

Arverne by the Sea attracts first-time buyers

BY MALLORY TOKUNAGA

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Queens residents may not immediately associate beach-front property with their borough, but one real estate development partnership, Benjamin-Beechwood, is changing that perception with their \$800 million project – Arverne by the Sea.

Nestled on the southern part of the Rockaway Peninsula, six distinct neighborhoods are underway with units ranging from \$599,000 to \$1 million. There are around 2,300 units and 800 are currently occupied.

Arverne is extremely attractive to first-time homebuyers because of its affordability and amenities, says Gerry Romsky, project manager.

“It offers more open space than what you would find in a typical Queens neighborhood,” said Romsky. “It will be one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Queens.”

Sales have been very good; three of the six neighborhoods have already sold out. The remaining developments for sale are The Tides, The Breakers, and The Dunes.

The developments feature two-family homes and condominiums that offer residents the convenience of living a commutable distance from downtown Manhattan, while still being able to raise a family in a planned community. Transportation options include the QM17 express bus, water taxi, the A train and the LIRR.

Arverne is both automobile and pedestrian friendly. Some models have garages attached to them or located by alleys that allow for easy parking. Shared parking



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courts have also been constructed.

Romsky said the neighborhood offers several amenities and has design plans for a YMCA, Stop & Shop, play areas for children and schools. Arverne will also feature an ocean front boardwalk and developers are setting aside space for commercial and retail spaces.

He also said Arverne’s affordable pricing and financing adds to its appeal. Homes purchased in the development have a 20-year abatement program that makes taxes as low as \$800 a year for the first 10 years.

Another attraction is that the two-family homes also enable owners to rent out part of their residence to offset the cost of the house and eventually generate income.

The community will be rich in diversity, said Romsky.

“It is a gorgeous mosaic and serves as a testament to the

mayor’s vision.”

Prior to development, the area was vacant. It was initially a vacation spot with Victorian hotels in the early 1900s, which later gave way to beach bungalows.

Advancements in transportation made travel more accommodating and those who once frequented the area sought summer retreat elsewhere.

By ‘60s, the area was condemned and the city began demolition of abandoned buildings. The area remained vacant for decades and it was not until recently that the area has seen development.

Romsky said community support and help from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) are the major reasons Arverne has been so successful.

“We are friends with the community,” he said. “We were part of the community before we even put a shovel in the ground.”

Romsky added that he was very thankful for HPD commissioner Raphael Cestero’s help with the Arverne development.

“We couldn’t have done it without him.”

Romsky explained that the partnership between The Beechwood Organization and The Benjamin Companies began in 2001, when they submitted the proposal to build Arverne.

Roughly three years later, they broke ground and they seek to complete the neighborhood’s entire construction by 2015.

“We are very proud of Arverne by the Sea,” said Romsky. “We can’t wait to finish it.”