

Lake Worth townhouse project targets struggling artists



A new section of townhouses have been built for lower-income artists to have a place of their own. Five homes are scheduled to close this month at The Art Lofts of West Village in Lake Worth. (Handout/Courtesy Neighborhood Renaissance, Inc.)

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A new section of eight townhouses has been built for lower-income artists to have a place of their own.

Five of the homes are scheduled to close this month at The Art Lofts of West Village in Lake Worth.

It's the second phase of the project. Twelve townhouses were completed in 2013. The plan is to provide "much needed attainable housing for people and specifically artists who want to live and work in a single location near other creative individuals," said Joan Oliva, executive director of the Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Agency.

The three-story townhouses are income-restricted. Some are set aside for families of four earning no more than \$92,280, and others are restricted to families of four earning no more than \$61,520.

There must be an artist who is a member of the household living there, and they must have documented work through “experience, reputation and achievements verified through a resume, letters of recommendation and support materials,” said Terri Murray, the executive director for Neighborhood Renaissance.

The project, 110 North F St., “helps to minimize displacement of working artists who contribute to the social fabric of Lake Worth,” Murray said. It will “ensure that they can afford to stay in the neighborhood and grow their art related businesses.”

This second phase is a \$3.3 million mixed-use development with the first level of the townhouses space for a street level studio or retail space.

The city of Lake Worth donated the land, and Palm Beach County provided \$532,000 in down payment assistance to four of the low-income working artist households so that they can afford to purchase their homes.

Neighborhood Renaissance, the West Palm Beach-based nonprofit community, was awarded a \$500,000 grant from NeighborWorks Project Reinvest to construct a 2,000-square-foot “Class A” commercial building to attract art-related businesses and amenities to the neighborhood.

Murray said there is no tenant yet for the building, which has townhomes on each side of it.

Oliva said artists are a “big part of the renaissance taking place in Lake Worth.”