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2023 Update from Community Ventures

Submitted by: David La Fontaine

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

I'm writing to bring you up to date on the progress of the work on Old First House, the permanent supportive housing development planned to be constructed on land belonging to Old First UCC along N. 4th Street.

As you probably already know, the new building will include 34 apartments for formerly homeless individuals, office and Sunday school classroom space for the Church and a 2,400 SF commercial space. We are hoping for a commercial use that is open and welcoming to all parts of the community, including our residents, members of the congregation and neighbors. We are partnering in the development of Old First House with the Church and with Depaul USA, who will provide supportive and management services to the residents.

In addition to the new building, the project will incorporate historic building at 151 N. 4th Street, which will be moved approximately 40 feet to the south. This structure will become the primary public entryway for the Church's offices and community space in the new building.

At this point, we have received zoning and historical approvals, as well as a final construction bid from Domus. That construction bid, received in October 2022, triggered a new round of fund-raising, since increased construction costs, along with higher interest rates, design cost and other items produced a final financing gap of approximately \$4 million. Since that time, we have received awards of the additional funds requested from the Federal Home Loan Bank Pittsburgh and the City of Philadelphia. We are now awaiting an award of additional funds from Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), which has our final submittal and related documents. We expect an answer soon.

On the operating side, HUD is now processing our already-awarded Project-Based Vouchers, which are a critical part of the operating funding. Depaul USA's Continuum of Care

application, which will fund supportive services, received the highest ranking of all the City's applications this year. We are awaiting a final decision on that award from HUD.

We are very hopeful that we will be starting construction in late March or early April, and we will keep the congregation as we pass the final milestones on the way to that goal, in particular the final word from PHFA. We continue to be extremely grateful to the staff and members of Old First Reformed for their generosity and dedication to our common mission of ending homelessness.

Thank you and please feel free to call me at 215-564-6004 x101 if you have any questions.

David La Fontaine
Executive Director, Community Ventures