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Velocity Makes Fast Work of Audubon Condos

By Craig M. Douglas

Sue Hawkes and her team at Velocity Marketing are riding high after Tuesday night's successful auction of 36 condos at higher-than-expected prices at the Audubon Park development in Boston. So too is The Davis Cos., which is set to pocket a quick 30-plus percent return on the Fenway-neighborhood property after acquiring it just five months ago.

Hawkes originally listed 25 units for sale, however strong demand from investors and potential residents alike proved too good to pass up. She said heated bidding among about 200 people helped push average sale prices to a healthy $468 per square foot — a nice premium over her pre-auction goal of $450.

"There were a lot of industry people there and their jaws were on the floor," said Hawkes, referring to Tuesday's crowd at the Colonnade Hotel. She said wannabe residents carried the night by adding some emotion to the bidding. Velocity also sold off 22 parking spots valued at $55,000 apiece.

"At the end of the day, owners will outbid investors ... They just don't have the same margins."

The Audubon came online in 2008, with 12 pre-sold units averaging around $600 per square foot. Sales activity at the 53-unit property ground to a halt thereafter. Davis ultimately acquired the property out of foreclosure for $13.5 million in May. The auction and parking-space sales together came to around $18 million in contracts. Hawkes said another three affordable units are yet to be sold.

"Their fund is happy," said Hawkes, in a nod to Davis and its investors.