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NEW MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS TO JOIN HOUSTON LAND BANK BOARD

Two new mayoral appointees to the Houston Land Bank (HLB) Board of Directors were confirmed by Houston City Council July 22 along with four additions to the inaugural class of HLB's non-voting advisory board.

The HLB board will have a new chair; Mayor Sylvester Turner selected Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair Matt Zeis to replace outgoing Board Chair Nicholas Hall, who has served as chair for five years. Three of the five appointees confirmed are re-appointments: David L. Collins remains as vice chair of the board, and Zeis and Jesus DeAnda are the other current board members beginning a new term.

Joining the board are Victor Mondragón, a territory manager for JDF Associates, which provides sales/marketing and consulting support to manufacturers; and Laurie Vignaud, a longtime Houston banker and current president and chief executive officer of Houston-based Unity Bank.

All appointees are to be sworn in at a July 29 special board meeting along with three of four new non-voting advisory board members:

- Nick Foran, a project manager for commercial real estate firm Cawley Partners;
- Vincent Marquez, former Houston Land Bank board director (to be sworn in at a later meeting);
- Elijah J. Williams, executive director of The Energy Corridor District; and
- Kellen Zale, an associate professor in property, real estate, land use and local government law at The University of Houston Law Center.

Outgoing Chair Hall led the successful effort to transform and transition the former Land Assemblage and Redevelopment Authority (LARA) into the Houston Land Bank. Under his leadership and since HLB's 2018 recreation with a new name, the organization has restarted its property sales program to builders for development of affordable homes and is marketing affordable homes built through the City's New Home Development Program. Additionally the transition included the establishing of new funding agreements with the City, hiring a full staff for the local government corporation, building new organizational systems, completing a thorough property and compliance audit, and increasing community engagement work were among the highlights of the successful reboot.

Hall's contributions were lauded by HLB's first CEO and President Anne Gatling Haynes, who joined the land bank in 2018 after Hall initiated a nationwide recruitment for HLB leadership. "We've come an incredibly long way in less than two years, and Nick Hall

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deserves the credit for what the Houston Land Bank has become,” Haynes said. “His vision and dedication to HLB’s mission of conveying vacant, abandoned, and damaged property into affordable homes for Houstonians has already helped people make their lives and neighborhoods better.”

Incoming Chair Zeis also highlighted the contributions made by Chair Hall, who joined the board in 2012 as a director for the land bank’s predecessor organization, the Land Assemblage and Redevelopment Authority. “Nick has been a valued asset for the HLB board, and he will be missed. The success we see for HLB going forward will rest on the strong foundation he helped to build,” he said.

“My goal as Chair was to develop the Houston Land Bank into an organization that leads the nation in affordable housing solutions, particularly when it comes to disaster recovery,” Hall said. “Working closely with the Board of Directors and with support of Mayor Turner, we accomplished the monumental task of creating the Houston Land Bank while responding to five different natural disasters: Memorial Day Flood of 2015; Tax Day Flood of 2016; Hurricane Harvey in 2017; Independence Day Flood of 2018; and Tropical Storm Imelda in 2019. The COVID-19 crisis underscores the importance of our mission to reactivate vacant, abandoned, and damaged properties into affordable home ownership opportunities, and the organization is well positioned to assist in this challenging time.”

HLB and its predecessor entity have seen more than 700 homes built over the years, including 70 homes in 2019, more than 30 completed to date in 2020 and more than 50 in the development pipeline. The first 14 lots were sold last month under the new program guidelines, and another 38 lots are currently for sale. The organization also estimates that it provided over \$1 million to the tax rolls in 2019 alone, based on properties sold and developed to date, and most importantly has increased homeownership and generated additional community and economic development in the neighborhoods that it has served.

For additional information, please go to houstonlandbank.org for more information and join our mailing list for future updates.

Houston Land Bank Background

HLB is a not-for-profit local government corporation incorporated in the State of Texas and is a component unit of the City of Houston. HLB is committed to be a strong, innovative partner in the equitable redevelopment of vacant, abandoned or damaged properties in Houston’s neighborhoods, and a good neighbor to the communities in which we work to provide affordable homes for low- and moderate-income Houstonians.

HLB was established by the City of Houston in 1999 as the Land Assemblage and Redevelopment Authority (LARA), a local government corporation charged with facilitating redevelopment of vacant and/or tax-delinquent residential real estate in targeted Houston neighborhoods. HLB’s 14-member Board of Directors includes representatives appointed by Houston’s Mayor and City Council, Harris County and the Houston Independent School District. HLB receives local funds from the City of Houston and generates additional revenue from the sale of lots and homes.