

LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES
November 9, 2018

The scheduled meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on Friday, November 9, 2018 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 200 Adams Avenue, Sixth Floor, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 11:00 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
Commissioner O'Malley (Chairman) – Present
Henry Deecke - Present
Linda Aebli – Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Excused
Steve Pitoniak – Present

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel and Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager, and Barbara Arens, Administrative Assistant.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

There were no comments made at this time.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Marion Gatto and seconded by Steve Pitoniak to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2018 meeting as prepared and presented.

All in Favor

PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS FOR EXAMINATION AND APPROVAL

A motion was made by Marion Gatto and seconded by Henry Deecke to approve voucher expenditures of October 13, 2018 through November 9, 2018, as presented.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Before the Agenda items were discussed, Commissioner O'Malley discussed the first municipality outside the City of Scranton to join the Land Bank is Fell Township. He spoke about a property that once housed a beautiful school house. However, now about one-fourth of its foundation is missing. Commissioner O'Malley stated he has a video of the tour of the school house. The three taxing bodies have already signed the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement and it will be a great opportunity to work with Fell

Township. Commissioner O'Malley stated that they have about 11 tax delinquent properties, but don't have a lot of funds. Fell Township will work with the Land Bank to assist with demolition and some rehab type projects possibly with the help of UNC, NeighborWorks, etc.

- a.) **New Interest in Joining the Land Bank: Dunmore, Old Forge, Mid-Valley SD:** Mr. Kelly and Mr. McDonnell met with Dunmore Council at their work session. They are very agreeable to joining the Land Bank. A meeting is being scheduled with the School Board. Dunmore Council is sending the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement to the School Board advising them that they strongly support joining the Land Bank.

Mr. Kelly also attended the Mid Valley School Board work session. They fully support the Land Bank and plan to send a letter of support to the three municipalities, Olyphant, Throop and Dickson City, encouraging them to join the Land Bank.

Mayfield has signed the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement and will be the next municipality to join.

- b.) **Blight to Bright LSA Grant Update:** Todd Pousley from NeighborWorks NEPA spoke about the final meeting of the Task Force. That meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2018 at the County 911 Center in Jessup at 6pm. At the meeting, the Task Force will be presenting their final report and recommendations for preventing and remediating blight in Lackawanna County. After that meeting, the Land Bank will continue to consult with the different municipalities to help them put forth some of the recommendations of the task force. NeighborWorks was commended for bringing Chris Gulotta, the consultant on the project, to help them with their challenges. Mr. Gulotta has made fighting blight his career.

- c.) **1445 Meylert Avenue Update:** Mr. Kelly explained that they are still waiting for the developer to clear the property. As stated at the last meeting, the developer ran into some issues with dust and had to adjust their demolition schedule. Mr. Kelly will contact the developers for a status update.

Attorney Colbassani asked about the Bryn Mawr property. There was an issue regarding electricity still going to the building. Also, the Land Bank has agreed to contribute \$5,000 toward the project for tipping fees. The City's demolition process has also been delayed due to equipment and flooding issues in Keyser Valley. Once demolition is complete, 2 new homes will be constructed on the property. The developer has also sent a request to the City and the School Board for a five year LERTA.

- d.) **Bid Openings:** Mr. Pappas explained that there was one bid for a property in the 1300 block of Pike Street, which located off the Morgan Highway. The bid was from Eric Lindsay on behalf of his company, Lean Properties LLC. The bid was for \$500.00 dollars.

- e.) **Property Acquisition/Disposition/Donation Discussion:**

**Property Acquisition/Side Lot Disposition
324 South Ninth Street.**

Mr. Pappas stated that a property purchase application was received on October 15, 2018 from Bernard and Jean Philippe. Mr. and Mrs. Philippe own and reside in the adjacent property at 326 South Ninth Street. They would like to expand their property, clean it up to improve the neighborhood. This property is currently on the repository list of unsold property. Mr. and Mrs. Philippe submitted a bid of \$100.00 for the property. The Board agreed to accept the bid of \$100.00.

Rear 1026 East Locust Street

Mr. Pappas stated a property purchase application was received on November 7, 2018 from Gerard and Lisa Guse. Mr. and Mrs. Guse own and reside in the adjacent property at 1026 East Locust Street. The lot has been vacant for 20 years. They will continue to maintain it as greenspace. This property is currently on the

repository list of unsold property. Mr. and Mrs. Guse submitted a bid of \$100.00 for the property. The Board agreed to accept the bid of \$100.00.

Property Disposition

1300 Block Pike Street

A property purchase application was received on October 11, 2018 from Eric Lindsay, on behalf of his company, Lean Properties, LLC. According to his application, he plans to build a new home on the property. Mr. Lindsay submitted a sealed bid in the amount of \$500.00 that was opened at the Land Bank Board Meeting. The Board agreed to accept the bid of \$500.00.

1750 Nay Aug Avenue

The Land Bank received a property purchase application for a property located at 1750 Nay Aug Avenue. Art Phillip, the applicant, owns the adjacent property, the body shop to the rear of the property and a few other properties in the area. He wants to rehab the property. He submitted an offer of \$500.00. This is a house that has been flooded a few times and two weeks ago someone lit a fire on the front porch. The Board agreed to accept the bid of \$500.00.

Property Donations

911 Cedar Avenue

A donation application was received from Penn East Federal Credit Union for a property located at 911 Cedar Avenue. There was a structure on this lot, but the Credit Union had it torn down. The property is only 20 feet wide and they want to donate it to the Land Bank. There has been some interest from an adjacent property owner. It was decided by the Board that if Penn East can sell it fine, if not, the Land Bank would take it and sell to the neighbor as part of the side lot program.

Clearview Street and North Rebecca Avenue

Another donation application was received for four (4) vacant lots at the corner of Clearview Street and North Rebecca Avenue. The Board felt this property donation may be worth approving and working with the City and School District for a LERTA to encourage someone to build on the property. This is a good opportunity for a developer who is willing to construct new housing in the City of Scranton.

Mineral Avenue

Another donation application was received for a property on the corner of Mineral Avenue and Olive Street. This is a challenging lot, although there has been some interest for development in that area. It was decided that the Land Bank would put a sign on it and see if there is any interest.

Additional Discussions

Although, at the last meeting on October 12, 2018, it was discussed about not acquiring any more structures in the City of Scranton until it was decided what to do with them and who would maintain them. There was one more property purchase application received from a home owner who wants to buy the property at Rear 138 South Van Buren Avenue. The house is located directly behind her current residence. Linda Aebli will check the status of the property and if any title searches were done. The property is landlocked and the potential buyer is going to take responsibility to tear it down.

The discussion continued regarding the Land Bank having issues with potential buyers wanting to purchase a property. The Land Bank acquires the property and then the potential buyer backs out. Land Bank is then stuck with the property. It was discussed that if there is a structure on the property, a deposit would be required with the application that is non-refundable. That deposit would be used to defer the cost of demolition if the Land Bank were unable to sell it and had to raze it.

It was recommended that the Land Bank get a letter of intent and a deposit of \$1,000 from the potential buyer. Five hundred dollars would be refunded at the time of closing. Motion made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Marion Gatto.

All in favor

ACTION ITEMS:

Resolution No. 18-034 – Approving the acquisition of additional property from the Tax Claim Office Repository List of Unsold Property

The properties are as follows:

326 South Ninth Street, Scranton **Pin #:** 15606050029
Rear 1026 East Locust Street, Scranton **Pin #:** 16712040035

Motion by George Kelly

Seconded by Marion Gatto

All in Favor

Resolution No. 18-035 – Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property under the Land Bank Property Purchase Program.

The properties, prices and purchasers are as follows

1300 Block Pike Street, Scranton	Pin #: 12302010011	Lean Properties	\$500.00
1750 Nay Aug Avenue, Scranton	Pin #: 13412090022	Arthur & Roxanne Philipp	\$500.00

Motion by Henry Deecke

Seconded by Linda Aebli

All in Favor

Resolution No. 18-036 – Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property under the Land Bank Side Lot Program

The properties, prices and purchasers are as follows:

326 South Ninth Street, Scranton	Pin #: 15606050029	Bernard & Jean Philippe	\$100.00
Rear 1026 East Locust Street, Scranton	Pin #: 16712040035	Gerard & Lisa Guse	\$100.00

Motion by Henry Deecke

Seconded by Marion Gatto

All in Favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

There were no comments made at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Barbara Arens