

# **HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA**

**REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS**

**DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2017**

**REGARDING: AUTHORIZATION OF LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH NEW LENS  
URBAN MENTORING SOCIETY FOR USE OF 776 AND 771 SELBY  
AVENUE, DISTRICT 8, WARD**

## **Requested Board Action**

Authorization to approve a license agreement with New Lens Urban Mentoring Society for use of 776 and 771 Selby Avenue.

## **Background**

On September 27, 1995, in resolution 95-9/27-2, the Board of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (“HRA”) approved a lease with Walker West Music Academy for the purpose of creating a community garden and outdoor performance space on vacant HRA-owned property located at 776 and 771 Selby Avenue (“Property”). Walker West has since relocated to a nearby facility, is no longer directly adjacent to the Property, and hasn’t programed the space for years.

In March of 2017, Council Member Thao’s office convened a meeting of stakeholders in the neighborhood to discuss the future of the now unused Property. During this meeting New Lens Urban Mentoring Society (“New Lens”) emerged as a party interested in resuming programing of gardens and community events in the space. New Lens is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to improve the quality of life for black males by providing culturally-congruent, multi-generational mentoring to address mental, physical, and social development.” This proposal was met with universal support from the stakeholders in attendance.

New Lens subsequently applied for and received a Neighborhood STAR grant to support the programing of gardens and community events on the parcel. By resolution 17-1005, the City Council approved a grant of \$46,520 to support overall project costs of \$105,520. The license agreement contemplated herein will last seven years, granting New Lens the necessary site-control required by STAR guidelines to implement their plans for a community garden and event programing.

**Budget Action**

No Budget Action is being requested. The license agreement does not include a fee.

**Future Action**

No future action is needed.

**Public Purpose**

The license agreement will allow for the creation of a community garden and event space for the neighborhood on vacant HRA-owned parcels, and provide mentoring opportunities for neighborhood youth.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval of a license agreement with New Lens Urban Mentoring Society for HRA-owned parcels at 771-776 Selby Avenue in Summit University District 8.

**Sponsored by: Commissioner Thao**

**Staff:** Joe Spencer 266-6703

**Attachments**

- **Map**
- **District 8 Profile**