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For Release: Immediate
Date: June 20, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

HOMES Program Launches New Website Feature for Purchasing City-Owned Property

BNI to offer new financial literacy program and homebuyer education workshop

SCHENECTADY – The City of Schenectady’s Homeownership Made Easy in Schenectady (HOMES) Program unveiled a new feature on the City’s website that allows potential homebuyers to browse available city-owned properties on an interactive map. The new feature can viewed on the City’s HOMES Program website at www.CallSchenectadyHome.com by clicking “Buying City-Owned Property” on the left hand side of the page. Each icon representing a city-owned property available for purchase includes the listing price, renovation estimate, and contact information for the listing agent.

“This new GIS mapping feature that is now available to the public will improve the experience for potential purchasers and make the process much more user-friendly,” **Mayor Gary McCarthy** said. “Economic development and revitalization in our community has created jobs and potential new homeowners, so we want to continue to improve and build upon the success of our HOMES Program which sold more vacant city-owned properties last year than ever before.”

The HOMES Program is a comprehensive partnership between the City, lending agencies, realtors, and other housing-related entities that helps promote and facilitate homeownership. A key partner in the program is Better Neighborhoods Inc. (BNI), a non-profit that offers housing rehabilitation assistance, pre-purchase counseling, and education workshops to potential homebuyers and current homeowners.

BNI also has a program to rehabilitate vacant properties in partnership with the Capital Region Land Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA). This includes the SONYMA Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), which offers up to \$20,000 to renovate vacant homes.

“BNI offers housing counseling services to those families who are presently homeowners to focus on subjects that directly impact the issues of housing affordability, owner occupant maintenance issues, and financial management,” said **James Flacke, BNI Executive Director**. “We will soon be rolling out a new financial literacy program that offers one-on-one counseling through a post-purchase program with the goal of ensuring families have the tools they need for long-term viability of their homeownership.”

The next BNI Homebuyer Education Workshop is Saturday, July 13th, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority Family Investment Center, 120 Emmons Street, Schenectady, NY 12304.