



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

APRIL 21, 2015, 5:30PM

200 HENRY JOHNSON BLVD, 2ND FLOOR, ALBANY, NY

Present: Pamela Harper, Charles Touhey, Ralph Pascale, Todd Curley, Tammy Cumo, Corey L. Ellis, Michael Keegan, Chris Spencer, Philip Calderone, Kathleen Bronson, Amanda Wyckoff, Christina Wiley, Kate Hedgeman.

Excused: Mike Jacobson

Guests: Amanda Savarese (Albany County Legislature).

Meeting called to order at 5:34pm by Vice Chair Pamela Harper, with a quorum of Directors present.

1. **Public Comment** Vice Chair Harper explained that two board members have time constraints this evening and proposes to two speakers before board business which requires voting and resume public comments afterwards. Also suggests public comment is limited to 2 minutes per speaker. Board and public agreed.
 - a. Mark Robinson cited an article about Corey Ellis during his mayoral campaign regarding his sweat equity agenda, which Mr. Robinson also supports. The written article was not provided to the board.
 - b. Tom McPheeters, a member of the Resident Community Advisory Committee for the land bank (CAC) has two questions: 1) Section 3 of the By-Laws of the Land Bank regarding removal of committee members. Does this apply to members of the Resident CAC? He would like clarification from the board as to the functioning of the CAC: is the CAC a self-governing, self-starting body or is it under the direction of the staff of the Land Bank. There is a concern about the flow of information from the Land Bank to the committee. The committee did not meet this month. Also, what is the role of the CAC in community re-development? 2) Vacant Lots: Reporting as chair of the Vacant Lot committee, the committee has adopted a policy on side lots, "clean and green vacant lots" (copy of report provided to the board). There are issues about the policy that need to be addressed by the board so they can move forward for those who want to lease or get permission to use lots as community gardens, for example. There are a number of vacant lots in the south end and west hill that Mr. McPheeters sees the potential for use, but not likely to be purchased.
2. **Minutes of the March 17th Board Meeting:** Motion made by M. Keegan to approve the minutes as presented, T. Curley seconded. Motion carried.
3. **Financial Documents:** Charles Touhey identified the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statement that were forwarded to the Board previously. The Budget will be available to the public when it is presented to and approved by the Board.

4. **Resolution for Travel and Discretionary Funds Policy:** The Governance and Finance Committees met to discuss the policy, discretionary: funds used for expenses and when travelling. Motion made by R. Pascale to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by C. Touhey. Motion carried.
5. **Resolution for Compensation, Reimbursement and Attendance Policy:** Motion made by C. Ellis to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by M. Keegan. Motion carried
6. **Resolution for Investment Policy:** Motion made by C. Spencer to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by M. Keegan. K. Bronson commented that although investing funds will take place in the future, a resolution needs to be in place now. Motion carried.
7. **Resolution to Continue the Contract with TAP:** Rehabilitation projects are planned and the Land Bank needs a contract in place. Troy Architectural Program has been a vital partner thus far with the assistance of completing the Attorney General's application; defining the criteria for the first 123 properties the Land Bank has taken possession of; assisting with stabilizations, demolitions and identifying those properties prime for rehabilitation. TAP has an intimate knowledge of the Land Bank's properties and has performed quality work to date. Continuing the contract with TAP is a great way of continuing our momentum for successes moving forward. The contract calls for work as needed, and not regular payments for work not being done. Although the exhibit for services (code compliance) is not attached, it was reviewed by the Executive Director and Counsel. K. Bronson will forward the exhibit to the Board. The upcoming project that will be the main focus is the rehabilitation of 309, 311, 313 Clinton Avenue which will include building drawings and construction inspections. Motion made by R. Pascale to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by T. Curley. Motion carried.
8. **Resolution to Enter into a Contract for Environmental Services with CT Male:** Outreach for environmental services yielded four responses, none from entities within the focus area. CT Male submitted a cost-effective proposal with discounted rates for the services requested. Per Counsel, all contracts will contain a cancellation clause per Public Authorities Law. Motion made by T. Cumo to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by C. Touhey. Motion carried.
9. **Resolution to Enter into a Contract for Commercial General Liability Insurance:** Two quotes were received for additional General Liability Insurance by Brown & Brown and a third is expected. The need for additional insurance was recommended by the insurance company, as it spreads out the risk over several policies that have maximum per-occurrence limits. Counsel agreed, stating as the Land Bank moves forward on several projects, and attaining additional properties, the additional insurance is needed. K. Bronson shared that other Land Banks in the state are experiencing the same high costs of insurance. Questions arose about other outlets for lower cost insurance, i.e. purchase insurance in conjunction with other land banks, or if the Land Bank could be covered under the county's insurance (Counsel will investigate). Perhaps in the future we can relook at obtaining insurance with the Land Bank Association. The Executive Director was given the authority to obtain insurance up \$50,000, and although the quotes provided falls under this threshold K. Bronson wanted to bring the matter before the Board. Motion made by C. Touhey to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by C. Spencer. Motion carried.

With the voting business of the Board complete, and with the Board's consent, Vice Chair Harper moved back to Public Comment, reminding the public of the two minute limitation in the interest of time.

Public Comment (cont):

- c. Charles Obar Robinson: Mr. Robinson previously worked to organize a community based plan for a Land Bank. Had he known that certain approvals were not needed, the Arbor Park Initiative would have moved forward with their Land Bank application to the legislature. Mr. Robinson cited articles that stated Albany was ranked last of 100 communities for healthy development. Albany also ranked last for values of resale of real estate. Mr. Robinson feels real estate values will rise when community members are put to work, are gainfully employed at prevailing wages. Regarding property located at 21 Lexington Avenue, Mr. Robinson is stressed the need to acquire the property from the Land Bank (written articles were not provided to the Board).
- d. John O'Grady: Member of the CAC, commented on the need for clarification from the Board if the CAC is a self-governing committee. He would like to see the committee become self-governing and that meetings occur once a month.
- e. Andrew Willis: Strategic Advisor with Genesis Construction Training Center. Mr. Willis has seen the mission of the Land Bank and would like to move forward and revitalize the community with re-development by putting local people to work at prevailing wages. He offered his services as an intermediary with local leaders, concerned individuals and the Land Bank. Genesis is new to the area and has met with the labor department, Albany Housing Development and now would like to talk with the Land Bank. Mr. Willis hears there are no jobs and no opportunities to be trained in Albany. "We come to stay until the problem goes away." The company has master trainers to teach all 33 crafts, can help with OSHA 10 training, and in the future, facilitate expanded apprenticeship programs. The company has been operating for 17 years as general contractors and has performed similar work in New York City.
- f. Roger Markovics, United Tenants of Albany. Mr. Markovics wanted to reiterate the housing the Land Bank is involved with be affordable and available to individuals of different levels of income. The "cultural overhaul" to quote Mike Jacobson, that needs to occur, must be taken into consideration regarding vacant and abandoned properties. Mr. Markovics also states that he sees resistance to this. Now is an opportunity to do something new, to view the community as an asset, not an obstacle.
- g. Vivian Kornegay, member of the Common Council, 2nd Ward. Recent demolitions in her district has resulted in calls from neighbors and residents about health concerns of hazardous materials being present at the site of these demolitions. Ms. Kornegay expects properties to be demolished properly by wrapping the building to contain any hazardous materials. When deciding what will be done with properties the Land Bank owns, Ms. Kornegay wants to be a partner with the Land Bank and wants the development of the community be fair and right for the residents in her community. She hopes that the Land Bank will connect with the community so the development includes what the community wants, needs, and is conscious of its appearance. Currently there are ten housing projects in her ward and she does not want another one.

Public Comment concluded and P. Harper resumed agenda items beginning with The Executive Director's update.

10. Executive Director Update:

Introductions of new staff: Christina Wiley, Executive Assistant. Priorities for the immediate future is to work on the Land Bank's website, compile pertinent information for Board Member Binders, and develop a Property Information Sheet for the public on the properties we own and creating a new website.

Cate Hedgeman, Counsel has been a great asset this past month accomplishing a lot of tasks in a short period of time. Appreciate all the work you've done so far.

Lisabeth Jorgensen, county attorney, a big thanks for her help during the past few months as counsel. Her input and support were a great asset to the Land Bank.

AG Funding: Although received in March, these funds will be utilized in the second quarter as work begins in the focus areas of Arbor Hill, West Hill, Sheridan Hollow and South End neighborhoods. During the first quarter we've identified three full rehabs, six demolitions and seven stabilizations; worked on the acquisition of additional properties and several property clean ups; performed due diligence and pre development work. 1st quarter funds will be moved to the 2nd quarter.

Amanda: provided a spread sheet identifying the properties of highest priority to stabilize. The City of Albany has been an asset in notifying the Land Bank of issues regarding conditions with some of the properties owned. There are safety and code issues being addressed on individual properties. Quotes are being obtained for interior clean ups to facilitate interior work on some of the properties; working on a case-by-case basis on issues of hazardous conditions and safety issues. Kingdom Services has been the main company utilized in exterior clean up and maintenance during the winter and early spring, and The Land Bank is utilizing the compiled list of companies for services and bids for work to be done. As the contractor list is a working document, we look to the CAC as a source for local tradesmen, as well as the Black Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Ellis noted there are local, qualified, trained individuals to do the work that needs to be done, but existing RFP protocol must be followed. During K. Hedgeman research, counsel has not found local law which allows preference for choosing local contractors and as a non-profit and Public Authority the Land Bank must work within the constraints of the law. The spread sheet is denoted for board use only, but it is the intent that Land Bank property information be available to the public via the website. As a public Authority and NYS non-for-profit, the Land Bank is working on the logistics of making internal documents available to the public. In addition, Counsel states that a Public Information policy is being developed for the Board's review and approval.

Community Advisory Committee: Due to timing conflicts the committee was not able to meet yet this month and a meeting will be scheduled soon. At the March meeting there was discussion of creating a formal document detailing the roles and responsibilities of members of the Resident CAC. As a non-profit and Public Authority there will be an application to complete as well as conflict of interest policy, however the committee is not a self-governing body. The committee serves to advise the board and make recommendations.

Purchase Application status: The Land Bank has received four purchase applications for buildings and five purchase applications for side lots, to date. Applications are being reviewed for completeness, adherence to non-profit and public authority laws and status' of other real estate owned. In determining a purchaser applicant is responsible, the Land Bank will verify taxes are paid on other properties applicants own, that their other properties are Code compliant, etc. Criteria will be developed and applied to all applications. The objective of the review process is to have a complete picture to present to the board for the disposition of property. Although there has been interest in some of the same properties, to date, there has not been more than one application per property. K. Hedgeman is to developing closing documents.

11. New Business: none noted

12. Executive Session: not required

Adjourn: motion made by R. Pascale, seconded by C. Spencer.

Meeting adjourned 6:55pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Christina Wiley
Executive Assistant
Albany County Land Bank

Attested:



Ralph Pascale, Secretary