

Property of the Week: Seaside Village

By Larry Greene
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Some of Marty Widness' fondest memories of growing up were the six weeks each year that she and her family spent at Hawk's Nest Beach in Old Lyme. Days filled with playing on the sand, swimming in **Long Island Sound** and eating ice cream were unforgettable. Now retired, she and her husband, Ed, decided to ensure that their grandchildren would have similar memories of growing up. The Glastonbury couple purchased a second home in Niantic's Seaside Village.

"We wanted something near the water," relates Ed. "She had a lot of fond memories of Long Island Sound." After doing an Internet search for condominiums close to the Sound, he found Seaside Village. "My wife was very impressed with the design and the quality and the spaciousness. Seaside Village is new construction," he says.

They visited the community with their grandchildren and asked for their opinion. For the grandchildren, the highlight was Hole-in-the-Wall Beach located a short walk from Seaside Village. The beach gets its name from the walkway beneath the railroad tracks that leads to a sandy beach. "It's really a unique beach on the Sound," says Ed. "Both our grandchildren are fascinated by it. The train goes by and the children wave to it."

Hole-in-the-Wall Beach is one of three beaches within walking distance of Seaside Village. McCook Point Park has a beautiful bluff overlooking two sandy beaches. Its large, grassy hill is shaded by copper beech trees and it has a playscape, swing set and pavilion for picnicking. A third beach is in the planning stages of development.

The famous Niantic Bay Boardwalk stretches eastward from Hole-in-the-Wall Beach for 1.1 miles to Cini Park. In summer months, spectators on the boardwalk can watch sailboat races organized by the Niantic Bay Yacht Club on Wednesday evenings and Sundays. The races include regional and national regattas. During winter months, it's not unusual to see seals swimming in the bay or sunning themselves on the sandbars, rocks and jetties. Female seals are pregnant when they arrive at Niantic Bay and give birth to their pups there.

Niantic is a beautiful, quaint, New England seaside community with fun eateries like Gumdrops & Lollipops and Frosty Treat. On rainy days, taking shelter in the Childrens Museum of Southeastern Connecticut or the Niantic Cinema can't be beat and both are within walking distance of Seaside Village. "Main Street Niantic looks like a very nice place to be," says Ed. "It's really charming to be walking there with our grandchildren."

There are plenty of activities for adults as well. Live music is featured at Sunset Ribs and Burke's Tavern. Connecticut Magazine says about The Book Barn, "a bibliophile's bliss awaits," as visitors browse 350,000 slightly used books.

To experience the wilder side of life, you can visit the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve overlooking the Niantic River. The 420-acre preserve has well-marked trails running through scenic woods. Bordering Seaside Village is Dodge Pond, a freshwater retreat for fishermen and canoeists. The Village has storage for kayaks and canoes.

Stu Friedman is a retired New York City policeman. While looking for a seaside community, he considered the Milford area, which would have meant a shorter trip for his teenage children when they visit him. "Once my kids saw the place, the extra time didn't mean much," he says. Friedman likes the tranquility at Seaside Village and its proximity to the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos. "Everything is easy to access," he says. "I liked the fact that it's new construction," he adds about his home of two years. "Financially, Niantic is a good place to hold retail value."

Friedman bought the townhouse that was originally a model home. "So, my unit has all the upgrades," he says of the granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. The sales office had been in the garage. "My garage, I believe, is the only garage with heating, air conditioning and a laminated floor," he laughs. "I keep the car in one half and use the other half for an office."

"This is a beautiful little property," says Ed Widness. "They kept their commitment to the original vision." Ed also believes the homes will retain their retail value. His three-bedroom townhouse, with a master bedroom suite on the first floor, "just suited our needs almost perfectly," he says. He feels that the community is a very manageable size, not too big and not too small.

The Seaside Village development began in 2008 with 17 townhouses and 36 condominiums. Construction on twelve more townhouses was started in 2012 and is nearly completed. Demand for the units is so high that they have all sold. The next construction phase begins in March on the Village Center, a three-story building housing 41 single-level condominiums with elevator access for the second and third floors. Construction on Village Center is expected to last nine to 12 months. A final phase of 12 more townhouses is planned to begin sometime next year.

Seven different open floor plans are currently available at Village Center. They offer between 924 and 1,174 square feet of living space with 9-foot ceilings. All units will have two bedrooms and two bathrooms, and some will have an additional room for a den. End units will have a balcony or patio, depending on which level the unit is on.

General Electric energy efficient appliances – a refrigerator, microwave, stove and dishwasher – are included in each home. Kitchens will feature 42-inch upper cabinets. Bathrooms have a walk-in shower. Ample closets will be standard. Each unit will have an individually metered heating and air conditioning system. Numerous upgrades are available.

"We've sold everything we've built; we can't build fast enough," says Carolyn Morrison, sales director at Seaside Village. She says the homes are not age restricted and homeowners are "20-something up to snowbirds." Contracts for the new units at Village Center are currently being accepted.

For about 20 percent of Seaside Village residents, the condominiums are their second home, Morrison says. "A big draw is living somewhere right near the water," she notes. "People like the walking lifestyle, that's what they're buying."

An association fee of \$263 a month covers common area insurance, maintenance of the grounds and buildings, landscaping, snow plowing and trash removal. Although cosmetic changes like painting are allowed within a unit, any structural changes to a unit must get approval from the association.

To learn more about Seaside Village in Niantic, visit one of the open houses held Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or call Carolyn Morrison of Seaside Real Estate at 860-739-7400.

Developer: New Boston Fund

Price: Starting at \$250,000

Style: Single-level condominiums

Rooms: 4 to 5

Bedrooms: 2

Baths: 2

Square footage: 924 to 1,174 square feet

Acreage: 7.2 acres

Tax rate: 22.78 mills

Best features: Single-level living in a shoreline village

Contact: Carolyn Morrison, Seaside Real Estate, **860-739-7400**