



FRIDAY PHOTOS

Ezekiel CDC Shows Off Foreclosed Home Rehabilitation

Ezekiel VP Jim Gaillard shows off work to Sen. Tammy Baldwin, DCD Commissioner Crump

By Jeramey Jannene - Oct 27th, 2023 05:49 pm

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Ezekiel Community Development Corp. workers install a light fixture. Photo by Jeramey Jannene.

One of the 150 vacant, city-owned homes that are to be renovated under a federally-backed City of Milwaukee program was on display Friday.

U.S. Senator **Tammy Baldwin** and Department of City Development Commissioner **Lafayette Crump** were given a tour of **Ezekiel Community Development Corp.**'s progress in renovating the home at **903 N. 37th St.** The work was described as stripping the house to its "bones" to create a new home within the historic structure.

Ezekiel vice president **Jim Gaillard** led the tour, highlighting how the 1,234-square-foot home was being renovated for a future owner-occupant and how, at the same time, Ezekiel was training a cohort of future electricians, carpenters and other trades workers.

"I use this as the classroom," said Gaillard, a master electrician. "Not only do you get housing, you get family-sustaining jobs out of this. It's a beautiful addition for the neighborhood."

Ezekiel provides on-the-job training, which Gaillard hopes will translate into his current workers buying the very homes they're renovating. "You have to train the guy under you coming up," said Gaillard, and that was evident on the tour as various Ezekiel employees were seen guiding others on how to install and wire lighting and other fixtures.

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Known as the Homes MKE initiative, the city allocated \$15 million in late 2021 to subsidize the renovation of 150 vacant homes it previously acquired via property tax foreclosure. After a developer selection process, work kicked off earlier this year.

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"We are at the site of a historic federal investment in the city of Milwaukee," said Crump in a brief press conference after the tour. "We are at a site that is building the future of our workforce. We are at the site of future owner-occupied home in the city of Milwaukee."

The funding for the initiative came from the city's \$394.2 million American Rescue Plan Act grant.

"It's such a special treat for me to see visions become reality," said Baldwin, who asked several questions about electrification, internet access and workforce development during the tour. "Seeing a dilapidated home with good bones turn into good paying jobs and then a place for a family to live in is the power of strong partnerships, dedication and our shared vision of a better Milwaukee."

Crump said Ezekiel's job-training focus, including for formerly incarcerated individuals, was a "force multiplier" for the initiative.

Unless the property is sold to an owner-occupant, the house must be developer-owned for at least five years. A deed restriction will require a sold property to be owner-occupied for five years and owners would be required to complete eight hours of home-buyer counseling through either [Acts Housing](#), [Housing Resources, Inc.](#) or the [United Community Center](#).

The Homes MKE subsidy covers the gap between selling the house at an affordable, market rate and the cost to provide a quality renovation.

"These are not quick fixes. These are long-term solutions," said the commissioner.

The 37th Street house on the edge of the Concordia neighborhood is the first Ezekiel is completing in the Homes MKE program. It has previously completed several others through different city and [nonprofit initiatives](#). Gaillard said the organization is also working on a house at [2606 N. Holton St.](#) through the program.

The city is allocating properties to the participating Homes MKE organizations, a mix of for-profit and nonprofit organizations, based on their capacity.

Based on the rehabilitation costs and final sale price, a subsidy of up to \$75,000 per home is to be provided in four installments as work is completed. A \$5,000 workforce development grant is also to be provided with each team.

Lead service line replacement is included with each project and the [Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District](#) is funding the cost of sewer lateral replacement.

Gaillard told Urban Milwaukee that his organization also works with the [Social Development Commission](#) and [Employ Milwaukee](#) on different workforce development efforts.

The homes Ezekiel renovates through Homes MKE will be sold through real estate agents and listed in the Metro MLS service.

[Near West Side Partners](#) (NWSP) team members, including executive director [Lindsey St. Arnold Bell](#), new associate director [Stephanie Sherman](#) and

housing resource coordinator [Dia Henderson](#), also attended the event alongside several neighbors.

The nonprofit organization offers a \$5,000 homebuyer downpayment grant for the seven neighborhoods it serves. The program is targeted at helping renters in the area become homeowners



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in an effort to build wealth and promote neighborhood stability. NWSP also provides matching grants for home repairs.

The city acquired the 37th Street property in 2019 via property tax foreclosure. It was built in 1925 according to city assessment records.

Photos



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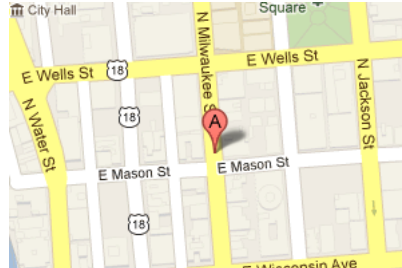
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