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**Patuxent Commons Receives \$1.6 Million Housing Trust Fund Award
— Howard County Grant Will Fund Mixed Income Community for All Abilities and Ages—**

Columbia, Md. — Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball has announced a \$1.6 million grant to Patuxent Commons, an innovative housing development conceived by the Autism Society of Maryland (AUSOM) and being developed by Mission First Housing Group. The project will provide deeply affordable housing for people with disabilities, and a mix of affordable and market rate units that will target older adults and families.

The award, one of the first made through the new Howard County Housing Trust Fund, was announced at a Housing Rally in Columbia attended by Maryland Secretary of Housing and Community Development Jake Day, other public officials, and community advocates. In making the announcement, Dr. Ball said, "Patuxent Commons is a visionary affordable housing project that will include 25 percent of its units set aside for persons with disabilities, insuring that we are growing inclusively together."

The 76-unit project will be located in Columbia's Hickory Ridge neighborhood at a site with access to public transit and walkable amenities. Based on a concept developed by AUSOM to help meet the housing needs of adults with Autism and other disabilities, the project is also being designed to reduce social isolation and increase community inclusion by encouraging relationship-building among neighbors of different abilities and ages. Its developer and the recipient of the award, Mission First, is an award-winning, non-profit affordable housing developer of over 3,500 apartments throughout the mid-Atlantic.

"AUSOM is grateful to County Executive Ball and the people of Howard County for their consistent, generous support for Patuxent Commons," said AUSOM Executive Director Melissa Rosenberg. "Their support, along with the committed efforts of Mission First, have been essential to bringing our vision for this community to life."

Mission First Managing Director Sarah Constant said, "Projects like Patuxent Commons require a range of funding sources to be developed. The Housing Trust Fund award is the latest example of the critical

role that County support has played in this initiative. With their help, this much-needed project moves even closer toward construction.”

Patuxent Commons is on track to complete the public approvals process, close on its financing and begin construction in early 2024. With the new Housing Trust Fund grant, the Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development has committed a total of \$5.8 million toward the \$39 million project cost. Patuxent Commons has also attracted major funding from state and federal sources, including a 4 percent low-income housing tax credit, and significant philanthropic support from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

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About Autism Society of Maryland

Autism Society of Maryland (AUSOM), formerly the Howard County Autism Society, is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, with offices in Howard, Montgomery, and Anne Arundel counties, and is an affiliate of the Autism Society of America. Since 1993, we have been providing support and resources, promoting awareness, and advocating for change on behalf of individuals in our community with Autism and their families. For more information, please visit us at www.autismsocietymd.org.

About Mission First Housing Group

Mission First Housing Group develops and manages affordable, equitable, safe, sustainable homes that support residents and strengthen communities. Mission First currently provides affordable housing and services to more than 6,00 people in over 4,000 apartments across the Mid-Atlantic region, serving populations in need, such as veterans, survivors of domestic violence, seniors and the disabled.