

February 08, 2014

For More Information:
Rachel Fee, 917 596 7665



PRESS RELEASE

Housing First! Commends Mayor de Blasio and Deputy Mayor Glen on the Appointment for Housing and Planning Agencies

Affordable Housing Advocates Support The Remarkable And Experienced Leaders In Affordable Housing And Community Planning Selected For Top Administration Posts

New York, NY- Housing First! applauds Mayor de Blasio and Deputy Mayor Glen for selecting experienced and proven leaders for the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Housing Development Corporation, the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of City Planning.

“Housing First! congratulates Vicki Been on her appointment as HPD Commissioner and looks forward to working with her in this new role. Vicki’s research at NYU’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy has provided the industry with thoughtful insight to solutions addressing the city’s affordable housing crisis. Vicki is more than capable of providing the leadership required to ensure the Mayor’s 200,000-unit affordable housing plan receives the resources needed for successful implementation,” said Co-Chair Todd A. Gomez, Senior Vice President, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

“Gary Rodney is also an excellent choice for President of the Housing Development Corporation. He has been an outstanding leader in the preservation of affordable housing and has shown his commitment to helping communities in projects like the troubled Ocelot buildings in the Bronx,” said Co-Chair Todd A. Gomez

“Shola Olatoye is a dynamic and energetic choice to bring new life to NYCHA and address the agency’s organizational and budgetary challenges. Her experience in affordable housing finance and community development will be an asset to NYCHA, and to the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who live in public housing. In all her roles – at Enterprise, as a Housing First! Executive Committee member, and as a Supportive Housing Network board member, Shola has focused on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including homeless families, the disabled and rent-burdened seniors. She is the ideal choice to bring New York’s public housing into the 21st century,” said Ted Houghton, Housing First! Co-Chair and Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

“Vicki Been is recognized nationally as thought-leader on affordable housing and urban development – she’s the person the affordable housing community turns to when they want to understand housing issue and how to solve it. She will bring a progressive and pragmatic vision to the Mayor’s ambitious housing development plan, which will be the largest in the nation, and

few people are better equipped to make the most of the country's fourth largest Section 8 rent subsidy program or direct HPD's robust code enforcement bureau. She is someone who really cares about New York and its communities. More important, she knows how to get things done. This will be evident when she puts her stamp on Mayor de Blasio's housing initiative," said Ted Houghton, Housing First! Co-Chair and Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

Equally important to the development and preservation of affordable housing is the vision provided by the new leader of the City's Planning Commission.

"Carl Weisbrod is exactly the kind of visionary we need at the helm of City Planning. Mayor de Blasio plans to capture untapped value from air rights and density bonuses to build more affordable housing. We need a creative and thoughtful leader like Carl Weisbrod to make this a reality, while balancing the various needs of neighborhoods in a community-focused approach," said Sydelle Knepper, Housing First! Member and CEO of SKA Marin.

"This is a stellar team to implement Mayor de Blasio's ambitious 200,000-unit affordable housing plan to make New York a more equitable city, especially for low-income families. I have long-admired Vicki Been's work and think she is a great choice to facilitate a shift in housing policy at HPD-- one that will provide a better return for taxpayers. I am really excited about Shola Olatoye leading NYCHA. She is really focused on changing outcomes for low-income families and doesn't stand for business as usual. I think she will be able to improve NYCHA's organizational challenges and think creatively about their financial problems. I am confident that Shola will develop an infill plan that NYCHA residents will be comfortable with while also maximizing opportunities for affordable housing," said Rachel Fee, Housing First! Coordinator.

Housing First! is a broad and diverse affordable housing coalition, unlike any other in New York. Founded in 2001, disparate community, business, labor, civic and religious organizations of that time successfully created a consensus plan that influenced Mayor Bloomberg to commit to the celebrated New Housing Marketplace Plan. In 2013, Housing First! issued the influential report, *Building Stronger 2014-2021*. The comprehensive plan represents an informed consensus of affordable housing leaders and knowledgeable stakeholders. The group plans to work with the de Blasio administration to adopt recommendations in their plan to increase affordability, reduce homelessness and expand economic opportunity through capital investment in affordable housing.