

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	25-410	Meeting:	November 3, 2025
	Agenda Item:	22	Roll Call:	25-1484
	Submitted by:	Chris Johansen, Neighborhood Services Department Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Forgiveness and release of HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program recorded documents against Esther Hall, also known as Hawthorn Hill, at 921 Pleasant Street.

SYNOPSIS:

In 2006 and 2007, the City loaned approximately \$250,000 in HOME funds to a rehabilitation project at 921 Pleasant Street owned by Chestnut Hills Limited Partnership. The HOME Program requirements have expired, and the final payment of the loan is now due. The recommendation is to fully release the loan to allow the owners to access equity for roof repair.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$252,488.40

Funding Source: HOME Program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Although the HOME loan repayment is now due, the building is needing additional capital improvements, primarily roof replacement.
- The roof replacement project is under review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) because the building is considered a local landmark. The current estimate for a historically accurate roof, which mimics the original character of the slate material, exceeds \$500,000.
- Forgiveness of the HOME loan allows the building owner to access equity to facilitate the roof repair.
- Occupancy is stable, but the property is operating with minimal cash flow. The owner is requesting an amendment from the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) of its Land Use Restriction Agreement (LURA) to increase area median income (AMI) requirements to 60% AMI, which allows the owner to charge a higher rent amount.
- Built in 1921, Hawthorn Hill is historically significant for both its Colonial Revival Architecture and its role in women's history. Hawthorn Hill, or Iowa National Esther Hall as it was once known, was

built as an educational and residential facility for young women and contributed to the emerging status of women during the first half of the 20th century.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: February 12, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-254](#)

Action: [Modifications](#) and update of HOME documents for Esther Hall a/k/a Hawthorn Hill, 921 Pleasant with Chestnut Hills Limited Partnership. ([Council Communication No. 07-082](#)) Moved by Vlassis to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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