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HPD COMMISSIONER VICKI BEEN AND SBS COMMISSIONER GREGG BISHOP JOIN PARTNERS IN CELEBRATING THE 2015/2016 MWBE & NONPROFIT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP GRADUATING CLASS

23 Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises and Non-profit Organizations completed the most recent Building Capacity Workshop series and gained valuable information on best practices for affordable housing development with the City of New York

New York, NY – New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Vicki Been and New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Gregg Bishop were joined by for-profit and non-profit partners at the graduation breakfast for the City’s Building Capacity Workshop for the professional development of Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and not-for-profit organizations in the affordable housing industry. The free workshop series was crafted to teach best practices for affordable housing development in New York City including site selection, building design, financing and budgeting. The workshops are one part of HPD’s multi-pronged Building Opportunity Initiative.

The 2015-2016 workshop series was developed collaboratively between HPD and SBS with significant support from Holland & Knight, NYSAFAH, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Paul Weiss, Redstone Equity Partners, Artimus, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and Enterprise Community Partners. The commencement celebration took place at the Wells Fargo New York City Headquarters at 150 E 42nd Street in Manhattan. The graduates include 23 businesses in construction, development, real estate management, and non-profit organizations.

“To make New York the most equitable city it can be, we need more minority- and women-owned businesses to help us build and preserve affordable housing. Through Building Opportunities, HPD is expanding the current pool of M/WBE with the know-how for navigating the significant regulatory and other hurdles involved in this work,” **HPD Commissioner Vicki Been** said. “Besides making the development industry more diverse, M/WBE and non-profit developers are critical to improving competition, promoting community development, and fostering local job growth -- central tenants of our Housing New York plan. I thank SBS, Redstone Equity Partners, Artimus, and Wells Fargo for their important partnerships on this effort. I would also like to thank each and every volunteer professional who donated time to be a course leader in this workshop.”

“Leveling the playing field for minority and women owned businesses to compete as affordable housing developers is an important goal for Mayor de Blasio, and we are making important headway on this goal through our critical partnership with HPD,” **Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the Department of Small Business Services** said. “I want to congratulate today’s second class of Building Opportunity graduates, who are strengthening our city by diversifying the pool of talented businesses who drive even more jobs and community investment through affordable housing.”

"To effectively tackle New York City's housing crisis, we need to leverage every resource and provide every dedicated partner with the tools they need to create high quality, affordable housing," said **Judi Kende, Vice President and New York Market Leader, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.** "It is especially important to support MWBEs as they work to improve the communities where they live and work. We commend the Building Capacity Workshop for helping to provide this crucial support, and congratulations to its second graduating class!"

"Wells Fargo congratulates all of today’s graduates of the HPD and SBS Building Opportunity Initiative. We are proud to support this vital effort to diversify and broaden the development professionals within the affordable housing community, and to make the driving force behind this industry as diverse as the City of New York.” said **Page Travelstead, Sr. Relationship Manager in the Community Lending & Investment group at Wells Fargo Bank.**

"I'd like to add my congratulations to the graduates of HPD's and SBS' Building Opportunity Initiative. It is extremely exciting to add a cadre of qualified and diverse professionals to the ranks of those working to impact the lives of the residents of our City who need the most support," said **Richard Roberts, Managing Director at Red Stone Equity Partners and a former HPD Commissioner.** He continued, "Too often the companies and entrepreneurs who perform this work are not always representative of the communities that we serve and with this graduating class, the City is making strides in ameliorating this concern. Kudos to Commissioners Been and Bishop for making this initiative a priority."

“We at Artimus congratulate the graduates of the MWBE program. You represent a welcome addition to the affordable housing community,” said **Robert Ezrapour, principal at Artimus NYC.**

The initial Building Capacity Workshop began in 2014. HPD partnered with SBS and the Minority Business Development Institute (MBDI) to develop and administer the coursework. The workshops are led by a panel of subject matter experts and teach participants effective business planning, financial management and strategies for competing more effectively for HPD-supported affordable housing development work. The Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group and Holland & Knight hosted workshops as well as provided staff with expertise in the course topics to participate in the workshops. NYSAFAH provided outreach and sponsored networking events where both course participants and NYSAFAH members were in attendance. The inaugural courses garnered overwhelming interest. Expanding on the success of the inaugural course introduced last year, the new session included non-profit developers.

Learn more about the program’s first and second graduating classes here: [M/WBE Academy Graduates](#)

The Building Opportunity Initiative is one of the tools created to remove unnecessary barriers to affordable housing development and increase opportunities under Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Housing New York Plan. Launched in 2014, the five-borough, ten-year plan was designed to create and preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing. The most comprehensive affordable housing plan in the City’s history and largest municipal housing plan in the nation, its goal is to help address New York City’s

affordability crisis by housing more than half a million New Yorkers, ranging from those with very low incomes to the middle class – all of whom face ever-rising rent pressures.

In 2014, New York State Senate Housing Chairwoman Cathy Young and Assembly Housing Chairman Keith Wright sponsored legislation that allowed HPD to designate a pipeline of development projects and seek competitive proposals from a pre-qualified list of MWBEs. After the issuance of a Request for Qualifications, HPD was able to create a pre-qualified list. That list was published on HPD's website in June 2015 and is available at: nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/MWBERFQPreQualifiedList.pdf.

Last fall, HPD issued a Request for Proposals seeking pre-qualified MWBE organizations to develop a portfolio of six vacant City-owned lots scattered throughout Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan. Forty applications were received and are currently under review. HPD anticipates RFP designation in fall 2016.

The Building Opportunity Initiative is a four-pronged pilot initiative to expand opportunities for MWBEs to compete more effectively for HPD-supported affordable housing development work. The initiative was designed to help ease the challenges faced by many MWBE developers such as limited access to affordable credit or land, inexperience with City loan processes, and lack of opportunities. The four prongs of Building Opportunity include:

- Build the Capacity of M/WBE Developers
- Increase Access to Capital
- Encourage Developers to Use M/WBE Contractors
- Increase Development Opportunities

For more information on the program, visit the 'MWBE Initiative' page on HPD's website under the 'Developer' tab or visit the following link: nyc.gov/hpd/developers/mwbe-initiative.page.

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About the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

HPD is the nation's largest municipal housing preservation and development agency. Its mission is to promote quality housing and diverse, thriving neighborhoods for New Yorkers through loan and development programs for new affordable housing, preservation of the affordability of the existing housing stock, enforcement of housing quality standards, and educational programs for tenants and building owners. HPD is tasked with fulfilling Mayor de Blasio's Housing New York: A Five-Borough Ten-Year Plan to create and preserve 200,000 affordable units for New Yorkers at the very lowest incomes to those in the middle class. For more information visit www.nyc.gov/hpd and for regular updates on HPD news and services, connect with us via www.facebook.com/nychousing and @nychousing.
