

## Planning for New Kidder Way Housing is Underway!

After spending the past decade focusing on the need for rental housing, OPAL is starting a new homeownership project in Eastsound.

In 2018 Rita and Dr. Stephen Bailey sold OPAL four lots on Kidder Way. Understanding the need on the island, the Bailey's sold the property to OPAL at a greatly discounted rate.

In making the donation, Rita said, "If you don't have affordable housing, you don't have people who can afford to live and work on the island. If you don't have people who work on the island, your services can't be met."

Dreams do come true. Since one of the four lots already contained a home, OPAL was able

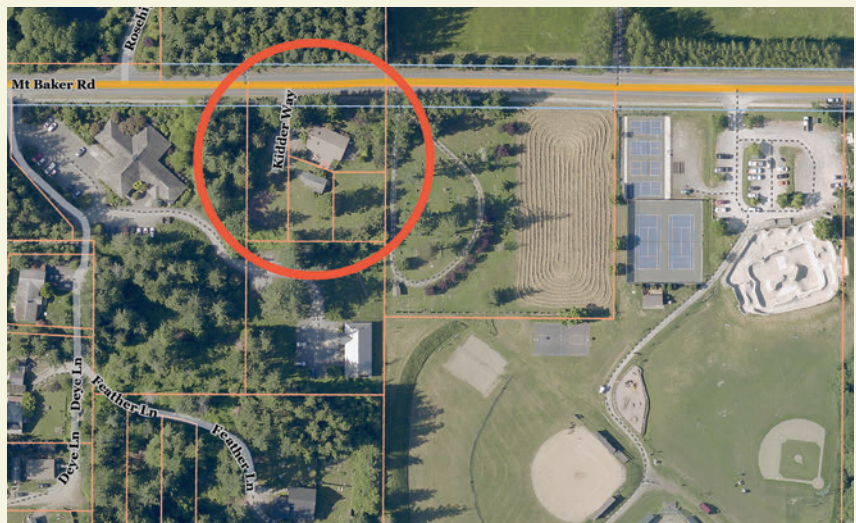
to turn renters into OPAL homeowners, giving this family a permanent home on Orcas. The remaining three lots of the Bailey gift will create ownership homes for additional islanders.

The Kidder Way property is located just east of the Island Primary Care-Orcas on Mt. Baker Road, and is conveniently located near schools, Buck Park and Eastsound. Community consultation for the development will begin with a participatory planning process or design charrette to guide the project and implementation.

In 2020 April's Grove was completed offering 45 rental homes to residents. OPAL now has 110 home ownership properties and 82 rental homes.



At right, location of new homeownership project. Above, project is currently in the design stage.



# Breathing New Life into the Mt. Baker Apartments

6,000 sq. ft. of new flooring. 55 vinyl windows. 10 exterior doors.

Thanks to generous donations from OPAL supporters, renovations are well underway at the seven affordable rentals on Mt. Baker Road that were acquired by OPAL last year when the privately owned property was listed for sale.

One unit has already been updated and will become the temporary residence for each of the long-term tenants while work on the six other apartments continues over the coming months. The goal is to improve safety, functionality and energy efficiency while adding years to the life of the 40-year-old complex and comfort to the lives of the families who live there.

“When the work is done and everyone sees the changes – improved lighting, windows that open, more kitchen space, I think they’ll be really happy with the decisions that were made,” said Jeanne Beck, OPAL Project and Stewardship Manager.

Begun in November, the renovation project is being led by local contractors Ken Katz and Silas Beardslee. The scope of work includes everything from upgraded plumbing and electrical to new heat pumps, cabinets and appliances.

**“We’re working to achieve OPAL’s standards for durability, energy efficiency and low maintenance.”**

– Ken Katz, contractor

“We’re working to achieve OPAL’s standards for durability, energy efficiency and low maintenance,” explained Ken. “The upgrades we’re making will last 40 years at a minimum,” Silas added.

Local vendors and subcontractors are being used for the project, and The Exchange has pitched in as a recycling source. “We’re grateful to local subs for being available when they’re needed,” commented Ken.



Contractors Ken Katz and Silas Beardslee are doing the remodel work on the Mount Baker apartments.

While the noise and inconvenience are an ongoing disruption for the adults and children who are living there, everyone has been understanding, gracious and grateful.

“We get a lot of thank yous,” said Ken. “The two boys next door show up with their toolbox and offer to hold a board,” added Silas.

“I’ve really enjoyed getting to know the families,” said Jeanne. “They’re so gracious and I hope they feel well cared for by OPAL.”

The long-term value to the Orcas community of preserving these affordable rentals goes beyond the current effort and dollars being invested. The units will be managed, maintained and remain affordable under OPAL’s stewardship, providing much-needed housing for working island families for decades to come.

**This work couldn’t happen without your support. Thank you!**





*The Northern Heights Apartments.*

## Northern Heights Fundraising in the Home Stretch!

With the April 30 deadline approaching, we again thank donors who are coming forward in response to the Martha Fuller Challenge. The offer, from Martha's bequest of \$100,000, is being matched two for one by donors of all shapes and sizes. Her challenge reiterates her lifelong commitment to community leadership. Northern Heights, with its twelve apartment homes, will become a permanent memorial to her vision and that of her fellow OPAL supporters.

Last December, we learned that the Washington State Housing Trust would not be able to meet our request for needed support to purchase and renovate the apartments. Soon after, an additional contribution from San Juan County's Home Fund and a fulsome response by the Orcas Island Community Foundation (OICF) and donors to the OICF's Holiday Catalogue gave a welcome boost to the project!

Our goal in the Northern Heights apartments purchase and renovation is to provide permanently affordable housing for some twelve long-term residents, and to prevent the property from being priced out of their reach as would likely happen in an open market sale. We continue to be grateful to the sellers who have been patient partners in making a sale to OPAL possible.

**Martha's bequest of \$100,000 is being matched two for one by donors of all shapes and sizes.**



*Martha Fuller, whose estate issued a challenge grant to help purchase the Northern Heights Apartments.*



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*“If you don’t have affordable housing,  
you don’t have people who can afford to live and work on the island.” - Rita Bailey*



**SAVE  
THE  
DATES**



4/20

Annual Meeting – Virtual  
Wednesday, April 20, 2022

5/2

OICF Give Orcas Campaign  
May 2-16, 2022

6/25

OPAL Gala  
Saturday, June 25, 2022

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