

FOR RELEASE ON
September 20, 2019

Contact: Kendra Bishop
The Alexander Company
o: 608.268.8114
c: 920.265.9272 (call/text)
kbishop@alexandercompany.com

HISTORIC MILWAUKEE SOLDIERS HOME BREAKS GROUND AND BEGINS REHABILITATION

Team led by The Alexander Company, HACM rehabilitates the once-threatened buildings for homeless, at-risk veterans

- Groundbreaking ceremony is Friday, September 20th, at 11:30am
- Construction is anticipated to come to completion in the first quarter of 2021
- Executives and elected officials will be available for photo and interview

MILWAUKEE, WI – September 20, 2019 – The Alexander Company and the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee begin efforts to rehabilitate and restore six buildings at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home (Soldiers Home), a National Historic Landmark District, located on the grounds of the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center.

Organizations throughout the nation have joined together to make this project a reality and will be making remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony to further show their support. The speaker schedule includes Dr. Daniel Zomchek of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, Aimee Jorjani of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Joe Alexander of The Alexander Company, Joseph Galvan of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Matthew Reilein of National Equity Fund, Joaquin Altoro of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, Mayor Tom Barrett, Governor Tony Evers, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and U.S. Army Private First Class Gary Wetzel – a Milwaukee-native Medal of Honor recipient.

“We have a shared responsibility to meet the needs of veterans who have served and sacrificed for us,” said Senator Tammy Baldwin. “This project tells an important story about our past and will help write a new chapter about serving homeless, at-risk veteran and improving their quality of life.”

The six historic buildings to be rehabilitated include Old Main (Building 2) - the most prominent and recognizable building on the campus, the Administration Building (Building 1), the Catholic Chaplain’s Quarters (Building 14), and three duplexes (Buildings 18, 19 and 62). These buildings will be renovated into a total of 101 units of housing with supportive services for veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

“This project entailed a significant collaborative effort, which speaks volumes to our nation’s commitment to care for our veterans,” said Joseph Alexander, President of The Alexander Company. “Our team is honored to have the opportunity to work with these historic buildings and we’re proud that through our work we’ll be able to return them to the veterans they were built to serve.”

The project is made possible through an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) program with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Through an EUL, six buildings in the District will be leased long-term to The Alexander Company, who will take on the cost of rehabilitation. The law authorizing EULs requires that the buildings be used to provide housing for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The VA selected The Alexander Company and the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority’s proposal after a competitive RFP process in 2016.

“I couldn’t be more excited about this project,” said Dan Zomchek, director of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. “It’s a wonderful partnership between the VA and our community that will enable us to showcase the historical significance of our campus while continuing to advance our mission to care for our nation’s heroes.”

The redevelopment partnership includes the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM), which will operate the buildings after renovations are complete. Since 2005, HACM has provided housing to homeless veterans on the VA grounds at the historic Surgeon’s Quarters building, which HACM remediated and restored into an award-winning single room occupancy facility.

“Once again, it takes a village to raise a village,” said Tony Perez, Secretary-Executive Director of HACM. “The intentionality of the VA, the commitment of HUD and WHEDA, and Mayor Barrett’s drive in supporting HACM’s participation, and the involvement of investors, philanthropic-minded corporations and individuals are why we’re here today. We thank all of them and The Alexander Company for envisioning this endeavor.”

“Teamwork, coordination, and shared vision have brought us to this important juncture,” Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said. “We are honoring both our veterans and our history with this work at the Soldiers Home, and the City of Milwaukee is proud to be a partner in that effort.”

The Alexander Company is Wisconsin-based and has over 35 years of experience in historic preservation and adaptive reuse developments. Project architecture will be led by The Alexander Company and Uihlein/Wilson – Ramlow/Stein Architects. JP Cullen will manage construction of all structures. Upon project completion, HACM will manage the housing units. Supportive services will be managed by the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, and include onsite education, employment assistance, financial assistance, counseling, and transportation services. Construction is expected to come to completion in the first quarter of 2021.

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About The Alexander Company

For over 35 years The Alexander Company has specialized in historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and urban infill development. Nationwide, The Alexander Company gives new life to historically significant buildings and revitalizes neighborhoods.

About HACM

Founded in 1944, HACM provides high-quality, housing options to over 10,000 households in Milwaukee. HACM’s award-winning programs foster strong and inclusive communities that support self-sufficiency, good quality of life and the opportunity to thrive.

About The Milwaukee Soldiers Home

A month before his assassination, President Lincoln signed legislation to create a national system of homes for disabled veterans. Established in 1867, the Milwaukee VA Soldiers Home (Soldiers Home) is one of the three original Soldiers Homes in the country. The 90-plus acre district rests on the grounds of the Clement J. Zablocki Medical Center and was designed to be a place of refuge for Civil War soldiers and help ease their transition back to civilian life. One of only 43 National Historic Landmarks in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Soldiers Home contains some of the oldest and most historic buildings in the VA system.

Links

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- Project Information: alexandercompany.com/projects/the-soldiers-home
- Soldiers Home History: savethesoldiershome.com