

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
121 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois in Council Chambers
Regular Meeting
June 10, 2025 at 1:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL

The Community Development Commission (CDC) Chairperson Hatten-Butler called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and then undertook a call of the roll to establish the presence of a quorum.

Present (7)

Gwendolyn Hatten-Butler, Chair
Latasha Thomas, Vice Chair
Grace Chan-McKibben, Secretary
Ciere Boatright, DPD Commissioner
Dwight Curtis
Leslie Davis
Ronald Milsap

Absent (5)

Robert Buford
Jacqueline Gomez
Cornelius Griggs
Terrance Johnson
John Zayas

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The CDC provided an opportunity for members of the public to submit written statements up to twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting through the CDC email; written public statements are on kept file with the Department of Planning and Development. The CDC provided a period for members of the public to provide verbal statements limited to 3 minutes per person.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 13 MEETING

Chair Hatten-Butler moved passage of this item by the same roll call vote previously used to establish quorum.

Approved 6-0-1

Yay: Thomas, Chan-McKibben, Boatright, Curtis, Davis, Milsap
No: None
Abstain: Hatten-Butler

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. CLARK/MONTROSE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA (WARD 47)

Request for the Commission to grant authority to the Department of Planning and Development to negotiate a redevelopment agreement with The Black Ensemble Theater Corporation for the redevelopment of the property located at 4450 N. Clark Street in the Clark/Montrose Redevelopment Project Area, and for the Commission to recommend to the City Council the designation of The Black Ensemble Theater Corporation as Developer.

Beth McGuire

25-CDC-05

Chair Hatten-Butler moved passage of this item by the same roll call vote previously used to establish quorum.

Approved 6-0-1

Yay: Hatten-Butler, Thomas, Chan-McKibben, Boatright, Curtis, Davis

No: None

Abstain: Milsap

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hatten-Butler moved to adjourn by the same roll call vote previously used to establish quorum.

Meeting adjourned at 1:21

1 MEETING
2 OF THE
3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
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10 City Hall - Council Chambers
11 121 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois

12 Tuesday, June 10, 2025
13 1:00 o'clock p.m.
14

15 PRESENT:

16 GWENDOLYN HATTEN BUTLER, CHAIRWOMAN
LATASHA THOMAS, VICE CHAIR
17 GRACE CHAN McKIBBEN, SECRETARY
CIERE BOATRIGHT
18 DWIGHT CURTIS
LESLIE DAVIS
19 RONALD MILSAP
20
21
22

23 Reported by: Nick D. Bowen
24

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Good afternoon, and 2 welcome -- good afternoon, and welcome to the 3 June 10th, 2025 regular meeting of the Community 4 Development Commission of Chicago. 5 I am Gwendolyn Hatten Butler, 6 Chairwoman of the CDC. Today's meeting is being 7 held at City Hall Council Chambers, and it's also 8 being streamed by the Department of Planning and 9 Development. 10 The agenda for today's meeting was 11 posted on June 5th, 2025 both on the CDC website 12 and physically at City Hall. 13 I will now call to order the 14 June 10th, 2025 meeting of the Community 15 Development Commission with a call of the roll. 16 Commissioners, when your name is called, please 17 respond by saying "present." Please note this vote 18 will be used to establish the roll call vote for 19 subsequent items. 20 Vice Chair Latasha Thomas. 21 COMMISSIONER THOMAS: Present. 22 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Secretary Grace Chan 23 McKibben. 24 COMMISSIONER CHAN McKIBBEN: Present.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 submit written statements to the Commission via 2 email. There were no written statements from the 3 public received by the Department of Planning and 4 Development prior to the established deadline of 24 5 hours prior to the scheduled start of the meeting. 6 At this time we will begin the 7 verbal public comment period of today's meeting. 8 Speakers were able to sign up to speak prior to the 9 meeting and will be called in the order they 10 arrived. During this public comment period, each 11 speaker is limited to three minutes to allow time 12 for as many speakers as possible. We ask that each 13 speaker keep their comments relevant to today's -- 14 to items on today's agenda. 15 Bailey, do we have any speakers that 16 are signed up? Okay. We don't have any speakers 17 that have signed up to speak today, so the public 18 comment period of today's meeting is now officially 19 over. 20 The first item on our agenda 21 requests approval of the minutes from our previous 22 meeting held May 13, 2025. The Commissioners have 23 had an opportunity to review the minutes, and if 24 there are no corrections, I move passage of this</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: DPD Commissioner Ciere 2 Boatright. 3 COMMISSIONER BOATRIGHT: Present. 4 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Commissioner Buford. 5 (No response.) 6 Commissioner Curtis. 7 COMMISSIONER CURTIS: Present. 8 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Commissioner Davis. 9 COMMISSIONER DAVIS: Present. 10 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Commissioner Gomez. 11 (No response.) 12 Commissioner Griggs. 13 (No response.) 14 Commissioner Johnson. 15 (No response.) 16 Commissioner Milsap. 17 COMMISSIONER MILSAP: Present. 18 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Commissioner Zayas. 19 (No response.) 20 Thank you, Commissioners. We have a 21 quorum. 22 At this time we will begin the 23 verbal public comment period of the meeting. 24 Members of the public were able to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 item by the same roll call vote previously used to 2 establish quorum. 3 Are there any corrections or 4 objections? 5 Please note that the Chair, 6 Gwendolyn Hatten Butler, was not present at the 7 meeting and will abstain from the vote. 8 (No response.) 9 Hearing no further changes, the 10 motion is approved. 11 Commissioners, for the first and 12 only item of new business on today's agenda, the 13 Department of Planning and Development is 14 requesting the Commission to grant authority to the 15 Department of Planning and Development to negotiate 16 a redevelopment agreement with The Black Ensemble 17 Theater Corporation for the redevelopment of the 18 property located at 4450 North Clark Street in the 19 Clark/Montrose Redevelopment Area, and for the 20 Commission to recommend to the City Council the 21 designation of The Black Ensemble Theater 22 Corporation as developer. 23 Beth McGuire will provide a brief 24 description of this request on behalf of the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 Department of Planning and Development. Thank you, 2 Beth. 3 MS. McGUIRE: Good afternoon, Chairwoman 4 Butler and members of the Commission. For the 5 record, my name is Beth McGuire, project manager 6 with the Department of Planning and Development. 7 With me today I have representatives 8 from the development team. I have Ms. Jackie 9 Taylor, president of The Black Ensemble Theater 10 Corporation; Kris Nesbitt, vice president of 11 planning; Ann Moroney, the TIF consultant from 12 Johnson Research; Liz Butler, the attorney from 13 Taft Law; and Jimmy Akintonde from Ujamaa, the 14 general contractor. They are here to answer any 15 questions you may have. 16 The resolution before you requests 17 a recommendation to the City Council for the 18 designation of The Black Ensemble Theater 19 Corporation as the developer for the Black Ensemble 20 Studio Theater project and the authority for the 21 Department of Planning and Development to negotiate 22 a redevelopment agreement with the developer. 23 The proposed project is located at 24 4450 North Clark in the Uptown community area,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 generated by all of the productions. They also 2 partner with Chicago Public Schools and community 3 organizations to provide youth programming. 4 This slide shows the unimproved 5 space which is currently not usable. The 6 construction work to be performed will turn this 7 5,000 square foot space into a smaller black box 8 studio theater seating 150 people and will also be 9 used as rehearsal space. 10 This project entails the build-out 11 of approximately 5,000 square feet of space above 12 the parking garage. The second floor space will be 13 divided into the studio theater of 3100 square feet 14 and a rehearsal room of 1800 square feet. 15 Significant work needs to occur to make this space 16 usable. 17 This shows the space upon 18 completion; the first picture is the space that 19 will be developed into a rehearsal room, and the 20 second picture shows a play being performed in the 21 new studio theater. 22 Here we have the project budget. 23 The City intends to provide the developer with TIF 24 assistance in an amount not to exceed \$2,434,955,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 47th Ward, and the Clark/Montrose TIF district. 2 The project is located on North 3 Clark Street between Sunnyside and Montrose 4 Avenues. The block contains a variety of small 5 businesses, one bar and grill, and a shuttered 6 restaurant. The building across the street was 7 recently purchased by Black Ensemble Theater, or 8 BET as we will refer to them throughout the 9 presentation, as part of their future planned 10 redevelopment of the block. The area is well 11 served by public transportation with several bus 12 lines and the Wilson Avenue Red Line stop nearby. 13 This slide shows an exterior view of 14 the existing BET building. BET originally opened 15 in 1976 in a nearby space on North Beacon Avenue, 16 but in 2011 opened up this larger, improved 17 theater. Unfortunately, a portion of the space 18 remained unfinished due to funding constraints. 19 That unimproved space is the subject of today's CDC 20 action. 21 BET has been a community anchor 22 for almost 50 years, with over 150 performances 23 annually, drawing visitors to the Uptown community. 24 There are 18 full-time employees and 100 positions</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 or 49 percent of the total project cost. The 2 remainder of the project funding is coming from a 3 state grant, a federal grant, and an Illinois Arts 4 Council grant. All grants have been secured. The 5 majority of project funds will be spent on hard 6 construction costs. 7 The development team is comprised of 8 the following members: The Black Ensemble Theater 9 Corporation; Morris Architect Planners, who 10 designed the BET building back in 2011; Ujamaa will 11 serve as the general contractor, though they were 12 not part of the 2011 project; and Liz Butler of 13 Taft Law Firm has been serving as their legal 14 counsel. 15 The City intends to provide the 16 developer with TIF assistance in an amount not to 17 exceed \$2,434,955, or 49 percent of their total 18 project cost. The City funds will be provided from 19 areawide increment in the Clark/Montrose TIF and 20 will be provided in four payments during the 21 construction period. The payments will be made at 22 30, 60, 90, and 100 percent of completion. 23 The project will have ongoing 24 operations and occupancy covenants that ensure the</p>

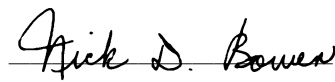
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 developer will continuously operate the project in 2 the manner agreed upon with the City. The typical 3 construction compliance requirements for prevailing 4 wage, M/WBE, and City residency will be applied as 5 well.</p> <p>6 This expansion will strengthen the 7 Uptown theater district and allow BET to continue 8 to serve as a community anchor. The theater 9 patrons will frequent area restaurants and other 10 businesses. The project is additive to the goals 11 and objectives of the Clark/Montrose TIF District 12 plan and is also complementary to the nearby Uptown 13 Square District, which is home to other theaters 14 such as the Uptown Theater and Rivera Theater.</p> <p>15 The Studio Theater space will also 16 allow for an expansion of the youth programming 17 that BET conducts in partnership with Chicago 18 Public Schools and community organizations. There 19 is programming during the school year in theater 20 production as well as their summer programming 21 where young people are hired as interns and 22 trainees.</p> <p>23 The Studio Theater will also 24 increase the number of productions staged annually</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Thank you, Beth. 2 Is Alderman Martin or anyone from 3 their office here?</p> <p>4 MS. McGUIRE: They were not able to attend.</p> <p>5 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Okay. Thank you. 6 I understand from the department 7 that Jackie Taylor from The Black Ensemble Theater 8 Corporation would like to make a brief statement. 9 Is that correct?</p> <p>10 MS. McGUIRE: Yes.</p> <p>11 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Thank you. Welcome.</p> <p>12 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. Thank you for 13 allowing me to speak. I just wanted to tell you 14 that even though Black Ensemble Theater was started 15 in 1976, if you count the years, I just want you to 16 know that I was 13. And I'm sticking to that 17 forever.</p> <p>18 Black Ensemble's mission is to 19 eradicate racism, and we did in all kinds of shapes 20 and forms. We have impacted since our beginning in 21 1976 more than 200,000 young people. We have 22 changed their lives, and we have put them on the 23 road of success.</p> <p>24 We believe that with this theater</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 from 150 to more than 180 as there will be more 2 theater space and additional rehearsal facilities. 3 There will be an increase in the seasonal employees 4 due to the greater number of performances.</p> <p>5 DPD has thoroughly reviewed the 6 proposed project, the qualifications of the 7 development team, the financial structure of the 8 project, and the project's conformance with the 9 Redevelopment Area Plan, and DPD recommends that 10 the CDC recommend to the City Council the 11 designation of The Black Ensemble Theater 12 Corporation as developer for the Black Ensemble 13 Studio Theater project.</p> <p>14 DPD also requests that the 15 Commission provide DPD with the authority to 16 negotiate, execute, and deliver on the City's 17 behalf a redevelopment agreement with The Black 18 Ensemble Theater Corporation for the project.</p> <p>19 Alderman Martin was briefed on the 20 project and the use of TIF funds and has provided a 21 letter of support for the project.</p> <p>22 Thank you for your consideration. 23 The development team and I are here to answer any 24 questions you may have.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 additionally we'll be able to impact at least 40 2 percent of new students, we'll be able to put on 3 productions that help to bring people together, 4 people of all kinds, and it's a vehicle for Black 5 Ensemble Theater to live forever. Since I can't, I 6 got to put in place what can. And that's my story, 7 and I'm sticking to it.</p> <p>8 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Thank you so much. 9 Commissioners, do you have any 10 questions for Beth McGuire regarding this request 11 by the Department of Planning and Development? 12 (No response.)</p> <p>13 If there are no further questions or 14 comments regarding the matter before us, I will 15 call this item to a vote.</p> <p>16 The resolution before us, the 17 Department of Planning and Development is seeking 18 the Commission to grant authority to the Department 19 of Planning and Development to negotiate a 20 redevelopment agreement with The Black Ensemble 21 Theater Corporation for the redevelopment of the 22 property located at 4450 North Clark Street in the 23 Clark/Montrose Redevelopment Project Area, and for 24 the Commission to recommend to the City Council the</p>

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1 designation of The Black Ensemble Theater
 2 Corporation as developer.
 3 If there are no objections, I move
 4 passage of this item by the same roll call vote
 5 previously used to establish quorum.
 6 Let the record reflect that
 7 Commissioner Milsap is abstaining on this item.
 8 Are there any objections or further
 9 abstentions?
 10 (No response).
 11 Hearing none, the motion is
 12 approved. Thank you.
 13 MS. McGUIRE: Thank you, Commissioners.
 14 CHAIRPERSON BUTLER: Commissioners, that was
 15 our first and last item on today's agenda. If
 16 there no further questions or comments, I move to
 17 adjourn the June 10th, 2025 meeting of the
 18 Community Development Commission by the same roll
 19 call vote previously used to establish quorum.
 20 (No response.)
 21 Hearing no objections, we are
 22 adjourned.
 23 (The proceedings adjourned at
 24 1:15 p.m.)

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 3 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
 4 I, Nick D. Bowen, do hereby certify that
 5 I reported in shorthand the proceedings of said
 6 hearing as appears from my stenographic notes so
 7 taken and transcribed under my direction.
 8
 9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
 10 hand and affixed my seal of office at Chicago,
 11 Illinois, this 24th day of June 2025.

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 14 Illinois CSR No. 084-001661
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