

# *City Life Community Builders*



August 24, 2020

Dear Baltimore City Council,

Thank you for your continued support of the CHAP Historic Tax Credit. I am writing to make you aware of how important this program is to my business, and how it is contributing to the Renaissance occurring in distressed East Baltimore communities

I develop the majority of my single-family houses in East Baltimore, near Johns Hopkins Hospital. These neighborhoods have suffered severe blight and housing vacancies for decades. The Baltimore City Historic Property Tax Credit allows my buyers to move into a renovated house and afford the taxes, while allowing me to charge enough for the house to make it profitable to develop it. Analyzing Baltimore City's 2.36% property tax rate vs. 1.1% in the surrounding counties, the CHAP program allows new homeowners to lay their roots in Baltimore City and pay comparable property tax to someone living in a surrounding county for their first ten years. The quality control of the building materials I must use makes the neighborhood look nicer and assures the property will stay intact for many decades for the city to get a nice return on its investment.

Each time I successfully rehabilitate a house and sell it to a new city resident it allows me to buy a new vacant house and repeat the process. This keeps my local employees working and also supports local city businesses. The new homeowner also supports the same local businesses and creates jobs for those in the neighborhood.

Just today, I settled on a house that we sold to a young professional working locally. He stated at settlement that he couldn't have even considered becoming a homeowner in the Oliver Community of East Baltimore, or anyplace in Baltimore City, without the CHAP tax credit. Last year, we sold the home right next door to a young family who stated the same.

Thank you for reading my letter and for your support.

Sincerely Yours,

Ellen Burke  
Executive Director