

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on August 11, 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 – Present

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Linda Aebli and seconded by Mr. Terrance McDonnell to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2017 regular meeting as prepared and presented.

All in Favor

PRESENTATION of VOUCHERS for EXAMINATION and APPROVAL

A motion was made by Mr. Henry Deecke and seconded by Mrs. Linda Aebli to approve voucher expenditures of July 20, 2017 through August 11, 2017, as presented.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) **Land Bank Website**

Mr. Kelly stated that the website is at the same status as last month. The domain site has been reserved. We are currently using the Land Bank link on the Lackawanna County website and keeping it up to date. Photos of the sold properties were recently added to the website. We will need to get some professional assistance in the setup of the website.

b) Scranton Advisory Committee Update

Mrs. Aebli reported that the advisory committee reviewed several properties for the side lot program. The following properties were recommended to be approved: 525 Beck Street, 612-614 Gibbons Street, 134 S. Bromley Avenue and 537 Willow Street.

Regarding the 1512 Preston Place parcel, the Land Bank received three applications for this parcel. The first application was received from Kayla Sherman on June 8th, 2017. Ms. Sherman owns and resides in a property at 1518 Luzerne Street. Her property is located across the alley and two properties down from the subject property. She stated in application that she would like to make it a safe place for both her children and the neighborhood children to play.

The second application was received from Frank Alu on June 14th, 2017. Mr. Alu owns a property at 326 15th Street. The rear of his property is located adjacent to the subject property. He would like to expand his property and give his next door neighbor the remaining land behind their property to expand their backyard.

The third application was received from Deborah Ann Gondella on August 8th, 2017. Ms. Gondella owns a property at 331 16th Street. The rear of her property is located adjacent to the subject property. According to Ms. Gondella's application, she would like to expand her property and either build or expand existing garage with an apartment above.

It was decided that the approval of 1512 Preston Place be rescinded in anticipation of a sealed bid process. The bids will be opened at the next public Land Bank Board meeting. Ralph is going to contact each interested party and advise them of the bid process.

c.) Property Acquisition Update:

The Land Bank has received interest in additional properties currently on the repository list. Since there has been interest shown on the properties the Advisory Committee recommended the following properties be transferred to the Land Bank: 1917 Prospect Ave., and 943-945 Acker Avenue

d.) Land Bank Issues:

The Land Bank has received a complaint regarding a tree on Land Bank owned property located at 914-916 Eynon Street. The adjacent land owner stated several branches have fallen hitting his garage roof. He is worried that if any more branches fall, they may go through the roof. He is requesting this issue be addressed as he does not want to be responsible for taking the tree down. It was stated if the branches are hanging over his garage he can cut those branches. It was also stated that the City is responsible to maintain land bank owned property in safe condition. The adjacent property owner was also informed that he could purchase the property for \$100.00.

Another call was received from Tony Santoli, City Forester, regarding a huge tree on the property line between a land bank owned property located at 1144 Luzerne Street and an adjacent property. Mr. Santoli feels this tree, if it ever falls, will cause major damage. He asked if we would determine the property line and who is responsible for the tree. It was stated that he could have the land surveyed if he would like but again it is not the responsibility of the Land Bank.

The Land Bank is in receipt of an application from Fidelity Deposit and Discount Bank. Fidelity Bank would like to donate properties located at 1218 S. Webster Avenue and 1204 Olive Street. Advisory Committee recommended not accepting donation and the Board agreed. The Board did agree to place "Land Bank Property for Sale" signs on the properties to help generate interest. Also, Ralph Pappas will contact the contiguous land owners and inquire if they would like to purchase the properties. If there is an interest shown, the Land Bank would accept the donation of properties.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Commissioner O'Malley inquired if there were any commercial lots available. Ralph Pappas stated not at this time. George Kelly informed the Board that Taylor Borough has reached out and would like to join the Land Bank. They have several sizable lots available.

Commissioner O'Malley also stated his concern in regards to who is responsible for maintaining the side lots. He would like it to be made clear that the County is NOT responsible. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement states that the City is responsible for maintaining the property in a safe manner. The role of the Land Bank is to put the properties back on the tax roll. Attorney Colbassani stated that the West Scranton Neighborhood Association wants to help maintain some of the properties in that area. It was also mentioned that prisoners, under the work release program, could assist in cleaning up the properties. But bottom line is County is not responsible for grass cutting, boarding up properties, etc. Commissioner O'Malley would like Ralph Pappas to draw up a letter regarding the City's responsibilities.

Terrence McDonnell asked if someone wants to purchase an adjacent land bank owned structure and that structure is occupied, who would be responsible for the current occupant. It was the Boards opinion that the new owner would be responsible for the occupant.

Ralph Pappas informed the Board that Krieger Construction called and wants to use a Land Bank property as a staging area for a sewer project they are doing on West Market Street. Commissioner O'Malley asked if it would affect the properties on the left or right of the properties. In the past Krieger Construction utilized property next the Keyser Valley Community Center to stage a project. They failed to bring the property up to the same or better condition when project was completed. It was decided that Linda Aebli would inquire within the City and see if Krieger ever fixed the Keyser Valley Community Center situation. It would then be brought before the Advisory Committee for discussion.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution No. 17-019, Authorizing the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Properties under the Land Bank Side Lot Program

Motion by Henry Deecke

Seconded by Marion Gatto

All in Favor

Motion for Resolution No. 17-019 was passed and then subsequently the conveyance of 1512 PRESTON PLACE was RESCINDED pending further review. All other properties were approved.

Motion by Terry McDonnell

Seconded by Marion Gatto

All in Favor

Resolution No. 17-020, Approving the Acquisition of additional properties from the City of Scranton's Tax Claim Repository List of Unsold Property

Motion by Henry Deecke

Seconded by Linda Aebli

All in Favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

No speakers at this time

ADJOURNMENT

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

Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Margaret Piccotti