



Board Letter

Agenda Date: March 17, 2026

Agenda #: 2

Authorization to enter into license agreements at Legends South for a tenant garden at 31 W. 45th Street and an urban farm at 4412-4436 S. Dearborn Street, and to submit a Planned Development amendment to ensure zoning compliance.

Presenter: Kemena Brooks, Chief of Staff

Recommendation

The Operating Chairman (“OC”) of the Chicago Housing Authority (“CHA”) recommends that the CHA Board of Commissioners (“Board”) authorize the OC or his designee to: 1) negotiate and execute license agreements for a tenant garden at 31 W. 45th Street and an urban farm at 4412-4436 S. Dearborn Street; 2) submit an application for a minor change to Planned Development 1135 (PD 1135) to the City of Chicago to ensure the tenant garden and urban farm conform with City of Chicago zoning ordinance; 3) and execute and deliver such other documents and perform such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement the foregoing.

The requested action complies in all material respects with all applicable CHA Board policies, federal, state, and local laws. CHA staff have completed all necessary due diligence to support the submission of this initiative.

License Agreement Summary

Land Use	Location	Area	Initial Term	Option	Amount
Tenant Garden	31 W. 45th St.	Approx. 7,500 square-feet	5 years	5 years	\$0.00
Urban Farm	4412-4436 S. Dearborn St.	Approx. 80,000 SF	5 years	5 years	\$0.00

Funding

Not Applicable

Background Approach

The Legends South Urban Farm and the tenant garden were established in 2012 on vacant land within the former Robert Taylor Homes by the CHA-selected development team of Brinshore Development, LLC, and The Michaels Development Company, Inc. (“BMT-I, LLC) in partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG).

The urban farm is located at 4412-4436 S. Dearborn Street and comprises approximately 80,000 square feet in area. The tenant garden is currently located at 43-49 W. 44th Street and will be relocated to 31 W. 45th Street. This 7,500-square-foot area features 22 raised beds and is maintained by residents with the assistance of CBG.

In May 2022, the CHA Board approved land disposition of vacant land at the former Robert Taylor site to Brinshore-Michaels to bring forth the first phases of for-sale homes to the Legends South community. The upcoming phase of for-sale development approved in May 2022 will occur at the current site of the tenant garden and, as such, the garden must be relocated to facilitate redevelopment of the next phase of the for-sale homes.

The agreements needed to operate both the urban farm and the tenant garden have expired. This Board action will enable CHA to reactivate the necessary agreements for both facilities alongside the required relocation of the tenant garden.

In order to continue operating the urban farm, the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development also requires a minor amendment to the PD 1135 to allow for a farming use in this location. The amendment is expected to constitute a minor amendment or minor change and should not require the approval of City Council.

The terms of the Urban Farm and Tenant Garden license agreements will be five (5) years each with the option to renew, for an additional 5 years, subject to HUD approval. Additional terms will include programs for CHA residents including monthly no-cost food distribution, designated spaces for CHA residents to participate in the on-site workforce development program, along with opportunities for CHA youth to participate at their young urban farmers program through After School Matters

The Legends South urban farm is home to the CBG Windy City Harvest certificate program and a farm incubator program. These initiatives provide important community benefits, including supporting efforts to reduce food insecurity by providing monthly food distribution to Legends South residents. Most urban farming trainees at the Legends South Urban Farm and Community Garden are Chicagoans from the south and west sides who have been previously involved in the justice system. Resident gardeners using the tenant garden also received support from CBG through its Windy City Harvest program which provides residents with training and materials to harvest sustainable agricultural produce.

The locations of the urban farm and the resident garden are not proposed for redevelopment in the near-term. These urban agriculture activities, which also support residents with food security and other community benefits, are recommended as a valuable interim-use while development efforts for the site advance over time.

Respectfully Submitted:



Matthew Brewer
Operating Chairman



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RESOLUTION NO. 2026-CHA-12

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Housing Authority has reviewed the Board Letter dated March 17, 2026, entitled "Authorization to enter into license agreements at Legends South for a tenant garden at 31 W. 45th Street and an urban farm at 4412-4436 S. Dearborn Street, and to submit a Planned Development amendment to ensure zoning compliance."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY:

THAT, the Operating Chairman, or his designee, negotiate and execute license agreements for a tenant garden at 31 W. 45th Street and an urban farm at 4412-4436 S. Dearborn Street

THAT, the Operating Chairman, or his designee, submit a Planned Development amendment application to the City of Chicago to ensure the tenant garden and urban farm conforms with City of Chicago zoning;

THAT, the Operating Chairman, or his designee, execute and deliver such other documents and perform such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement the foregoing.




James Matanky
Vice Chairman
Chicago Housing Authority