

LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES
July 8, 2020

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on Wednesday, July 8, 2020 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 123 Wyoming Avenue, Fifth Floor, Lackawanna County Government Center, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:00 AM Chairman Debi Domenick called the meeting to order and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken by Ralph Pappas, Staff
Commissioner Debi Domenick – Present
Commissioner Chris Chermak-Present
Al Chelik - Excused
Wayne Beck – Present
Henry Deecke - Present
Marion Gatto – Excused
Brenda Sacco – Present

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager, Jesse Ergott, Advisory Committee Representative

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS BOARD (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

Mr. James Burne addressed the Board regarding a flooding issue on a property the Land Bank sold to Hillsboro Inlet LLC. (It was long thought by the neighbors that due to the flooding issues some of properties in this area were owned by the City and could never be built on due to the flooding issues). The property is located in the 100 block of Merrifield Avenue. Mr. Burne's wife's family owns a property at the corner Jackson Street and Merrifield Avenue. Over the years, during heavy rain events, the Burne family home along with other homes, have suffered flooding problems and damage to their homes. The main concern is that if someone builds on this property, it will create even more flooding issues and damage to these neighboring properties. Mr. Burne requested that the Land Bank reacquire the property and along with some other Land Bank owned properties convey the properties to the City to prevent any future construction in this flood prone area. Atty. Colbassani and Mr. Pappas informed Mr. Burne that talks are underway with Hillsboro Inlet LLC. to have them convey the property back to the Land Bank. They stated they would inform Mr. Burne as to results of the negotiations with Hillsboro Inlet LLC.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

A Motion was made by Mr. Deecke and seconded by Commissioner Chermak to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2020 meeting as prepared and presented.

All in Favor

PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS FOR EXAMINATION AND APPROVAL

Mr. Pappas reviewed the vouchers with the Board. He reported that due to the pandemic, he had some of Land Bank invoices paid from the County General Fund. Some of the vouchers scheduled for approval today were made payable to the General Fund for reimbursement of the Land Bank expenses.

A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Mrs. Sacco to approve the voucher expenditures of May 14, 2020 through July 8, 2020, as presented.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Land Bank General Update

Mr. Pappas stated that as of this date, in the City of Scranton, the Land Bank has conveyed 130 properties. Some of these 130 properties were conveyed to the City at their request. Some others were conveyed to local nonprofit Community Development corporations.

In the City of Carbondale, Mr. Pappas reported that four properties were acquired. Two properties were conveyed. The Land Bank are in the process of conveying one more. The other property will be razed by the City of Carbondale. Later in this meeting, the Board will be requested to approve a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Carbondale regarding this demolition. The Land Bank will be contributing \$5,000 toward the tipping fees.

New Interest /Land Bank

Commissioner Domenick stated at the last meeting, it was her intention to meet with the Lackawanna County School Boards and municipal representatives to explain the benefits of being part of the Land Bank. However, due to various issues, including updating some Land Bank information, this has been delayed. Commissioner Domenick intends to email the Land Bank information to all school districts and municipalities within the next few weeks.

Scranton Demolitions

Mr. Pappas again informed the Board that the City has razed three (3) land bank owned properties to date. Through the Cooperation Agreement with the City, there is one more structure to be demolished. That property is located at rear 1619 Price Street. A Right of Entry from an adjacent property owner is needed to gain access for the demolition. Mr. Pappas stated he plans to get this the Right of Entry when he receives a timetable from the City for demolition.

Blight Task Force Update

Jesse Ergott, NeighborWorks NEPA, informed the Board that they have arranged a visit from the HUD Regional Administrator, Joseph DeFelice, to come to Scranton for a roundtable discussion addressing blight in the City. The visit is scheduled for Wednesday July 22, 2020. He explained the reason he is coming to Scranton is because of the work of the Land Bank in fighting blight. Mr. DeFelice is interested in hearing from some Land Bank and City officials as well as community groups, such as NeighborWorks, about the challenges we may be facing and what has been accomplished. Neighbor Works is putting together the final details of the visit and if there is time, they may want to visit some blighted properties. Mr. Ergott stated it just goes to show the work of this Land Bank is being recognized at a higher level.

Mr. Pappas added that the County is submitting a grant application to the state for a blight remediation. Sandi Opshinsky, our Grant Manager is preparing the application and it will be submitted prior to the July 31, 2020 deadline. The request is \$300,000 will be used for acquisition, rehabilitation and maintenance of blighted properties in Lackawanna County.

Bid Openings/if Necessary

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

Advisory Committee Discussion

Mr. Pappas stated he received an application to purchase a Land Bank owned property located at 1118 Luzerne Street. The applicant owns an adjacent structure that he had purchased at last year's Judicial Sale. The applicant stated they have been trying to get estimates to rehab the structure, but they feel the estimates are too high. To date, no work has been started by the owner on this house. It was recommended by the Advisory Committee not to sell the Land Bank owned adjacent property until permits are issued and work has started to rehabilitate this adjacent structure.

Based on the Advisory Committee recommendation, Mr. Deecke made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Beck to table any decisions on this property.

All in Favor

Chairman Domenick then proceeded to the Resolutions to be acted upon at today's meeting,

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution No. 20-008– Approving a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Carbondale for the Demolition of a Certain Land Bank Owned Structure

This Resolution approved a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Carbondale for the demolition of a Land Bank owned property located at 54 Farview Street, Carbondale PA. According to the Agreement, Carbondale Public Works Department will raze the structure using their manpower and equipment. The Land Bank will contribute \$5,000 toward the tipping fees associated with the demolition of said structure.

A Motion was made by Mrs. Sacco and seconded by Mr. Deecke to approve this Resolution

All in Favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

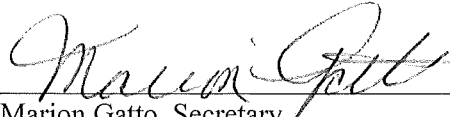
None at this time

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Domenick made a motion to adjourn and motion was seconded by Mr. Beck

All in Favor

Chairman Domenick stated next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 11:00AM.



Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Ralph Pappas