

LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES
March 8, 2019

The scheduled meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on Friday, March 8, 2019 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 123 Wyoming Avenue, Fifth Floor, Lackawanna County Government Center, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:30 am Chairman O'Malley called the meeting to order and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken by Commissioner O'Malley (Chairman) – Present
George Kelly-Excused
Henry Deecke - Present
Wayne Beck – Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Present
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 Henry Deecke and seconded by Steve Pitoniak to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2019 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 February 8, 2019 through March 8, 2019, as presented. **All in Favor**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Welcome New Land Bank Board Member – Wayne Beck

Commissioner O'Malley congratulated and welcomed the new Land Bank Board Member, Wayne Beck.

New Interest /Land Bank- Dunmore, Old Forge, Mid Valley SD

Terrence McDonnell stated that he spoke to the Borough Manager and was told that the resolution should be on the agenda at the next council meeting that is scheduled for the beginning of next month. He stated there are only about

12 tax delinquent properties in Dunmore. It was noted that there is not much movement in Carbondale and Taylor to join the Land Bank. Attorney Colbassani informed the Board that he has reached out to C.J. Mustacchio, Olyphant Borough Manager, and they hope to join the Land Bank soon. The Borough of Olyphant has about 4 tax delinquent properties. As stated in the past, Old Forge Council has approved the resolution to join the Land Bank. Now, the School Board must come aboard.

1445 Meylert Avenue Update

The building has been demolished. Mr. Pappas stated that he had spoken to Don Rinaldi, a partner of Lace Company Affiliates, the selected developer of the property. Mr. Rinaldi stated that the Phase 2 environmental assessment is not completed. The costs related to the development of this property will equal out. The Land Bank has committed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to demolish the building. The Land Bank, in turn, will receive five thousand dollars (\$5,000) as the purchase price for the property. The development of this property is part of a larger project, the future development of the Laceworks Village.

2018 YE Audit

Mr. Pappas stated that the audit has been completed and there were no findings. Any board member who wants a copy of the audit can let him know.

Bid Openings/if Necessary

There were no property purchase bids received prior to this meeting.

Advisory Committee Discussion

It was agreed upon at the Advisory Committee meeting that Jesse Ergott would be the spokesperson for the Committee. He informed the Board that the Advisory Committee has taken on a new format and that he is looking forward to assisting the Land Bank wherever possible.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution No. 19-005- Approving the Appointment of Treasurer of the Lackawanna County Land Bank Board of Directors - Board Member Wayne Beck was appointed as Treasurer of the Lackawanna County Land Bank. A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Terrence McDonnell.

All in Favor

PROPERTY ACQUISITION – Fell Township

Resolution No. 19-006 – Approving the Acquisition of Additional Property from the Tax Claim Office Repository List of Unsold Property – Jesse Ergott stated that the Advisory Committee favored this project. Jesse went on to thank the Board for allowing him to serve on the Advisory Committee and reiterated the Committee’s commitment to the Land Bank Board. He further complimented Ralph Pappas on the hard work that he does getting prepared for not just the Board Meeting but also the Advisory Committee Meeting as well. The Committee recommends that the Board approve this acquisition. Commissioner O’Malley remarked that once the property is transferred to the Land Bank, the Land Bank should contact Olde Good Things to see if they want to go through the building and look at the wooden floors, chalk boards, staircases and railings. Commissioner O’Malley was amazed that for a building that was built a hundred years ago that most of the building is still intact. Commissioner O’Malley would like to see any monies that can be received from tearing out the floors etc. be used to aid the Land Bank in other opportunities such as other building demolitions. A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Steve Pitoniak.

All in Favor

PROPERTY ACQUISITION – Mayfield Borough

Resolution No. 19-007 – Approving the Donation of Property to the Lackawanna County Land Bank – Mr. Pappas stated that this property is one of three Mayfield properties with problems. Mayor Chelik gave the Land Bank a very thick file containing all the problems associated with this property, which is next to a former gas station. The owner

of the property, out of the blue, called and wanted to donate this property to the Land Bank. It was noted that the Land Bank has already committed twenty thousand dollars to help the Borough once it controls the property but would be a lot easier if the Land Bank owned the property. Terrence McDonnell questioned whether the gas tanks had been removed from the property and if there were contamination issues. Mr. McDonnell stated that per a 1990 law a gas station owner had the choice to either walk away from the business and be responsible for any environmental issues or to replace the gas tanks with fiberglass ones. Marion Gatto suggested looking further into this before taking any action. Commissioner O'Malley requested that Mayor Chelik be advised that the Land Bank is doing due diligence and looking into several issues. A motion to table this Resolution was made by Marion Gatto and seconded by Mr. McDonnell.

All in Favor

PROPERTY ACQUISITION – Scranton

Resolution No. 19-008 – Approving the Donation of Property to the Lackawanna County Land Bank – Mr. Pappas stated that this donation consists of four properties on the corner of Clearview Street and Rebecca Avenue. The location is in an area behind the Armstrong School. This donation was discussed late last year but it was never formalized. These lots are non-conforming lots. It is possible that if two lots are put together then at least two houses can be constructed. Mr. Pappas stated that he has interest in these properties already. The Board needs to ratify this Resolution as the Board agreed to the donation at the December meeting. Attorney Colbassani has been in touch with the attorneys for Mrs. Rutkowsky to keep the process moving. They are waiting for the resolution approving the donation to be signed to be signed. The Advisory Committee has recommended this acquisition. A Motion was made by Mrs. Gatto and seconded by Mr. Beck.

All in Favor

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

There was a property donation application from Attorney Joseph Gaughan on behalf of Millett Real Estate. These are three properties in the East Mountain section of Scranton. These properties are landlocked with little or no direct access to public or private utilities. The property taxes are up to date. There is really nothing the Land Bank can do with these properties. Jesse Ergott stated that the Advisory Committee's recommendation is that the Land Bank not consider this donation at this time. There are numerous properties in Scranton in the same situation. It is not the role of the Land Bank to speak to adjacent property owners to gauge interest in acquiring these properties. In this particular case, Millett Real Estate should address the adjacent property owners.

BLIGHT TO BRIGHT GRANT UPDATE

Resolution No. 19-009 – Ratifying the Agreement with NeighborWorks NEPA for services related to the Implementation of the Blight Prevention and Remediation Strategies as Recommended by the Blight Task Force – This Agreement along with the additional agreement following have been discussed and agreed upon at the last several meetings. A Motion was made by Henry Deecke to ratify the agreement and seconded by Marion Gatto

All in Favor

Resolution No. 19-010 – Ratifying the Agreement with NeighborWorks NEPA for Website Updating, Maintenance and General Land Bank Marketing Assistance - This Agreement along with the additional Agreement preceding this Resolution have been discussed and agreed upon at the last several meetings. A Motion was made by Marion Gatto to ratify the agreement and seconded by Henry Deecke

All in Favor

Additional Discussion

Jesse Ergott spoke about the changes to the Advisory Committee and how the Committee is committed to being more helpful to the Board in making sure that word is getting out about the Land Bank. One of the resolutions the

March 8, 2019

Minutes

Page 3

Advisory Committee made is to do a video about the Land Bank. Doing interviews with not only the Land Bank board members but also with residents that the Land Bank has helped. People don't realize the story of the Land Bank and how much has been accomplished and what is yet to be accomplished. Jesse would like to have the video crew go out to the Fell Township project and follow the progress from start to finish. The Land Bank is coming up on its' 100th property. Commissioner O'Malley recommended contacting ECTV and Adams Cable and possibly utilizing billboards announcing the Land Bank. Terrence McDonnell recommended setting up tables or tents at county functions to pass along information about the Land Bank. Jesse Ergott thanked the Board for all of their hard work and committed the Advisory Committee to assist in any way possible. Jesse Ergott continued that the Land Bank is a very good thing and that people in Lackawanna County need to know about it. Commissioner O'Malley summed up by saying that the Land Bank is and can work for everyone and can help every municipality.

Opportunity for Public to Address the Board:

None at this time

Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was made by Marion Gatto seconded by Terrence McDonnell

All in Favor

Next Meeting: Friday, April 12, 2019



Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Barbara Arens