

## Groundbreaking Officially Kicks Off Wilton Commons Phase II Construction

By Heather Borden Herve, GMW Editor on February 4, 2016



Yesterday, Wilton officials and volunteers who have dedicated themselves to creating the Wilton Commons housing community gathered for an official groundbreaking on the second phase of building.

The new wing that is being built is for Wilton Commons Congregate Housing, and will provide 23 units of congregate housing as part of a program called Congregate Housing for the Elderly. The program provides rental assistance, supportive services and meal subsidies to support residents in Congregate Housing. The 23 new units will be contained in a new wing on the north side of the property, which will be attached to the existing 51 units of Wilton Commons on the 2nd and 3rd floors via enclosed walkways.

After thanking the many people who helped make Wilton Commons a reality, Phil Lauria, chairman and president of the Board of Wilton Commons said, “My hope is for all of the residents of Wilton Commons Congregate to enjoy a beautiful place to live here and where they will feel at home, comfortable and safe.”

He also acknowledged the need for affordable housing for seniors in Wilton. “With the completion of Wilton Commons Congregate the vision for Wilton Commons will be achieved. Wilton Commons is a spectacular place, truly a jewel of a facility. The entire complex will be comprised of 74 units with 51 units for independent living and now 23 units for

congregate living. Wilton Commons provides a great living solution for individuals and families looking for a new, beautiful, modern and safe environment to live. Residents in Wilton Commons Congregate will receive a hot meal each day and weekly housekeeping.”

George Ciaccio, the chairman emeritus of Wilton Commons GP, said despite some community resistance to the project years ago, Wilton Commons has become a model for similar residences in other nearby towns, and the complex is full with a waiting list of 60 people. Adding the new wing, he said, “is a dream come true.”

Renée Dobos, chief executive officer of Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc. states “MHA couldn’t be more delighted to work with the Wilton community. This development is an example of what can be accomplished when varying groups come together with a purposeful mission. MHA’s vision is to build and transform lives and this project honors the organizational commitment as well as supports an entire community.”

### Wilton Commons Congregate Facility Features

The new Wilton Commons Congregate building will enhance the Wilton Commons complex with more lounge space, an activities room, a community room, additional staffing and program space. The existing Wilton Commons Phase I structure provided a number of essential features to support the building for Wilton Commons Congregate including additional common space for tenants of both units and commercial kitchen. A large generator will provide emergency power.

### Wilton Commons & Wilton Commons Congregate Facility highlights

Most of the individual units are 650 square feet and designed to have an open airy feeling, with large oversized windows to reinforce connection to the outdoors. Public areas were also designed to feel open and airy. The lounges were designed to feel like a nice living room and hallways are well illuminated and provided with natural light and windows to connect people to the outdoors. Hallways throughout the complex incorporate small sitting areas for moments of respite and chance meetings with neighbors.

Architect Louis Contadino, who has designed both Wilton Commons buildings, said he tried to keep in mind the population who would be living in the space he was creating.

“I tried to better understand the issues faced daily by the future residence of Wilton Commons. The small everyday tasks that we take for granted; getting dressed, bathing, eating, grooming, walking can appear unsurmountable to an elderly person with physical limitations. My task was not to design a building, but to make someone’s life a little easier, less stressful and pleasurable in a congregate setting”.

Among the amenities that residents are able to enjoy throughout the facility:

- Secured Vestibule Entry
- Reception area
- Elevators to 2nd & 3rd Floors
- Visiting Nurse’s Office
- Medical examination room/space
- Lounges with fireplaces
- Arts and Crafts Room
- Chapel/Meditation Room
- Fully outfitted commercial kitchen
- Resident Dining Room
- Private Dining Room
- Resident operated convenience store
- Beauty/barber shop
- ADA lavatories
- Laundry room each floor
- Trash room each floor
- Tenant storage area.
- Management Offices
- Individual Mailboxes

## Eligible Population

The eligible population for Wilton Commons Congregate II will be individuals who are considered frail or “At-Risk” elderly who may need some level of supportive services in order to remain independent. To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be 62 years of age or older;
2. Meet criteria for congregate care not limited to: physical and functional assessment of frailty, current housing conditions and living arrangements, and daily living needs;
3. Annual Income at 50% AMI or below