

**FACT SHEET ON UNITED SOUTH END SETTLEMENTS**  
**AND THE HARRIET TUBMAN HOUSE**

**Why is United South End Settlements selling the Harriet Tubman House at 566 Columbus Avenue?**

The Board of Directors of United South End Settlements (USES) made the decision to sell 566 Columbus Avenue in order to continue its mission of disrupting the cycle of poverty for children and their families living in the South End, Roxbury and other neighborhoods of Boston. USES opened its doors in 1892 as the Andover House, the first settlement house in Boston. The original Harriet Tubman House, which had two locations on Holyoke Street, consolidated with the Andover and three other settlement houses in 1959 to form the United South End Settlements. Then in 1974, the Harriet Tubman House on Holyoke Street moved to its current location on Columbus Avenue.

Almost from the beginning, the building has been extremely expensive to operate and maintain, resulting in unsustainable operating deficits and jeopardizing the delivery of the wide array of programs and services that USES provides to the community. After 43 years, the building's mechanical systems and envelope require complete replacement with the cost running in the millions. Facing financial realities, USES launched an 18-month strategic planning process aimed at preserving and growing its historic legacy for future generations. As a result, in October 2018, the Board determined that the only sure way to achieve that goal was to sell the building. As David Lee of Stull & Lee – the architectural firm that designed the building – concluded, preserving the programs USES offers is far more important than holding on to the building that once housed them.

**How will USES use the revenue it will derive from the sale?**

The revenue from the sale will help secure USES's financial future. It will further its historic mission by revitalizing its historic campus at 36 & 48 Rutland Street and offering even more vital programs and services to hundreds of families and children – over 80% from communities of color, 70% low income – that it currently serves. These programs include early education, after-school, job placement, individualized coaching and its Camp Hale summer camp. USES plans to name the new building on the expanded campus at 48 Rutland Street the Harriet

Tubman House so that the historic connection between USES and Harriet Tubman – that began at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – will endure.

### **What development entity is buying the 566 Columbus Avenue site?**

After an intensive competitive bid and interview process, USES selected New Boston Ventures to redevelop the 566 Columbus Avenue site. New Boston Ventures (New Boston) is a South End based developer that has a long history of including significant affordable housing components in its development projects and collaborating with and contributing to neighborhood organizations such as Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion (IBA), Castle Square Tenants Organization and Tent City. New Boston was the largest developer of affordable first-time single-family homes for sale in the Dudley Triangle of Roxbury and Dorchester as the result of its partnership with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. According to USES, it selected New Boston because “we appreciated their vision, their conscientiousness as developers and their respect for community as shown in the other projects they have undertaken over the years.”

### **What are the developer’s plans for the building?**

Because the cost of rehabilitating the current structure is prohibitive (particularly when combined with the sale price required to ensure USES’s future success), New Boston Ventures will replace it with a new six-story building that complies with zoning regulations. It will encompass 65 residential units of which 17% will be set aside for affordable homeownership, exceeding the City’s requirements. A significant number of the affordable units will be set aside for live-work space for artists, many of whom are being displaced from the Piano Factory and other area locations. Most of the first-floor commercial space will also be allocated for affordable community uses. They include: 2300 sf that will be donated back to USES for community gatherings and the Harriet Tubman Gallery; an affordable social enterprise café to be called Hi Hat after the famed jazz club that occupied the corner of Columbus and Massachusetts Avenues prior to the construction of the current building; an artist live-work gallery; and an exhibition space and plaque to commemorate the rich multicultural history of the site.

### **What will happen to the building’s iconic mural?**

New Boston will contribute generously to the relocation or reproduction of the mural. It is collaborating on the undertaking with Carolyn Parker, the widow of

artist Jameel Parker who created the mural, and with internationally recognized Boston artist Paul Goodnight as well as with David Lee and USES.

### **What will happen to the building's current tenants?**

There are six non-profit tenant organizations currently located in the building. (There are no residential tenants – and New Boston has never displaced any residential tenant in its 35-year history.) New Boston has offered to help each of the non-profit tenants find affordable alternative space so that the services they contribute to the surrounding community will continue. New Boston is providing the tenants with relocation assistance, rental subsidies and buildout reimbursement and has successfully found space for five of the six non-profits. It is continuing its efforts to do find acceptable space for the one remaining tenant.

### **Are there other significant features of the developer's plans that would be of interest to the community?**

New Boston is committed to a generous community benefits package that will include significant contributions to neighborhood organizations in the South End and Lower Roxbury that promote affordable rental housing or serve the community in other important ways. It will establish a neighborhood advisory group to monitor the construction process. A significant percentage of investors in the project will come from communities of color; over \$1 million has already been raised from that source. The development team is a diverse one and includes co-development partner Richard Taylor, architect Jonathan Garland, communications liaison Joyce Ferriabough Bolling, community activist Jovita Fontanez and Article 80 consultant Beverley Johnson.

### **Who are the principals of New Boston?**

Both of the principals come out of government and are active in political and civic organizations. Dennis Kanin managed former Senator Paul Tsongas' presidential campaign, ran five states for Ted Kennedy when he ran for President, and served on Barack Obama's National Finance Committee. He was a member of MassDevelopment, a member of Governor Patrick's Working Group on Housing, President of the Board of Roxbury Latin and Vice President of the Board of Epiphany School. David Goldman is a long-time South End resident and was member of the Mayor's Task Force on the Harrison Avenue/Albany Street Corridor, the Board of Governors of the Fenway Community Health Center, and

the Board of Washington Gateway Main Streets. Both Kanin and Goldman serve on Ayanna Pressley's Finance Committee.

**Where can one find more information on the project?**

USES-related documents, presentations, news/articles and more can be found at USES's website <https://www.uses.org/vision125/>.

The New Boston website for the 566 Columbus Avenue development is [www.566columbus.com](http://www.566columbus.com).