Groundbreaking Held for Edgewater Hill

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton's newest economic development is underway. Edgewater Hill, a mixed-use community that will offer residential, commercial and retail spaces, broke ground last Wednesday – and town and state officials, as well as the developers and tenants, could not be more pleased.

Stephan and Lisa Motto of Edgewater Hill Properties & Dream Developers have been working for years on the development of the 79-acre piece of land. The husband-and-wife team is also responsible for the Laurel Ridge development, a housing community next door to Edgewater Hill on Route 66. According to Stephan Motto, Laurel Ridge broke ground in 2004 and was completed in 2012.

He added the support and friendships made from the Laurel Ridge project "gave me the hope and the vision for this new project."

The designing for the Edgewater Hill project began in 2005, but the concepts started being drafted in around 2003, Motto said.

"It's finally here," he said at last week's groundbreaking ceremony. "It's a long time in the making."

Motto called the development his and his wife's "dream."

"It works for the town of East Hampton and it works for us, and it works from a logistical and financial standpoint," he said, covering all the bases.

According to Motto, Edgewater Hill will feature one three-story building with office spaces on the second and third floors, and retail space on the first floor. The development is set to have more than 200 residential units, not including office or retail space, he said.

There are three spaces for tenants, Motto explained, and two have been filled already. One tenant will be Educational Playcare, and the other will be Berkshire Hathaway Realty.

Gerry Pastor, co-owner of Educational Playcare, explained his company already exists in six locations – Edgewater Hill would be its seventh. Pastor said he plans to offer services for 190 children, ages six weeks through pre-school, at the Edgewater Hill location.

Berkshire Hathaway New England Properties regional vice president, Beth DiLoreto, called the development "exciting growth for the community."

Local and state officials agreed.

"Economic development is more important than ever," state Sen. Art Linares said of Belltown's promising new project.

"We welcome Edgewater Hill with open arms," he added, before thanking the Mottos for their dedication to the project.

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron also welcomed the upcoming development to town.

"I know this project is just going to be amazing," she said, mentioning to the crowd they are "standing here today on the vision of what we will be proud of."

Referencing the Mottos' entrepreneurship, Ziobron said, "This is what real economic development looks like. The state wasn't here giving people money."

Rather, Motto explained, funding for the Edgewater Hill project came from Farmington Bank. He recalled, "The recession was tough for us. Banks didn't want to talk to us about this project."

But Farmington Bank came through.

Town Manager Mike Maniscalco also noted that in 2012, when he was first introduced to the project, it was difficult to get financing for, and fill business spots in a development.

But, he said, he knew it would come to fruition after he met the Mottos.

"He's the boots on the ground. He's going to make it happen," Maniscalco said of Motto. "He has the drive and the motivation to make this happen."

He then called Motto's wife "the lady behind the whole thing."

Maniscalco got a few laughs from the crowd when he said the site "smells like economic development and it smells like dirt." He furthered, "That's a good smell in East Hampton."

The town manager concluded that this new development is "the beginning of a lot of really good things to come."

East Hampton last Wednesday celebrated the groundbreaking of Edgewater Hill, an upcoming mixed-use development in town. From left are Town Manager Mike Maniscalco, Beth DiLoreto and Marion Terry (both of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England Properties), architect Patrick Pinnell, developers Stephan and Lisa Motto, state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, state Sen. Art Linares and Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore.

Maniscalco then turned the microphone over to Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore, who called the plans for the development "beautiful."

"We look forward to watching it grow," she said. "Laurel Ridge, I'm sure, is very, very, very pleased to have such great new neighbors."

Patrick Pinnell, one of the development's architects, was just as optimistic.

"It's fantastic to be here and see this mess," he laughed, noting that the development has a "soft spot" in his heart.

He called the Mottos' plans a "demonstration of the way that you can update the suburban Route 66's of the world for the 21st century."

Time will tell, but it seems Edgewater Hill is going to be a great step forward for economic development in Belltown, USA.

Feral Cat Food Drive

On Saturday, June 21, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the East Hampton Stop & Shop, the local Cat Rescue Group will accept cat food or financial donations to continue to feed, trap and neuter the local feral cat population.

Digs for Kids

East Hampton Youth Volleyball "Digs for Kids" is having its summer volleyball camp June 25-27 at East Hampton Middle School.

The camp is open to boys and girls entering grades four through eight. It is coached by Con-