

GEDCO trying to raise green for Green House

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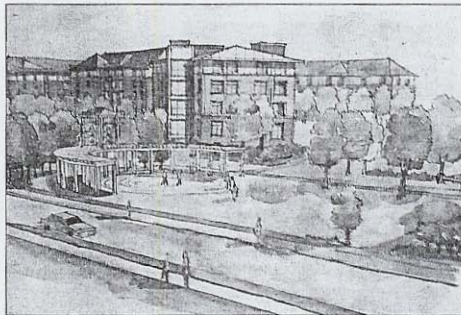
If a north Baltimore-based nonprofit wants to open a long-term-care facility using the innovative Green House model, it first has to raise some serious green.

In a tough economy, especially for nonprofit organizations, the Govans Ecumenical Development Corp. is trying to raise \$14 million to build the state's first Green House long-term-care facility.

The Green House approach, developed by Dr. William Thomas of Ithaca, N.Y., is a new concept in nursing care. It does away with strict scheduling in nursing homes and focuses on providing for the dignity and emotional well-being of residents.

Part of the challenge for GEDCO is that the nonprofit is trying to build the Green House Residences at Stadium Place without taking a loan.

So far, the corporation has secured \$1.1 million in commitments from the city, various charitable organizations and private donations, said the Rev. John Sharp, president of the Stadium Place Board of Directors.



RENDERING COURTESY OF GOVANS ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT CORP.

The Govans Ecumenical Development Corp. has proposed a four-story Green House long-term-care facility for Stadium Place. The nonprofit is trying to raise \$14 million to construct the building so it doesn't have to take a loan for the project.

<http://www.baltimoremessenger.com>

The corporation is also pursuing \$4.5 million in a capital grant that is currently included in the state's fiscal 2010 budget proposed by Gov. Martin O'Malley. The grant went before Senate and House subcommittees March 26.

No one will know if the funds will be included in the final budget until the end of the current session of the General Assembly.

"We won't know (if they'll receive the money) until the clock strikes midnight April 14," said Mitch Posner, GEDCO's executive director.

The four-story, 49-bed Green House facility would cost more than \$11 million to build and would create 52 full-time caretaker positions. The rest of the \$14 million GEDCO hopes to raise would go to operational costs.

Thomas, who conceived the Green House concept, said GEDCO's attempt to raise money for the facility without taking a loan was unusual, but he said he had confidence that the organization would be able to build the facility.

"I think you can do it, or at least get close," Thomas said.

The facility would be the newest building at the Stadium Place complex, located on the site of the old Memorial Stadium. There are already three buildings for seniors there, but the Green House would be the first long-term-care facility at the location.

NCB Capital Impact, a Washington-based nonprofit that is trying to spread Thomas' concept to all 50 states with a \$15 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, selected GEDCO for the Green House project.

Rosie Prince, who currently lives in the Ednor II Apartments at Stadium Place, said she's "really excited about Green House because I'm currently looking for long-term care for my husband," Prince said.

Her husband, a Korean War veteran, is currently at a veterans' hospital, but she would like to have him moved to the

Green House if it's built so that she could visit and spend as much time with him as possible, she said.

"Green House is a beautiful place," Prince said.

The name Green House model is a play on words, Thomas explained.

"A one-word greenhouse grows plants," Thomas said. "A two-word Green House grows people."

In addition to getting rid of strict scheduling and encouraging seniors to live independently, the Green House concept also puts an emphasis on privacy, something that is all too precious in most nursing homes, Thomas said. In a Green House, eight to 10 residents live in a "house" with a shared room and open kitchen, just like a home.

"We try to help the elders in the (Green House) live their lives the way they want to," he said.

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