



ULI Chicago YL Small Group Discussion Series
Informing Affordable Housing Policy through Civic Engagement
March 30, 2021

ULI Chicago Young Leader's hosted the final session of a three-part Small Group Discussion Series, "Informing Affordable Housing Policy through Civic Engagement." Guest Speakers included: Bill Eager, *Senior Vice President, Real Estate Development, Midwest, Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.* Aaron Johnson, *Project Manager, Office of Community Engagement, Racial Equity and Strategic Initiatives, Department of Housing, City of Chicago* and Barbara Taylor, *Financial Planning Analyst/Project Manager, Department of Housing, City of Chicago.*

Aaron Johnson and Barbara Taylor presented an overview of affordable housing, the City of Chicago's mission for building and preserving affordable housing, and recently completed (or in the process of being completed) affordable housing projects. Barbara Taylor further explained the various municipal housing finance programs that developers utilize when projects are identified for renovation, acquisition, or development. Housing projects in the Woodlawn neighborhood of Chicago were specifically highlighted given POAH's involvement. The Woodlawn neighborhood received increased attention when Jackson Park was selected as the location for the Obama Presidential Center.

Bill Eager discussed the aspects of identifying the need for housing in Woodlawn and determining the resources required for the neighborhood. POAH had acquired an affordable housing community (Grove Parc Plaza) in 2008 and began redevelopment in 2009 before the announcement of the Obama Presidential Center. The tenants had reached out to POAH for help since they were seeking more commercial uses in the neighborhood rather than just housing. POAH, with its partners and the City of Chicago, redeveloped South Cottage Avenue to include not only new affordable housing but also mixed income housing, as well as commercial and recreational uses. Additionally, POAH worked with Jewel-Osco to develop a grocery store for the neighborhood.

After highlighting the affordable housing and community building efforts in Woodlawn, Bill Eager discussed other projects that POAH completed or was in the process of completing in surrounding Chicago neighborhoods. These projects highlighted the various ways in which affordable housing can be preserved in communities experiencing increased property values related to future commercial developments designed to spur economic growth.

Summary written by Brendan Ahmad, Vice President, PGIM Real Estate