

# **POTTSTOWN BOROUGH LAND BANK BOARD MEETING**

**June 24, 2019**

**4:30pm**

**Council Meeting Room**

## **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Penrod called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

## **2. Roll call**

Members Present: Debra Penrod, Cheryl Chiarello, Carol Kulp, Michael Mauger (arrived late)

Members Absent: Twila Fischer

Others Present: Justin Keller (Borough Manager), Winnie Branton (consultant to the Land Bank), Peggy Lee Clark (PAID), Craig Way (Mosaic Land Trust)

## **3. Public Comment**

None

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of minutes for April meeting were tabled until the next meeting. Andrew Monastra, Board Secretary, resigned at the end of the April meeting. Ms. Penrod will follow up with Mr. Monastra to see if minutes were taken.

## **5. Bills and Communications**

None

## **6. Report of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff**

Borough Manager Justin Keller informed the Board that Borough Council had approved the agreement for consulting services to be provided to the Land Bank by Branton Strategies LLC.

Peggy Lee Clark, Executive Director, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID), advised the Board that, on advice of counsel and for other reasons, PAID was no longer interested in administering the Land Bank. Ms. Clark identified capacity, fiscal and other reasons for PAID's decision. Ms. Clark suggested that the Land Bank engage in discussions with the County Redevelopment Authority and County Commissioners on using the Land Bank as a pilot project and for longer-term collaboration. Chairman Penrod thanked Ms. Clark and PAID for considering this project and invited them to return in the future if position changed.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- a. Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (ICA) - ICA has been signed by the Borough, the Pottstown School District, and the Land Bank. Ms. Branton reviewed the ICA in general terms. The County is not a party to the ICA; any discharge or release of county taxes on property acquired by the Land Bank would need to be approved by the Commissioners.

- b. Grant Opportunities – Ms. Branton provided an overview of two state grant programs that could benefit the Land Bank: (1) Keystone Communities grants; and (2) the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency PHARE/RTT grants. Ms. Branton advised that the Westmoreland County and Schuylkill County Land Banks had received grants under both programs, and that other land banks also had success getting funding through these state programs. Ms. Clark and Mr. Keller reported that PAID and the Borough were exploring submitting a Keystone Communities grant application for this year. Ms. Branton suggested then that the Land Bank focus on considering applying for a PHARE/RTT grant from PHFA. The application deadline for that grant is November 2019. A request for proposal setting the deadline and providing other guidelines is expected to be released in August.

For property donations, Ms. Branton will follow up with Wells Fargo and other sources to see if there are any bank-owned properties that might be donated to the Land Bank as has been done in other places in Pennsylvania.

- c. Insurance –Tabled until next meeting.
- d. Blighted Property List – Discussion on how the Land Bank can work with the Blighted Property Review Committee. Ms. Clark suggested focusing on streets with multiple properties on the Blighted List. Ms. Chiarello noted that there are several properties in the 600 block of Walnut. Experienced developers are more likely to be interested multiple residential properties are available for acquisition and redevelopment. Ms. Penrod mentioned 566 High Street, next to the Historical Society’s building as a property for consideration by the Blighted Property Review Committee. Further discussion needed.
- e. Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales – No report.
- f. Record Retention Policy – Tabled until next meeting.

## **8. New Business**

- a. Election of Officers – Tabled until next meeting.
- b. Right to Know Policy – Tabled until next meeting.
- c. Public Education and Engagement – Ms. Penrod addressed the need to inform the public about the Land Bank and its mission. She suggested Hobart’s Run Investors Conference and Community Leaders Conference as opportunities to share the work of the Land Bank. Other opportunities include the Council Committee of the Whole meetings, Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission meetings.

## **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.