

April 13, 2023

Minutes of the Virtual Regular Board Meeting of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.

April 13, 2023 – 2:00 P.M., E.S.T.

Members Present: Chintalapalli, Powell, Lavelle, Williamson, Innamorato

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Harris, Nemani-Stanger, Grantham, Davidson-Wagner, Miller, Knapp, Jackson, Wilson, Fitzgibbons, Geiger, Schacht, McMahon, Barkley, Williams and Bohince

Chair Chintalapalli called the Regular Meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

1. Roll Call
2. General
  - a. Approval of the March 9, 2023, URA Board Meeting Minutes
3. Public Comment – See attached.
4. Announcements
  - a. Chair Chintalapalli announced that Executive Sessions were held on April 6, 2023, for a briefing for informational purposes only and April 13, 2023, regarding legal matters
  - b. The Housing Preservation Program application opens Friday, April 14, 2023
  - c. Invest PGH awarded Equitable Recovery Grant
  - d. Centre Avenue project updates
5. Centre Avenue – Salem’s Market and Grill
  - a. Proposal and form of contract for the sale of Lot & Block 11-A-123, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward, to Salem’s Market Centre Avenue, LLC, or a related entity, for \$1,900,000.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested Board approval of the above item.

Bailey Knapp, Project Manager, Projects & Asset Management presented that authorization is requested to approve the proposal and form of disposition contract for the sale of Block & Lot 11-A-123, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward to Salem’s Market Centre Avenue, LLC, or a related entity, for \$1,900,000 plus costs. Located at the corner of Centre Avenue and Heldman Street, the parcel contains approximately 2.57 acres.

Total project costs are budgeted at approximately \$6,861,900, funded by debt, various grants, a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant, and a URA commercial loan. Salem’s Market and Grill is committed to Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (**MWBE**) requirements and is projected to spend \$643,950 in development costs with MWBE firms.

## Background

Salem's Market and Grill currently operates a full-service grocery store and restaurant in the Strip District and is expanding its operations by opening a new grocery store in the former SHOP 'n SAVE building at Centre Heldman Plaza. The URA acquired the Centre Heldman Plaza in November 2019 from Centre Heldman Plaza, LLC. In 2020, the URA issued a Request for Interested Tenants to find new tenants to occupy the storefronts. The URA received 14 responses to the Request for Interested Tenants. The responses were evaluated, and agreements were entered into with the finalists. The sale of Block & Lot 11-A-123 to Salem's Market Centre Avenue, LLC, requires the buyer to honor all leases entered into via the 2020 Request for Interested Tenants process.

In January 2022, the URA executed a lease with Salem's Market Centre Avenue, LLC, for the former SHOP 'n SAVE grocery space. Since then, Salem's has been working towards the opening of a grocery store. The URA transitioned to selling the property in March 2023. The opening of Salem's Market and Grill will bring a full-service grocery store back to the Greater Hill District and is expected to create more than 62 jobs. Further, its opening aligns with the vision of both the Greater Hill District Master Plan and the URA's Avenues of Hope initiative.

Salem's Market Centre Avenue is a single member Limited Liability Company, registered in Pennsylvania, that was formed on October 6, 2021. It has a mailing address at 2923 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15201. Abdullah Salem is its President and owner.

Abdullah Salem, President, of Salem's Market Centre Avenue, was present. Mr. Salem thanked the URA staff, the URA Board, Mayor Gainey and Marimba Milliones, of the Hill CDC for their support. Mr. Lavelle thanked Mr. Salem and URA staff for their hard work on this project.

Upon a motion to approve by Mr. Lavelle seconded by Ms. Powell, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 146 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That the Redevelopment Proposal submitted by Salem's Market Centre Avenue, LLC, or a related entity, for the sale of Block 11-A, Lot 123, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward, for \$1,900,000, and execution of a disposition contract by sale to Salem's Market Centre Avenue, LLC, or a related entity, are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel and/or Chief Financial Officer, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute said disposition contract and related documents to effectuate said sale, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

6. Larimer Avenue – Urban Academy Campus Expansion
  - a. Approval of final drawings, final evidence of financing, and authorization to execute a deed with the Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School for the sale of Block & Lot 125-B-116-1, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, for \$1.00 plus costs.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested Board approval of the above item.

Donita Thomas, Manager and President of PEIDC, presented that authorization is requested to rescind Board Resolution 121 (2022), to reinstate Resolution 365 (2020), to approve final drawings, final evidence of financing, and to authorize the execution of a deed for the sale of Block & Lot 125-B-116-1, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward to Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School (**Urban Academy**) for \$1.00 plus costs. This City-owned parcel is in the process of being transferred to the URA, and eventual conveyance to Urban Academy will be contingent on successful completion of the transfer from the City to the URA. Located at the northeast corner of Meadow Street and Xenia Way, the parcel contains approximately 11,291 square feet of space.

## Background

Urban Academy, with the help of design firm AE7, has developed a comprehensive master plan to expand their current footprint in Larimer via the creation of a campus environment. To do so, Urban Academy is also in the process of acquiring Lot & Block 124-P-199 from the Pittsburgh Land Bank. Additionally, Urban Academy has acquired several privately owned parcels surrounding their current building. While several parcels still need to be acquired to complete the master plan, acquisition of Block & Lot 125-B-116-1 is a crucial component of the project.

Given these recent land acquisitions, Urban Academy has requested that the URA rescind previously approved Resolution 121 (2022), which authorized approval of a revised proposal package and entrance into a disposition contract for a hybrid parking and greenspace concept. Authorization is requested to reinstate Resolution 365 (2020), acceptance of the original redevelopment proposal package for greenspace only and execution of a disposition contract for the sale of the parcel.

Acquisition of Block 125-B, Lot 116-1 by the Urban Academy will allow it to expand its footprint by creating a greenspace that will help enrich academic, social, and emotional learning opportunities for its students. It will also create an attractive, nurturing space for the Larimer community. The greenspace is inclusive of this parcel and an adjoining 5,303-square-foot parcel at the northwest corner of Meadow and Turrett Streets. This parcel was previously acquired by Urban Academy from the City of Pittsburgh.

Total project costs for this phase are budgeted at approximately \$436,032 and are funded entirely by redeveloper equity. Greenspace construction is planned to take place during the summer of 2023. Total development costs for the entire master plan are budgeted at approximately \$12.5 million, with an estimated completion date in 2027.

Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School is a Pennsylvania nonprofit organization with a mailing address at 437 Turrett St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206. K. Chase Patterson is the Chief Executive Officer

Upon a motion to approve by Mr. Lavelle seconded by Ms. Powell, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 149 (2023)**

**RESOLVED:** That the final drawings and evidence of financing submitted by Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School for the sale of Block 125-B, Lot 116-1, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, for the amount of \$1.00 plus costs are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel and/or Chief

Financial Officer, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute a deed and all documents necessary to effectuate the sale thereof, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

7. For-Sale Development Program for Community Land Trusts

- a. Presentation of guidelines for the American Rescue Plan Act funded For-Sale Development Program for Community Land Trusts, and the opening of a three-week public comment period.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested presentation of the above item.

Victoria Jackson, Lending Analyst, Residential and Consumer Lending presented that the For-Sale Development Program for Community Land Trusts (**FSDP CLT**) is an American Rescue Plan Act (**ARPA**) funded program that provides construction financing to Community Land Trusts (**CLTs**) for the substantial rehabilitation or new construction of affordable for-sale housing. FSDP CLT will provide low interest rate construction financing and/or grants for the purpose of increasing the supply of permanently affordable housing for homeownership.

FSDP CLT will provide a dedicated stream of funding to allow CLTs to serve the communities in which they work. Units that receive FSDP CLT funding must remain affordable to households at or below 80% of the Area Median Income for a period of 99-years and will be enforced by a recorded deed restriction on the property. All homes must remain owner occupied after initial sale by the CLT.

FSDP CLT funding will be made available through a to-be-released funding application that must be completed and returned to the URA for project underwriting. Approval of FSDP CLT funding is contingent upon the applying CLT providing evidence that all other funds needed for the pre-development and/or development phases of the project are secured.

The maximum per-unit amount of FSDP CLT funding cannot exceed \$100,000 for rehabilitated units. The per-unit maximum for newly constructed units cannot exceed \$130,000. Funding will primarily be in grant form to bridge the difference between total development costs and an affordable sale price for the given unit. The maximum grant amount cannot exceed the difference between the total development costs and the total proposed sales price(s) for the project unit(s).

The URA is scheduled to receive \$5,000,000 in ARPA funding from the City of Pittsburgh to support the FSDP CLT Program. Draft guidelines will be posted on the URA's website and open for public comment until Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 5:00 PM. Final guidelines are slated for presentation to the URA Board for approval during the Thursday, May 11, 2023, Regular Meeting.

Upon final approval, and contingent upon the execution of a recipient agreement between the URA and City of Pittsburgh, the URA will then release an application for funding seeking eligible projects in need of FSDP CLT financing. The application release date will be announced at a future URA Board Meeting.

8. Troy Hill – Troy Hill Firehouse

- a. Authorization of the proposal and form of contract for the sale of Lot & Block 48-N-10, in the 24<sup>th</sup> Ward, to QGE Holdings, LLC, or a related entity, for \$300,000. This action is contingent on the execution of a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Pittsburgh.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested Board approval of the above item.

Gordon Hall, Project Manager, Development Services presented that contingent on the execution of a Cooperation Agreement between the URA and the City of Pittsburgh, authorization is requested to accept the Redevelopment Proposal and enter into a disposition contract with QGE Holdings, LLC, or related entity, for their 2,200 square foot adaptive reuse of the historic firehouse located at 1800 Ley St. in Troy Hill. The firehouse will be redeveloped into a tap room and farm-to-table community market, with prepared food and locally sourced and grown products from Western Pennsylvania farmers. The market will be managed and operated by the owners of Scratch and Co., an existing restaurant across the street from the project site. Due to the historic nature of the building and its ongoing nomination for historic designation with the Historic Review Commission, all renovations will be sensitive to restoring the firehouse to its original condition. Total development costs are estimated at \$648,000.

### Background

In November 2021, the URA, in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, released a Request for Proposals (**RFP**) for the redevelopment of the historic firehouse. In December 2021, the URA received three RFP responses. URA staff, along with a Review Committee comprised of relevant community stakeholders, interviewed all three development teams. After reviewing the proposals and interviewing the development teams, the Review Committee unanimously decided to move forward with the proposal put forth by QGE Holdings, LLC.

In March 2022, QGE Holdings, LLC, was granted authorization to enter into Exclusive Negotiations for the sale of the property. Since that time, QGE Holdings successfully completed their Redevelopment Proposal Package. Their proposed drawings, evidence of financing, and Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (**MWBE**) cost calculator have all been approved by URA staff. In addition, approved MWBE and Minority Workforce Inclusion narratives are on file.

The project is privately financed with 29% of project costs coming from equity and 71% coming from debt.

QGE Holdings is a Limited Liability Corporation with a mailing address of 1600 Lowrie St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Chad Chalmers and Heather Wildman are the founders.

Upon a motion to approve by Ms. Innamorato seconded by Mr. Williamson, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 150 (2023)**

**RESOLVED:** That the Redevelopment Proposal submitted by QGE Holdings, LLC, or a related entity, for the sale of Block 48-N, Lot 10, in the 24<sup>th</sup> Ward, for \$300,000, and execution of a disposition contract by sale to QGE Holdings, LLC, or a related entity, are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer,

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Senior Counsel and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute said disposition contract and related documents to effectuate said sale, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

9. Uptown – 23 Miltenberger

- a. Final drawings, final evidence of financing, and authorization to execute a deed for the sale of Block 11-J, Lots 95, 96, and 101 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward to Epic Development, LLC, or a related entity, for \$60,000 plus costs.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested Board approval of the above item.

Brandon Wilson, Project Manager, Development Services presented that authorization is requested to accept final drawings, final evidence of financing, and to execute a deed for the sale of the following three URA-owned parcels in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward to Epic Development, LLC, or a related entity, for \$60,000 plus costs:

<u>BLOCK &amp; LOT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BLOCK &amp; LOT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BLOCK &amp; LOT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
11-J-95	0 Forbes Ave.	11-J-96 (Structure)	23 Miltenberger St.	11-J-101	0 Forbes Ave.

The parcels are currently in the process of consolidation and comprise a total area of approximately 3,200 square feet. Epic Development will serve as the redeveloper of a mixed-use development featuring:

- One commercial unit
- Two one-bedroom apartments – one rented for \$1,450 per month (affordable to a two-person household at 80% of Area Median Income [AMI]) and the other at \$1,550/month (affordable to a two-person household at/between 80-100% AMI)
- An outdoor community and food truck space at the intersection of Miltenberger Street and Forbes Avenue

The rehabilitation of the site's vacant building will reactivate a commercial corner in Uptown by providing a vibrant space for residents of the neighborhood along the forthcoming Bus Rapid Transit line.

A top-to-bottom renovation of 23 Miltenberger St. will restore the turn of the century building's ground level retail space into a welcoming corner storefront café. Upper floors will be rehabilitated as apartments. The building's prominent architecture will also be restored via the removal of the ill-proportioned "hat" that expanded the fourth floor, replacing it with rebuilt dormers. New windows will also be installed throughout the building.

The adjacent open lots will be developed into a three-and-a-half season community destination for food and drinks. The space will accommodate three food businesses, each with access to communal assets in the retail space as well as electrical hookups, a landscaped patio with string lights and umbrellas, portable toilets, and other amenities.

Food cart spaces will be rented out on an annual basis. Compared to traditional brick and mortar leases, this arrangement provides entrepreneurs with an opportunity to incubate their businesses in a lower barrier, lower risk environment. One of the food cart spaces will be reserved each year for an Uptown-

based or minority-owned business. Additionally, Epic would seek to work with other Uptown developments to place businesses looking to expand from the food cart model to a traditional storefront setting when applicable.

## Background

In May 2021, the URA released a Request for Interest seeking a redeveloper to purchase and redevelop the aforementioned parcels. In July 2021, upon receipt of two responses, the URA requested that both developers submit full proposals. Epic Development was the only developer to submit a full proposal by the September 24, 2021, due date. The project has the full support of Uptown Partners and the Office of Council District 6. On November 16, 2021, the URA entered into exclusive negotiations with Epic Development for the sale of the parcels for the construction of the aforementioned mixed-use commercial development. The Board accepted Epic Development's proposal package and authorized the URA to enter into a contract for disposition of the parcels on July 14, 2022.

Epic Development has since submitted their final drawings as well as all evidence of financing for the project. Further, Epic Development obtained all necessary city and zoning approvals, and URA approval of their final Woman and Minority-owned Business Enterprise plan. The project is expected to close in April 2023 and is anticipated to be fully occupied by the end of 2023.

The project's financing is comprised entirely of private funding, with 77% coming from debt and 23% coming from equity. Total development costs are estimated at \$455,565.

Epic Development is a Limited Liability Corporation with a mailing address of 1536 Colwell St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Michael McAllister is the Managing Member.

Michael McAllister, Member, Epic Development, was present. Mr. McAllister thanked the Board for their consideration. Chair Chintalapalli stated that this project was "a long time coming".

Upon a motion to approve by Mr. Lavelle seconded by Ms. Powell, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 151 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That the final drawings and evidence of financing submitted by Epic Development LLC, or a related entity for the sale of Block 11-J, Lots 95, 96, and 101, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, for the amount of \$60,000 plus costs are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel and/or Chief Financial Officer, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute a deed and all documents necessary to effectuate the sale thereof, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

#### 10. 2023 Neighborhood Initiatives Fund Revised Guidelines

- a. Authorization to revise the Neighborhood Initiatives Fund Guidelines for the 2023 funding round.

Ms. Nemani-Stanger requested Board approval of the above item.



Josette Fitzgibbons, Manager, Neighborhood Business District Programs presented that the Neighborhood Initiatives Fund Program (**NIF**) was developed in 2019 to:

1. Help unlock the economic and placemaking potential within neighborhood commercial corridors.
2. Support vision-to-action community investment strategies that build a more equitable Pittsburgh.
3. Formalize collaborative partnerships across the City of Pittsburgh.

NIF is intended to assist nonprofit and community-based organizations with neighborhood-scale projects within commercial corridors that improve quality of life and maintain the corridor as a desirable location for small business. NIF projects include efforts that encourage investment through vacant property reclamation and stewardship, historic preservation, brownfield redevelopment, public infrastructure improvements, and other eligible efforts. Nonprofit organizations with for-profit development partners are also eligible to apply.

Since 2019, the URA has awarded nearly \$2.4 million to fund 42 projects in 21 neighborhoods throughout the City of Pittsburgh. In 2023, the NIF Program guidelines will be adjusted due to an increase in the amount of available funding. This will allow NIF to support up to 15 projects in 2023 – up from 10 in previous years. In addition:

**1. Four specialized grant categories have been added:**

- Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades in business corridors
  - Grant Amount: \$30,000
  - Number of Grants Awarded: Up to two
- Public Art Installation and Improvements
  - Maximum Grant Amount: \$30,000
  - Number of Grants Awarded: Up to two
- Nonprofit-owned Building Improvements
  - Maximum Grant Amount: \$50,000
  - Grants Awarded: one
- Small Nonprofit Organization Grants
  - Maximum Grant Amount: \$50,000
  - Grants Awarded: up to two

**2. The grant disbursement process has changed from reimbursement-only to the following:**

- 90% of the grant will be awarded upon execution of the project contract.
- The final 10% will be awarded upon receipt of the final project report.
- Each awardee will be required to submit quarterly reports, including receipts and/or proof of payment for all grant expenditures.

The total amount of funding available for the 2023 NIF program is \$1,100,000, sourced from 2023 Community Development Block Grant and PAYGO funds.

Upon a motion to approve by Mr. Lavelle seconded by Ms. Powell, and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:



**RESOLUTION NO. 152 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That revised Neighborhood Initiatives Fund Guidelines are hereby approved.

**DISCLOSURES AGENDA**

The Members reviewed the items on the Disclosure Agenda upon motion made by Mr. Lavelle, seconded by Mr. Williamson, and unanimously carried, the following resolutions were adopted:

1. Authorization to enter into a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to accept up to \$1,000,000 in funding for the Penn Circle Two-Way Conversion project, funded by City Bond.

**RESOLUTION NO. 153 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That a cooperation agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to accept up to \$1,000,000 in funding for the Penn Circle Two-Way Conversion project, funded by City Bond is hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute said cooperation agreement, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

2. Authorization to amend the guidelines for the Small Landlord Fund (SLF) program to reduce the interest rate for SLF loans from 3% to 0%.

**RESOLUTION NO. 154 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That the Small Landlord Fund (SLF) program guidelines are hereby amended to reduce the interest rate for SLF loans from 3% to 0%.

3. Authorization to amend the guidelines for the OwnPGH program to clarify that the starting value of the participating homes shall be expressed in the OwnPGH deed restriction as "Sales Price minus 50% of OwnPGH assistance or \$190,000, whichever is less." Allowable resale price will continue to increase at 2% per year.

**RESOLUTION NO. 155 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That OwnPGH program guidelines are hereby amended to clarify that the starting value of the participating homes shall be expressed in the OwnPGH deed restriction as "Sales Price minus 50% of OwnPGH assistance or \$190,000, whichever is less." Allowable resale price will continue to increase at 2% per year.

4. Authorization to enter into a contract, in an amount of up to \$7,880 sourced from the Housing Opportunity Fund's 2022 allocation, with E Holdings, Inc., or a related entity, for design and preparation services related to the Housing Opportunity Fund 2022 Annual Report.

**RESOLUTION NO. 156 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That an agreement with E Holdings, Inc., or a related entity, for design and preparation services related to the Housing Opportunity Fund 2022 Annual Report, in an amount of up to \$7,880, payable from the Housing Opportunity Fund's 2022 allocation is hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute an agreement therefor, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

5. Rescission of Resolution 46 (2015), which approved the proposal and form of contract for the sale of certain parcels, including Block 83-M, Lots 174 and 176, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, to Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation, for \$7,500.

**RESOLUTION NO. 157 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That Resolution No. 46 (2015), which approved the proposal and form of contract for the sale of certain parcels, including Block 83-M, Lots 174 and 176, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, to Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation, for \$7,500, is hereby rescinded.

6. Authorization to enter into a new contract, in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 sourced from Community Development Block Grant funds, with Catapult Greater Pittsburgh, or a related entity, for the continued implementation of their 2023 entrepreneurship programs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 158 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That an agreement with Catapult Greater Pittsburgh, or a related entity, for the continued implementation of their 2023 entrepreneurship programs, in an amount of up to \$200,000, payable from Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) funds is hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute an agreement therefor, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

7. Amendment of Resolution 308 (2017), which approved the conveyance of Block 31-G, Lot 200, in the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward, and Block 32-H, Lot 100, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Ward, to the City of Pittsburgh, for \$1.00 plus costs, to include Block 31-G, Lot 202, in the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward, which was formerly a part of Block 31-G, Lot 200, and was recently assigned a new parcel number by Allegheny County.

**RESOLUTION NO. 159 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That Resolution No. 308 (2017), is hereby amended, to include Block 31-G, Lot 202, in the 31<sup>st</sup> Ward, which was formerly a part of Block 31-G, Lot 200, and was recently assigned a new parcel number by Allegheny County.

8. Amendment of Resolution Nos. 198 (2008), 451 (2018), 209 (2019), 255, 256, 257,258, 399 (2020), 83, 272 (2022) and 5 (2023) to add Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Finance and Senior Counsel as Signatories for all URA Documents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 160 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That Resolution Nos. 198 (2008), 451 (2018), 209 (2019), 255, 256, 257,258, 399 (2020), 83, 272 (2022) and 5 (2023) are hereby amended, to replace to add Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Finance and Senior Counsel as Signatories for all URA Documents.

9. Amendment of Resolution Nos. 450 (2018), 255 (2020), 85 (2022), 273 (2022) and 6 (2023) by inserting a new subparagraph A as follows:
  - a. All accounts of this Corporation – any two of the following: one of which is to be one of the following: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, or Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the second signature to be that of one of the following, so long as it is not the same as the first signature: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer; excepting the accounts designated “Contractor’s Disbursement Account” and “PHRP Disbursement Account” and the “HOME Disbursement Account” which shall require only one signature to be one of the following: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Development Officer.”

**RESOLUTION NO. 161 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That Resolution Nos. Nos. 450 (2018), 255 (2020), 85 (2022), 273 (2022) and 6 (2023) are hereby amended, by inserting a new subparagraph A as follows:

- a. All accounts of this Corporation – any two of the following: one of which is to be one of the following: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, or Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the second signature to be that of one of the following, so long as it is not the same as the first signature: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer; excepting the accounts designated “Contractor’s Disbursement Account” and “PHRP Disbursement Account” and the “HOME Disbursement Account” which shall require only one signature to be one of the following: Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Counsel, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Development Officer.”
10. Authorization to approve Aaron Brown to receive a Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance second deferred mortgage loan in the amount of \$7,500 (Aaron Brown is a Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety employee).

**RESOLUTION NO. 162 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That a Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance second deferred mortgage loan to Aaron Brown, an employee of the Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety is hereby approved.

11. East Allegheny – Allegheny City Brewing
  - a. Certificate of Completion for Allegheny Center Alliance Church for Block 23-S, Lots 165, 165-A and 166, in the 23rd Ward (506-508 East Ohio Street and 507 Emlin Street – community parklet).

**RESOLUTION NO. 163 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That issuance of a Certificate of Completion to Allegheny Center Alliance Church, for Block 23-S, Lots 165, 165-A and 166, in the 23rd Ward, and return of the Good Faith Deposit commercial development, (506-508 East Ohio Street and 507 Emlin Street – community parklet) are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, is hereby authorized to execute said Certificate of Completion, and the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto

12. Authorization to approve a change in reuse of Block 23-S, Lots 165, 165-A and 166, in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward to allow for development of a restaurant and tap house by Farmolly, LLC.

**RESOLUTION NO. 164 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That the reuse of Block 23-S, Lots 165, 165-A and 166, in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward to allow for development of a restaurant and tap house by Farmolly, LLC is hereby approved.

13. Transfer proposal, form of contract, and authorization to execute a deed to Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation for the sale of Block 83-M, Lots 174 and 176, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, for \$500 per parcel plus costs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 165 (2023)**

RESOLVED: That the Redevelopment Proposal submitted by Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation, for the sale of Block 83-M, Lots 174 and 176, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, and execution of a disposition contract by sale to Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation, for \$500 per parcel plus costs are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute said disposition contract and related documents to effectuate said sale, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto; and it is

RESOLVED FURTHER: That the final drawings and evidence of financing submitted by Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation for the sale of Block 83-M, Lots 174 and 176, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, are hereby approved, and the Acting Executive Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Senior Counsel, Chief Financial Officer and/or the Director of Finance, on behalf of the Authority, is hereby authorized to execute a deed and all documents

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necessary to effectuate the sale thereof, and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary is authorized to attest the same and affix the seal of the Authority thereto.

There being no further actions to come before the Members, the Meeting was adjourned.

DocuSigned by:  
*Theresa Schacht*  
742F4DACDC874B0

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Assistant Secretary

March 13,2023

Dear Mayor Gainey, City Council, and Urban Redevelopment Authority Board,

We, the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group, are requesting that you turn down the proposal from Oak Moss Consultants Inc to build along the publicly owned, forested lots of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward in the Hazelwood neighborhood. Furthermore, we request that this section of land be held as a greenway and designated as park land, as all greenways in Pittsburgh have become. Additionally, the results of Oak Moss' Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) should be released to the public. The public should also be informed of any planned public presentations by the developer to the URA's board or other City authorities such as the Planning Commission and Zoning Board. In the future, we strongly request that the City Council stop all transfers of parcels to the URA to avoid a similar endangerment of our public lands.

The Sierra Club's concern for this parcel of land is trifold. For one, it serves the greater forest ecosystem and wildlife of Pittsburgh, which goes far beyond its humble size. Secondly, it enhances the health and quality of life for the people who live there. Thirdly, this forest serves to counter the effects of climate change, which contributes to Pittsburgh's climate commitment.

This forest is well established, making it prime habitat for wildlife such as deer, wild turkey, hawks, owls, songbirds, bats, coyotes, and foxes. Of particular interest are the bats and songbirds who are important pollinators and keep down insect populations, but are also sensitive to pollution, habitat loss, and climate change. Pennsylvania's state insect, the firefly, is also in decline, but finds refuge in these woods. Fireflies are important because they keep garden pests, such as slugs and aphids, in control, which is important for the nearby community garden. Pennsylvania wildlife, as a whole, is continually threatened by habitat loss as development increases, as the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy alerts us. This concerning trend not only endangers our wildlife, but also increases contact with people as animals are left with nowhere else to go. This translates into more vehicle collisions, disease transfers, and pest infestations.

Additionally, this tract of forest exceeds its isolated value because of its placement between Schenley Park and the Greenway forests at the top of Elizabeth Street. This creates 1,896 contiguous acres of forest, going from Schenley Park, to our Greenways, to Calvary cemetery, housing lands, and Frick Park. As such, it acts as a wildlife corridor that expands wildlife's range and as such, their chance to maintain healthy populations. The renowned scientist E.O. Wilson taught us about the value of wildlife corridors with his theory of island biogeography as long ago as 1967. Wilson explained that larger pieces of habitat can support a greater number of species. However, this

habitat needs to be contiguous without any disconnected plots. Otherwise, wildlife cannot move from one end to the other. This isolates populations of species, which can lead to inbreeding and sicker animals. Other species struggle to find the resources they need to survive and die out.

This seemingly simple concept has been applied to park management and city planning for decades. A simple solution has been to create wildlife corridors in order to connect forests to create larger habitats that support a greater number of species with healthy populations. Some cities have gone as far as to build bridges over highways to achieve this goal, which can cost millions of dollars. Fortunately, there is no need for that in Hazelwood because the forest there fulfills the role that a wildlife bridge serves. As such, it provides much-needed green infrastructure to the greater city of Pittsburgh.

This forest benefits people too by providing not only recreation, but also better air and water quality, while enhancing quality of life. Just one average-sized tree produces enough oxygen for two adults. Additionally, research shows that spending time in forests helps us build compassion, increases pain threshold, and lowers stress. Those that live around trees also have reduced blood pressure, muscle tension, and fatigue. As summers heat up with climate change, this forest will become more valuable for its cooling properties – some forests cool the air by more than ten degrees Fahrenheit! Communities with more forests also have less noise pollution and statistically experience less crime.

This forested land is also important to the nearby school, Three Rivers Village School, which offers innovative education to children who may struggle with the traditional school system. This school has just moved into the former YMCA building and is already benefiting from the adjacent Community Garden. The adjacent proximity to these forested lots offers a unique opportunity to extend their hands-on curriculum to this forest for studies in biology, ecology, forestry, and more. Already students are benefiting from the benefits of tree cover, which can increase attention and engagement, and even improve student grades.

We would be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the service this forest plays in fighting climate change. Most scientists agree that our current climate is rapidly changing as a result of human activity that has overloaded the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. Forests counter this effect by absorbing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, effectively working as “carbon sinks.” According to Global Forest Watch, forests alone can provide 30 percent of our effort to keep global warming below the 2 degree Celsius mark that is the recommended threshold to support human life.

Furthermore, Pittsburgh’s Climate Action Plan emphasizes the need to “HALT the loss of forest canopy to developers.” Mayor Gainey’s own website admits that “climate



change is bringing greater rainfall to our region, resulting in flood events that put lives, homes, and businesses at risk, and overwhelms our sewer system, polluting our rivers.” Pittsburgh’s climate initiative recognizes that fighting climate change and mitigating its consequences not only solves these issues, but also results in more jobs, cleaner air, and cost savings.

Development of this forest is also directly counter to the Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan, “Our Hands Our Plan,” which was to be formally adopted into the City’s Comprehensive Plan. This plan clearly states that development be focused on Second Avenue with the goal of protecting forests. Furthermore, the plan is committed to improving air quality and saving and improving green spaces.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also recognizes the importance of our natural areas. Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, in a 1967 amendment reads:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

Developing the Hazelwood forest would be counter to this constitutional amendment, Pittsburgh’s Climate Action Plan, and Hazelwood’s own “Our Hands Our Plan.”

Despite all the benefits of saving Hazelwood’s forest, many are tempted by the promises of Oak Moss Consultants. Oak Moss Consultants, Inc has painted an unrealistic picture of how their plan will create a new vibrant neighborhood, complete with housing, retail, and a restaurant. In reality, it lacks family housing (with only 5 buildings containing 3 bedrooms) and would lead to a bottleneck of traffic, more pollution, and stranded wildlife that will clash with the urban development. Keeping these lots as forest will not only save our urban wildlife but will also continue to provide residents with an important outlet to maintain their physical and mental health and fight the climate change that plagues our global community.

As Pennsylvania native and influential scientist and author, Rachel Carson, put it in her letter to the Washington Post in 1953:

The real wealth of the Nation lies in the resources of the earth — soil, water, forests, minerals, and wildlife. To utilize them for present needs while ensuring their preservation for future generations requires a delicately balanced and continuing program, based on the most extensive research. Their administration is not properly, and cannot be, a matter of politics.

We hope you keep these wise words in mind when making your decision.

Thank you for considering our appeal.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee of Sierra Club's Allegheny Group



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