LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2017

The regular meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on April 13, 2017 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 200 Adams Avenue. Sixth Floor, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:00 am Chairman O'Malley called the meeting to order and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken by George Kelly (member)

Commissioner O'Malley (Chairman) - Present
Henry Deecke – Present
Linda Aebli – Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Present
Steve Pitoniak – Excused

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager, Department of Economic Development and Margaret Piccotti, Assistant to George Kelly.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

There were no public comments on the agenda.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Deeke and seconded by Ms. Aebli to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2017 regular meeting as prepared and presented.

All in Favor

PRESENTATION of VOUCHERS for EXAMINATION and APPROVAL

A motion was made by Ms. Gatto and seconded by Mr. McDonnell to approve the voucher expenditures of March 10, 2017 through April 13, 2017, as presented.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) First Round of Property Acquisition Update

Recording of the Deeds - Ralph Pappas mentioned at the last meeting the board voted to approve the sale of several properties for the Side Lot program. They also approved the leasing of some properties to NeighborWorks and the Hill Neighborhood Association. He stated that a meeting with Attorney Colbassani and George Kelly is scheduled for Monday to tweak the agreement of sales. Once that is done and the agreements are executed, the deeds could be prepared. George Kelly then stated the sales agreement for unimproved lots is $100 "as is, where is" Quit Claim Deed.

Henry Deeke asked if the Deed of Conveyance could it be special warranty rather than a Quit Claim Deed. Attorney Colbassani answered that it could be, but the onus is going to be on the purchaser to worry about doing title searches, or any title issues. That is part of the consideration of getting the property at a low cost. He also stated that side lot programs in other Pennsylvania counties as well as other states usually do the Quit Claim Deed.

George Kelly stated the reason behind that is since we are only doing a $100 side lot program and we are paying the $35 state fee to transfer, the net on it is $65. He stated he did not want to incur an added expense.

George Kelly also questioned - to do a special warranty do we have to take other steps? Attorney Colbassani responded that we may have to but that would defeat the purpose.

A discussion to place regarding a Special Warranty Deed on commercial property. Henry Deeke voiced concerns over any possible discrepancies to which Attorney Colbassani reassured him it was up to the purchaser to do their due diligence to make property marketable.

George Kelly also discussed the disposition of the properties. He stated that Ralph Pappas is going to go through the current Land Bank property list and check the ones that need to be updated on Assessor's database. Then, if there are any vacant land properties that have high assessments, the Assessors office can make sure all the properties are equitable. The Land Bank is taking all step to minimize buyer's remorse.

b) Next Round of Property Acquisitions

It was stated that research has been done on a number of properties by a partner of our community development team, NeighborWorks. Staff at NeighborWorks took photos of properties on the repository that are now being used by neighbors. They were being used as driveways, house sheds, and for pools. George Kelly asked Ralph Pappas where we were at in acquiring those properties. Ralph Pappas said the board members are going to sign the check today to record those deeds. On Monday we will record the deeds all at once. We have 124 properties at this point. Commission Patrick O'Malley stated he would like to have a press conference when we are handing the first deed over to a new owner. At the press conference we could inform the community about the Land Bank and answer any questions pertaining to Land Bank.

c) Scranton Advisory Committee Update

Linda Aebli- The committee meeting was lightly attended. Linda Aebli was provided a letter from the Housing Alliance of Pa regarding how DCED provided CDBG funding to demolish properties. The letter provided information that money for demolition should be paid back once the property is sold. She is going to send the letter to our HUD representative in the hopes of getting answers.

George Kelly summarized the letter explained that taking down the properties is achieving the national objective on the blight. The letter states we do not have to recover the amount of demolition but we have to recover the fair market value obtained. George Kelly also suggested going through Senator Bob Casey's office regarding a response from HUD.

A discussion took place regarding the disposition of four (4) different properties that were discussed at the advisory committee meeting. There are three (3) Side Lots, one has a demolition lien on it. The fourth property is an existing structure that is surrounded by other properties. One of the property owners wants to purchase it but wants us to take care of the demolition of it. Advisory Committee recommends we do not demolish. They suggest once we do a press release, we can post a for sale sign to see if any neighbor wants to purchase the property as where is, as is. If no one makes an offer the situation will be addressed and the proper steps will be taken.

d) Land Bank Website

The Land Bank website is almost complete. An intern from Marywood set up the site. Chris Speicher from Marywood wants to meet on April 26th to finalize it. Chris Chapman from the Economic Development team will be our point

person to keep us up to date with the website. In using the intern we were able to save a substantial amount of money.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion by Marion Gatto Seconded by Henry Deeke

Resolution No. 17-008, Authorizing the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property under the Land Bank Side Lot Program

All in favor

Motion by Henry Deeke Seconded by Linda Aebli

Resolution No. 17-009, Ratifying the Acquisition of 26 Properties from the City of Scranton's Tax Claim Repository List of Unsold Property.

All in favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Jennifer Spitler from Neighbor Works mentioned that they (Neighbor Works) are working on a community survey targeting the West Side of Scranton area. It is a residence survey with 10 questions. She is giving the Advisory Committee the opportunity to add questions. She thought if Land Bank questions were asked it would make people aware of the Land Bank.

ADJOURNMENT

As all business had been conducted, a motion to adjourn was made by Henry Deeke with a second by Terry McDonnell. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

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Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Margaret Piccotti