



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2020

CONTACT:

Department of Housing Press Office

312.744.4190

doh@cityofchicago.org

CITY ANNOUNCES WOODLAWN COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE TO GAIN INPUT ON PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

City to host January 30th meeting to inform the community and gain input that will aid in the development of new inclusive plans for Woodlawn in advance of the Obama Presidential Center project

CHICAGO—The Chicago Departments of Housing (DOH) and Planning and Development (DPD) will host a Community Open House on January 30, 2020 to gain input on a proposed Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance for Woodlawn, and to collect feedback to aid in the city's ongoing efforts to ensure inclusive development and economic growth for the community. The proposed ordinance is designed to protect existing residents from displacement and ensure continued availability of affordable housing in the Woodlawn area.

These and other planned efforts by the City are designed to ensure the Woodlawn community and other Chicago residents can benefit from the economic opportunities created by the future Obama Presidential Center project. Residents are encouraged to attend the meeting which is being held from 5 PM – 8 PM at Hyde Park Academy High School, 6220 S. Stony Island.

"The City is committed to unlocking the unprecedented potential offered by the Obama Presidential Center project for every Chicagoan. In order to fulfill that commitment, we are taking a hands-on, community-first approach, ensuring Woodlawn and other nearby communities have access to affordable housing and the resources needed for residents to thrive," said Mayor Lightfoot. "From day one, my administration has ushered in a new era of transparency through direct community engagement, which is why open houses like this one are so critical to working in partnership with residents."

Mayor Lightfoot kicked off a series of community engagement meetings with Woodlawn stakeholders last summer to begin a discussion around community priorities related to the

Obama Presidential Center project and to inform legislation for a Woodlawn-specific housing ordinance. Since then, City staff have been working closely with community leaders to craft a proactive, feasible housing and development ordinance that sets the foundation for equitable growth and development in the future.

"I am grateful to the members of the working group for their commitment to come together to address housing and development in Woodlawn and greatly appreciate the involvement and counsel of Aldermen Jeanette Taylor (20) and Leslie Hairston (5) in this process," said DOH Commissioner Marisa Novara. "This open house is an important step in drafting an ordinance that considers the residents and all stakeholders to create a plan that protects residents while also allowing for projects that will sustain the neighborhood for the future."

Over the past several months, DOH has led a working group comprised of neighborhood stakeholders, advocates and local elected officials who worked together to draft the new Woodlawn Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance. The working group has assembled a proposal which is focused on three core goals: protecting existing residents from displacement; creating new rental and for-sale housing opportunities that are affordable at a range of incomes; and promoting equitable and inclusive income diversity in Woodlawn and supporting economic development opportunities.

Alderman Jeanette Taylor (20), who played a pivotal role in the stakeholder-City meetings to draft a plan, said: "The open house is important because we can't talk about economic development in our community without the actual community. This is a great opportunity for stakeholders to come to the table and decide what policies look like that protect folks in our community. It shows that we're moving in a real progressive way."

Key components of the proposed ordinance include:

- **Tenant Right of First Refusal for larger apartment buildings** - Gives renters the right of first refusal if a landlord seeks to sell his/her building. Rather than tenants being automatically displaced from the sale of a building, tenants would have the right to form a tenant's association and enter into an agreement with a not-for-profit affordable housing developer to purchase the building and maintain it as affordable.
- **Preservation of Existing Affordable Rental (PEAR)** - This apartment building refinance program would help existing owners refinance their property to keep tenants in place and rents affordable.
- **Long-Term Homeowner Repair Grant Program** - Assists longtime homeowners to remain in their homes by providing grants for home repairs.
- **Residential Acquisition and Rehabilitation Revolving Finance Facility** - Supports the creation of rental and for-sale units by helping finance the rehabilitation of vacant buildings.
- **Development of City-Owned Vacant Land** - Sets guidelines for the disposition and development of City-owned, vacant, residential land for affordable and mixed-income housing.

- **Enhanced local hiring requirements** - Residential developments that receive City land for development of rental housing would be required to meet enhanced local hiring requirements.

“During the community meetings, the City was on the same page as the residents and neighborhood organizations in preserving affordable housing and protecting homeowners as well as renters to help them maintain and remain in Woodlawn,” said Venus Scott, Executive Director of Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors (WECAN), a working group member and longtime resident. “It restored my belief that the City really does want to help. It restored my trust that the City does not want anyone to be displaced.”

At the Open House, DOH staff will be available to talk with residents and explore the proposed components of the ordinance. DPD staff will be available to discuss work to develop a Plan Consolidation Report, which reviews past plans and studies and identifies where they align; surveys existing conditions and projected future trends in Woodlawn; and outlines a set of strategies that synthesize this information and identify ways in which the City of Chicago and its partner agencies can support the goals identified in past plans and help direct future investment and development in Woodlawn in a way that reflects the community vision.

In addition to the City’s proposed Woodlawn plans, the City will provide direct assistance and information on housing resources available to residents. More information is available at chicago.gov/housing.

#