



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 17 2015, 5:30 PM
200 HENRY JOHNSON BLVD. 2ND FLOOR, ALBANY, NY

Present: Kathleen Bronson, Mike Jacobson, Charles Touhey, Phillip Calderone, Tammy Cumo, Ralph Pascale, Pamela Harper, Todd Curley, Michael Keegan and Chris Spencer.

Excused: Corey Ellis and Steven Krokoff.

Guests: Amanda Savarese (Albany County Legislature), Lisabeth Jorgensen (Office of the Albany County Attorney), David Friedfel (Albany County Department of Management and Budget)

Called to order at 5:30 pm by Chair Mike Jacobson, with a quorum of Directors present.

I. Public Comment

i. 5th Ward Councilman Mark Robinson, City of Albany

Mr. Robinson started with the West Hill Neighborhood Association's "Vision Plan", and discussed that with hard work, labor and door to door campaigns, properties can be addressed and remediated that have bared over four decades of neglect. Mr. Robinson stressed that poverty is at an all-time high, and for the Board to be sensitive and compassionate to the impoverished community's needs as well as the residents. Mr. Robinson also shared that a big concern of his, is involving residents within each project and employing the residents who live within the target neighborhoods.

ii. Obar Robinson

Mr. Robinson shared that big business destroyed his community. Mr. Robinson proposed that the Board establish a working relationship within the community to hear their needs and hire those residents.

iii. Celeste

Celeste indicated that this is an opportunity for local people to start a career and to learn trades within our in communities; we need to reinvest in our communities now and afford the people the pride of being involved with the revitalization. It's imperative that the community supports each project and local people are hired within the focus areas- if people are not included or contractors are not hiring local people, there will not be any support from the community. Celeste and the Community Advisory Committee would like to see the Board to revise the language in any RFP to include the words "local contractors".

iv. James Gary

Mr. Gary reported that he is part of the Albany Housing Project in the South End and that he was said to say that housing is being constructed and no one is being hired from within the South End, when those people desperately need work. Mr. Gary said that people are interested in working, especially people that do not have their own transportation and when there are jobs available right in their neighborhood. Mr. Gary mentioned that there is a lot happening in the City and Land Bank, partnered with the community can be the start of true change.

II. **Review and Approval of February 24, 2015 Minutes**

MOTION made by Mr. Keegan to adopt the resolution. Mr. Pascale seconded. Motion carried. An amendment was proposed to indicate that the 2015 Budget documents will be posted on www.albanycounty.com/landbank.

III. **Financial Documents to Board**

Mr. Touhey discussed and explained the financial documents included in the Agenda. Mr. Touhey mentioned that the Board will need segregated accounts for the funding from the Attorney General and Albany County funding and moving forward all financial documents will be available to the Board. Mr. Touhey shared that the first portion of the Attorney General money was received in the amount of \$280,000 in the first week of March.

IV. **Adopting a Resolution for a Privacy Policy**

MOTION made by Ms. Harper to adopt the resolution. Mr. Curley seconded. Motion carried.

Ms. Jorgensen indicated to the Board in order to ensure that information is properly safeguarded; it cannot impose restrictions based on the public authority law. Ms. Jorgensen shared that the Governance Committee reviewed the Policy and agreed to present it to the Board. Ms. Harper commented that she did have an opportunity to review the Policy.

V. **Adopting a Resolution for a Defense and Indemnification Policy**

MOTION made by Mr. Spencer to adopt the resolution. Mr. Pascale seconded. Motion carried. Ms. Jorgensen indicated that the Defense and Indemnification Policy is required by the public authority law, and that the Governance Committee reviewed the Policy.

VI. **Adopting a Resolution to enter into a Contract for Snow Removal**

MOTION made by Mr. Keegan to adopt the resolution. Mr. Pascale seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Jacobson indicated that an amendment to add local contractors was discussed. Mr. Touhey mentioned that word of mouth is important, especially when trying to include local contractors. Mr. Calderone agreed that the Board should incorporate an amendment to include language that Celeste suggested. Mr. Jacobson addressed his belief of some confusion in regards to Celeste's point; he explained that it makes good business sense to include local businesses, and to please assume positive intent. Mr. Calderone indicated his concern that there was a lot of anger directed at the Board during the Public Comment period and suggested that the Board do a better job to help the community, and explained that the people need to know that the Board was established to help and each member cares about the communities within Albany County. Ms. Harper questioned the Resolution, indicated that the winter season is almost over but there will still be leaves and branches that need to be removed, she asked if the Board will we need a separate Resolution for excess residue? Ms. Bronson replied "yes". Mr. Jacobson talked about the vision and explained that many of the vacant lots will have assistance from the community and neighborhoods to help take care of when the time comes.

VII. **Adopting a Resolution to enter into a Contract for Legal Services**

MOTION made by Mr. Touhey to adopt the resolution. Mr. Spencer seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Jacobson shared with the Board that the Law Firm of Catherine M. Hedgeman is a women-owned business, and that Ms. Hedgeman is a local, well known attorney in the area and that the Board should consider entering into the contract with her.

Ms. Jorgensen indicated that she believed that Ms. Hedgeman's contract was not complete in regards to the public authority law, and that the board will have to vote on Ms. Hedgeman and allow Ms. Bronson to enter into a contract after reworking a contract that mutually makes sense with Ms. Hedgeman and the Albany County Land Bank Corporation.

Mr. Jacobson questioned if the Board could authorize Ms. Bronson to enter into an agreement? Ms. Jorgensen replied that Board could allow Ms. Bronson to enter into the agreement and that the addendum will just have to be amended.

VIII. Adopting a Resolution to enter into a temporary Lease Agreement for 21 Lexington Avenue with Mark Robinson

MOTION made by Mr. Spencer to adopt the resolution. Mr. Curley seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Robinson explained that 21 Lexington Avenue has been used as a social service headquarters for the residents in the community; He indicated that there are educational programs, clothing drives; it's a social network to guide residents in community where to go for services and a place to learn about available resources. Mr. Robinson shared that the previous owner withdrew all of the equity and relocated; he indicated that he was willing to pay the remaining back taxes on building but is waiting for a title search for liens. Mr. Robinson indicated that while working with the County Executive's office, he entered into a temporary agreement so right now the building is being used as storage and that no programs are available at the time, but as summer is approaching more youth is going to need this location to come to, as well as the community. Mr. Robinson promised as an individual and stakeholder in the community, he will work hand in hand with community to see and create change. Mr. Touhey indicated that this is a good example of why the Land Bank was established and the process Mr. Robinson is going through is not necessary. He further explained now that the properties are in the possession of the Land Bank, opportunities like this can be presented to people in the community. Mr. Pascale questioned if the building was safe to occupy? Mr. Robinson explained that the first floor is the only one being occupied and he has all the materials to maintain and revitalized the remaining floors. Ms. Harper questioned the current lease agreement and if the insurance adequate? Mr. Robinson explained yes, that the insurance is adequate and in the temporary lease agreement people under the age of eighteen will not be allowed in the building. AMENDMENT – Change the word "License" to "Lease" – in the title and throughout the Resolution.

IX. Executive Director Update

Ms. Bronson shared that the first round of Attorney General funding was received and that the Land Bank received the first 123 properties from Albany County and is currently in the process of making sure the buildings are stabilized and will be identifying properties that need to be moved forward in regards to: demolition, stabilization and clean up. Ms. Bronson indicated that the Land Bank is already receiving Property Purchase Applications, there were two submitted and there were four Side Lot Applications submitted. The Land Bank staff is reviewing the applications and making a check list to make sure everything is complete before presenting to board and Community Advisory Committee.

Ms. Bronson explained that the Land Bank is looking at the next step for real estate with these properties, that there is not exactly an MLS listing so people can see specifics of the property- she explained that it will take some time but they are working on it and would like to introduce an RFP for a real estate broker. Ms. Bronson indicated that having Ms. Hedgeman on board, the Land Bank will be able to look at all options.

Ms. Bronson indicated that the Community Advisory Committee is very engaged and involved with the process, acquisition and disposition plan and are working on a mission statement. Ms. Bronson said she is willing to readdress issues with Community Advisory Committee to find a solution to implement different preferences regarding the RFP and bid process, what's legal, what's appropriate, etc. Ms. Bronson shared now that the Land Bank has acquired the properties, the Board and Staff can start engaging with local communities, contractors and neighborhood associations. Ms. Bronson said the next step is to get the Community Advisory Committee established as its own committee and become the community liaisons and working with board; She further explained that the Community Advisory Committee is developing guidelines for applications and how they would like to process them as a committee and have their own sort of executive committee- starting to address this now.

X. **New Business**

Mr. Jacobson shared that he will not be available in the month of April, but would like to mention that on June 1, 2015 his term as Board Chair will be coming to an end; he plans on staying on Board, but wanted to officially and publicly inform everyone. Mr. Jacobson explained that someone in current body will be voted on as the new Board Chair or the County Legislature will appoint someone.

XI. **Adjournment**

MOTION made by Mr. Jacobson to adjourn. Ms. Harper seconded. Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

XII. **Executive Session**

MOTION made by Mr. Spencer to enter into Executive Session to discuss employment matters. Mr. Curley seconded. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

April 21, 2015 at 5:30 pm
200 Henry Johnson Boulevard
Albany, NY

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Savarese
Albany County Legislature

Attested:



Ralph Pascale, Secretary