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## Developers, hospitality leaders help add affordable housing

By ABRAHAM GALVAN

The need to create affordable housing for the working community and programming to end homeless for good remains great in Miami-Dade, which has given developers and hospitality industry leaders an opportunity to get involved and make an impactful difference.

With the overall goal to improve the quality of life for all county residents, downtown North Miami will soon have much-needed senior and affordable housing options, said Rasha Cameau, executive director of the North Miami Community Redevelopment Agency.

"Located on a corner parcel at 950 NE 124th St, **Residences at NoMi** will also provide a significant amount of tax revenue when complete, create necessary jobs and improve existing walkways to enhance transportation for all of North Miami's residents and visitors," Ms. Cameau said.

The city is working toward the revitalization of its downtown, but it hasn't seen any new vertical development for housing. This project is probably going to be the first new multifamily development in that area, said



Kristen Kitchen aided homeless.

Steven J. Wernick, managing partner of Wernick & Co. PLLC and Residencies at NoMi's representative.

"It was very gratifying to be able to bring the project forward and have the support of the [North Miami] CRA last month because I think that is a key to solving these issues," Mr. Wernick said. "It has to be a purposeful partnership in exploring different solutions for different neighborhoods, but definitely has to be public sector and private sector working together."

The seven-story, 175-unit mixed-income project is being tailored for seniors living with



15% of the units – which is 27 units – committed to affordable housing, he said. The project will also offer 9,000 square feet of retail space on the ground level and 11,000 square feet of office space.

Budgeted at \$40 million, the groundbreaking ceremony is set for the fourth quarter of this year and projected to be completed by early 2023.

"It's as much as activating the property to bring new affordable housing and being a catalyst for future development as well as small businesses, restaurants and neighborhood services people are looking for," Mr. Wernick said.

In efforts to permanently eliminate homelessness, Miami-Dade County Homeless

Trust's chair Ron Book said without hotels like Dunns-Josephine Hotel in Overtown offering temporary shelter, housing options for the homeless would be scarce and limited.

"I cannot say enough about the power of community that **Kristen Kitchen** has embodied this year. She was the first business to engage with the Homeless Trust and offer to house clients needing quarantine and isolation support due to covid," Mr. Book said.

Besides offering quarantine rooms to more than 500 people since the pandemic struck, the hotel is also temporarily housing and acting as a steppingstone for homeless individuals who are transitioning to permanent housing, said Ms. Kitchen, owner and CEO of Dunns-Josephine Hotel.

As covid starts to dissipate, other needs step up to the forefront, Ms. Kitchen said. "With more evictions coming down the pipeline and people just struggling a little bit more, we are offering our rooms for guests who are waiting for the next step to better their lives, like obtaining permanent housing."

"Ms. Kitchen has been a stand-up partner through the



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incredibly stressful process of housing and caring for hundreds of clients over the past year," Mr. Book added. "She gets it. She understands the community and she knows the importance of flexibility and problem-solving, especially with very high-need clients."