

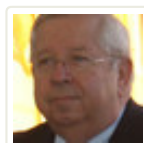
# Ground Broken On Linwood Mill Project

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From left, Patty Giannopoulos, Historian Ken Warchol, Bill Giannopoulos and Matthew



NORTHBRIDGE, Mass. – The clang of pipe against pipe and the growl of saws punctuated speeches outside the Linwood Mill yesterday during the official groundbreaking in its transition from mill to senior affordable housing.

State and local officials joined with developers, architects and financiers of the Linwood Mill project to celebrate the mixed-use redevelopment that will include commercial/retail space and 75 apartments for the 55-plus community.

Part of the Whitin family legacy, the Linwood Mill was built between 1866 and 1868. At one time, the cotton mill employed about 300 people.

It was purchased three years ago by Bill and Patty Giannopoulos with the hope of preserving the mill, said Matthew W. Mittelstadt, manager of EA Fish Development, “and it didn’t take long to feel the passion Bill and Patty felt for this project.”

EA Fish Development partners with the O’Connell Companies and Gerard Doherty, Mittelstadt said. The commercial/retail component is under the direction of the Giannopoulos’.

“Projects like the Linwood Mill require long-term support and commitment from local and state leaders,” and the commitment level has been second to none, noted Doherty. That commitment was also praised by Town Manager Theodore Kozak. “In these difficult times, it’s good to see people coming together to make things better for all of us,” he said.

“We in the Blackstone Valley have found creative ways to continue the icons of the Industrial Revolution,” said Sen. Richard T. Moore, D-Uxbridge, who was on the ground floor with the creation of the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor more than 20 years ago.

Plans are now underway to make the Corridor a national park. “That may come to fruition over the next few years,” Moore said, “and I can’t think of a better anchor for that than the Linwood Mill.”

“We are so excited” by this project, said Planning Board member Barbara Gaudette. “It will be another jewel in our crown. I’m very proud of Northbridge.”

“If the Planning Board is excited, the Historic Commission is very, very, very excited,” said Historian Ken Warchol.

During his 31 years on the Commission, he’s seen the mill slowly deteriorate. “There have been two proposals to restore it, but it didn’t happen,” he said. He’d had a sign made prior to the failure of the last proposal, but yesterday happily turned the sign over to the Giannopoulos’.

The sign details the history of the mill.

The development team also includes The Architectural Team, Westbrook Joint Venture, Western Builders & Dellbrook Construction, Macrostie Historic Advisers, Peabody Properties, Heritage Design and Lightship Engineering.

Financing comes from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Berkshire Bank, Raymond James Financial, Apple Inc. and Quincy Mutual.