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Urban Edge Announces Leadership Transition

BOSTON, MA -- Urban Edge's Board of Directors announced today that President Mossik Hacobian will be stepping down from his leadership position at the end of this year and that chief executive officer Chrystal Kornegay will assume the consolidated position of president and CEO. The leadership transition is occurring on schedule at the end of a three-year transition period outlined by the Board in January of 2008.



Mr. Hacobian, known to everyone as Mossik, has served the Jamaica Plain- and Roxbury-based community development corporation since 1977 and became executive director when the organization's founder, Ronald Hafer, stepped down in

1988. Ms. Kornegay, who goes by Chrystal, joined Urban Edge in 1999 and served as director of real estate development and deputy director before being appointed CEO in 2008.

Urban Edge will be guided by its strategic plan, which focuses on continuing to implement existing projects and programs for the first few years of Chrystal's tenure as President and CEO. After the transition Mossik plans to remain active on a part-time basis in Urban Edge projects as needed and to pursue other activities in the community development field.

Given Mossik's long tenure, his identity is inextricably tied to Urban Edge. But Mossik has always credited the scores of others — Board and staff members, partners and supporters — with the organization's successes and comprehensive approach to its community work.

"Mossik's dedication will be sorely missed," said Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "Mossik creates affordable housing. He just makes it happen -- even in difficult times."

Ken Wade, chief executive officer of NeighborWorks America, said Mossik's contribution to the neighborhoods showed that, "Urban Edge served locally and contributed to the broader community development field. He is recognized as a national leader in that respect."

When Maria Quiroga, a family law lawyer and long time resident of Boston's Egleston Square neighborhood, was Chair of Urban Edge's board of directors in 1977, she helped hire Mossik. "Little did we know the impact he would have," she said. "Mossik's vision for building affordable housing and stable neighborhoods and his tenacity in obtaining the resources needed to realize this vision have benefited Boston residents, shaping the landscape of neighborhoods into safe, stable areas for families and businesses to thrive in," she said. "Mossik has led Urban Edge's growth and development into a nationally recognized and respected innovative community development organization."

Anne L. McKinnon, current Chair of the board, called Mossik “a leader in working with others to build community from the ground up.” He “always has his eye on the desired outcome and empowering everyone around him to help make it happen,” she said.

"Mossik Hacobian exhibited an unbridled enthusiasm, dedication and passion for strengthening communities and making them places of opportunity for people from all walks of life and on all income levels," said Tina Brooks, undersecretary for Housing and Community Development in the administration of Gov. Deval Patrick. "I will always value the unique way in which he continually challenged me and the rest of the public sector to be the very best we could be."

Hubie Jones, social entrepreneur and dean emeritus of the Boston University School of Social Work, called Mossik “just an extraordinary community developer.”

“What has been produced at Urban Edge under his leadership is just absolutely stunning,” Jones said. “He’s done this work by empowering communities, and he really cares deeply. He has a personal mission to change community and the world, to deal with inequities of all kinds.”

Mossik oversaw Urban Edge’s production of affordable housing and retail and community facilities — 1,350 units of housing and 81,500 square feet of retail and community facilities. Tom Davis, Vice Chair of Urban Edge’s Board and Co-Chair of Jackson Square Partners, said Urban Edge’s vision for Egleston Square was realized block by block, with Mossik beating the drum for Jackson Square before many people even knew where it was.

“His determination to explore every option for Jackson Square mobilized many stakeholders, but most significantly he built a team of partners that together sustained the long effort to make a new Jackson Square possible,” Davis said.

“Over his extraordinary career, Mossik has taught us what community development is all about,” said Doug Foy, a former head of the Conservation Law Foundation who served as a senior secretary for housing and transportation in Massachusetts state government. “And in the process he has helped to change the face of Boston and its neighborhoods. In Mossik's world, cities have always been the answer. His efforts

have created housing, environmental, energy, and transportation solutions for the neighborhoods that are models for the country.”

Joe Kriesberg, president of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, noted that Mossik was an early leader in the field. “The record is there and will be a legacy in the city and neighborhoods for a long time,” he said. “Mossik was a unique leader, innovator, collaborator and advocate who was able to both see the big picture and work at the grass-roots level.”

Over the last 11 years Urban Edge has relied on Chrystal to lead teams that produced its major development projects and designed and implemented its primary programs. As director of real estate development, she oversaw \$50 million in development — more than 500 housing units and 20,000 square feet of commercial and program space.

Chrystal led Urban Edge during Mossik’s three-month sabbatical as a Barr Fellow in 2005, and as deputy director she provided strategic direction for property management, community programs, asset management, community building and organizing as well as real estate development. As Urban Edge’s CEO since 2008, Chrystal has reported directly to the Board and has executive responsibility for all aspects of organizational management. She hits the ground running when she steps into the president and CEO position in January.

Once a planning committee decides on the best way to thank Mossik for his three decades of service, Urban Edge will announce a date and venue and will extend invitations for a celebration of his long tenure, hard work, and many projects completed.

The Mission of Urban Edge is to help develop and sustain stable, healthy and diverse communities. Urban Edge accomplishes this mission through the development and preservation of high quality, affordable rental and ownership housing and educational and recreational facilities and through programs that increase opportunities for families and individuals to own or rent homes they can afford, to improve their quality of life and to build generational wealth. Green Housing at Urban Edge (GreenHUE), a

strategic effort to design and implement green affordable housing development and operations at Urban Edge, is an important part of this mission.

Urban Edge is one of 240 member organizations nationwide that make up NeighborWorks® America. Together, these organizations are committed to excellence in community development and serve more than 2,500 urban, suburban and rural communities throughout America.

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