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Requests for Proposals Open for The Blue Church and 1400 Market Street

WHEELING, W.Va. – Sept. 1, 2021– Wheeling Heritage and the City of Wheeling announced today the opening of the request for proposal (RFP) process for the sale of two redevelopment sites. Interested developers will have the chance to submit proposals to rehabilitate The Blue Church, located at 1206 Byron Street, and four properties located on the 1400 block of Market Street.

The two entities have partnered with Steadfast City, an economic and community development firm, to create requests for proposals and prospectus documents to attract developers who are equipped to take on these large-scale redevelopment projects. They have also partnered with Evenbound, a digital marketing agency, to create a robust digital marketing campaign to reach a wide audience of potential developers from across the country. Proposals will be accepted through Oct. 29, with the goal of selecting developers by January 2022.

Both properties are located within historic districts, which makes them eligible for both state and federal historic tax credits, as well as other financial incentives.

“We recognize that while these buildings have a lot of historic value, funding projects of this scale can be intimidating to some developers,” said Betsy Sweeny, director of heritage programming for Wheeling Heritage. “With a 20% federal and 25% state historic tax credit, larger projects such as these can become a lot more manageable. When you factor in additional incentives like new market tax credits, opportunity zones and grants, these properties are eligible for millions of dollars in incentives. That goes a long way to making these projects a reality for developers.”

Built in 1837, The Blue Church is one of the few pre-Civil war buildings remaining in Wheeling and one of the oldest in the community. Wheeling Heritage acquired The Blue Church in 2013 and has made significant improvements to the building, including a new roof, gutters and masonry repairs. The organization has been marketing the former church as an ideal venue to engage the community.

The City purchased 1437, 1433, 1429 and 1426 Market Street between 2015 and 2016. The buildings’ distinct architectural styles and historic fabric, as well as their prime location in the downtown historic district, make them desirable candidates for redevelopment. In 2019, the City was prepared to transfer the properties to an interested developer, but the pandemic brought the deal to a halt. The City is optimistic that the right developer is out there to take on this project.

“We need to look at these buildings as non-renewable resources and think expansively in terms of adaptive reuse projects to save them,” said Wheeling Mayor Glenn Elliott. “The City stands ready to



work with any developer willing to look past the current condition of these buildings and see them for their full redevelopment potential in the heart of downtown Wheeling, barely more than 100 feet from West Virginia Independence Hall.”

Wheeling Heritage and the City partnered with Steadfast City and Evenbound to help execute the proposal process. Steadfast City has a demonstrated track record of managing complex real estate and development processes. Steadfast City and Evenbound will both assist in marketing these projects by tapping into their network of developers who regularly take on projects of this scale.

Both properties and the corresponding RFPs can be viewed at wheelingheritage.org/project/blue-church/ and wheelingheritage.org/project/1400-market-street/. Questions about the RFP process can be directed to Joel Glasscock, project manager for Steadfast City, at joel@steadfastcity.com.

About Wheeling Heritage:

Wheeling Heritage is a catalyst for the revitalization of Wheeling. Through historic preservation, community development, and the arts, we help to tell Wheeling’s story and shape its future. We seek to improve the quality of life in Wheeling by preserving and investing in our city, collaborating with others, and engaging the citizens of Wheeling in our work.