

Cleveland

Housing project planned for

DOUGLAS J. GUTH
Senior Staff Reporter

The former Young Israel of Greater Cleveland site at Cedar and Miramar roads in South Euclid has been an empty lot since the Orthodox shul was demolished in 2008.

That may change as soon as the beginning of next month, when Jewish Community Housing, a nonprofit supporting organization of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, hopes to begin construction on a four-bedroom home for disabled individuals.

The project awaits official approval on a \$456,900 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), notes Jewish Community Housing director Cathy Weiss. The organization, which currently has a "firm commitment" from HUD regarding the grant, wants to secure the money before its current fiscal year ends on Oct. 1.

The HUD funding will cover con-

struction, landscaping, and other development costs. Jewish Community Housing has already completed the approval process with South Euclid's planning commission and architectural review board.

Along with waiting on funding, "the deed (of ownership) still has to transfer to us," Weiss says. The parcel is owned by Ivan Soclof, a private developer and Young Israel member. Soclof had bought the land at auction for residential use and currently has "an option to purchase" with Jewish Community Housing for only the easternmost piece of the vacant greensward.

When finished, the proposed 3,000-square-foot independent-living domicile will house four mentally disabled men who would otherwise be homeless, says Susan Bichsel, president of Jewish Family Services Association (JFSA), the project's service provider. As the home will be paid for by government funding, its occupants do not have to be Jewish, she notes.

Cleveland

former Young Israel space

One of the enterprise's major supporters, is South Euclid Mayor Georgine Welo. "It's a wonderful use for the space," she says. "There are so many adults who need this type of housing."

Landowner Soclof believes the home's location on a major thoroughfare will be advantageous for its in-need residents. "Employment opportunities and transportation are concentrated in that neighborhood," he says.

Plans for Jewish Community Housing's South Euclid venture are similar to the nonprofit's other independent living residences in Cleveland Heights, Lyndhurst, Shaker Heights and University Heights, explains JFSA's Bichsel. As with these projects, JFSA will provide the proposed home's occupants with employment assistance, psychiatry

services and other help.

The home's inhabitants will be determined by disability and economic guidelines. "We have to see who's the most in need," Bichsel says. Many of the people living in Jewish Community Housing's other residences throughout the region subsist on a disability income of about \$600 a month.

The home's eventual occupants will not have dangerous backgrounds, notes Bichsel, hoping to assuage any worries from neighbors.

JFSA has assisted Jewish Community Housing on similar projects since the early 1990s. Due to the occupants' economic limitations, "it's hard to find safe housing for these folks," Bichsel remarks. "This (project) fills an unmet need, and we're thrilled to help out."

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"There are so many adults who need this type of housing."

South Euclid Mayor
Georgine Welo

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