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## LHAND FINDS GATEWAY TO \$250,000 STATE GRANT

ITEM PHOTO BY OWEN  
O'ROURKE

*Jeff Weeden, left, and Executive Director Charles J. Gaeta go over paperwork at the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development office prior to receiving a grant award for \$250,000 that they picked up in Boston on Wednesday.*

**BY GAYLA CAWLEY**

**LYNN** — The Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood



Development (LHAND) has been awarded a \$250,000 Urban Agenda Housing grant for the second phase of the Washington Street Gateway project.

The grant is part of the inaugural round of awards from the Commonwealth's Urban Agenda Grant Program, a new grant program that "seeks to unlock community-driven responses to local economic opportunities through partnership-building, problem solving and shared accountability," according to Gov. Charlie Baker's office.

"The focus of our urban agenda is community empowerment across the Commonwealth to meet local needs with locally driven solutions," Baker said in a statement.

"The partnerships that have formed in response to this program will be essential to building leadership, collaboration and capacity, while creating economic opportunities in the short term and building a foundation for long-lasting economic development in our urban communities," Baker said.

The funding will be used for pre-development costs to "get things up and running" with producing a total of 20 market-rate units at a development site located 826 Washington St., according to Jeff Weeden, manager of Planning and Development for LHAND. He said 71 housing units are already being built on Washington Street.

Weeden and Charles Gaeta, executive director of LHAND, said they saw a need for market-rate housing in the Washington Street area. Both said LHAND applied for the grant on behalf of the city and has partnered with the Neighborhood Development Associates Inc. (NDA) and Lynn's Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC) on the project.

As part of their application, letters of support for the project were submitted to the Urban Agenda Grant Program by Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy and by state legislators. Support was also received from the City Council, Gaeta said.

"This particular corridor, the Washington Street Gateway, is currently experiencing a revitalization effort with the development of a 71-unit state and federal tax credit-funded development, and I am encouraged with the continuation of another phase in this plan," Kennedy wrote.

"The proposed 20 market-rate units will help further stabilize a highly subsidized area and contribute needed disposable income to the local economy," Kennedy wrote.

Gaeta said he received an email Monday afternoon from the office of Jay Ash, State Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, informing him that the grant had been awarded.

"By engaging cities and community-based organizations around local economic assets, urban agenda grants will help communities unlock dynamic growth," Ash said in a statement regarding the grant program.

Gaeta said the email also invited LHAND officials to an Urban Agenda Grant Program presentation that was held Wednesday in Boston. The event included Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.

"We were excited," Gaeta said of being awarded the grant. "We were pleasantly surprised. We knew it was very competitive."

Gaeta added that the grant is a "big step for the creation of some market rate housing." According to the grant application submitted by LHAND, Lynn has a strong need for affordable housing, as 52 percent of its current residents are cost burdened.

Gaeta said he anticipated starting the project by early spring or summer 2016 and completing the market-rate units in about a year and a half. He said the grant program has given them three years to complete the project.

"We will be in the ground by the end of the year," Gaeta said.

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