



## CITY OF PEEKSKILL

JOHN G. TESTA, *Mayor*

### MAYOR ANNOUNCES DOWNTOWN ART TECH LOFT OPENING

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Peekskill Mayor John G. Testa will host a press conference and celebration on June 13th, 10:30 a.m., to mark completion and occupancy of the first phase of ART TECH LOFTS, the combination live/work economic development project on Central Avenue and South Street in the City's central business district.

"This opening marks another important step forward in our downtown revitalization program," Mayor Testa said. "Advances in digital technology have resulted in more people working at home and this facility will meet the special needs of people in the arts - traditional work as well as computer graphics, digital video and design, digital photography, digital music - bringing new businesses and resident consumers to support other local enterprises," Testa explained.

Councilwoman Cathy Pisani said, "I've been involved with this cutting edge project since its inception in 1995 when the concept won its first national award. The benefits to Peekskill include attractive buildings on long vacant land, 28 new businesses conducted in dual purpose live/work spaces and tax returns to the City where there was nothing before. This is the kind of creative development that expands our commercial and tax base. And, further, its location fits in with our goal of making Central Avenue a strategic link that connects our riverfront area with our downtown."

New York State's Division of Housing and Community Renewal granted the City \$3.7 million for this innovative live/work project. The Central Avenue phase of the program utilized \$2.5 million of the designated grant funds leaving \$1.2 million for a second phase. The ART TECH LOFTS concept is a unique initiative and the DHCR-supported demonstration home ownership project is the first in the state to construct new workspaces combined with affordable housing.

Westchester County and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provided over \$875,000 in infrastructure funds to help cover costs such as special pilings, water and sewer lines so that the coop units would remain in the affordable price range. Project funding also included \$2.2 million in private bank financing.

The attractive two-story buildings were designed to complement Peekskill's historic downtown. Mayor Testa explained, "My keen interest in historic preservation made it especially important for these new buildings to blend with our many existing turn-of-the-century structures. Many people have already told us how much they like the buildings' appearance. We need to compliment the architects on understanding what we wanted and drawing up a design so suited to our City."

ART TECH LOFTS contains 28 units with provision for parking. Fourteen one-bedroom units, averaging 1300 square feet, range between \$89,500 to \$115,900 and fourteen two-bedroom units, averaging 1700 square feet, will sell for \$118,500 to \$139,500 depending on the design and location of the space.

Deputy Mayor Al Undly said, "Looking at these desirable units today, it's already hard to remember these were vacant lots for more than 30 years. No one was interested in building anything because the site was difficult and costly to develop since it sloped in all directions. We couldn't have done it without the support of the state and the county."

Councilman Bill Schmidt added that ART TECH LOFTS "bring a meaningful contribution to revitalizing the downtown. In particular, the people who will be living in these lofts will have a triple stake in our community by virtue of owning, living and working in their units."

Prospective coop buyers must meet income requirements to purchase one of these affordable units, agree to resale terms and must also meet the art-related occupational standards set forth in the offering plan. An eligible buyer is an individual who practices one of the fine, design, graphic, musical, literary, computer or performing arts or an individual whose profession relies on the application of the above mentioned skills to produce a creative product (an architect, craftsperson, photographer, website designer, etc.). Many of the units have already been purchased with others currently in the review stage. A few are still available and inquiries may be made through the Peekskill Planning Department.

The same team that successfully completed the \$3 million conversion of the former deteriorated Steinbach department store into state-of-the-art district offices for New York's Workers Compensation Board developed ART TECH LOFTS.

The National Development Council concentrated on the financial aspects, working and reworking costs and researching additional private funding so that completed units would sell for prices approved by the DHCR, the major grant provider.

Monahan Development, a Syracuse based corporation with major projects in the Hudson Valley area, served as the construction manager working with the San-Gra Corporation as the general contractor. Architectural services were provided by JMC Architectural Associates.

Determining eligibility of applicants based on the specific parameters developed after local public hearings and with the concurrence of the DHCR was the task of a review panel comprised of community residents representing a wide range of interests.

"Bringing this project to successful completion was a major achievement since every step represented an innovative experience, something that had not been done before. Peekskill's ART TECH LOFTS is expected to be a nationwide model for combination economic and housing development, especially in New York State," Mayor Testa concluded.