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City, developer agree to terms for canal project
paving the way for new retail options, amenities

INDIANAPOLIS – The City of Indianapolis and Buggs Development Group have agreed to terms on a project agreement that will pave the way for a new development along the downtown canal, Department of Metropolitan Development Director Maury Plambeck announced today. The project will revitalize historic Buggs Temple, a former church located at Admiral Spruance Basin near 11th Street, and incorporate a full-service restaurant, coffeehouse, pub and frozen custard stand, as well as public restrooms for thousands of canal visitors.

Buggs Development Group – a team comprised of local developer John Bales, Ritter’s Frozen Custard, Boyle Construction Management, Halstead Architects, CM Enterprises, and JR Construction & Design – will invest about $1.3 million into development. This company was selected through a request for proposals process administered by the Department of Metropolitan Development. Five proposals were received in total.

“This is a great step in moving this development forward,” said Plambeck. “We are very excited about the redevelopment of Buggs Temple and the addition of retail, which will greatly enhance the already popular downtown canal walk and complement other developments in the area.”

Plambeck mentioned numerous plans and developments are under way along the north end of the canal near Buggs Temple, including the new Indiana School of Medicine information sciences building, which will include 2,000 square feet of retail space, and the new Clarian Health Partners Clinical Lab, which is currently under construction just north of 11th Street. Also, proposals are being reviewed to develop a site just east of Buggs Temple owned by Clarian Health Partners into a life sciences complex.

The terms of the project agreement call for the sale of the property to Buggs Development Group for one dollar. The low selling price will allow the developers to put more money into revitalizing the property. The agreement also requires the developer to place $100,000 into an escrow account to ensure the rehabilitation proceeds as planned and stipulates that the property can only be utilized as originally proposed by the developer. The project is required to be complete by September 2005.

Built in 1899, the two and a half story Buggs Temple will provide 11,374 square feet of retail space. Ritter’s Frozen Custard and CM Enterprises, Inc., owners of Moe and Johnny’s in Broad Ripple, have committed to the project and will be joined by other retailers in the near future. Construction is anticipated to begin this fall, and the new retail locations will be open for business in 2005.

“Our group intends to create a vibrant project that will serve as an inviting gateway to the canal and an amenity for all residents and workers of Indianapolis’ near-northwest side,” Bales said. “We envision a mix of restaurant-oriented tenants offering coffee and baked goods in the morning, unique lunch menus, and dinner and drinks in the evening. The beauty of the structure and the canal will help create a truly special destination.”

Buggs Temple was originally home to an African Methodist Episcopal church.

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