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Media Contact:
Cristina Pinzon
Stateside Affairs
Tel. 908-447-3964
Email. Cristina@statesideaffairs.com

HACO Executive Dr. Walter McNeil Joins Prominent Speakers at Two Major State Conferences

ORANGE, NJ – August 20, 2019 -- Dr. Walter McNeil, executive director of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange, was invited to be a participant at two, prestigious conferences this fall, the Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development and the New Jersey Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities Conference and Trade Show (NJAHRA).

Although Orange is one of the state's smaller cities, it is leaving a big footprint in modelling the transformative effect of carefully planned and efficiently executed redevelopment. In recent years, HACO has embarked on several ambitious building projects resulting in the conversion of some of the city's worst neighborhoods. Dr. Walter G. Alexander Village I, II, and III is a multi-million-dollar redevelopment that has revitalized the city's central and east wards into safe, affordable housing for working families and senior citizens. Approximately 156 units of townhouses have replaced vacant, dilapidated properties that had been magnets for crime.

Today, those streets are filled with brightly colored townhomes and single-family homes with decorative streetlamps, and gardens, and crime is down by a reported 30 percent. Dr. Walter G. Alexander Village IV is under development and will add another 44 family units. So far, property values have increased, jobs have been created, the local economy has been stimulated, and additional revenue to the city has been produced.

At the conferences, Dr. McNeil will share his decades of experience in public housing administration and public service. He has served as executive director of the Housing Authority

of the City of Orange since 2005 and as president of the Orange Housing Development Corporation,

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HACO Executive Director

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which created Dr. Walter G. Alexander Villages. Previously, Dr. McNeil was the executive director of the City of Plainfield Housing Authority. He has also served his community as a city administrator for Plainfield and as a Union County freeholder. Dr. McNeil holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Bates College and a Master of Public Administration from Kean University. Dr. McNeil received his doctorate from Rutgers University.

At the Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development, set for September 16 and 17, in Atlantic City, Dr. McNeil is among a group of distinguished speakers that includes Lt.Gov. Sheila Oliver and Newark Mayor Ras Baraka. He will participate on a panel with Nana Duncan, founder of the Thatcher Duncan Group; Ricardo Fernandez, City of Passaic business administrator; Karim Hutson, founder, Genesis Companies; and Matthew Reilly, president and CEO, Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development.

The panel will be discussing *New Uses for Old Spaces*, a subject Dr. McNeil knows well. He has been instrumental in renovating dilapidated neighborhoods one ramshackle house and vacant lot at a time. The Governor's Conference is hosted by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and New Jersey Redevelopment Authority.

At the NJAHRA Conference, scheduled September 23 to 25, at Resorts Casino-Hotel also in Atlantic City, Dr. McNeil is the solo presenter at a session entitled *Ethics for Public Housing Authorities*. The conference brings together housing and redevelopment professionals to network and share experiences. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with HUD and other key officials.

About the Orange Housing Authority

The City of Orange Housing Authority works to transform the City of Orange by providing safe, livable and affordable housing that promotes the development of communities. At the Orange Housing Authority, participants are not statistics, they are neighbors. HACO knows the community and tailors programs to better serve the participant's needs. Whether it is a search for

housing, assistance with foreclosure or neighborhood development, the Orange Housing Authority stands ready to offer its services to all residents.

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