



## **BELDEN SAWYER TENANT ASSOCIATION**

January 15, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHICAGO – 33 Realty has once again backpedaled on an offer made to tenants, continuing a pattern of mismanagement that began the moment the company took control of a Logan Square apartment building last month.

On December 30, 2024, 33 Realty property manager Sarah McAllister indicated that the owners of the building where members reside, at the corner of Belden and Sawyer Avenues, intended to raise rent by three to five percent, with corresponding renovations which would last three to five days.

But on January 14, residents of the building received notice that rent would be raised by roughly twenty-five percent, and will no doubt be raised even further once extensive renovations—far more than the three to five days of work mentioned by McAllister—take place. Following the expiration of their current leases, residents may now pay inflated rents to stay in their homes until October, which for some tenants represents just a one-month lease extension.

Residents were blindsided in December when 33 Realty assumed management of the building. The property is home to many long-term residents, including individuals who have lived in the building for over twenty years. On Christmas Eve, residents began to be notified that their leases would not be renewed and that they must move out to make way for renovations—news which came as a shock to tenants during the holidays.

33 Realty violated the Chicago sanitation code in December by failing to provide dumpsters, and was cited by the Department of Streets and Sanitation as a result. In addition, it violated the Chicago Fair Notice Ordinance on Christmas Eve by failing to provide 120 days notice of lease non-renewal to long-term tenants. The company has also failed to provide snow removal, and some residents are not currently receiving mail due to a problem with the front door that the company has yet to fix.

“The extension until October may appear as a concession,” said resident David Amato, “but many landlords make similar offers after purchasing buildings just to line up the lease expirations. It’s really an insulting offer. Our members are working-class Chicagoans who cannot afford an outrageous rent increase. We are still being displaced from our homes—just on a slightly longer timeline.”

“Instead of kicking us out today,” said one tenant, “they’re extorting us today and kicking us out tomorrow.”

“This company claims to be serving the Logan Square community,” said resident Tory deMartelly, “but actual servants of the community look like the people who live in this building, the people who this company is pushing out: plumbers, doulas, warehouse workers, and service workers. We are volunteers, we are active in our community, and *we* work to serve our neighbors.”

BSTA members intend to stay in their homes, and are prepared to negotiate with management to that end. They have agreed upon the following asks of 33 Realty and the building’s owner, 2257 N. Sawyer LLC:

- Annual lease renewals, in accordance with the precedent set by the previous owner
- Reasonable rent, to be negotiated with the tenant union
- No renovations, as the building’s units are in excellent condition

33 Realty was founded by Andrew Millard and was recently acquired by California conglomerate Poplar Homes, which has extensive ties to Google and venture capital firms. Chicago is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis exacerbated by the practices of companies like 33 Realty.

Illinois State Representative Will Guzzardi (D-39), who represents areas of Logan Square, when asked to comment on BSTA members’ fight to stay in their homes, said that “I strongly support tenants’ rights to organize to demand safe living conditions and resist rent gouging and wrongful displacement. Investment banks and hedge funds continue disrupting the market and hurting families by buying up housing and treating it like a financial instrument. Our community will organize to fight back against this displacement, and I’ll keep working at the legislative level for protections for our neighbors and all Illinoisans from this kind of predatory activity.”

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For more information, contact Tory deMartelly 