

Report to EMP Directors from Ad Hoc Committee Regarding a Intentional Housing Solutions (IHS)
Ray Buchanan, Chair, Jay Saylor, Rick Hill, September 11, 2023

We met and corresponded with a group of parishioners from St. John of Rochester Church who would like to provide safe, affordable housing around the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rochester per their statement on the following page. While we applaud their lofty goals, we see some gaps in the plan and are unable to discern how this can be accomplished based on the information provided so far. With the board's approval, we are willing to seek more information. If we believe the plan can work, we would proceed to develop a working agreement similar to those we've established with other new ministries to present to the EMP directors and leadership of IHS for approval.

Some Issues to Address

- Where is the money coming from and how will it be raised? Solicitations, lotteries (unacceptable to some member churches), fund raising events, etc. all must be approved in advance by EMP directors.
- Liability for other EMP ministries if there are any lawsuits or financial problems.
- Fair housing/discrimination laws in terms of faith, race/ethnicity, etc. Note frequent use of "family/families" as target owners. That could be viewed as discriminatory against unmarried parties. "Households, tenants, or homeowners" would be more neutral. Citizen/immigration status could be tricky. "Low-to-moderate-income" buyers/tenants would be a better choice than referring to immigration or refugee status.
- How to select prospective buyers if more applicants than available houses? NYS requires a public lottery drawing for some affordable housing apartments.
- EMP would have to approve and EMP officers would sign any contracts to purchase or sell property, home improvement contracts, as well as all staff hiring and firing.
- Disposition of unused funds, homes, etc. if/when program ends?
- Critical mass of volunteer leaders? Large group or just a few key people and could it survive the sudden loss of one or a two?
- Professional staff involved—builders, maintenance, accountants, lawyers, and brokers for buying, rehabbing, and selling homes? Employees, independent contractors, contractors? Having employees is a huge complication and an additional expense.
- Would there be insurance policies needed beyond what EMP provides? (paid by ministry)
- Possible to acquire houses or vacant lots and turn construction, homeowner selection and guidance over to other nonprofits like Habitat? Wouldn't get money back if Habitat.
- Instead of buying, rehabbing, and selling homes, consider assisting qualified buyers, doing so by contributing to their closing and/or rehab costs?
- Need to establish a written working agreement (term "governance" has been used in the past) with both sides agreeing and signing. Among the highlights—ministry belongs to EMP and ministry leadership can't simply walk away with it at will. All volunteers and staff serve at the pleasure of the EMP board of directors. All funds belong to EMP. EMP must approve steering committee chair and treasurer. Some titles like "president" can't be used. Periodic program and financial reports submitted to EMP during the year, final reports at year end for taxes and annual report, and EMP must approve annual budget in advance. EMP would need to file DBA with NYS. EMP board of directors has final say on all matters.
- Do they need an audit for applying for grants? Not an expense we normally include in our budget.

Intentional Housing Solutions

Mission Statement: Intentional Housing Solutions is a non-profit organization (IHS) which creates homeownership opportunities for qualified families who currently reside or are willing to relocate to the neighborhood around the Holy Apostles church in the Lyell Ave. area of Rochester, N.Y. Home ownership opportunities in this program are limited to the funds donated to this organization.

Because there is support from Holy Apostles and to support the creation of a more stable Lyell Avenue community, this opportunity will be offered first to families in the parish neighborhood. These housing units will be made available at affordable monthly payments in an Intentional Community for people who have sufficient income and wish to become homeowners. All applicants will be U.S. citizens, recent refugees or legal immigrants.

Objectives: To establish a road to financial security through home equity.

To build community in the Lyell/Otis neighborhood.

Below is a summary of some of the key features of the proposal:

1. A not-for-profit entity (NFP) qualified under the umbrella of Ecumenical Ministries of Perinton (EMP) would obtain funds from donors to be used to acquire single-family houses in the Holy Apostles neighborhood.
2. The NFP would rehabilitate the houses with additional donated funds in order to bring the houses up to code.
3. Saints Place, an operating 501c3, would furnish each house with all necessary furniture, bedding, kitchen pots and pans, dishes, silverware and utensils and clothing for the occupants.
4. The NFP would sell a particular house for an amount equal to the acquisition price plus rehab cost to a low-income family which met certain criteria (including adequate income to qualify for a mortgage through a low-cost mortgage holder (such as ESL). The monthly mortgage payment would not exceed a certain percentage (30-40%) of family income.

There are more details to be decided, including limitations on transfer of houses by homeowners and a possible homeowners association desired by the NFP to fund ongoing capital improvements.