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For immediate release – Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) is pleased to announce the opening of Central Commons in Hallowell, a 29-unit affordable housing development for Mainers aged 55 and older in Hallowell.



Central Commons is a certified historic, adaptive reuse project that completely rehabilitated the vacant Central building, one of five historic buildings that comprise the core of the Stevens Commons campus in downtown Hallowell, Maine. CHOM is proud to contribute to the larger effort spearheaded by Mastway Development to revitalize the campus, which has blossomed into a robust, vibrant community with a range of residential offerings, business and commercial spaces, and recreational uses.

Construction on the approximately 25,000 square foot Central Commons building was completed in June 2020 and the apartments are leasing quickly, underscoring a strong need identified by the City of Hallowell for additional affordable housing units. Central Commons is a desirable place to live and an asset to the Hallowell community.



The building has 29 units of high-quality permanent affordable rental housing for people aged 55 and older, comprised of eight efficiency and twenty-one 1-bedroom units. The 29 apartments enjoy historic features such as beautifully restored original windows, along with new construction amenities, including new kitchens, energy star appliances, bathrooms, schoolhouse-style lighting, and window treatments. The rehabilitation of the building also included activities to maximize energy efficiency such as exterior door replacements, air sealing, an energy recovery ventilation system, and insulation. All rehab work was done in accordance with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of historic structures.



Each of the 29 units are unique - an appealing feature of the adaptive reuse of a historic building. Many units have original hardwood floors, and some units have original tin ceilings. The building features bright and spacious layouts. Efficiency apartments range from 484 to 573 square feet and the 1-bedroom apartments range from 580 to 745 square feet. Central Commons also offers on-site laundry, community space, additional tenant storage, an elevator, and on-site parking. The building is professionally managed by Preservation Management, Inc.

The Stevens Commons campus where Central Commons is located, is an ideal location for senior housing. Situated in very close proximity to parks and open green space, residents enjoy opportunities to engage in physical activity and social interaction. CHOM believes these opportunities are important because they promote healthy lifestyles and wellness, and they provide more ways in which people can be included and participate as part of their community.



In addition to the central open green space, nearby on campus is the ten-plus acres Effie L. Berry Conservation area with walking/hiking trails connecting woodlands, a large mowed field, and a small pond. The trails on Stevens Commons also link to the Howard Hill Conservation Area, 164 acres of land owned by the Kennebec Land Trust in Augusta, where the public, including residents of Central Commons, can hike, cross-country ski, snowshoe, and observe nature. Central Commons is also conveniently located a half mile from downtown Hallowell and its many amenities, and city sidewalks connect the campus to downtown.

CHOM believes that housing, together with support services, provides stability, fosters dignity and respect, and transforms lives. Supporting CHOM's mission to develop, own, and maintain

quality housing, which is inclusive of people experiencing homeless, Central Commons will also be home to Veterans who have been homeless.

CHOM retained Ryan Senatore Architects, Landmark Corporation Surveyors & Engineers, and Wright-Ryan Construction as Construction Manager-at Risk to develop the plans and complete construction. Sutherland Conservation & Consulting served as the project’s historic consultant.

“We are thrilled to be part of the Stevens Commons campus in Hallowell,” said Bree LaCasse, Development Officer for CHOM. “The City of Hallowell and Mastway Development have been a pleasure to work with. It’s wonderful to breathe new life into a vacant historic building, while at the same time creating affordable rental housing that fosters a sense of community and dignity for our tenants. These projects take time, but after 2 years of planning, and 12 months of construction, our team could not be prouder of the final transformation. We are delighted to now have people calling Central Commons home.”

“It is a beautiful building, and this is a really nice place to live,” said Cullen Ryan, Executive Director for CHOM. “Anyone would be proud to call this their home, and we expect a wonderful community to emerge within this building and campus, all as part of the wonderful city of Hallowell. I am grateful to everyone who worked to make this affordable housing possible.”

MaineHousing, Northern New England Housing Investment Fund, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, and Bangor Savings Bank are providing construction and permanent financing for the project.

For more information about Central Commons, leasing and application information visit: <https://www.preservationmanagement.com/rental/property/central-commons>

### **About Community Housing of Maine**

Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides workforce housing, along with advocacy, supportive housing, and community inclusion for special needs populations across the state. CHOM develops, owns, and maintains high quality, affordable, service-enriched housing for people with low incomes and disabilities. Founded in 1993, CHOM has become the largest supportive housing developer in Maine with some 81 housing sites in 38 communities spanning 12 counties, creating more than 791 units of low-income and special needs housing. CHOM has provided stable homes to thousands of disadvantaged people. To learn more, visit [www.chomhousing.org](http://www.chomhousing.org). Find CHOM on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CHOMhousing](https://www.facebook.com/CHOMhousing) and Twitter at [www.twitter.com/CHOMhousing](https://www.twitter.com/CHOMhousing).

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