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Eastman Commons earns major funding award

Supportive housing project moves forward thanks to grant award

Eastman Commons Community (ECC), an organization focused on building a residential community that is affordable and supportive of low-income and homeless individuals, has secured approximately \$9 million from the state toward its project.

David Agostinelli, ECC president, said the not-for-profit charitable corporation is "elated" to receive the news of this new capital financing. "It is critical to advancing the development of a residential community that will provide safe and attractive supportive housing that is affordable for low-income individuals and homeless adults with the assistance they need to live independently," said Agostinelli. He added, "This award will allocate low income housing tax credits from the New York State's Division of Housing and Community Renewal, providing approximately \$9 million toward ECC's \$16 million development plan."



Governor David A. Paterson announced the awarding of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits administered by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) noting, "this critical

funding will not only improve access to quality, affordable housing, but also help put New York back to work by creating new jobs." The Governor went on to say, "In these difficult economic times, it is especially important that we do everything we can to help return our State to prosperity and improve the lives of everyday New York families."

ECC will be developing its supportive housing at 1630 Dewey Avenue in the City's Northwest quadrant in the Historic Maplewood Neighborhood. This project will include the environmental site cleanup and demolition of the existing vacant and contaminated building. Then a newly constructed building will be erected including 80 one-bedroom apartments and a host of amenities including a community room, laundry areas, library and computer room, recreation area, an outdoor garden area and space for offices and meeting rooms.

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Half of the apartments will be reserved for formerly homeless individuals who have been referred as ready for independent living. The rest of the apartments will be available for low-income adults. "We are proud to be part of the historic Maplewood Neighborhood," said Agostinelli. "We are very pleased to be investing in this area and contributing to the revitalization planning underway in the community." The NYS DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen said the need for tax credits to encourage the development and preservation of housing for low- and moderate-income people is high. She also noted, "Governor Paterson's leadership has helped keep the creation of affordable housing a priority, even in these turbulent economic times. This commitment will result in quality, decent housing for thousands of New Yorkers."

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer and Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter also expressed their support of this funding. "It is critical that we provide safe and affordable housing for the most vulnerable," said Schumer. "We cannot thrive without quality, affordable housing." Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter added that this funding "will go a long way to help ensure affordable housing for those in our community who need it most. What's more, these key construction projects will generate quality jobs for hard-working New Yorkers to strengthen our region and economy for the long-term."

Agostinelli said this DHCR award "significantly boosts ECC's overall funding." He said this award adds to the capital funding previously committed by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the City of Rochester's designation of federal capital dollars. "It positions the Project well to secure the balance of funding planned by the end of 2009," Agostinelli said. "It will move us forward into detailed design, development, contracting and construction."

CAMP-OUT TO HELP THE HOMELESS

You can help! Sponsor a youth.

Youth groups across Monroe County are hosting a Camp-Out to Help the Homeless on September 25, 2009 as part of an awareness program to the plight of those needing affordable housing. Rev. Julie Cicora, leading the event, said "over 20 organizations are likely to be participating, including church youth groups, several groups of students including one from SUNY Geneseo, and a handful of neighborhoods as well." Participants are collecting sponsors and contributions, and will spend the evening constructing a cardboard box shelter, gathering around a campfire, and experiencing a night outdoors. Each organization's coordinator determines its site for its Camp-Out and the evening's activities.



The churches have designated Eastman Commons to receive all contributions to assist in paying carrying costs until construction is expected to begin in late 2010 and the many other predevelopment expenditures for the Eastman Commons housing complex at 1630 Dewey Avenue. If you would like your community, church and or youth group to become involved, or would like more information to sponsor a group or individual, call Ellen Agostinelli 671-4069.

Additionally, if you would like to contribute directly to Eastman Commons to help with this event or its many others needs, visit its website to find out more at EastmanCommons.org or simply send your contribution to the address shown in this newsletter. Your generosity will make a difference.

HUD awards \$1.2M to ECC

Just in time! The down-turned economy pinches the people needing affordable housing harder than most, but there was a bright moment recently when HUD announced the local winners of their competition for funding assistance.

In March, 2009, Eastman Commons Community (ECC) was awarded funds that will help eligible individuals break the cycle of homelessness by providing rental assistance which aides in keeping them housed. ECC, partnering with The Salvation Army for case management and other services, is bringing the supportive housing model with affordability to the 1630 Dewey Avenue development, consisting of 80 one-bedroom apartments for qualifying low income adults and formerly homeless individuals.

Half of the money will be reserved for formerly homeless individuals who are referred as ready for independent living. All tenants will sign leases and pay rent that is no more than 30 percent of their income. Case management and employment programs will improve tenant health and wellness, as well as their economic status.

HUD applauded the application for "the outstanding work of the program," and for the high degree of accountability built into the operations. Eastman Commons was awarded \$900,000 for future rental assistance, with an additional \$300,000 of capital funding to assist with the development and construction of its supportive housing complex. The Continuum of Care of Rochester ranked the ECC development as the number # 1 project in the community.

Eastman Commons locates new office at Eastman Business Park

Eastman Commons Community, a not-for-profit charitable corporation developing affordable, supportive housing in Rochester, has moved its office to Eastman Business Park on West Ridge Road. David Agostinelli, ECC president, said, "We are proud to be located in the historic Maplewood neighborhood, just blocks away from the important site under development at 1630 Dewey Avenue. We are dedicated to being good neighbors, assisting in the revitalization of our community, and bringing over \$15 million in new capital to the area during these difficult economic times." On-site and community-based case management and employment programs will improve tenant health and wellness, as well as their economic status.

Mr. Agostinelli added in closing, "We're pleased to have this wonderful opportunity to work with Eastman Business Park, a place that has contributed significantly to the proud history of the Maplewood neighborhood."

*"Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much."*

- Helen Keller

ECC and the City work together for supportive housing in Rochester

Eastman Commons and the City of Rochester's Department of Community Development and the Mayor's Office have worked closely together over the past three years as the ECC Development Team formulated its comprehensive housing plans. The outcome is an exciting and innovative Project that is responsive to the needs of growing low-income and formerly homeless populations and consistent with the City Consolidated Community Development Plan and Housing Strategy.

Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy congratulated Eastman Commons Community recently for earning the NYS award allocating approximately \$9M in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits from the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. The mayor added, "I am also prepared to recommend and request authority from the Rochester City Council for up to \$573,953 in HOME funding to support this effort." Mike Goonan, ECC Treasurer, explained that "these monies will be essential in contributing to the overall capital financing plan for 1630 Dewey Avenue that includes demolition, clean up, and then construction of the attractive and sustainable 80 unit apartment building with supportive services offices, computer lab, library, laundry, wellness center, community room and lobby". David Agostinelli, ECC President, added, "We are eager to advance this important Project with a fully funded Financing Plan to bring supportive housing of distinction to Rochester and our historic Maplewood Neighborhood."

Eastman Commons Office

Eastman Business Park
200 W. Ridge Road
Bldg 28, Suite B-14
Rochester, NY 14652-3409



Can you help?

Yes, I want to make a difference in the lives of Rochester's poor and homeless.

Please make checks payable to:
Eastman Commons, and mail to:

Eastman Commons Office
% Eastman Business Park
200 W. Ridge Road, Bldg #28; Suite B-14
Rochester, N.Y. 14652-3409

... or find other ways to give by checking out **How You Can Help** at Eastman Commons' website: EastmanCommons.org

Want to Volunteer?

Volunteers needed between
August - December, 2009 to:

- prepare mailings (stuff envelopes, adhere stamps, etc)
- help with our fundraising (database updating, grant writing, event planning, ...)
- coordinating with our volunteers (calling, updating our database, recruiting)

ECC is gratefully accepting donations of:

- Office supplies
- Event sponsorships
- Printing and copying services

*If you would like to receive ECC's newsletter electronically in the future, please send your e-mail address to us at EastmanCommons07@aol.com or by using the **Contact Us** feature in our website.*