

**Land Bank Board Meeting**  
**July 26, 2021**

Public Comment: No comments from the public

Roll Call: Deb Penrod, Jamie Sanchez, Twila Fisher, Lisa Vanni, Justin Keller, Peggy Lee Clark, Winnie Branton

Approval of meeting minutes for June 28, 2021 – will be delayed until next meeting.

Review of Bank Statement Bills – no changes in statement as of 6/30/21

Communications Report from Administrator and Consultant – no bills this month but good news: Winnie will be able to provide good assistance for the application of the blight technical assistance grant.

Consultant Report: There were three pieces to blight technical assistance – one is to continue help the land bank be fully operational. The other two we already have in place (property maintenance code and a blighted property review board), so we are in good shape compared to some other communities.

Welcome New Board Member: Jamie – please tell us a little bit about yourself (Jamie shared with the group...been between Pottsgrove and Pottstown for 34 years, back in Pottstown last 5 years. She works in nursing field. Has spent a lot of time doing volunteer work and she is interested in trying to help with blighted properties and getting them fixed up).

Peggy asked everyone else to introduce themselves as well and give a little bit of background about what each one of us do.

Property Inquiries:

Peggy: We have to get people to understand what kind of property we are interested in and what we have the capacity to take on. The property Paula Bickelman brought to our attention is really encumbered and that is not really the kind of property we are interested in at this point (maybe not ever). We need to be able to convey clear title. People almost have the sense that we can do more than what we can. We are operating under a narrow scope. The mayor has someone else interested in a placemaking space (place where people can go – a bench, setting up a chess board – not necessarily a park). The best properties could come from estate transfers where family who don't have ties to Pottstown want to dispose of the property. We can go to the county pre-auction and try to get it before judicial sale.

Winnie: Are there any plans on the borough side to take the citations to the next step to try to move the owners to do something? If you get a donation of a beat up property in terrible shape, the land bank gets stuck with those disrepairs. We also need to talk to the courthouse and look at properties where thousands of tax dollars are owed. There are a bunch of different ways to acquire properties. Sheriff's sale through Portnoff would be another way.

We talked about several properties that were on the blighted property tour and continued discussing how the land bank acquires properties, especially blighted ones. Lisa asked for clarification around why we don't want blighted properties right now when a land bank specifically fights blight. In short, the answer is that we are being conservative with the properties we acquire early on. We want some solid successes.

Winnie: 429 May St. is up for judicial sale and it's not a terrible property, although it is on the blighted property list. We hope it's a good bidder who gets it and we need to follow up with county to see who purchased it. There are ways to ask for the sale to be revoked if they are not in good standing as an investor. Bidders are now required to register before sales.

Highlights from PA Land Bank Quarter 2 Meeting – no specific highlights to report; there was a lot of information and Peggy will gladly share the reports with anyone who wants to read over them.

Act 33/HB 264 Information: This law now requires bidders in judicial & upset sales to identify themselves & addresses. They may no longer register as LLC's.

RFP – Solicitor: PAID will prepare an RFP for a solicitor. Ideally, we will include a list of requirements so that we work with a solicitor that has adequate experience with municipal law, blighted properties, etc.

Land Bank Pre-Screening Applications – we have 5-6 applications right now. Peggy will bring them next month for the board to review. The application makes sure you meet the basic requirements of our policies and procedures as a land bank. We want to have a list of people who are pre-screened so that if opportunities arise, we are ready to move forward quickly.

Unfinished Business: Biannual Review of Policies and Procedures – we don't have a quorum to vote on this or proposed changes.

Blighted Property List: Winnie showed the map she created that indicates where the blighted properties in town are. Justin said he is working with the county to create a map of judicial and repository sale properties, and he will share Winnie's map to create an overlay. Do L&I code violations or fire departments have "do not enter" restrictions? If so, it is helpful to indicate that on the map. We talked briefly about 207 Potts Drive (fire damaged). Sometimes these kinds of properties are important to target for acquisition, demolition, and rebuild.

Sheriff, Upset and Judicial Sales: August 12, 2021 (we are not participating in this date as a land bank). Judicial Sale scheduled. Properties likely to be available for acquisition: 57 Beech Street; 351 Beech Street; 529 Beech Street; 439 Chestnut Street; 22 South Franklin Street; 208 Gable Avenue; 421 Hale Street; 779 Lincoln Avenue; 429 May Street.

New Business: Letter for Blighted Property Owners – Peggy: we are clear that we want to have people that would be interested in properties and what they would pay for them before we proceed with sending letters.

Motion to adjourn at 5:51 p.m. made by Twila Fisher.

*Note: These minutes are a summary of the agenda items discussed and are not verbatim.*