

City of Dowagiac unveils MSHDA modular home for sale

By **MAXWELL HARDEN**

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DOWAGIAC — There is a new house on the block that has local officials buzzing with excitement.

The city of Dowagiac hosted its public Michigan State Housing Development Authority Modular Home Open House from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday.

The 1,100-square-foot property, located at 505 Spruce St., is priced at \$199,000 and features three bedrooms, one bath, central air, laundry space, crawl space and a two-car garage complete with a garage door opener. The bedrooms feature walk-in closets, and the kitchen houses appliances including a refrigerator, gas range, over-the-range microwave and dishwasher.

The home was constructed with grant funds provided by a MSHDA grant. It is a low-income modular home, meaning eligible buyers must be at or below 120 percent of the average median income of the area, which equates to \$75,240 for a family of four or \$99,360 for a family of eight.

The MSHDA modular home was built on one of five city-owned lots on Parsonage and Spruce streets. The home is flanked by a private modular home on one side and a lot where modular home developer Accent Homes of Dowagiac LLC plans to locate a modular home on the other.

The city hopes its modular home will serve to actively market the building of new modular homes within the city.

“We built this house to spur development,” said Assistant City Manager Natalie Dean. “We hoped that it would bring interest, and it has. We only have two lots left on this block, and as soon as those are taken and this house is sold, we will build another modular home in a different neigh-



City manager executive secretary Bobbie Jo Hartline and assistant city manager Natalie Dean pose for a photo outside the city's MSHDA modular home at 505 Spruce St. (Leader photo/MAXWELL HARDEN)

borhood strategically where we want to spur development.”

Modular homes are residences built in a controlled factory environment in modules and transported to the construction site where they are installed on permanent foundations and completed by professional installers. The city ordered the home through Accent Homes of Dowagiac, LLC, 52051 M-51 N., and Indiana-based Heckman Homes built the home.

“The construction process is faster,” Dean said. “If this house had been built on site, we would still be in the middle of construction right now. The longest thing is that it took about six months to get this

from the factory from the time you ordered. Other advantages are that you can make a modular look any way you want it to. We picked a house that had more of a front porch presence. You can really make them look any way you want.”

The MSHDA modular home project is just one of the Dowagiac Housing Initiative programs. Launched in 2019, the main goal of the Housing Initiative is improving the quality of housing within the city limits. According to Dean, the Housing Initiative is composed of various strategies including MSHDA grants to improve the current housing stock, demolition of blighted and unrepairable homes, and the sale of low-

cost lots and development of new homes.

“These are the best ways we can turn over lots that aren't going to be used for anything,” Dean said. “This mod house is part of a unique path. It's part of a whole program. We're really trying to bring new homes and better homes to Dowagiac.”

Dowagiac's housing initiative programs include:

Neighborhood Enhancement Program Grant

- Through a grant from MSHDA, the city is assisting homeowners with exterior improvements to their homes. Each household receiving the grant can get up to \$7,499 in improvements. City staff will assist each homeowner in bidding the projects to contractors and offering help and advice during the process.

Housing Incentive Grants

- Dowagiac offers an annual Housing Incentive Grant to homeowners within city limits. This program is for exterior improvements. Each application will be reviewed and awarded between \$50 to \$750 dependent upon the total project cost.

\$1 land for new homes on city-owned lots

- There are currently two city lots — 509 Spruce St. and 205 Parsonage St. — that are available for \$1 apiece to any member of the public wanting to build a new home on the lot. The lots feature free water, sewer and electric connections.

For more information, contact Dean by phone at 782-0437 or by email at NDean@dowagiac.org. Questions can also be directed to city manager executive secretary Bobbie Jo Hartline at (269) 782-2531 or by email at BHartline@dowagiac.org.



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