

FINANCE & COMMERCE



Gramercy Development hopes to start construction this summer on this 87-unit senior cooperative development in Anoka. Homes will rise along the 17th and 18th holes Green Haven Golf Course. (Submitted rendering: Kaas Wilson/Gramercy)

Gramercy plans senior co-op

By: Brian Johnson © January 21, 2021 4:22 pm

Reviving the brand name established by his late father, local developer Mick Conlan looks to break ground this summer on a Gramercy Development project that will deliver 87 units of cooperative senior housing to a golf course site in Anoka.

Conlan's new entity, doing business as Gramercy Development Cos., is working with Frana Cos. on the project, which will create one- and two-bedroom homes ranging in size from 1,045 to 1,810 square feet. The homes will rise along the 17th and 18th holes of the Green Haven Golf Course at 2800 Greenhaven Road.

Scheduled for completion in late 2022, the American Cooperative of Anoka project will be a cooperative community for residents 62 and older. Gramercy defines cooperatives as nonprofit entities owned and operated by the members.

Conlan credits his father, Mike Conlan, with establishing "the blueprint" for the cooperative model in Minnesota. The elder Conlan started the original Gramercy in 1990. He built 13 Gramercy communities throughout the Twin Cities, he said.

"Early on, he was kind of the only show in town for doing senior cooperatives," Mick Conlan said in an interview.

After Mike Conlan died in 2004 at the age of 55, the company was sold to another developer, who did one project and then moved onto other things, thus abandoning the Gramercy name.

Conlan said the Anoka project will be the flagship development for the new iteration of Gramercy. One of the goals, he said, is to “advance Dad’s work and continue to push the model forward.”

“It felt like there was unfinished business for us as a family,” Conlan said. “That name, Gramercy, has always meant something to my sister and me. It was important that the development company be named that.”

Doug Borglund, Anoka’s community development director, told Finance & Commerce in 2019 that the Gramercy project stems from a 2012 redevelopment plan, which identifies the property as a future senior housing site.

Like other cities, Anoka’s population is aging. According to the Anoka’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan, roughly 28% of the city’s population is over 55 years old, and an additional approximately 15% is more than 45 years old.

“This represents over 40% of the city’s population, which is a significant percentage of the population that may desire housing styles other than a traditional single-family residence, particularly as some of these households become empty nesters,” the comp plan notes.

As a “limited equity” cooperative, Gramercy partners with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD requires 60% presale to begin construction. So far, 40% of the Anoka units have been sold, according to Gramercy.



The Gramercy project will create one- and two-bedroom homes ranging in size from 1,045 to 1,810 square feet. The homes will rise along the 17th and 18th holes of the Green Haven Golf Course at 2800 Greenhaven Road. (Submitted rendering: Kaas Wilson/Gramercy)

Jill Johnson, a Minneapolis-based senior housing consultant and owner of Johnson Consulting Services, said Minnesota is a leader in cooperative housing for older adults. Typically, she said, cooperatives are attractive to younger retirees or empty nesters.

Though some seniors still prefer traditional rentals, cooperatives “generally do really well,” said Johnson, who has more than 30 years of senior living consulting experience. Cooperatives tend to keep the price down by forgoing “bundled” care services, like meals, she said.

"It's a very appealing concept," Johnson added. "It really attracts, typically, a very independent, active older adult and there are usually lots of nice amenities."

For the Anoka project, the unit cost includes an upfront share price, which starts at \$124,710, and a monthly fee, which starts at \$1,513 per month, Conlan said. The share price appreciates at 3% per year compounded and the monthly fee includes all utilities except electric.

Designed by Kass Wilson Architects, the project will offer amenities such as a billiards and "fireside" room, a fitness studio, a do-it-yourself studio, a guest room, and a clubroom boasting views of the golf course, according to Gramercy.

In addition, the homes will feature "owner-grade" cabinetry, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, large kitchen islands and more, said Kathleen Conlan Joyce, Gramercy's vice president of Design and Construction.

Ebenezer Management Services will operate the cooperative.

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