

MEETING MINUTES OF THE COOK COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, December 11, 2020 – 10:00 AM Via Zoom

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Bridget Gainer, Maurice Cox, Xochitl Flores, Peter Friedman, Calvin Holmes, Diane Limas, Richard Monocchio, Jim Planey, Lyneir Richardson, Tony Smith, Katrina Thompson, Sarah Ware, Michelle Carr

Also Present: Rob Rose (*CCLBA Executive Director*), Darlene Dugo (*CCLBA Sr. Acquisitions Manager*)

II. Public Speakers

Chairwoman Bridget Gainer notes there is one public speaker registered, but they are not present at the meeting.

III. Awards Presentation (Robert Rose)

EXEC. DIRECTOR ROB ROSE: This is the last board meeting for Director Calvin Holmes. We have staggered term limits. He is one of the last remaining founding board members whose term limit will expire at the end of this year. I was able to meet him at one of our completed projects. I presented Calvin Holmes with his service award.

(VIDEO PRESENTED)

DIRECTOR CALVIN HOLMES: I am tremendously honored to have been a part of creating the Cook County Land Bank Authority and being a part of that original urban land institute technical assistance panel back in 2012. Time really flies when you are having a rich experience.

I don't think I could've imagined that The Cook County Land Bank Authority would become as effective and self-sufficient as it has. Rob, the commissioner, and those who were a part of the engineering did a fantastic job. I am proud of many things the Land Bank has accomplished over the years including, creating a pathway for hundreds, and eventually thousands, of working families across our great county to secure a solid home.

I think every person on this call recognizes that the level of home ownership for black and brown people has a huge gap. In Cook County, the Land Bank authority is a big part of moving the needle on that measure. We have much to be proud of.

We have become a central place for smaller real estate businesses of color to build wealth, hire more people locally, and to be able to expand into greater real estate endeavors. I am sure that Commissioner Gainer and her fellows on the board of commissioners appreciate the amount of property that the Land Bank is putting back on the tax rolls. It is generating millions of dollars of revenue for other public services that are desperately needed across the county.

So many of the homeowners grew up in the neighborhoods where they are buying their first home. So many of the small real estate businesses are people from those neighborhoods are using the Land Bank to effect and expand community control of land and development pressure.

As we look towards the future, I know that with your leadership, as directors, as we move towards strategic planning next year, the Land Bank will move to help large amounts of land so we can have repurposing for open space, urban ag, and commercial and industrial space. This will help communities in the county that have low demand be repurposed in a way that those residents and business continue to have dignity in private place.

I have nothing but pride about how the Land Bank has evolved, and I know that potential is extremely bright. You will continue to shape unutilized land and property across the county will be utilized, so that Cook County can be as dynamic as ever.

It is with a very heavy heart that I have to term out, but I will always be a partner to the Land Bank, and I look forward to continuing the relationship as the authority continues to excel.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: Before the Land Bank had a board, they had an advisory panel. Before the advisory panel, they had a technical assistance panel. At each one of those, Calvin was present. It is one thing to come up with an idea about something that is broken and missing, but it is another thing to turn it into something completely different that is actually useful.

I personally had two benefits from Calvin's involvement. The first is a deep knowledge base of how things actually work on the ground. So often people make assumptions about what gets in the way of neighborhood development, and it actually ends up not being the case. They don't bother asking anyone who lives there what is needed in order to make the neighborhood better.

Staying close to the ground is what really makes you successful. It is not as attractive, there are not as many cameras there, but being close to the ground is what makes something successful. Calvin had innumerable contact points of staying close to the ground, so all of his advice very spot-on.

The second benefit that he has managed to do is not only stay effective, but he has done so in a way that makes everyone want to work with him. He is well-liked. Calvin, you inspire a lovely calamity, affection, and friendship. That is a true gift. It requires a lot of patience and giving others the benefit of the doubt. That is not an easy thing to do, and you have done it beautifully over the years. Your temperament, wisdom, and enjoyable presence will be missed. We would not be sitting here without people like you validating the concept of the Land Bank.

I am incredibly grateful for your time and effort. I wish you the best of luck. I look forward to the Land Bank and CCLF continued partnership.

DIRECTOR HOLMES: Thank you for the privilege to serve. I couldn't be prouder.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: I wanted to introduce our two new board members. I wanted to give them a moment to introduce themselves.

Mayor Katrina Thompson has a background that proceeds her time as mayor, which is valuable, but bringing the perspective of running local government will be very valuable to us. Mayor Thompson, I wondered if you would say a few things about yourself to the rest of the board members.

MAYOR KATRINA THOMPSON: Good Morning, and congratulations to Calvin Holmes on his departure from the Land Bank. I met Calvin at the West Humboldt Park Development Council. I can truly attest. I see he is still bike riding, and that is a great thing.

I am the Mayor of the Village of Broadview. Economic development and home ownership for people in black and brown communities is near and dear to my heart. I would like to be a team player and teammate to this board bringing insight as to how we operate in local municipalities. I am happy to be a part of the board and thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: Next, we have Michelle Carr, who runs the Nature Conservancy for the state of Illinois. She also has a very interesting background. One of the things that has come to the Land

Bank in the past, is not only the rehabs of existing structures that are important to us, but also the vacant land.

Some of that vacant land is in areas that you can look at green space, taking advantage of local environment, and mitigating flooding. We have the opportunity to look creatively at not only the role of conservation in the environment and economic development, but also in improving quality of life as we have to confront and deal with climate change. Michelle, if you would, please say a few words.

MICHELLE CARR: Thank you. Thank you all for welcoming me to the group. I work in the nature business now. My background is in investment banking. I did that for 16 years. I came into the nature business knowing more about balance sheets than about climate resiliency, but I have a wonderful passion for community and how we create livable, and breathable, cities for all.

As I think about my work here with The Nature Conservancy, the urban effort has components that will lend to my perspective and my ability to learn other perspectives for the open space. I'll give an example. We are working with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District on a pilot project in the lower Des Plaines area. This is about how we can bring resources to a place that is frequently flooded. As such, working with the Metropolitan Planning Council, we create a mechanism so that funds would come to that area.

I am thinking about these kinds of issues a lot, and I look forward to diving in. I love the mission of the Land Bank. Thank you.

IV. Purchase Sale Agreement with CCGD-SP Harvey, LLC at 17040 S. Halsted Street, Harvey, IL Presentation (Rob Rose)

EXEC. DIRE ROSE: In your supplemental packets, you received a copy of the agreement. The background here is that this site was the old Chicago Park Hotel at the corner of Halsted and I-80. Harvey is on the northwest corner, South Holland on the northeast corner, and then Homewood on the south of I-80.

This was a hotel that was demolished and now this site is ready for development. We worked with Chung Tim with the Chicago China Gateway Program and this was a part of a delegation that came to Cook County to look at ways in which they can strengthen foreign investment within the region.

They went around the entire country looking for a good transportation site and settled on Harvey because of its proximity to the railyard, its ability to work with local government to work on the entitlements, and the sufficient amount of land necessary to work on this project.

This is going to be a distribution warehouse built on the site. The original purchase sale agreement is with the Chicago China Gateway, LLC. We knew that there was allowance in the board approval that just the contract could be assigned to a related entity.

They have created CCDG-SP. The SP stands for Scannell Properties. That is a nationally well-known builder of industrial properties throughout the country. They are going to be their development partner. This LLC is 51 percent owned by Chicago China Gateway Properties and meets the criteria for being a related entity.

This restated, amended agreement allows us to assign the contract over to this related group as we move forward to finish the assemblies. We have two more lots to be assembled. Then, the entire site will be sold to this entity. This is a bit of housekeeping and reassigning the agreement over to the special purpose entity.

There was one change we made from the original agreement. The original agreement called for its adjacency to the CN Railyard. There is a strip club there, and there was anticipation that this club would be removed, and that property could be acquired abutting this development to that property.

The club is not active, and they are still working on trying to buy it. This project will go on with or without that property. The provision that it be "adjacent to" has also been removed from the agreement.

We anticipate that we will have the deed to the two outstanding parcels in March of 2021. We would then follow up with a conveyance of the entire site over to this group. That is the background and I'll entertain any questions you may have.

DIRECTOR JIM PLANEY: Rob, the Scannell people are well respected within the industrial development market, and I am glad to see their name involved in this project.

V. Motion to Approve the Resolution to Amend the Purchase Sale Agreement with CCGD-SP Harvey, LLC at 17040 S. Halsted Street, Harvey, IL

Director Friedman, seconded by Director Limas, moved to enter into a purchase and sale agreement with CCGD-SP Harvey LLC at 17040 S. Halsted Street, Harvey, IL. **The motion was carried unanimously via a roll call vote.**

VI. Women in Need Recovery Presentation (Bethany Little)

MS. BETHANY LITTLE: My name is Bethany Little, and I am the founder and Executive Director of WIN Recovery. We are here today because we are working with Susan Burton. She is the founder and executive director of A New Way of Life in California.

She has a model that has been replicated and proven to be successful. We are beginning to replicate it, statewide, starting with Cook County. That is the background before going into this presentation. It is known that incarceration of women is the fastest growing incarceration population in America. Twenty percent of the women being released do not have enough reentry resources.

In 2018, Susan Burton took her program, A New Way of Life, and conducted an analysis. The data revealed that there was a lack of reentry services.

She traveled to prisons and talked to a lot of women individually. She repeatedly asked them why they continued to become incarcerated. Their answers were all the same; the lack of resources in the community.

Susan Burton partnered with UCLA and Professor Jorja Leap to use the evidence and launch what they call the SAFE House Network. Her goal with the SAFE House Network is to advance this model, nationwide, for wraparound reentry support services. They are flexible and meet unique needs which includes legal help, mental health treatment, parenting, substance misuse training, employment assistance, and everything in between.

WIN Recovery is in Champaign, Illinois. In 2015, I started creating this program, and in 2018, I was able to meet Susan Burton at her first training of the SAFE House Network. We became one of the first SAFE Houses in the state of Illinois.

Our first house opened in July 2019 and our second in March of 2020. There are a lot of differences between this model and what we know as a halfway house or a transition house.

The population that WIN Recovery focuses on are women that are getting out of prison, jail, or treatment centers. These women are currently in the criminal justice system. We have found that we cannot just focus on the women coming out of prison. We also needed to have our focus on preventing women from going back into prison. We service both individuals. We have a de-incarceration project that allows us to use our SAFE House as an alternative to prison. We are trying to open 30 to 40 houses across Illinois. We want to replicate this whole model.

The first phase of the program is the individuals leaving jail, treatment, or prison, and come into our home. They have 30 days probationary time to get reacquainted with the community and begin to build a strong recovery foundation. After that, they are allowed to apply to a part time job. While they are in the process of getting a part time job, they are participating in self-help groups every day including AA and NA. They also have leadership case management classes that revolve around probation, parole, and DCFS requirements. They will also be working on self-identified goals. We do not create their goals for them.

When they begin the program, they are reunited with their family right away. I always make sure to mention that because traditionally, transition/halfway houses make them wait. That is something that we start immediately. We also offer trauma, peer facilitated, groups along with recovery, codependency, parenting help, and personal financial assistance.

In saying that, we move into the personal financial assistance because the next phase is the independent living homes. During that particular time, they should be working full time. They move into the next phase or home, and they do not have as many services on site but still have the ability to use those services. The minimum stay in the first house is three months. Our program lasts 9-12 months but is very individualized.

The goal is to open at least 10 houses in the first year focused in Cook County. We are hoping to work with other Land Banks in the state of Illinois during years two and three. We hope to implement the next 20 and then the next 10 houses. The goal is to look for four-six-bedroom homes, two baths, and large community areas.

Private donators and individual donations make up 10 percent, state federal government covers 10 percent, and the individual women that live in our homes pay 30 percent of their check, up to \$400, to go back into the program. This helps them hold themselves accountable and being able to show they can maintain paying the bills and being responsible, while also paying back into the program. So, five percent of those funds allow us to continue providing sustainability for those homes.

By the third quarter, we are hoping to start acquiring the independent homes and begin remodeling those, so we can finish up the year strong by finishing the remodels of as many homes as we can.

EXEC. DIRECTOR ROSE: The Land Bank agreements typical have a three-year term. This design to work with groups like this and help them aggregate properties for a particular project whether its land or houses. This Land Banking agreement will allow us to hold these houses to the side since they have been houses identified to fit their criteria, and then with all the different stake holders, they can get the capital together. These houses will be secured, and this Land Bank agreement allows them some flexibility around financing.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: This is a project we have been working on for a while now. It started about a year and a half ago with Ms. M.K. Priztker who has taken a deep interest. We spent some time together with women in county jails talking about these issues. As was discussed by Ms. Little, post-incarceration

housing is especially a problem for women. Ironically, men typically get taken in by mothers, grandmothers, wives, or others, and women often have less options and want to be reunited with their children.

In my mind, finding a cluster of these homes, figuring out how to move this forward, and discussing this with developers who would be excited to be partners with these guys, it is a well-traveled path, and I am really happy that we can be a part of it.

DIRECTOR HOLMES: Bethany, I really appreciated your presentation. The program seems like it is sorely needed and very effective.

DIRECTOR SMITH: That is fantastic. What a great way to wrap up the end of the year, Commissioner, this is great.

DIRECTOR MAURICE COX: I just wanted to thank you for your work. When thinking of reentry, these are our friends, sisters, and daughters. I am very mindful of successful integration and some of the other ways you can be successful. I am thinking of transit, integrating them into stable communities rather than outlying neighborhoods.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: Thank you, Bethany. Some members have asked to be connected with you, and I will have the office do that. We will proceed along with you and the other groups that are interested. I believe this is only a good thing to be working on. Thank you for your interest and effort, and we look forward to working with you.

VII. Motion to Approve Women in Need Recovery

Director Ware, seconded by Director Richardson, moved to approve the Motion to Approve Women in Need Recovery. **The motion was carried unanimously via a roll call vote.**

VIII. Executive Report (Rob Rose)

- Holiday Giveaway – CCLBA decided to take \$25,000 and give it away for mortgage and rent relief to Cook County residents. People register at www.cookcountylandbank.org. 25 families getting \$1,000 each. This giveaway is open through December 17th.
- Despite COVID it has been a very impactful year. We have an accumulative impact of \$105 million. I am not saying that we are generating \$105 million in tax revenue. Right now, we have about \$92 million dollars of market value that has been created in the houses and properties that we have renovated. That's community health and market value that has been create.
- Conservatively, we have another \$12 or \$13 million dollars that has been returned from properties that have been redeemed for tax certificates we've touched. That is where the \$105 million comes from. We think the impact may be higher than that.
- Earlier this year, CCLBA earned the NACO Achievement Award for our Homebuyer Direct Program. That is the first national award recognition of a program that we have created where we can go directly to owner occupants for them to buy the properties rehabbed and live in them.
- Even though business has slowed down due to COVID, the interest is at an all-time high. CCLBA had 108 transactions this month. That is the number of properties acquired and sold. That is a 4.4 percent increase over 2019, despite COVID. We expected this to be a 20 or 30 percent increase, and that is why we were below expectations, but it is still an increase. That speaks to our ability to operate in this environment remotely. I thank the team for stepping up this year. Darlene's leadership with the acquisition team and the asset managers, everyone has made a unique and strong contribution to the Land Banks achievements this year.

- We were short of our acquisition goal, 613 properties instead of 700, but we have surpassed what we did for last year.
- The composition of our acquisitions has shifted from purchases to tax delinquent properties. In 2020, 90 percent of what we have in inventory now has come from the tax sale. This is something we have anticipated and why we made the early investment in 2015 to go into the tax sale knowing and understanding that there would be an end to the sales through Fannie and Freddie.
- COVID put a freeze on foreclosures around the country and around the county. Our ability to pivot and participate in the tax sale allows us to continue to get inventory and still have that impact.
- There was an article that was in the Tribune that talked about our role in the Scavenger Sale, and the number that they quoted has increased. They mentioned 1,162, but we have increased to 1,267. That number will continue to increase as we are getting more deeds recorded through the Recorder of Deeds and working on those properties. It has been an incredible journey despite the challenges.
- For the tax certificate program, we have had over 6,000 applications. Again, the application is where it starts. That's how we know people are interested. People are drawn to the price points, and the ability to come in and add value. We see that reflected in these numbers.
- The pipeline is robust. We have plenty of work ahead of us, but regardless of COVID, we can move forward and execute.
- For sales, we had a goal of 225 and sold 194. This is lower than anticipated, but COVID hit during the peak selling season which is March to May. We received roughly 74 more applicants a month than we did last year. That is about a 15 percent increase from the numbers of last year, with last year's numbers being a record.
- The number of community developers that we are working with has gone up to 615, up from 525 from last year.
- It shows where we had spikes where the COVID restrictions were lifted a bit; 730 applicants in the month of July. In the month of August, we saw an incredible amount of activity as we continue throughout the year.
- Homebuyer Direct Program: 222 homes have been sold since the 2017 rollout. In 2020, 27 were sold. Incidentally, there's an average of \$20,000 of equity for each homeowner, and we received a national recognition for the efficacy of this program.
- Commissioner Cox and the Land Bank are working to revise the MOU first crafted back in 2014. We are very positive about what we will be able to do. It is all about the partnerships with the Department of Planning and Development, Law and Buildings, and the Department of Housing. We also support the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority and then by extension the Southland Development Authority, as well.
- In this last year, CCLBA had nearly 29 million impressions in earned media. A more detailed report is included in the supplemental packets from the media team. CCLBA's Instagram account is new, and it's growing the number of followers.
- CCLBA distributed an 18-month calendar sent to hundreds of supporters.
- We have 155 rehabs complete this fiscal year, with 705 total ever-to-date. CCLBA celebrated the 500th rehab last year, and we are already at 705. We are on pace to hit 1,000 rehabs over the next 18 to 24 months. We have been able to double milestones each year, and that is incredible.
- The fiscal year runs from December 1 through November 30. It shows the growth over the years. In 2014, we started with 31 properties in inventory. We now have 613 shows tremendous growth. The 2021 goals are included; 800 properties to acquire, 400 properties to sell, continue to execute under the scavenger sale strategy, continue to work the Homebuyer Direct Program, continue our partnerships, and also continuing to execute on our hiring plan in order to have enough capacity to match the demands.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: I have three motions to combine. The first is approving meeting minutes and the rest is doing schedules for committee meetings that will happen in the coming year. All of you

have this in your board packets. Based on which committee you were on, you can take a look, as well as schedule for your own purposes. I am going to make three motions together.

IX. Motions to Approve the Cook County Land Banking Authority Data and Marketing Committee Meeting Schedule for 2021, the Consent Agenda for the September 18th Cook County Land Bank Authority Directors Meeting, and the Meeting Times for the Cook County Land Bank Authority Land Transactions Committee Meetings for the year 2021

Director Tony Smith, seconded by Commissioner Friedman, moved to approve the Approval of the Cook County Land Banking Authority Data and Marketing Meeting Schedule for 2021, to Approve the Consent Agenda for the September 18th Cook County Land Bank Authority Directors Meeting, and the Approval of the Meeting Times for the Cook County Land Bank Authority Land Transactions Committee Meeting for the year 2021. **The motion was carried unanimously via a roll call vote.**

DIRECTOR COX: In terms of the subcommittee schedule for next year, I was put into the Finance Committee, and I must admit, I am more interested in the Land Transaction Committee. I was wondering how we can ensure the new members of the board are placed where they can make the most value.

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: I couldn't agree more. We will have that conversation more. Most of predecessors have also served on the Land Transactions Committee so that makes a ton of sense. That is where we get into the chapter and verse of these larger deals, and where most of them overlap.

EXEC. DIRECTOR ROSE: You were put on the Finance Committee at the time because we were short on committee members. We needed another director to serve on that committee so that we could have quorum, because we needed at least three members on the committee. We have agreed, however, that Land Transactions is where you will land. I will pass that board the proposal assignment, and then we will solidify that with the commissioner.

X. Chairman Report (Bridget Gainer)

CHAIRWOMAN GAINER: As you know, for better or worse, the Land Bank is still diligently pursuing the reform of a scavenger sale and liberating properties out of the scavenger sale. We are taking ten times as many properties as every other buyer in the last decade has taken out. In just this one year we've created an opportunity for people to not have to drive by their own neighborhood and say, "Why can't people take care of their neighborhood?" That is the myth we are destroying.

No person would believe you if you told them how complicated it was to get properties out of the scavenger sale. Add to that, the Land Bank has faced very diligent opposition to that reform, but it doesn't matter. We are heads down and pushing forward. I know we have your support. I know that this is one of the best examples of systemic racism that exists, or at least that I have ever seen laid out so clearly. We have the opportunity to unwind some of the challenges and damages. It hasn't been easy, but it is a venture worth taking on. There will be ribbon cuttings two years earlier than they ever would've happened because in 2015, Rob had the foresight to go down this road.

We are moving forward, and I am excited for 2021. It will be the tenth year since we started the idea of the Land Bank. It is a wonderful milestone, and we will do some fun things in it. I thank you for your support over the last year, and the opportunities of 2021. I hope you all have a great holiday and spend lots of time with family. Thank you for your support.

XI. Motion to Adjourn

Director Calvin Holmes moved, seconded by Commissioner Richardson. Motioned to adjourn the meeting. **The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Board of Directors of the Cook County Land Bank Authority

DocuSigned by:
Bridget Gainer
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Chairman Bridget Gainer

DocuSigned by:
Sarah Ware
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Attest

Sarah Ware, Secretary