



ANDREW JOYCE
CHAIRMAN

COUNTY OF ALBANY
COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HAROLD L. JOYCE
ALBANY COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
112 STATE STREET, ROOM 710
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207
PHONE: (518) 447-7168 FAX: (518) 447-5683
WWW.ALBANYCOUNTY.COM

PAUL T. DEVANE
CLERK

NECOLE M. CHAMBERS
FIRST DEPUTY CLERK

March 5, 2019

CONTACT: Nicole Antonucci
518-447-3092

Albany County Officials and Community Groups Announce Revitalization Initiatives and Say ‘Welcome Back to Albany’s South End’

Albany, NY – Albany County Legislature Chairman Andrew Joyce was joined by County Executive Daniel P. McCoy, District 6 Legislator Samuel Fein, and representatives from community groups to announce collaborative efforts to revitalize the South End, joining forces to say, “Welcome Back to Albany’s South End.”

The press conference was held Tuesday at the former St. John’s Church at 142 Green St., a property that the Albany County Legislature approved in February to convey to Chiou Development Group. In attendance was Patrick Chiou, CEO of Chiou Development Group, Jahkeen Hoke, Executive Director of AVillage and co-founder of 4th Family; and Travon Jackson, President of BlueLight Development Group and Executive Director of the African American Cultural Center, who shared other investment initiatives that are underway in the South End.

“No single organization has all the answers or all the assets needed to revitalize a neighborhood. Each of these opportunities relies on collaboration,” Chairman Andrew Joyce said. “We demonstrated that with three resolutions passed in February – to convey St. John’s Church to Chiou Development Group who will invest to redevelop the property; to update our disposition plan so future foreclosed properties can be put back on the tax rolls quickly; and to relocate the Board of Elections to South Pearl Street. We will demonstrate that collaboration again as we welcome more and more people, investors and businesses back to the South End.”

“As the foreclosing governmental unit for the entire County, my staff and I are in a unique position to balance the needs and desires of the diverse communities of the County. Our aging historic city neighborhoods are some of the most beautiful, yet challenging cases we face.

Disinvestment, absentee landlords, vacancy all combine to create a perfect storm that threatens their very existence,” said Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy. “We work diligently on a daily basis to market properties many consider unattractive, such as the old St. John’s Church, to capable and proven individuals or businesses who have shown a desire to not only help these distressed neighborhoods, but the commitment to take on their most challenging properties. It’s great news that Chiou Development Group, 4th Family and the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region, Inc. can work with us to help revitalize the South End.”

Chiou Development Group CEO Patrick Chiou announced Tuesday he expects to invest approximately \$3 million to turn the former church into approximately 20 affordable housing units.

“This is will be the first of its kind of adaptive reuse of a church. I believe this will be a unique project that will mix new and old together to make it a wonderful and innovative project,” Patrick Chiou said. “We have our work cut out for us in the future but we will be making this a successful addition to the City of Albany and to the South End.”

Cynthia Herback, Executive Director of South End Improvement Corp., announced that the organization recently received over \$1 million to fund homeowner rehabilitation projects for property homeowners right in the South End.

Jahkeen Hoke, Executive Director of AVillage, added there are ongoing discussions with the Albany County Legislature and other governmental groups regarding projects that will directly impact the South End, including a bike path, investment to improve Lincoln Park and a potential grocery store.

“The private sector of investors in development and the political will of our government leaders is going to drive the change in our neighborhood.” Hoke said. “I really think that our city and our neighborhood are moving forward specifically in the South End, and investments like this really capitalize on the opportunities that exist.”

According to Travon Jackson, President of BlueLight Development Group and Executive Director of the African American Cultural Center, an expansion project is underway at the African American Cultural Center, which serves as a community center for the neighborhood. There is also a stabilization project at what was known as School 17 on Second Ave., which is expected to be converted into public mixed use.

“Everyone is here today because we believe in the South End.” Jackson said. “In the case of this neighborhood, if we can all look to build up spaces our community deserves, if we can all look to invest where there may not be profit, with a direct result to a child or family that lives in that neighborhood, we will all be better off.”

District 6 Samuel Fein stated, “The rehabilitation and development of St. John's church gives hope to the residents of the South End. This beautiful historic church, which many assumed was destined for demolition, will now be restored and integrated back into the community. I am excited about local community groups working with business and government to create a real

vision for the South End that fits the needs of residents today and in the future, and provides economic opportunity for residents."