

Groundbreaking at Swan Lake Village

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Blue Sky Communities breaks ground on affordable housing rental complex in Lakeland, FL



Lakeland, Fla. (February 12, 2021)- A groundbreaking for Swan Lake Village took place Thursday at 10am. Swan Lake Village is a planned, garden style, affordable housing community that will consist of 84 apartments. The complex will be built on vacant land located at 2076 Griffin Road in Lakeland, Florida. The property is next to a Publix Supermarket and a nature preserve, with close proximity to I-4. Swan Lake Village is expected to be completed by January 2022.

A panel of local leaders spoke at today's groundbreaking, including Lakeland Mayor, Bill Mutz, Polk County Sheriff, Grady Judd, Blue Sky Communities President and CEO, Shawn Wilson, Ivon Ruz from Tri-County Human Services, and Scott Eller from Community Assisted & Supported Living. Those that were

not able to attend the event in person had the option to watch virtually through a [Facebook livestream](#) or a [YouTube livestream](#).

“I want you to know that I couldn’t be much more excited about having a project kickoff than I am about this project today. We’ve worked on this a couple of years and this [project] is very, very from my perspective, very exciting for the City of Lakeland. And it is a project and a partnership that I hope we’re able to expand as we go along,” Lakeland Mayor, Bill Mutz told the attendees. “We want to make an investment in things that change lives. And that’s what we’re having happen here.”

“The reality of it is that there are people today who don’t know where their food is coming from to feed them or their children tonight. There are those that have mental health challenges and medical challenges, that didn’t ask for that. And we have the opportunity to do something great,” said Sheriff Grady Judd.

Sheriff Judd continued, “The solutions are with us. We have the ability to help those that are less fortunate. And I applaud the teamwork, the community work, that’s going forth in this today. Our commitment at the Sheriff’s Office and at the County is to help others. To stand in the gap between good and evil. To create opportunities, so that the biggest mental health facility is not the county jail. So, the biggest homeless facility is not the county jail. I will promise you that given opportunity and given healthcare, and given a home, and given a way to eat, and given a way to survive, that crime will go down, and quality of life will go up for all of us. That’s why we all have to work together. That’s why we’ll never give up, but we’ll always give out a helping hand.”

Swan Lake Village’s 84 apartments will consist of 48 one-bedroom and 36 two-bedroom units. All apartments will be equipped with multiple energy efficient features, balconies, in-unit laundry, pantry closets, and open floorplans.

Amenities will include a clubhouse that is over 3,200 square feet, free parking, a playground, a fitness center, and a pool. Swan Lake Village will be staffed with a case management team to serve the residents at the site.

Tenets will be selected based on need, and rent will be adjusted according to income. Families making 60% of AMI or less are eligible to submit an application. Application rental information will be available in Fall 2021. Interested potential tenants can register on the website www.swanlake-village.com to be notified when they will begin accepting applications. Accessible units and reasonable accommodations are available to those with disabilities.

Swan Lake Village is estimated to cost roughly \$20 million dollars to develop. Funding for this project was provided in part by the Sadowski Affordable Housing

Trust Fund. **Blue Sky Communities** secured nearly \$4 million dollars of Sadowski funds through a competitive process at the Florida Housing Finance Corporation in order to help finance this project.

The City of Lakeland provided impact fee waivers in excess of \$400,000 and a loan of federal home funds. Polk County also provided impact fee waivers in excess of \$500,000. TD Bank provided construction financing. Raymond James tax credit funds were also applied. Raymond James is Blue Sky Communities' strategic partner. They have partnered on over a dozen projects to date.

Community Assisted & Supported Living (CASL) is a non-profit partner. The property will be managed by **Carteret Management Inc.**

Blue Sky Communities President and CEO, Shawn Wilson concluded his introduction by recognizing that this month is Black History Month, "African Americans have played a very important role in Lakeland and Polk County since the very beginning. They contributed to farming and mining in the area as well as military service. There is a history of African American military encampments in this area. Those all deserve to be recognized."

He then went on to commend the City of Lakeland for establishing the Periodic Table of Black History a couple of years ago and encouraged their continued efforts to recognize the contributions and accomplishments of African Americans in the community.

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About Blue Sky Communities:

Blue Sky Communities, LLC is the 36th largest Affordable Housing Developer in the nation. Blue Sky has developed more than 1,300 units of affordable housing across Florida. Blue Sky has an additional 500 units under construction and 600 in the pipeline for 2020-21.

Founded in 2012, and based in Tampa, Florida, Blue Sky is also an advocacy leader. President Shawn Wilson is the immediate past Chair of the Coalition of Affordable Housing Providers of Florida; CFO Scott Macdonald is the Chair of the City of St. Petersburg Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.