

# BANKER & TRADESMAN

THE REAL ESTATE, BANKING AND COMMERCIAL WEEKLY FOR MASSACHUSETTS

## THE TELLER

### Apartment Hunting

► A nonprofit community development group that is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year is about to undertake its largest project yet. The **Housing Corporation of Arlington** acquired four apartment buildings located along **Massachusetts Avenue** in **Arlington** last week and is planning to renovate the



The Housing Corporation of Arlington acquired four apartment buildings in Arlington, including this one at 1016 Massachusetts Ave., last week.

structures and preserve them as affordable rentals. The brick buildings contain a total of 18 one-bedroom units.

The improvements to the buildings – which include the installation of new mechanical systems and roofs and masonry work – will be done by Arlington-based **Feinmann Inc.**, an award-winning remodeling company that specializes in upscale residential projects. **Feinmann**, which is owned and run by longtime Arlington resident **Peter Feinmann**, also will be updating and remodeling apartment interiors. All of the work will be done at a discounted rate. “The discount is significant for us, but equally significant is that [Feinmann] is committed to do this,” said HCA Executive Director **David Levy**. “I don’t think we could have ever afforded the quality of work that he can do for us.”

Levy said if **Feinmann** hadn’t volunteered his services, HCA probably would have had difficulty securing a contractor. “To be quite honest with you, doing capital improvements on buildings that were built in the 1940s isn’t all that glamorous,” Levy said. **Feinmann**, who has provided his services for other HCA projects, told *The Teller* he is happy to help out. The only way to preserve a community’s diversity and “vibrancy” is to “make sure that there’s affordable housing,” said **Feinmann**.

Some of the newly acquired apartments will be rented to tenants earning less than 50 percent of the area median income, which translates to \$29,450, while other units will be rented to those making up to 80 percent of the area median income, or \$46,300. Levy said existing tenants won’t have to move during the renovation process. Only two tenants will be relocated temporarily to hotel rooms, which will be paid for by HCA.

The acquisition and renovation is being done with a \$450,000 **Community Development Block Grant** that was awarded to HCA by the town of Arlington, federal funds provided through the **North Suburban HOME Consortium** and financing from the **Massachusetts Housing Partnership**, which is providing an \$840,000 first mortgage and an \$850,000 deferred-payment second mortgage.

HCA, which has a portfolio of 14 two-family properties totaling 28 units, has spent the last several years buying two-family homes, renovating them and renting them to low- and moderate-income families. The group decided to tackle larger projects after hiring a consultant to help it broaden its reach and identify new affordable housing opportunities in Arlington.

“We’re very supportive of that [two-family] program but we felt like creating affordable units two at a time was somewhat inefficient and ... not as effective as perhaps buying bigger buildings,” Levy said.

A special ceremony to mark the acquisition of the buildings is scheduled for Thursday morning.