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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHICAGO – A group of tenants in a Logan Square apartment building recently purchased by 33 Realty Management voted Thursday to form a tenant union, the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association. BSTA was formed after tenants learned that their previous landlord, Bill Houck, had sold the building to 33 Realty earlier in the week. 33 Realty was recently acquired by California-based Poplar Homes. Sean Story, of Chicago, was named Executive Vice President of Multifamily at Poplar Homes earlier this year.

“I’ve lived here for over ten years and in the neighborhood most of my life,” one resident said. “This is my home and it’s a shame to see another historic and beautiful part of this city being sacrificed for profit at the expense of people.”

“My family and I have lived in this building for almost 8 years, and I work in the neighborhood,” said another resident. “We are shocked at the lack of communication regarding the sale of the building and the new property owners and management. We have leases that are not yet expired. We are humans living in this building and no one has tried to explain to us what’s going on.”

In October, City Council passed the Northwest Side Housing Preservation Ordinance, which would have given tenants the right to secure financing to purchase the building outright. However, implementation of the ordinance was delayed, excluding residents from this possibility.

The building’s dumpster disappeared as soon as 33 Realty took over, leading to confusion among residents. A text message from the new owners instructed residents to “NOT disperse the trash on the side of the road,” though no alternative was provided. Some residents took to piling garbage in their apartments. The Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation subsequently issued a citation to 33 Realty for violating the city’s sanitation code.

Some residents have lived in the building, located at the corner of Belden and Sawyer Avenues, for decades, and were informed by 33 Realty Management that they would need to move out at the expiration of their current leases to make way for interior renovations.

"I was incredibly sad to learn through indirect means that this building I love and call home was under the management of 33 Realty," said resident Tory deMartelly. "A lot of people right now are feeling exceptionally powerless while large, faceless corporations buy out their most basic needs, including housing. The power of forming community in response to this cannot be overstated. As the old adage goes: don't get mad; organize. I say do both."

Communication to residents has been spotty. Last week, tenants learned from an unsigned letter posted in the building lobbies that Houck's sale to 33 Realty had closed. No formal, written documentation aside from the flyers has been provided to residents. The only other written communication has been a text message that not all residents received. Lacking clarity from Houck or 33 Realty, tenants have been sharing crucial information with one another, including that they will be expected to move out at the end of their current leases, information that was not widely shared with tenants.

"I've lived in Chicago for over 25 years now in several neighborhoods and many, many apartments that were less than satisfactory," said one resident. "When I saw this building, I knew in an instant it was the place I'd call home. After living here for over 14 years, I'm shocked not only by the selling of my building, but also the lack of communication and basic respect from 33 Realty. I'm deeply saddened that our community is being taken apart piece by piece. And what makes Logan Square a spectacular, unique, friendly, beautiful neighborhood is being undone by groups like 33 Realty."

"I've lived at 2255 N. Sawyer for the last 13 years," said another resident. "It's my home. This is the longest I've lived anywhere in my entire life and I love it. I don't want to leave. What this company is doing feels criminal to me."

For further information, contact Tory deMartelly 