

Letters to the Editor

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'Demand is high' for affordable senior housing

To the editor,

As many in Kennebunk and surrounding communities are aware, affordable senior housing is something that remains in high demand and incredibly low supply. Over the past two years, Kennebunk Savings has worked with Avesta Housing on a plan to bring additional affordable senior housing units to Kennebunk.

Avesta currently maintains three properties in Kennebunk – Park Street School, Cousens School and Pinebluff – providing a total of 82 units of senior and affordable housing.

Demand is high; very high. The properties are 100% occupied with a waiting list of over 300 individuals. In 2023, only seven units out of the 82 became available for new tenants.

Kennebunk Savings is always looking at new and unique ways to improve our communities. Our Operations Center property on Alewife Park Road in West Kennebunk, across from the southbound Maine Turnpike exit, has a total of 24 acres of unused land. Our intent is to put the unused land to use by splitting it into two 12-acre parcels.

Alewife Park Road in West Kennebunk. *Dan King photo*

One parcel will be preserved in perpetuity as conservation land and offered as a donation to the Kennebunk Land Trust. The second parcel would be donated to Avesta Housing for its development of two 35-unit, one-bedroom affordable senior housing apartment buildings over two phases. Kennebunk Savings will also be providing Avesta with a \$550,000 grant toward construction costs.

The proposed housing parcel is currently zoned Industrial, which does not allow for multifamily housing as a use, meaning the project as proposed could not move forward. Kennebunk Savings and Avesta Housing are asking Kennebunk residents to vote yes on the March 5 ballot, Referendum Question A.

A yes vote will provide approval to create a contract zone, for the subject parcel only, to allow multifamily housing and the development of the 70 total units of affordable senior housing in West Kennebunk.

While the 70 units won't solve all of our senior housing needs, it represents a significant step forward through a unique project and partnership that we earnestly hope will serve as a model for other businesses and communities. Thank you for your support.

Bradford C. Paige, CEO

Kennebunk Savings Bank

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