

State agency forecloses on Walker Club Apartment Homes in Vero Beach for \$9.2 million

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Vero Beach — The Florida Housing Finance Corp. has foreclosed on the Walker Club Apartment Homes in Vero Beach, which serves low- to moderate-income residents, according to a civil lawsuit filed in Indian River Circuit Court.

The total foreclosure judgment on the property, at 2650 69th Terrace near the Indian River Mall, is \$9.2 million, likely one of the first and largest multifamily apartment foreclosures in Indian River County this year.

But residents won't have to move out any time soon. Because the property serves low- to moderate-income residents, rents and leases are protected under federal law for at least three years.

The apartment complex was built in 2001 and has about 172 units.

The Walker Club Apartment Homes property, on 28.49-acres, is owned by Amherst, N.Y.-based Walker Avenue Club Ltd., an affiliate of the real estate firm, The Benchmark Group.

In April 2006, The Benchmark Group purchased the Walker Woods apartment complex, at 2898 71st Circle in Vero Beach, for \$19.72 million. The 2-year-old property is off 26th Street and 74th Avenue.

Maureen Vitucci, an attorney at Orlando-based GrayRobinson, the law firm representing the New York real estate company in the civil lawsuit, did not return calls.

A woman answering phones at the Walker Club Apartment Homes Monday referred calls to the company's corporate office.

Executives at the corporate office did not return calls Monday.

The development was initially financed through an issue of bonds through the Florida Housing Finance Corp. On Dec. 31, 2004, the outstanding balance of the bonds were \$8.83 million.

The Florida Housing Finance Corp. was created by the Florida Legislature more than 25 years ago to assist Floridians in obtaining affordable housing. Its housing programs include the Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bond, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, State Apartment Incentive Loan, Florida Affordable Housing Guarantee, Elderly Housing Community Loan and Home Investment Partnerships programs.

In court documents, the agency claims, "Walker Avenue Club has failed to make any payments on its debt obligations since Jan. 1, 2009."

The Walker Club Apartment Homes property is scheduled to be sold at the Indian River County Courthouse at 11 a.m. Nov. 12.

"We expect to be the high bidder and plan to take title of the property before the end of November," said Cecka Rose Green, a spokeswoman at the Florida Housing Finance Corp. "The property has an extended use agreement."

Residents at the complex were surprised at the news Monday.

Lisa Best, who has lived at the complex for three months, said residents were not informed of foreclosure.

"I am very surprised," Best said. "They keep the place looking very good."



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