

Habitat Waukesha moves ahead on two multi-home projects

Organization has hopes of
revitalizing Main Street corridor

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WAUKESHA — As Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County is in full construction mode on its housing project on White Rock Avenue, the organization also recently began construction on the first two homes of its 20-home Domenica Park subdivision with the hope of finishing the first homes by Christmas.

“It’s really exciting to have the infrastructure in and to be done with that chapter and to turn the reins over to Habitat and our volunteers,” said Habitat Waukesha CEO Melissa Songco. “It’s a bit nerve-racking finishing our project off White Rock and beginning this project at the same time because we do need to grow our volunteer base quite a bit.”

Domenica Park is located in Waukesha’s Broadway Heights neighborhood between Oakland and Greenfield Avenues on land that was formerly occupied by the Aeroshade factory that was torn down in 2017.

Habitat plans to build 16 single-family homes and two duplex townhomes. There are four different house models, which will be a mix of three-bedroom and four-bedroom homes, including four ranch-style homes to accommodate ADA families.

The first year of homeowners have been selected, with the exception of families for the duplex units. To be selected, individuals apply for a home and, if they meet certain qualifications, the applicant will meet with Habitat to learn more about the partnership.

Habitat Waukesha is starting with the duplexes in Domenica Park as they are currently working on identical duplexes on their White Rock project.

“That’s why we decided to build the duplexes right away, kind of muscle memory,” Songco said.

The White Rock project consists of three duplexes: one is fully drywalled, one is about to be insulated and drywalled, and one, which is being built by Waukesha County Technical College carpentry students, is currently having interior walls built, Songco said. They hope to finish two of these three duplexes by the end of June.

Currently, Habitat Waukesha has about 30 volunteers that come on a regular basis, but that’s not enough to construct Domenica Park, Habitat Waukesha’s biggest project to date, according to Songco.

“I really think we need to double those folks to more like 60 volunteers that come once or twice a week,” Songco said. “We really need to double down on our efforts and we’ve been working on that, but it’s a specific niche of a person who wants to volunteer on a regular basis.”

New Main Street property

In April 2022, Habitat Waukesha purchased a two-family home located at 302 E. Main St. to renovate it. The organization is seeking a \$100,000 loan from the city of Waukesha’s Affordable Housing Development Fund.

“This fund was created to assist with development costs associated with creating and rehabilitating affordable housing units,” city documents say.

The city’s Redevelopment Authority will consider the request at a meeting Monday.

Habitat Waukesha plans to convert the home back to a single-family home, anticipating \$250,000 in costs even with Habitat discounts and volunteer labor.

“It needs significant repairs,” Songco said.

According to Songco, Habitat Waukesha hopes renovating this home will be the first of many homes in the Main Street corridor.

“We purchased and rehabbed a number of properties on White Rock and were able to really transform that through-way, so we hope to do similar revitalization on Main Street as well,” Songco said. “This is our first property really in that endeavor on Main Street.”

The Redevelopment Authority will meet at 6 p.m. in the training room of City Hall, 201 Delafield St.

Lottery