FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEARTHSTONE COHOUSING OFFERS SOLUTION FOR SMART GROWTH

DENVER GROUNDBREAKING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 21, 2000

DENVER, CO; SEPTEMBER 11, 2000 -- In the past several months, Hearthstone Cohousing Community has gained considerable attention as Denver's newest cohousing community. The new cohousing neighborhood -- to be located in Highlands Garden Village, a new urbanist project on the site of the old Elitch Gardens Amusement Park -- presents a viable solution to the "smart growth" initiatives now on the ballot in the upcoming election. The cohousing community, and the larger new urbanist project in which it will be built, both stress the importance of knowing your neighbor and conserving natural resources.

Under the leadership of developer Jim Leach, president of Wonderland Hill Development Company, the project is scheduled to break ground October 21, 2000. According to Leach, this cohousing project has special significance as the first cohousing community in the U.S. to be part of a larger new urbanist neighborhood in an infill site.

"Because cohousing and new urbanism share similar social goals emphasizing community, we view this project as a model for other situations where people can comfortably live on a smaller piece of land in an urban setting, while cultivating a strong sense of participation with their neighbors."

Future resident Brooke Guilfoyle just moved to Denver with her husband John from Nova Scotia, and is choosing cohousing as a way to recreate the closeness with her neighbors that she experienced growing up. “We are a busy professional couple and we miss the close-knit neighborhoods like those we grew up in. We want the benefits of intergenerational relationships within our community. We also like the idea of living more lightly on the earth without sacrificing high-quality modern housing. Hearthstone has both the diversity of people and the environmental values we are seeking,” said Guilfoyle.

– more –

The cohousing project will have 33 energy efficient townhomes and single story units located near the corner of 38th Street and Tennyson. Many of the 100-year old trees, original landscaping and historic features are being preserved as part of the overall plan. Hearthstone will incorporate resource conservation and employ environmental solutions and sustainable building practices. The project will be built by The Genesee Company and will exceed Colorado E-Star and Built Green Program criteria.

The neighborhood will include homes in a wide range of sizes and prices. Prices range from $154,000 to the upper $200,000s and, for a limited time, early buyer discounts are available. The one bedroom units have already sold out as people realized the value of owning a home in a Denver neighborhood that is quickly appreciating and whose median price is over $200,000.

"This is a terrific value because people can lock in on their purchase price now, while home values appreciate over the next year as the community gets built. In addition, buyers get the added benefit of living in a community with a higher level of resources than what is typically available," said Laurel Rhoades, project manager for Hearthstone Cohousing.

The project will include a 4,800 square foot Common House, often the heart of community life, typically used for optional weekly meals, meetings and special events. Hearthstone's Common House will have a gourmet kitchen, children's playroom, a dining area, laundry facilities, guest room and lounge.

The cohousing group has over 50% committed member households in the project. Future residents represent a diverse mix of ages and professions, including families with children and single people. Professions include a nurse, a retired professor, computer engineer, teacher, therapist and a physician's assistant. The group invites potential new members to join now so they may participate in upcoming decisions around group process and guidelines for living which will help direct their future life in community.

"People increasingly seek community in their life and cohousing offers a healthy balance between the need for privacy and home ownership, with the benefits of a built-in social life with their neighbors," says Leach.

"We view cohousing as a trend that is building momentum in this country and will only increase as more developers and builders step up to the plate," adds Leach, whose Boulder-based company is the most experienced developer of cohousing communities in the U.S. Wonderland Hill Development Company has completed eight cohousing neighborhoods to date in Colorado, Washington, Arizona and California, and is working with another nine groups to create new cohousing villages in the Western U.S.

Hearthstone Cohousing has bimonthly meetings on the second Thursday and fourth Sunday of the month. The next meetings are on Thursday, September 14 from 7-9 P.M. and Sunday, September 24 from 3-5 P.M. at the Conflict Center in Denver, 4140 Tejon Street (between 41st and 42nd Avenues.) New member orientations are an hour before the regular business meeting, from 2-3 P.M. on Sundays and 6-7 P.M. on Thursdays.

For more information on Hearthstone and the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony, people can call Orientation Coordinator Kathryn Rodriguez at 303-922-2413, or visit the Hearthstone website: www.denvercohousing.com. For more general information about cohousing, people can contact Melissa French at Wonderland Hill Development Company at 303-449-3232, ext. 106 or via email at melissa@whdc.com.

# # #

RADIO PSA - 30 SECONDS

Interested in a strong sense of community? Want to know your neighbors before you move in? How about a home in a new urbanist village on the site of the original Elitch Gardens Amusement Park?

If this sounds appealing, you may want to check out HEARTHSTONE COHOUSING – the new cohousing community breaking ground in North Denver this Fall. Free orientation meetings take place twice a month.

For more information, please call Kathryn Rodriguez at 303-922-2413, or visit the Hearthstone website at www.denvercohousing.com.

# # #

THE DENVER POST REAL ESTATE
Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Urban village advances at former Elitch's site

After many heated debates and neighborhood meetings, the zoning is in place to create an urban village on the site of the old Elitch Gardens at 38th Avenue and Tennyson Street in Denver.

Now all the village needs are villagers.

Wonderland Custom Homes is starting in that direction. The Boulder-based homebuilder was picked by Elitch's redeveloper Chuck Perry of HGV Land Company LLC to build the housing portion of the mixed-use development.

Wonderland will have its first meeting tonight with potential homebuyers to discuss the details of the development.

The $50 million, three-year redevelopment of Elitch's — now called Highland's Garden Village — is expected to include a mix of housing, retail and offices along with preserved historic features of the old park.



Emily Narvaes

Wonderland plans roughly 110 single-family homes and townhomes, which could include land set aside for Wonderland's sister company, Wonderland Development Co., to build co-housing units, said Steve Doane, president of Wonderland Custom Homes.

Co-housing allows many individual families to live in close proximity to each other, similar to a townhome development with shared park and clubhouse areas. But with co-housing, families and friends decide ahead of time — even before they purchase the land — to create such a community.

They hire an architect and make decisions about design and landscaping by consensus. Once the project is built, they often share meals and other activities.

Wonderland Development Co.'s Jim Leach has built five co-housing communities in Colorado in such places as Boulder, Fort Collins, Golden, Lafayette and Littleton.

Tonight's meeting will determine if there is interest in a co-housing development on the Highland's Garden property, Doane said. The meeting will be from 7-9 p.m. at the All Saints Episcopal Church, 3650 Yates St.

Wonderland also will give potential co-villagers information about the types and prices of single-family homes that will be built, Doane said.

Homes have not been designed and prices have not been determined, Doane said. But he said single-family homes could range from approximately the low 200s to the high 200s. Townhomes could cost in the area of $160,000 to $180,000.

Interested residents will be asked to put down a fully refundable down payment of $3,000 to hold a place in line in the Wonderland development. The person first on the list gets to choose his or her lot first.

Those on the waiting list who decide to buy a home will get an additional $3,000 in options and upgrades from Wonderland, said Doane. The families who "put up $3,000 on a house that hasn't yet been designed" deserve it, he said.

Where life is better

So here's a potential reason Denver's getting so many people from other parts of the country: Life is just more enjoyable in some cites as it is becoming less enjoyable in others, particularly America's older cities, according to The Heritage Foundation.

The conservative foundation recently conducted a study showing that despite a drop in crime rates, American cities lose out to the suburbs when it comes to good schools and housing.

Hundreds of billions of dollars spent to stop the decline have "had little effect on the pace of the deterioration — and may have accelerated it."

The study does not include Denver, but it's clear that, to some people, U S West is right — life's better here. According to the study, "Of the top 20 cities in 1970, the 12 located east of the Mississippi River had lost 3.5 million residents or 17 percent of their populations, by 1996."

Philadelphia and Boston are at their lowest population levels since 1900, according to the study. The last time St. Louis had so few people was in 1880.

But the report ends on a high note: "Thanks to the emergence of a new breed of city leader who understands that quality of life begins at home, the United States stands on the brink of a new approach to urban revitalization," said Ronald D. Utt, a fellow at Heritage in federal budgetary affairs. "What these revitalized cities will look like is anyone's guess, but they should not be held hostage to national objectives implemented by federal agencies."

Emily Narvaes covers real estate and economic development for The Denver Post. Her column appears every Tuesday. Reach her at business@denverpost.com, and put "narvaes" in the subject field.

Golden apartments sold in $14 million transaction

DEALS OF THE WEEK

Recent deals:

■ **FF Realty LLC** purchased **Lunnonhaus Village** at 17600 W. 14th Ave. in Golden, a 285-unit apartment development, for $14.2 million. The seller was **Griffin Real Estate Fund II. Frank Farrell** and **Chuck Sweeney** with **Hendricks & Partners** in Denver negotiated the deal.

■ **Wadsworth Commercial Associates** recently sold 17 acres on the southeast corner of 100th Avenue and Wadsworth Parkway to an unidentified buyer for $2 million. **Jerry Thompson** of **Moore Commercial Co.** handled the transaction.

■ Construction has begun on a multipurpose office building at 11853 Pecos St. in Westminster. The 25,000-square-foot building will serve as the new headquarters for **Moore and Company at the Ranch** and full-service mortgage and title companies.

■ **Herbert & Brenner Realty,** a member of **Metro Brokers,** is listing a $17.5 million commercial project in Black Hawk. The project is **Miner's Mesa,** a 200-unit apartment complex, that is scheduled to begin construction this fall. Models could be open by February.

SCRIPPS HOWARD

Denver Rocky Mountain News

Winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for news photography

October 21, 2000 • RockyMountainNews.com

SATURDAY

25¢ (May vary outside metro Denver)

Co-housing comes to Denver

Hearthstone project will attempt to create greater sense of community

By John Rebchook
News Real Estate Editor

Wonderland Hill Development Co. today breaks ground on the first co-housing project in Denver, the $7 million Hearthstone complex, located in the Highlands' Garden Village community on the site of the old Elitch Gardens amusement park.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the 33-townhome community will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the southwest corner of the $50 million, mixed-use housing development on West 36th Avenue and Wolff Street.

The community allows you to log on to the Internet (www.denvercohousing.com) and read biographies of all the buyers; early buyers range from a pathologist to masseuses, empty nesters to young families with children.

Co-housing is a type of collaborative housing that attempts to create a greater sense of community than typically found in a modern subdivision.

Such projects include separate, private dwellings but also have a large "common building" that includes a big dining room, kitchen, lounges, meeting rooms, recreation facilities, library, workshops and child-care areas.

Boulder-based Wonderland Hills, headed by Jim Leach, builds more co-housing communities than anyone else in the country. Colorado leads the nation with seven co-housing projects.

Leach started talking with Chuck Perry, the overall developer of Highlands' Garden Village, two years ago. Wonderland Custom Homes, a sister company to Leach's co-housing company, is building the single-family homes at the old Elitch's, with prices ranging from $250,000 to $370,000.

By contrast, the co-housing units range in price from just under $150,000 to about $250,000. They range in size from about 750 square feet to about 1,700 square feet.

The common house will have more than 3,000 square feet, Leach said.

So far, almost 70 percent of the units in Hearthstone have been presold, Leach said.

"We usually like to have about 70 percent presold, but I'm not as concerned with this development," Leach said. "The units are priced quite well. Basically, the units are priced based on our cost of the land, and we locked in the land prices about a year ago. The market has gone up so darn much that we've benefited from that."

Perry said Hearthstone helps make Highlands' Garden a well-rounded community.

"It's one of our key components," Perry said. "It increases the diversity of the development. From the beginning, one of our guiding principles has been to have diversity. Just like biological systems are stronger if they have a diversity rather than monolithic, we believe the same is true for communities and developments."

Perry said he is pleased the co-housing units are relatively affordable and likes the co-housing concept.

"Buyers at co-housing communities tend to strive for a higher level of community," Perry said. "They get to know their neighbors a little better and become more involved, which I think is good. We just had a little festival for our buyers here, and they seem to be creating quite a nice little neighborhood. I think by adding co-housing, we're going to have a neighborhood within a neighborhood."

Leach said what sets Hearthstone apart from most co-housing projects is that it is part of a larger New Urbanism project. Co-housing projects often are islands unto themselves.

Hearthstone is the ninth co-housing project Leach has built. Together, they have about 300 units. There are 51 co-housing project in North America — 45 in the U.S. and six in Canada.

"We're the only developer who has done multiple projects," Leach said.

Leach's next project probably will be built in Boulder, with the help of the Boulder Housing Authority.

"What will be really interesting about that one is that we're trying to partner with Habitat for Humanity," Leach said. Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit group that builds homes for low-income people with volunteer labor.

He also is looking to do a project in Westminster.

Contact John Rebchook at (303) 892-5207, or rebchook@RockyMountainNews.com.

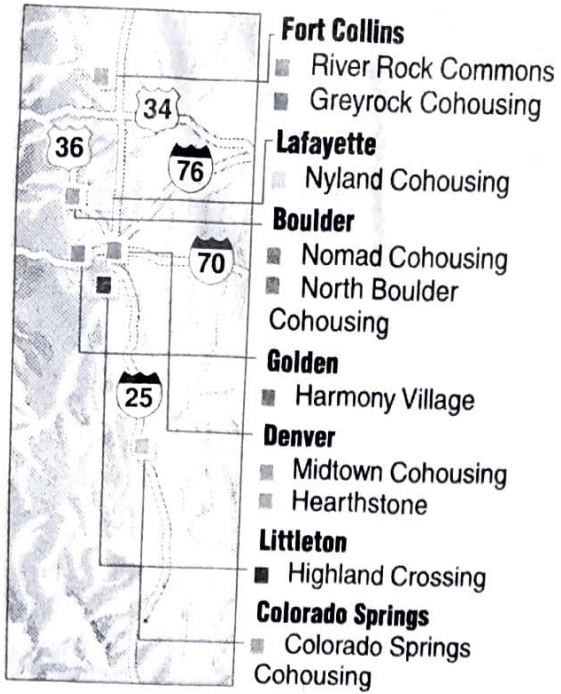


Special to the News/Wonderland Hill Development

Units at Hearthstone, a 33-townhome community to be built in the Highlands' Garden Village community, will range in price from $150,000 to $250,000.

Co-housing communities

Co-housing communities — small tight-knit neighborhoods where people own their homes but share activities — are popping up along the Front Range. A sampling of where they're located:



The Denver Post

Co-housing developments set to break ground in metro area

By Kristi Arellano
Denver Post Business Writer

If a new housing development planned for northwest Denver raises eyebrows, it won't be the first time. Neighbors of a similar development in Boulder were equally skeptical when the community next door grew up around a common house and residents were unusually close to one another.

"People thought we were a cult," said Scott Rodwin, a resident of the Nomad Cohousing community in north Boulder.

But neighbors were quick to accept the community where residents shared meals, lawn mowers and even cars.

"People realized that we're more a bunch of yuppies than a bunch of hippies," Rodwin said.

He is sure that people will be even more accepting of two new communities — called co-housing developments — set to break ground in the metro area.

The Hearthstone community will begin construction next month in Highland's Garden Village near West 38th Avenue and Tennyson Street as part of the redevelopment of the old Elitch Gardens amusement park. Developers of Midtown Cohousing at East 21st Avenue and Humboldt Street hope to break ground soon as well.

Some co-housing advocates say these developments may not have gotten off the ground a few years ago when most people hadn't heard of co-housing, and those who had equated the developments with communes.

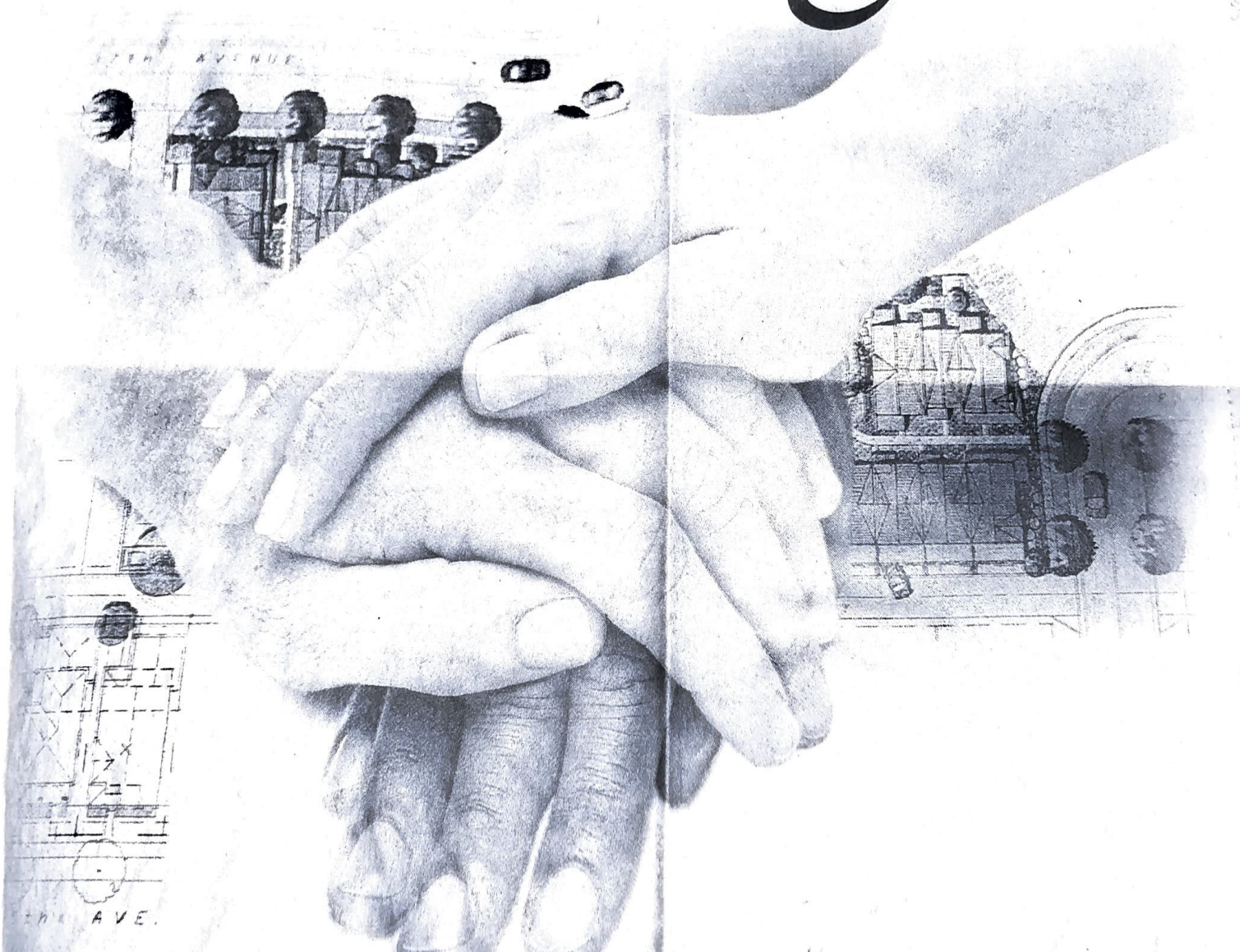
"Co-housing is finally being understood as condominium or townhouse living with a little bit of extra community," said Rodwin, who is an architect for the Midtown development.

Whatever you call it, co-housing advocates say there are a few things that make their communities unique. The pedestrian-oriented developments are often centered on a courtyard and include a common house where neighbors chat with friends,

Please see **CO-HOUSING** on 6M

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it takes a village



NORTH DENVER COHOUSING