

**HOUSTON LAND BANK  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING  
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

**September 9, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") of the Houston Land Bank ("HLB"), a Texas non-profit corporation created and organized by the City of Houston as a local government corporation pursuant to the Texas Transportation Code Annotated, Section 431.101, *et seq.*, and the Texas Local Government Code Annotated, Section 394.001 *et seq.*, was held by video conference due to the City of Houston Stay Home Work Safe Order, and Governor Abbott's Executive Order Regarding Public Meetings during the time of the COVID 19 pandemic in Houston, Texas, on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Written notice of the regular meeting, which included the date, hour, place and agenda for the regular meeting, was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Board members in attendance were:

Matt Zeis	Juan Cardoza-Oquendo
Christa Stoneham	Janae Ladet
Tonzaino Bailey	Courtney Johnson Rose
David Collins	Victor A. Mondragón
	Jesus DeAnda

Board members absent were: Carol Galloway, John David Vasquez, Pastor Steve Hall, Antoinette Jackson and Laurie Vignaud. Others in attendance included: Jennifer Allison, Vice President of Operations and Programs for HLB; David Benson, Director of Organizational Excellence for HLB; Ivan Zapata, Manager of Real Estate and Acquisitions for HLB; and Greg Erwin of Winstead PC, outside legal counsel for the HLB; Gonzalo Gonzalez, Interim CEO/President and Vice President of Finance and Accounting for HLB; Gracie Saenz, In-house counsel for HLB; Nick Foran of the HLB Advisory Board; Christa Stoneham Ex Officio Director for the Mayor's Office; Kellen Zale of the HLB Advisory Board; Lauren Avioli of The St. Bernard Project; and Denise Smith and Raven Lightsey with Denise Smith Consulting.

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Zeis called this regular meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. A roll call of the Board members in attendance immediately followed. Chairman Zeis announced that a quorum of the Board was present.

**II. Public Speakers**

Lauren Avioli announced that she was present in the event the Board had any questions with regard to the requests for sale price increases submitted by The St. Bernard Project for the four houses which are on the Agenda for approval today. Ms. Avioli stated that the request for the sales price increases are the result of the reduction in available labor from Americorps and higher costs for building materials.

### **III. Consideration and Adoption of Meeting Minutes**

#### **a. August 12, 2021 Board Meeting**

Chairman Zeis noted that the minutes for the August 12, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Directors were previously circulated for review and comment. He asked if there were any comments for discussion to such minutes. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve and adopt such minutes as written.

Director Mondragón made a motion to adopt the minutes of the August 12, 2021 Board Meeting as written, which motion was then duly seconded by Director DeAnda and passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

### **IV. Chairman's Greeting: Matt Zeis**

Chairman Zeis thanked the Board members in attendance for volunteering and being available for this meeting. He requested continued assistance and support for the people affected by Hurricane Ida.

### **V. Committee Reports:**

#### **a. Executive Committee: Matt Zeis, Chair**

Chairman Zeis announced that the Executive Committee met last week to discuss the Round 5 Lot Sales which are now proceeding, alternative plans for the Settegast affordable housing project including having non-enclosed garages, and the Fiscal Year 2022 budget changes requested by the Houston Housing Department including down payment assistance for qualified homebuyers.

#### **b. CEO Search Committee Update (Denise Smith and Raven Lightsey of Denise Smith Consulting): Matt Zeis, Chair**

Denise Smith and Raven Lightsey addressed the Board with regard to their professional backgrounds and the time line for the search to find a new CEO/President. Ms. Smith stated that her consulting business has been assisting non-profits for 7 years using her prior experience in staffing and human resources. Ms. Lightsey stated that she has worked as a teacher development specialist and as the manager of talent acquisition for AppleTree PCS.

Ms. Smith and Ms. Lightsey have discussed the candidate search with both the HLB staff and the Search Committee and prepared a timeline for the due dates for submittal of resumes and interviews of the candidates. A survey will be distributed to the HLB staff and the Board to complete and then Denise Smith Consulting will finalize the job description and post the position to its networks.

Ms. Saenz cautioned that any group meeting of the Board must consist of fewer than 7 Board members, otherwise the posting of a notice of public meeting will be necessary.

**c. Finance Committee: Laurie Vignaud, Chair**

Chairman Zeis stated that the Finance Committee did not meet this month and noted that the financial report is included in the meeting packet distributed to the Board.

**1. Monthly Financial Report**

Nothing to report.

**d. Partnership and Program Development Committee: Courtney Johnson Rose, Chair**

Director Johnson Rose stated that the Partnership and Program Development Committee met and discussed the Round 5 Lot Sales which will end on September 20, 2021, and recommendations for start-up home builders to be able to purchase up to 4 lots while experienced builders could purchase up to 12 lots.

**e. Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition Committee: Victor Mondragón, Chair**

Director Mondragón reported that the READ Committee met on August 25, 2021 via Zoom and discussed several requests from builders for sales price increases on houses constructed. The READ Committee also discussed the Round 5 Lot Sales which includes 54 lots being made available from the HLB inventory for bids by the HLB approved home builders. The READ Committee then discussed establishing an option for houses with garages versus houses without an enclosed garage. Director Collins stated that each lot will need a driveway whether or not there is a garage. Director Mondragón lastly reported that the READ Committee discussed recommendations for lot sale price increases. Director Gonzalez noted that there is one lot sale for approval on today's Agenda.

**f. Procurement and Oversight Committee: Jesus DeAnda, Chair**

Director DeAnda reported that the Procurement and Oversight Committee met last week to discuss development related procurements including land surveyor qualifications, acquisition services from real estate brokers, construction inspection services, and security services for houses constructed but not yet sold. He then reported that the Builder RFP was posted on August 13, 2021 for the next two weeks. Also, a virtual forum was held with the HLB home builders and the responses from the builders will be posted this week. Director DeAnda noted that the RFP was withdrawn due to city permitting matters which will need further discussion with the city of Houston. He then informed the Board that the HLB policies review will be on the Agenda for the November meeting.

**VI. President's Report: Gonzalo Gonzalez, Interim CEO/President**

Mr. Gonzalez announced that the Round 5 Lot Sales closed yesterday which bids will be reviewed and assessed for approval. Mr. Gonzalez stated that a tour of constructed houses in Acres Homes included members of the NHDP and the Houston Housing Director. He further stated that the posting of a Request for Qualifications for builders is still open to expand the homebuilder

pool's capacity to develop new affordable houses on HLB lots through the Traditional Builder Program.

Director Mondragón requested information on lots in the HLB inventory which are located in clusters because certain builders wish to purchase lots which are in close proximity to each other. Director Gonzalez stated that HLB staff should be able to generate a list of addresses of the available lots which can then be used to locate any clusters of lots.

Next Director Gonzalez informed the Board that the HLB has hired Will Houston as the new real estate analyst and inventory manager to handle the revamping of the data conversion to accommodate a shift of systems from EPP to Tolemi.

Lastly, Director Gonzalez reported that there have been productive conversations with HCDD with regard to adjustments to the HLB Fiscal Year 2022 budget to provide for a 3-year funding agreement for continued HLB operations.

## **VII. Mayor's Office/Complete Communities Report: Ex Officio Director Christa Stoneham**

Ex Officio Director Stoneham reported on the projects to provide lender education and home buyer counseling services to the community. She also informed the Board that she is working on a project to provide residents with a safe place to go during weather emergencies such as a hurricane.

## **VIII. Board Action Items**

### **a. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition Committee Recommendations Regarding Lot Sales Under the Traditional Home Builder Program.**

1. 6626 Hoffman - HCAD #0660250110903 - MHL Properties, LLC (Builder) - Sales Price \$14,002 - Maximum Home Sale Price \$209,469 (Trinity Gardens)

Director Johnson Rose made a motion to approve the sale of the subject lot to MHL Properties, LLC which motion was duly seconded by Director Mondragón and passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

### **b. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Partnership and Program Development Committee Recommendation to Execute a No-Cost Lease with Ivy Leaf Farms for the Property at 8524 Scott Street**

Director Gonzalez stated that approval of this item will authorize staff to enter into a no-cost lease with Ivy Leaf Farms for the HLB lot located at 8524 Scott Street in Sunnyside (HCAD #06416801700068524). The lease has been examined and recommended for approval by the Partnership and Program Development Committee.

Director Gonzalez mentioned that Ivy Leaf Farms, is owned and operated by native Houstonian and Sunnyside resident Ivy Walls, and serves the Sunnyside area with programs dedicated to complete neighborhood wellness. Ivy Leaf Farms has expressed an interest in utilizing an HLB lot for community engagement. After a thorough analysis by HLB staff, the lot at 8524 Scott Street was deemed unsuitable for a residential building and more appropriately used for another purpose because of its location at a busy street intersection and adjacent to a commercial tire shop and a Citgo fuel station. Also, there are a number of trees on this lot and no structures will be built on the lot pursuant to the terms of the lease agreement.

Ivy Leaf Farms plans to utilize the 5,230-square-foot property for the following purposes:

- a. Managing a farmer stand and greenhouse trailer from which residents may pick up fresh organic produce from local farmers,
- b. Planting a small field of flowers and greenery to enhance the aesthetics of the Lot and decrease illegal dumping, and
- c. Facilitating the Black Farmer Box program where specially curated boxes can be sold directly within the community.

Consistent with other leasing of HLB properties for use as urban gardens, Ivy Leaf Farms will be allowed to utilize the property at no charge but will be required to carry adequate insurance, keep the lot well-maintained, and also provide status updates via pictures and written summaries throughout the entire lease period (anticipated as one year with the potential for annual renewals). Approval of this item carries with it a finding of public benefit and purpose in executing the proposed lease with Ivy Leaf Farms, as the planned use of the property is to enhance Sunnyside residents' access to fresh produce, improve the property's appearance, and reduce incidents of illegal dumping in the community.

This partnership with Ivy Leaf Farms will allow HLB to expand its community presence in Sunnyside, where a significant number of new affordable homes are being constructed via HLB's Traditional Homebuilder Program and the City of Houston's New Home Development Program. HLB will promote its efforts in Sunnyside through staff participation in Ivy Farms' programs and through placement of signage on the lot.

Director Bailey made a motion to approve the lease agreement with Ivy Leaf Farms to use the lot at 8524 Scott Street as an urban garden and farmer stand which motion was duly seconded by Director Johnson Rose and passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

c. **Consideration and Possible Action to Accept Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition Committee Recommendations of SBP (The St. Bernard Project Inc.) Contract Amendments for Maximum Sales Price Increase Requests on Four Homes Under the HLB Traditional Homebuyer Program**

1. 8206 Orebo - HCAD #0162630000211 - 1,506 SF - Recommend Increase from \$163,938 to \$194,790 to Address Increased Costs of \$30,852 (Acres Homes)
2. 8202 Orebo - HCAD #0162630000210 - 1,506 SF - Recommend Increase from \$163,938 to \$194,790 to Address Increased Costs of \$30,852 (Acres Homes)
3. 8118 Orebo - HCAD #0162630000209- 1,506 SF - Recommend Increase from \$163,938 to \$194,790 to Address Increased Costs of \$30,852 (Acres Homes)
4. 6813 Bethune - HCAD #0781250060179 - 1,495 SF - Recommend Increase from \$162,871 to \$193,907 to Address Increased Costs of \$31,548 (Acres Homes)

Director Mondragón made a motion to approve the maximum sales price increase requests submitted by SBP for four houses constructed under the HLB Traditional Homebuyer Program which motion was duly seconded by Director Johnson Rose and passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

**IX. Executive Session**

a. **Discussion Regarding the Value or Transfer of Real Property**

Nothing to report.

**X. Action Items from Executive Session**

Nothing to report.

**XI. Board Member Comments**

Nothing to report.

**XII. Adjournment**

Chairman Zeis asked if there were any additional matters to be considered by the Board. Hearing none, the regular Board meeting adjourned at 12:46 p.m. upon the motion of Director Johnson Rose, which was duly seconded by Director Ladet and passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

Minutes Prepared By:

Mark Glanowski (Paralegal) of Winstead PC and  
Graciela Saenz of Law Offices of Graciela Saenz, PLLC

Signed on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

*Jesus A. DeAnda*

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Secretary

10 / 20 / 2021