

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK  
REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES  
June 14, 2019**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on Friday, June 14, 2019 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 123 Wyoming Avenue, Fifth Floor, Lackawanna County Government Center, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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

**ROLL CALL**

Roll Call was taken by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley (Chairman) – Present  
George Kelly-Excused  
Wayne Beck – Present  
Henry Deecke - 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, Jesse Ergott, Advisory Committee Spokesperson and Barbara Arens, Administrative Assistant.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS BOARD (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

There were no comments made at this time.

**PRESENTATION OF MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Terrence McDonnell to approve the minutes of the April 12, 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 Terrence McDonnell to approve voucher expenditures of April 12, 2019 through June 14, 2019, as presented.

**All in Favor**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **New Interest /Land Bank- Dunmore, Old Forge, Throop, Carbondale**

Mr. McDonnell reported that the Dunmore Council has passed the resolution to join the Land Bank. Mr. McDonnell and Ralph Pappas will be attending the next School Board work session to present the same. Mr. Pappas reported that Old Forge Council has approved the resolution to join. However, still waiting on the School Board. Regarding Throop, Attorney Cimini, Borough Solicitor, feels that the resolution will go before Council soon. The Mid-Valley School District is already on board. Carbondale may be on board soon. Mr. Pappas sent information to all of the Council members and the Mayor explaining the positives of joining the Land Bank.

### **Land Bank LSA Grant Extension**

The LSA grant was scheduled to expire at the end of June 2019. An extension was granted for another year, expiring June 30, 2020. There is currently thirty-four thousand dollars (\$34,000) remaining in the grant. With this money, the Land Bank may be able to assist with the demolition of some Land Bank owned property in the City of Scranton by paying the tipping fee for demolition.

### **1445 Mevlert Avenue Update**

Mr. Pappas spoke to Don Rinaldi who stated that the building is down and should be cleared within the next two weeks. At that time, the Phase II environmental assessments can be started.

### **Ontario Street Property/Fell Township Update**

Continuing with the Land Bank's desire to have a salvage company go into the property prior to demolition, Mr. Pappas contacted Olde Good Things to see they would like to go through the building to see if anything is salvageable. They asked him to get photos of the interior of the building. Mr. Pappas stated he attempted to get into the building, but was unsuccessful. Mr. Pappas contacted one of the Township Supervisors who agreed to go into the building and take pictures. The Land Bank has committed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to take the building down. The Township has commissioned KBA Associates, their engineers, to do the environmental assessment prior to the demolition. KBA is working with the Office of Economic Development regarding specifications for the demolition.

### **601 Prospect Avenue, Scranton Update**

The Land Bank has been receiving complaints about this property from neighbors. However, at this time, nothing can be done about the huge trees growing out of the sidewalks. Some of the trees are adjacent to the property and are growing between the sidewalk and the curb. The Land Bank will ask the City for assistance. Mr. Beck will check with Licensing and Inspections, DPW and Tony Santoli to see who can help. Attorney Colbassani stated that, per the Cooperation Agreement, the City is responsible to keep the premises in a safe condition. The property will eventually become a transitional home for veterans run by Veterans Resource Coalition of Lackawanna County. The Veterans Resource Coalition of Lackawanna County has received a grant to clean it out and secure it until the Coalition gets additional funding for renovation.

### **Blight Task Force Update**

Todd Pousley, NeighborWorks Neighborhood Revitalization Manager, addressed the board regarding the Blight Task Force. The action team has met a few times already to finalize the action plan and the steps to be taken for the remainder of the calendar year. The focus right now is to organize a workshop for municipal code officers and municipal legislators. The workshop would probably be a half-day morning or afternoon session to walk them through some of the practical day to day things they can do to address some of the issues they have with blight. The workshop would also discuss the abridged version of the property code which covers the important things such as ticketing ordinances, property maintenance, etc. so it is easier for the municipalities to enforce.

### **Bid Openings/if Necessary**

There were no property purchase bids received prior to this meeting. To date, 103 Land Bank properties have been sold.

### **Advisory Committee Discussion/Additional Discussion**

As usual at this time of year, the Land Bank has been getting some complaints about overgrown weeds on Land Bank properties. Mr. Pappas has been in touch with Lackawanna County Prison Warden Tim Betti. He gave Mr. Betti a list of the more visible properties that the Land Bank has been receiving complaints about.

There is a huge Land Bank owned property located on Sixth Avenue in Scranton. The property is located near a salvage yard and people have been using the land bank property as a dumping ground. Mr. Pappas is trying to coordinate with the City so that if the prison help can get the waste and junk out to the curb, the City will haul it away.

Mr. Beck advised that he was able to get some information regarding the Price Street property. He is certain that the property was fire damaged. One of the problems is gaining access to the property for demolition. Currently, there is a ten foot easement to get to the property. The owner of the front property has stated that he will sign a right of entry for the City to come in and use his property for access. The Land Bank is willing to help by assisting with the tipping fee. Jesse Ergott stated that this is the type of situation you want resolved favorably because you don't want the neighbor to go to the media and say "I've been talking to the Land Bank for a couple of years and no one is doing anything" even though we know the backstory. It wouldn't look good for what the Land Bank does.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **PROPERTY ACQUISITION – Scranton**

**Resolution No. 19-014 – Approving the Acquisition of Additional Property from the Tax Claim Office Repository List of Unsold Property** – The property is located at 1712 Lafayette Street. It is on the repository list and there is interest in it. The gentleman that lives next door is interested and ready to go. This would be a side lot. The neighbor has been maintaining the property. He has stated that he had a hard time buying the property over the years because of liens, etc. The Advisory Committee is in favor of approving this. A Motion was made by Marion Gatto and seconded by Henry Deecke to approve this resolution.

**All in Favor**

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**PROPERTY DISPOSITIONS**

**Resolution No. 19-015 – Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property Under the Land Bank Side Lot Program**

Property Located at 1712 Lafayette Street, Scranton

Pin #: 14513090031

Purchaser: Mr. William Williams

Price: \$100.00

The Advisory Committee is in favor of approving this. A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Terrence McDonnell to approve this resolution.

**All in Favor**

**Property Donation Application**

There is an application for a property donation from Don Mamanno on behalf of Madison Jefferson Realty LLC. The property was purchased as part of a transaction from the Lackawanna Institute. The owner had approached the neighbors but the taxes are too high for the neighbors (\$2,200). It was suggested that the Land Bank see if the neighbors on each side would be interested in splitting the property. The Land Bank would require the neighbors to sign a commitment agreement to buy the property before the Land Bank takes it in. However, an enforceable agreement would be difficult and any agreement would be contingent on those neighbors being up to date on their taxes and fees. Mr. Pappas will ask the owner for permission to have the Land Bank put a sign up on the property to see if there is any interest in the property. No action was taken on the donation application.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:**

None at this time

**ADJOURNMENT** – A Motion to adjourn was made by Terrence McDonnell seconded by Henry Deecke.

**All in Favor**

Next Scheduled Meeting: Friday, July 12, 2019

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Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Barbara Arens