When asked what drove him to purchase with the CLCLT, Enzi Tanner confidently responded “Specifically, the affordability but also the struggle with gentrification. I knew that the CLCLT would prevent a house from falling into gentrification.”

Gentrification. A term familiar to the CLCLT and an issue which the organization works hard to combat though on a much smaller scale than what is currently needed, as research suggests. A team of graduate students from Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota has been researching this issue in depth. Ed Goetz, Director of CURA, shared preliminary results show that households right at area median income are finding fewer places to consider when looking for affordable housing (Ed Goetz, Director of CURA, Star Tribune, November 28, 2016).

Unfortunately, research also shows that despite efforts made by the affordable housing industry to combat the issue, gentrification is accelerating in the City of Minneapolis. Enzi points out “Sometimes gentrification isn’t visible. You have landlords that are able to bring in those from outside the community by charging higher rent…Or when you see a grocery store going in where [the products] are higher-priced. You will also see that no one from the neighborhood works there and slowly homes become more expensive.”

Enzi works to combat gentrification at the grassroots level. “Combating gentrification on a large scale is hard, but I spread the word as much as I can.” This includes Enzi candidly asking friends who are looking to buy homes if they are looking at specific homes because they are less expensive or if it’s because something about the neighborhood draws them. Enzi also continues to work with his realtor, Joseph Adams, in helping communities of color to get more interested in homeownership and to “get the word out” that it is possible to own their own homes. Enzi goes on to explain, “Even though I knew that I wouldn’t make a huge profit if I ever sell my home, the affordability would be passed on to another buyer.” This idea supports Enzi’s own conviction of “not pushing communities out” and helping communities of color to develop a sense of ownership.

This coming year Enzi also plans to become more involved with local politics because he’d like to see a more progressive City Council. Enzi plans to work hard to get more people out to vote, particularly since only City
Community land trusts (CLTs) have been around for less than 50 years, although their roots are much older. The nonprofit organization generally credited with being the first CLT, New Communities, Inc. (NCI), was founded in southwest Georgia in 1969, a product of the Southern Civil Rights Movement. In 1970, NCI purchased over 5,600 acres of farmland in Albany, GA and was the largest tract of African-American farmland of its time. Please join the CLCLT at the Capri Theater on April 20, 2017, for a screening of Arc of Justice, which traces the remarkable journey of New Communities, Inc. Event details available at clclt.org.

Almost a decade later only a handful of CLTs were operational in the United States, and all of them were in rural areas. However, in 1980 the first urban CLT appeared and today there are over 260 CLTs in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The model has begun spreading to other countries as well, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, and France.

There is also wide variation in the kinds of land uses and in the kinds of buildings to which CLTs have been applied. Despite a strategic decision by leaders of the fledgling CLT movement in the early 1980s to focus on single-family homeownership, is not out of reach.

Regardless of the results of the next round of City elections, Enzi is confident he will continue, which will focus on inclusivity and accountability for all. “The safety of a community isn’t about forcing out those who can’t make a higher income. You keep your neighborhood safe by knowing who lives in the neighborhood.” For Enzi this means helping as many of those in the community as possible to understand that homeownership, particularly affordable homeownership, is not out of reach.

A Brief History of Community Land Trusts

Community land trusts (CLTs) have been around for less than 50 years, although their roots are much older. The nonprofit organization generally credited with being the first CLT, New Communities, Inc. (NCI), was founded in southwest Georgia in 1969, a product of the Southern Civil Rights Movement. In 1970, NCI purchased over 5,600 acres of farmland in Albany, GA and was the largest tract of African-American farmland of its time. Please join the CLCLT at the Capri Theater on April 20, 2017, for a screening of Arc of Justice, which traces the remarkable journey of New Communities, Inc. Event details available at clclt.org.

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There is also wide variation in the kinds of land uses and in the kinds of buildings to which CLTs have been applied. Despite a strategic decision by leaders of the fledgling CLT movement in the early 1980s to focus on single-family homeownership, the model can be used— and frequently has been used—in the development and stewardship of other types and tenures of housing, including: multi-unit rentals, limited equity condominiums and cooperatives, and “mobile homes” in resident-controlled parks. CLTs have also been applied to many non-residential projects, including neighborhood parks, community gardens, commercial buildings, community service centers, urban agriculture, and family farms.

Note: The CLCLT continues to focus on homeownership opportunities within Minneapolis but is researching to determine if commercial CLTs are a viable option, and is looking more and more towards investments for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

2017 Day at the Hill

On January 19, 2017, CLCLT staff member, Sheng Vang; Board member, Libby Murphy; and Interim Executive Director, Kris Brogan met with state senators and representatives about Workforce Homeownership Minnesota (WHOM), a community-based, statewide initiative to double the number of current homeownership opportunities offered to working Minnesotans. Along with other homeownership advocates, WHOM was established in 2016 as an initiative to expand funding available for affordable homeownership.

WHOM funding comes from capturing the growth in the mortgage registry and deed transfer taxes, an existing and ongoing source. It is estimated the captured funds will raise $6 to $10 million annually and double workforce homeownership production throughout the State of Minnesota. In addition to increasing opportunities for homeownership, WHOM is projected to have a tremendous economic impact on the State as well. Funding achieved with WHOM is estimated to create 730 new construction jobs; increase state income and sales tax by $3.5 million; increase local property taxes by $730,000; and provide $2.9 million in real estate commissions.

WHOM was allocated $750,000 for a pilot project in the 2016 State Budget. Developers were asked to submit letters of interest to Minnesota Housing. Twenty-seven responses (totaling $6.5 million) were received, demonstrating there is truly a need in Minnesota for more workforce homeownership.

To assist us in this effort, please contact your State senator and representative, share your homeownership story, and ask them to join their peers in supporting the WHOM legislation. Contact information for your representatives can be found at https://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/districtfinder. For more information, please contact Kris Brogan at kris@clclt.org or (612) 594-7147.

Peer Learning Opportunity

In February 2017, the CLCLT hosted Aaron Miriopol, President and CEO of Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) based in Denver, Colorado. The CLCLT and ULC have embarked on a peer learning exchange for 2017 with support from Nexus Community Partners. The “Conversation with Aaron” held on February 3 provided an opportunity for community stakeholders and public policy representatives to learn about ULC’s transit-oriented development work and utilization of the community land trust ground lease to ensure long-term affordability and community ownership of land associated with some developments along Denver’s expanding transit infrastructure. A CLCLT representative and another community member are traveling to Denver in April to delve deeper into ULC’s work while simultaneously offer support and insight to ULC on their new scattered-site housing initiative.

New 2017 CLCLT Homeowners

- Emily Z.
- Diane G.
- Shaleena B.