Pottstown Borough Land Bank Board Meeting

March 22, 2021

Present: Carol Kulp, Justin Keller, Peggy Lee Clark, Deb Penrod, Winnie Brant

Guests: Craig Way, Amanda Soskin

Meeting called to order at 11:17 a.m. by Deb Penrod

Review of meeting minutes: we will put off approval until next meeting.

**Justin’s report:** there are quite a few inquiries about side lot transfers. The redevelopment authority is interested in getting rid of some of them if they can. The Borough is deciding what they want to do. They need to decide how the lots will be used. They would like it to be productive use as possible.

Bills: there was one invoice sent over the weekend from Brant Strategies for $1200.

**PHARE Grant Update:** Funds still have not been dispersed. PHARE is waiting to receive a Certificate of Corporate Subsistence. We expect to receive that certificate in the next few weeks. Then we can work with Genesis Housing to work out final admin details between PAID, Genesis and the Borough. Winnie looked over PHARE grant this morning. There are four properties. One property needs to be transferred to a developer within a certain income bracket and who would use it for homeowner occupancy. There also is an affordable housing component that we are meeting by working with Genesis Housing.

Under property sourcing, think about the list that the tax claim bureau sent to us for the April sale (may be too soon to acquire) and for the August sale.

We also talked about a time to meet with Portnoff so that we can better understand the tax sale laws and how Portnoff works with the Borough and the school district.

Property transfers could be a source of acquisition for the land bank, as well as the county redevelopment authority transfers.

Disposition list from county: post to Land Bank website

We want to find that first property that is a clear success and aligns with the purpose of the land bank, etc.

Justin brought up side lot transfers again. We need to talk about how much we care if they are developed right away, or if we care that we are starting to move them along.

Twila said she thinks the onus of what happens to the lot, or proposal for the lot should be on the developer or person wanting to acquire it, then the Land Bank can respond to the feasibility of the proposal by using zoning and land bank ordinance requirements.
Carol mentioned the possibility of a conservation easement. This is something we could look into.

Request for Quotes: Winnie hasn’t seen anything from Ginny about this, but she will follow up with her.

**Bi-annual Review Status**
Winnie would like to schedule another work session to talk to the members who were not on the last call.

Lunch and Learn community outreach will be postponed until next month. Twila and Craig will reach out to Dave Garner from the PHC to see if we can hold an informational session on April 7 about the upcoming tax sale.

**Blighted Property Update:**
There is not much of an update. We do know we have a next step now that the land bank is operational and there is a place for the properties to go. There is a lag in how constables serve the citations and we don’t always know which ones have been served, etc. then it just gets pushed off until the next month. Kevin Brown, the new president of the BPC said we should prioritize the ones that have been sitting for a long time; he suggested we focus on that is where the Land Bank and development on High St. is happening.

Deb mentioned a property on Farmington and one on the 500 block of E. High. They will be talking to the owner of the latter. Deb encouraged board members to look at the list attached to the agenda.

How can we better document the constable’s serving citations?
Does the county notify the borough when a property changes hands?

**MOU with PAID:**

Peggy is waiting for approval from the group. Twila made a motion to allow Deb to engage PAID as administrator of the land bank as proposed in previous meetings and outlined in the MOU. Carol seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Peggy will have the MOU executed.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m. The next meeting will be on April 26, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.