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Arbor Knoll community in Norristown holds ribbon-cutting

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Arbor Knoll, created on the heels of the highly successful Arbor Heights and Arbor Mews communities, plays an integral role in transforming Norristown into a thriving and desirable neighborhood in which to live, work, and play.

NORRISTOWN — The third time was the charm for Norristown homebuyers as Arbor Knoll, the third townhome community by Progressive New Homes, made its official ribbon-cutting debut on Wednesday.

That the residences of Arbor Knoll are charmed by both affordability, beauty and amenities galore should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Progressive New Homes' first two developments in town, the award-winning Arbor Heights and Arbor Mews townhomes.

Council members and the business community gathered at 1550 DeKalb Street for the ribbon-cutting on the porch of a recently completed model home.

Already 75 percent of the 34 total homes in the Arbor Knoll community are sold, almost entirely to first time homebuyers, noted developer Sarah Peck, president of Progressive New Homes, who has been acclaimed for making affordably priced home ownership in the Philadelphia area her company's focus.

"That's showing the demand by first-time homebuyers who want to live in Norristown. We have very good financing that makes it affordable for first-time home buyers to purchase," Peck noted, explaining that several homeowners had taken ownership of their homes.

"Usually you open a model home, and then you sell. It's rare that you would both open and still have people living here, but it's such a successful community that we're lucky to have this many sales."

With oversized windows and lofty ceilings, all the homes have one- or two-car garages and either two bedrooms with a den, or three bedrooms.

The architecture at Arbor Knoll has been carefully designed to blend in seamlessly with the historic buildings on Upper DeKalb Street, a press release noted.

"The amount of space you get for the money here is extremely attractive," Peck said.

"The reason we can build the homes for such a good price is that we got public subsidy from several sources. Montgomery County gave us some money, through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; the state gave us some money, through the Department of Community and Economic Development, and finally, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency gave us money. So by cobbling together all those sources of funds we were able to lower the price of the houses."

Peck said she is proud that Arbor Knoll has attracted “a cross section of every possible demographic you can imagine ... every age group, every ethnicity. It’s like the United Nations here.”

While many units are four-level construction, including garage, one-level living is also available, Peck said, adding “Those are very attractive to seniors.”

Montgomery County Commissioners' Chairwoman Val Arkoosh told the crowd, “These kinds of ribbon cuttings are my most favorite. Before I was a commissioner I was a physician, and one of the reasons I decided to step into public service was that many of my patients told me about their challenges in obtaining affordable, safe housing. So every time we make more progress in affordable housing here in the county I am thrilled to be part of it. This is a really important issue for our county,” Arkoosh added. “So many people view Montgomery County as a very wealthy place. The county’s been blessed by (solid) growth in both our business community and our residential community, but as more and more jobs come into the county it makes housing even more expensive because there is a lot of competition for the housing.”

Housing is considered unaffordable when a family has to pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs, Arkoosh explained.

“So that’s why today is so important. This project has been done with the full support and enthusiasm of Norristown Borough Council. As always, putting the financing together for these projects is a tricky business, and I am very proud that the county has contributed \$100,000 in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is structured as a \$20,000 subsidy to five of the units. So for these particular five units they must be first-time homebuyers and must live or work in Montgomery County and meet certain income qualifications. There are plenty of people who will qualify,” Arkoosh added, “and we’re so happy to get five families into a beautiful home like this.”

Norristown Administrator Crandall Jones noted: “Sarah is a premier builder and we’re very proud to have her in this community. We love her work and we love working with her.”

For more information, visit arborknoll.net.

- Photo courtesy of Norristown Municipality



Norristown council members and administration and Montgomery County Commissioners take part in the ribbon cutting for Arbor Knoll.

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Gathered for a ribbon-cutting at Arbor Knoll on Wednesday are, from left, Montgomery County Commissioner Ken Lawrence, Rep. Tim Briggs (D-149th Dist.), developer Sarah Peck, Montgomery County Commissioner Val Arkoosh, Municipal Administrator Crandall Jones, and Norristown Municipal Council member Valerie Scott Cooper. Missing from photo is Council president Sonya Sanders.