

Free - Take One!
Please Patronize Our Advertisers!



THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Proud Member Of The Observer Media Family Of Community Owned Newspapers & Websites

Volume 5, Issue 5, March 10, 2009

Congressman Kucinich And Mayor FitzGerald Deliver

Social Security Office Stays In Lakewood

by Daniel Slife

After months of bad news on the economic horizon, the city of Lakewood was relieved to learn that many years of

hard work have paid off. This Monday at a special press conference Congressman Dennis Kucinich and Lakewood Mayor Edward FitzGerald announced that the Social Security office will not only stay within Lakewood city limits, the relocation project will involve roughly \$5 million in new construction, the preservation of 100 jobs, the demolition of a soon to be vacant church, and an increase in tax revenues.

Through the combined efforts of Kucinich, FitzGerald and Planning Director Nathan Kelley, the GSA and Social Security Administration agreed to give serious consideration to Lakewood sites for a reconstruction project of the Lakewood Social Security Office. At one point, the agencies were looking to relocate in other western suburbs. But the case for Lakewood as a home base for the dispen-



From left to right; Lakewood Planning Director Nathan Kelly, Lakewood's Mayor Edward FitzGerald, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and Senior Counsel Marty Gelfand are the team that worked to keep the Social Security Office in Lakewood.

sation of social services was compelling, given Lakewood's walkability, high senior population, and urban amenities desirable to many employers.

The site of the new building is currently home to the Lakewood Christian Church at

17513 Detroit Avenue. The congregation, which was looking to right size due to escalating operating costs, agreed to sell to the SSA. The arrangement calls for the private development of a modern, one story office building with room for

future expansion. West 2nd Street, the developer, will own the property and lease it to the SSA. Because the property will be owned by a private sector interest, a yearly property tax income of approximately \$120,000 will be collected from the development. All of this will be accomplished without tax abatements. In addition, those 100 jobs will generate \$4.4 million in payroll, in Lakewood. This is good news for the city and the Lakewood Public Schools.

"This is great news for Lakewood," stated Mayor Ed FitzGerald. "I want to thank Congressman Kucinich and our Planning and Development Department for working so hard to keep the Social Security Office here in Lakewood. In these tough economic times, we are happy to be retaining

continued on page 12

Social Security Office Stays In Lakewood

continued from page 1

these jobs and gaining the additional tax benefits of turning this site into a taxable property."

In early 2008, the City of Lakewood's Planning and Development Department made it a priority to find the Social Security Office a new home within Lakewood. Within six months, the City found three potential sites

which met the needs of the Social Security Administration and would be beneficial for Lakewood.

In a time when neighborhood stress is high over imminent church closings, FitzGerald and Planning Director Nathan Kelley have found an innovative solution to an emerging problem.