



**CHAMORRO LAND TRUST COMMISSION**  
***Kumision Inangokkon Tano' Chamoru***

**PRESS RELEASE NO. 2018-01**  
***The CLTC and Barrigada Heights***  
**October 5, 2018**

As Commissioners of the Chamorro Land Trust, it is very important to us that the beneficiaries of the Chamorro Land Trust (*native Chamorro*, as defined by law), know and understand the current status of the Chamorro Land Trust program.

Over the last five months, the Commission has met seven times to discuss all of the issues that have arisen, initiated with the controversies at Barrigada Heights. Starting with this press release, the Commission will be sharing all that has been discussed at our meetings: the Commission's investigations, findings, decisions and next steps. We think it is important for you to hear it from the Commission directly.

This first press release discusses our investigation and findings for the Barrigada Heights properties.

**Barrigada Heights Chamorro Land Trust Leases and Clearing Activities**

There were 100 leases issued for the Barrigada Heights lots (Tract 9 or Lot 5382) between 1997 and April 2018. The current administration issued 57 leases between the years 2014 to 2018. Of these leases, it was revealed that: 1 lease was issued to a staff member, 3 leases were issued to staff members' relative within the third degree of consanguinity. In addition, news stories noted 2 leases were issued to those the press considered "well-connected" to people in the government. Leases in each case were derived from a December 1995 application.

We conducted an investigation into these leases, along with a review of the entire CLTC program and policies. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Commission could find no wrongdoing by the Director, staff members, their family members or those "well-connected" individuals who have the leases, because they were following the policies in place at the time.

What the Commission did find was that Barrigada Heights was not the main issue as the CLTC initially thought; it was only a part of the bigger issue at hand, which is that the policies of the CLTC have been inconsistent with the existing laws over the last 23 years.

The Commission also evaluated the clearing of the easement at Barrigada Heights by the Department of Public Works (DPW) at the request of the CLTC Administrative Director. The Commission concluded that there was no wrongdoing on the director's part. When GPA had cleared part of the easement, the Director took advantage of that by requesting DPW to clear the rest of the easement in order to reach CLTC land that had been inaccessible since the program started. Clearing the easement provided access, which meant that leases could be issued to those properties

Although there was no wrongdoing found with the staff's actions or the Director's actions at Barrigada Heights, the Commission did find issue with the fact that the Commission was not involved in any of the decisions for leasing or land clearing.

Moving forward, the Commission has made it clear that all decisions and approvals must be made at the Commission level. In addition, the Commission has realized that the existing laws must be amended to ensure that practical policies may be created and followed in the years to come.

The next series of press releases will discuss the policies referred to above that were followed at Barrigada Heights and program-wide; the changes the Commission recommends to the existing laws in order for them to be to be practical and clear for program implementation; and, additional steps the Commission will be taking to ensure that the Chamorro Land Trust is managed and operated in the way it was envisioned.

The Chamorro Land Trust was created to heal the wounds of our *native Chamorros* (as defined by the Act) from generations ago when descendants' land were taken by our island's colonizers. Its implementation has not had the great effect it was meant to, and has perhaps caused more recent wounds among our beneficiaries. The Commission is hopeful that by being completely transparent today and moving forward, we can begin the process of healing and forgiveness that we know must happen among our beneficiaries. Only then can we come together to truly move forward and realize the mission of the Chamorro Land Trust: to return *native Chamorros* to their land to live and farm. The Commission, Administrative Director and staff are committed to realizing this dream.

The Commission's door is always open to those who have concerns with these or other issues. Our next public meeting is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup>, at 1PM, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the ITC Building.

# # # # #

