

# Most Parker Riddick residents get vouchers



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The work to demolish and rebuild the Parker Riddick Apartments could come as soon as June.

To date, 55 of the 77 families who live at Parker Riddick have received Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers and have been looking for alternative housing in the city and elsewhere, according to Michell Layne, Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority housing operations manager. There are 93 apartments at Parker Riddick, which will be known as White Marsh Pointe.

Layne briefed the authority's board on the vouchers, telling the board that five families are heading to Portsmouth, and another to Newport News. Another two are waiting to sign leases at new apartments. Three others are awaiting updated inspections on their potential new residences, as those places failed an initial inspection, Layne said, and two more are awaiting landlords to provide certificates of occupancy.

At Cypress Manor Apartments, Layne said there are 10 to 12 vacancies there out of the 113 units that will undergo a substantial rehabilitation. None of those residents will have to be relocated, as they will shift to other apartments while they are being rehabilitated. The brick frame of those units will stay intact while improvements are made to the interior.

All 206 units of the two apartment communities will be converted to Section 8 project-based voucher assistance housing.

"Michael Pack, the agency's community development director, said it has been working to secure moving companies for residents. He said there are three buildings at Parker Riddick the agency is trying to vacate now, which would allow for an earlier demolition.

"Once we get those, we're going to go ahead and start demolition and remediation on those three buildings prior to closing," Pack said, "so we could start seeing action, some movement, perhaps demolition of those buildings probably as early as May, if not sooner."

Asbestos abatement still has to be done prior to demolition at Parker Riddick. After that, the buildings, roads and underground utilities will be demolished, with new roads and underground utilities to be built and installed before the new buildings go up.

SRHA Executive Director Tracey Snipes has been pleased with the work to ready the apartments to be rebuilt.

"He's moved this project along so well," Snipes said.

Residents are getting \$2,000 to help with expenses related to the move, of which part will go toward a security deposit to their new landlord. Snipes said the remaining balance would go to the resident to use as they need, but they will provide guidance to them on suggested uses for it.

"We're figuring that a lot of the families are going to need the assistance with getting utilities turned on," Snipes said. "This is something that we're doing and we're displacing the families, so we're trying to make it as painless as possible."

Board chairman Quinton Franklin said he is looking forward to the work going forward.

"Thank you for everything you've done to bring us to this point," Franklin said. "We really appreciate it. We're moving the ball along. We are getting closer. ... This has been a 20-year process — a long time coming. We are as close as we've ever been."