



Nehemiah Spring Creek

Brooklyn, New York | New Construction, Single Family and Multifamily Homeownership and Rental

A decades-long housing action rooted in the power of collective efforts

Nehemiah Spring Creek is a multiphase housing development initiative of the City of New York and East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC), culminating a vision that began in the 1980s to transform 43 acres of former wetland and landfill into affordable housing for the communities of East Brooklyn.

The project owes its origins to EBC's relational approach. Decades ago, EBC began conducting house meetings with local residents – one-on-one conversations to build trust, understand their needs, and find solutions. Rather than starting with a solution, EBC starts with understanding the problem. What started with a campaign to address missing street signs that kept ambulances from reaching their destination and contributed to urban blight evolved into a long-term vision to stabilize the community, help people build wealth, and foster a sense of pride.

EBC's efforts draw strength from religion, with the church as a primary source of funds and social space for orga-

nizing, and faith sustaining the movement and fight for change. After hundreds of grassroots conversations in community, Nehemiah Spring Creek first broke ground in 2008. Phase 1–3B included 368 one-, two-, and three-family homes completed in 2017. Phase 4C is currently underway, adding 57 single-family and 27 two-family homes for middle-income homebuyers, with future phases to come.

It's about a community vision. Most of the people fighting for Nehemiah will never live there.

Aaron Graf, Executive Director

Nehemiah Housing Development Fund Company

Project team

Faith Institution

East Brooklyn Congregations

Development Partners

Phases 1–3

Developer: Nehemiah Housing Development Fund Company

General Contractor: Monadnock Construction

Phase 4A

Developer: Monadnock Development

Lender: M&T Bank for end loans

Community context

ACS (2020) PROFILE: ZIP CODE 11239

- Population: 17,038
- Total Households: 8,367
- Bachelors or Higher: 24.4%
- Total Housing Units: 8,251
- Business and Economy: 124
- Median household income: \$38,670
- Employment Rate: 45.3%
- Unemployment Rate: 4.1%
- Population without Health Care Coverage: 2.4

HOUSING COST BURDEN (BROOKLYN)

Share of household income spent on housing costs	Owner households	Renter households	Total
Less than 30%	187,625	334,855	522,480
31-50%	46,145	144,900	191,045
Greater than 50%	58,460	181,050	239,510
Not available	2,850	16,440	19,290
Total	295,080	677,235	972,315

Source: CHAS 2016-2020

FAIR MARKET RENT (2024): NEW YORK

Efficiency	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
\$2,386	\$2,451	\$2,752	\$3,434	\$3,700



Key details

- EBC is the City of New York’s largest organization of congregations, schools, and homeowner associations.
- Nehemiah Spring Creek is part of the 227-acre Fresh Creek Urban Renewal Area in the Spring Creek section of Brooklyn.
- Prior phases also include affordable rental for seniors and families, “big box” retail development and a new educational campus home to three public schools.
- The City of New York invested in new streets and other infrastructure.

Program

- To date, the project includes 1,842 total units, 618 of which are homeownership.
- Phase 4A represents 83 homes with 110 units, awarded to residents via a lottery.
- Affordability level ranges from 80 to 130 percent of AMI.
- Homes were priced to sell for 40 percent below market, with soft second mortgages that expire after 15 years.

Timeline

VISION CASTING

1980s

- EBC begins house meetings
- Nehemiah Plan
- Brownsville groundbreaking

PRE-DEVELOPMENT

- City of New York transfers land to EBC for Nehemiah Spring Creek

PHASED DEVELOPMENT

2006

- Phase 2 closes

2020

- Phase 4A completion

December 2022

- Phase 4C closes construction financing

LEASE-UP & SALES

- Phase 4A 100 percent sold
- Phase 4C marketing and lease-up to begin mid-2024

Addressing our severe housing shortage will happen because of collaboration and making sure everyone has the necessary tools to succeed. Nehemiah Spring Creek serves as a prime example of mission-driven, affordable, and community-centric development.

Adolfo Carrión Jr., Commissioner

New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Finances for Phase 4A

SOURCES

Equity	\$83
City of New York HPD grant	\$12,028,069
HPD loan	\$9,579,212
New York Affordable Housing Corporation	\$3,282,500
Community Preservation Corporation loan	\$27,988,000
Total development costs	\$52,877,864

USES

Land acquisition	\$83
Construction (includes contingency)	\$45,464,199
Professional fees	\$2,233,159
Soft costs	\$2,967,180
Reserves	\$213,423
Developer fee	\$2,000,000



Lessons learned

“Nehemiah is a housing action”

Nehemiah Spring Creek is the product of EBC’s philosophy of connecting with community, fighting for change, and achieving wins through strength in numbers. EBC believes people working together have real power and can achieve change for their communities. Acquiring the land for Spring Creek was a long process of working with the City of New York, proving over years the success of what they were doing.

Further, despite the many programs and sources of funding that exist for affordable housing, Nehemiah Spring Creek broke new ground here too, sparking a



A suite of strategies to support first-time homebuyers

The goal of Nehemiah Spring Creek was to create affordable housing comparable to market properties, with a pathway for homeowners to build equity and pride. To support prospective first-time homebuyers, many of which came locally from East New York, EBC went beyond below-market sales prices to provide other guidance and resources, helping them navigate the process, providing homebuyer education, rebuilding credit, and more. Through these efforts, Nehemiah Spring Creek has seen very strong sales with a remarkably low foreclosure rate of one percent.

"It's about power. Organize people. Organize money."

EBC is about building a critical mass of support for the desired action. Hundreds of conversations had to happen to ensure the success of this project, beginning with Sunday conversations around the kitchen counter to instituting a financial management program to build a pipeline of prospective homebuyers. Religion was an important component, providing the grounding and perseverance to navigate this process.

For Nehemiah Spring Creek, EBC organized hundreds of local pastor's to call on the city and the state to allocate much needed funding for affordable housing. This call led to nearly \$500 million in affordable housing funding, part of which was used for Nehemiah Spring Creek. Next, EBC and community partners began marketing a homeownership program, to get households organized and ready to submit applications to purchase homes.

CONTACT

Nehemiah Spring Creek
www.nehemiah-spring-creek.com
Aaron Graf Nehemiah Rising
agraf@nehemiahrising.com

RESOURCES

East Brooklyn Congregations
'Citizen Power' Rebuilds East Brooklyn: The Nehemiah Housing Plan in the 1980s