



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**August 18, 2015, 5:30PM**

**200 HENRY JOHNSON BLVD, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, ALBANY, NY**

**Present:** Charles Touhey, Pamela Harper, Ralph Pascale, Chris Spencer, David Traynham, Samuel Wells, Philip Calderone, Kathleen Bronson, Amanda Wyckoff, Christina Wiley, and Kate Hedgeman.

**Excused:** Michael Keegan, Michael Jacobson, Corey Ellis, Todd Curley

**Meeting called to order** at 5:35pm by Chair Charles Touhey, with a quorum of Directors present.

**1. Public Comment**

- Roger Markovics noted the exorbitant cost of mold remediation associated with neglected, vacant and abandoned buildings that need rehabilitation, specifically an estimate Albany Housing Partnership received for 308 1<sup>st</sup> St., Albany.

**2. Introduction and welcome** of new board members: Samuel Wells, Resident of the South End neighborhood and David Traynham of New Horizons Christian Church which is also located in the South End of Albany.

**3. Minutes** of the July 21<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting: Approved as presented (S. Wells/ D. Traynham). Question if the Land Bank will file a short return to have the organization's fiscal year coincide with the calendar year. It will be discussed during the audit of the Land Bank later this month. Counsel noted that the IRS must approve the change in filing dates and then the board can adopt the change.

**4. Financial documents were presented to the board by K. Bronson**, giving a brief detail of accounts for the benefit of new board members. The first annual audit of the Albany County Land Bank begins on August 25<sup>th</sup> by Bonadio Group. This will be a full audit as the Land Bank is a public authority. Auditors are expected to make a formal presentation to the board of their findings.

**5. Resolution to approve the sales of multiple Land Bank Properties** which are being recommended for approval by the Acquisition & Disposition Committee as well as the Community Advisory Committee, as noted.

The properties are described below:

- 231 Sheridan Avenue: The applicant is the property owner of a number of lots and buildings on Sheridan Ave. and is interested in acquiring this lot as a garden. His current properties are well-maintained on the street and one of his buildings' camera will be directed towards this lot for safety. Based on the Land Bank's disposition policy, the staff recommends selling this property to Sixth Son Holdings, LLC for a total of \$1,200 with a requirement to complete the development of the garden by July 1, 2016. Counsel noted that since the applicant is a corporation, a corporate resolution will be needed to approve the purchase. At its last meeting, the Community Advisory Committee had asked the Land Bank to hold this complete application for 30 days since a neighbor recently submitted an incomplete application. A CAC member noted there were some barriers preventing the side-yard neighbor to move forward with his application. Since the other application was incomplete the Board moved forward with this complete application. The Board approved the Property Purchase Application submitted by Sixth Son Holdings, LLC unanimously. (R. Pascale/ S. Wells).

- 44 & 54 Odell Street: These vacant lots, located between Second Ave and Seymour Ave are zoned R-2B. The applicant is the adjacent property owner and she is interested in acquiring the two lots for increased yard space. She owns and resides in 52 Odell Street and her plan is to enlarge her back and side yards. She will fence in the lots for privacy. Based on the Land Bank's disposition policy and Side Lot Policy, the staff recommends selling the properties to Pamela Hepburn for a total of \$1,500 plus closings costs for 44 Odell and 54 Odell, and the deed to be conveyed with a requirement to merge 44 Odell and 54 Odell with her property, 52 Odell Street, within six months. The Land Bank just received another application for 54 Odell from the other side yard neighbor, as a back-up if this transaction falls through. The CAC supports the purchase by Pamela Wells. Passed unanimously (S. Wells/ C. Spencer).
  - 75 Third Avenue: This vacant lot is located between Elizabeth and Sloan Streets and it is zoned R-3B. The applicant owns a next door at 73 Third Ave, which is a small orchard with a number of fruit trees. He is interested in acquiring this lot to increase his orchard. He lives across the street at 70 Third Ave, and owns another lot being used as a garden at 58 Third Ave. Based on the Land Bank's disposition policy and Side Lot Policy, the staff recommends selling this property to Travis Klami for a total of \$1000 plus closing costs, with the deed conveyed with a requirement to merge 75 Third Ave with his property at 73 Third Ave within six months. Other applications were received for this property which were considered by the Acquisition and Disposition Committee. The CAC deems this application as the highest and best use for the property. The Board approved this transfer unanimously (S. Wells/ C. Spencer).
6. **Resolution to approve the acquisition of available properties from Albany County.** The Executive Director provided a list of sixteen properties located in Albany County that are available to be transferred from the County to the Land Bank. Most of the properties are in the Land Bank's focus neighborhoods and some are in surrounding areas. The properties were selected based upon the potential for a positive cash flow for the Land Bank as well as the utilization of stabilization resources to invest in focus neighborhoods. A. Wyckoff, Property and Development Manager for the Land Bank inspected a larger list of properties with a representative from Albany County and recommends the identified properties as desirable acquisitions. The Board unanimously approved to request and acquire the properties from Albany County (P. Harper/ C. Spencer).
  7. **Resolution to allow the Executive Director to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Albany Community Development Agency.** The Albany County Land Bank is eligible to acquire property and funds from municipalities under Not-for-Profit Law. The ACDA, an urban renewal agency of the City of Albany, passed a resolution to provide funds to the Land Bank for stabilization projects and acquisition of properties located in the Land Bank's focus neighborhoods. Passed unanimously (R. Pascale/ C. Spencer).
  8. **Resolution to enter into a contract for consulting services.** The Executive Director has researched public relations firms to help get the name of the Land Bank out to the community: identifying who we are, what we're doing and to tell of the progress the Land Bank has made, and its future goals. Castle Rock Ranch Group is a local PR firm out of Latham. The owner is a 30 year communications professional, has done work for General Electric, and provides a discounted price for non-profit organizations. This will be considered a marketing expense for budget purposes. The contract is flexible and other options can be pursued if desired results are not achieved after six months. The Executive Director outlined a timeframe which includes stakeholder meetings, reputation management and press releases. Discussion if this is a need or luxury as public funds will be used: Traditional media sources are not proving to be effective and the Land Bank needs higher visibility to survive. To date, the Land Bank has not adopted a social media policy so other avenues need to be explored. Passed unanimously (D. Traynham/ S. Wells).

9. **Resolution to enter into a contract with DiTonno and Sons for stabilization of 202 Clinton Avenue,** Albany to address the leaking roof and unsafe stairs. Upon completion of the repairs the realtor will post the property on the Multiple Listing Service. Passed unanimously (P. Calderone/ R. Pascale).
10. **Resolution to enter into a contract with The Help (Robert T. Davis) for stabilization of 45 Main St.,** Cohoes to install stairs to access the property and repair the cornice to prevent unwanted access by wildlife. Discussion that the scope of services in the contract is not specific will be addressed by A. Wyckoff and Counsel. Passed unanimously (P. Calderone/ S. Wells)
11. **Resolution to enter into a contract for Hazardous Materials Testing, Design & Project Monitoring** with ALECS, LLC for various properties, based on their favorable bid submitted per the RFP. ALECS has worked for other New York land banks with successful results. Passed unanimously (P. Calderone/ R. Pascale).
12. **Review of the Land Bank's newly designed website.** This is the second draft by the website designer to address the need of listing all properties, provide information to the public, and host public documents required under Public Authority Law. Board members will be forwarded a link to view the working version of the website which will enable them to leave comments.
13. **Next Board Meeting:** September 15, 2015, 5:30pm at 200 Henry Johnson Blvd, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Community Room.

Meeting adjourned 7:15pm to go into Executive Session

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Christina Wiley  
Executive Assistant  
Albany County Land Bank

Attested:

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Ralph Pascale, Secretary