

An Update from Community Ventures

Submitted by: David La Fontaine, Executive Director, Community Ventures

Dear members & attenders of the Old First United Church of Christ,

I'm writing to bring everyone up to date with a second annual progress report on Old First House, the proposed permanent supportive housing development planned for construction at 4th & Race Streets. As you probably have already heard, the development will include:

- ❖ 34 small efficiency apartments for formerly homeless individuals,
- ❖ community rooms for residents,
- ❖ office and Sunday school rooms for Old First,
- ❖ office and service space for Depaul USA, the agency that will operate the building and
- ❖ approximately 2,400 square feet of commercial space at the corner of 4th & Race.

As we reported last fall, we have now been awarded the most important pieces of the financing needed to make Old First House a reality. These are (1) operating subsidies from the Philadelphia Housing Authority (Annual Contribution Contracts and Project-Based Vouchers), (2) a \$2.5 million funding award from the City of Philadelphia and, most recently, (3) Low Income Tax Credits worth approximately \$11.8 million.

We have also completed our zoning approvals, site investigations & archeological studies. Still to come are the completion of architectural plans and specifications, final approvals from the Philadelphia Historical Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office, archeological monitoring during construction, building permits and, most unpredictably, competitive bidding to determine what company will act as the general contractor.

With major funding in place, we are now heading toward a construction start in August or September of this year. The approvals mentioned in the previous paragraph do not present insurmountable difficulties, but the construction bidding, due to take place this spring, is likely to present a stumbling block due to the explosion in construction costs. We could have to seek additional funding at that point, which could postpone the start of construction. For the time being, however, we are working very hard on completing construction drawings, anticipating that whatever additional funding we need will be available in time to start construction in September.

Construction drawings are being refined as we speak, and we expect to present renderings to the Congregation at some point in the next two to three months, as requested by the Joint Venture Management Team and your Pastor.

We appreciate the profound care and generosity shown by the Old First congregation toward the future residents of Old First House. I look forward toward working with you as we move toward the start of construction.