

Pottstown Borough Land Bank Board Meeting

January 24, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Deb Penrod at 4:37 p.m.

Board Roll Call: Deb Penrod, Twila Fisher, Carol Kulp, Lisa Vanni (Zoom)

Additional Attendees: Peggy Lee Clark (Secretary), Justin Keller, Melissa Shainline, Winnie Branton (Zoom), Steve Boell (Solicitor)

Guests: Craig Way

Public Comment: None

Election of Officers for 2022:

Chair: Deb Penrod

Vice Chair: Lisa Vanni

Secretary: Twila Fisher

Treasurer: Jamie Sanchez (if accepted)

Introduction of Land Bank Solicitor: Peggy introduced the engagement letter that secretary and chair will sign. It is from our new solicitor at FL&B.

Steve gave a few comments regarding his service and experience with land banks. He has lived in Montgomery Co. for past 17 years. Most of his legal experience has been with economic development projects, including NIZ and LERTA legislation drafts.

Approval of meeting minutes for November 22, 2021:

- a. Carol made a motion to approve the minutes; Twila seconded. Motion carried.

Review of Bank Statement:

- a. \$100,100.32 in Account – PHARE grant money; nothing has changed.

Bills and Communications:

- a. Justin: we will assist with management of PHARE grant but Judy Memberg of Genesis Housing Corporation will get us a record of any funds that she spent. Whatever the board can do to get Kourtney up to speed before reporting period, that would be very helpful. We had communication with Bill Caldwell at County regarding December sales. We asked if five Pottstown properties could be continued until the next sale as prospective parcels for the land bank.

- b. Winnie added that she heard from Judy that no funds have been spent from the PHARE grant, so the reporting is all zeros at this point but will still be submitted by Jan. 31, 2022 for purposes of reporting. The board authorizes that either Peggy Lee-Clark or Winne Branton can submit the report by that time. Winnie will notify PHARE that going forward, Peggy-Lee Clark/PAED will take care of reporting. Peggy noted that the money has been sitting for some time, so we need to be prudent about transacting business. Peggy will investigate a potential extension as needed. Winnie confirmed that we received the money in May 2021.
- c. The land bank needs to purchase four properties with those monies.
- d. Six home repair grants up to \$10,000.
- e. 30% of PHARE grant need to benefit low-income households in the specified region per the grant narrative.

Winnie asked who has the final grant agreement. She will check with Ginny and report back.

Report from Administrator and Consultant:

Property Inquiries: We all should have received an application from Deb Spence following her presentation to the board in November about the placemaking of dog park in her ward, Cherry St. and Center Ave. The project would cost \$30,500. Peggy has a packet for our review. She is offering a purchase price of \$750 for the land. The Borough would have to deed the property to the land bank, then we would proceed with transferring it to Ms. Spence. The recommendation of the administrator that we move forward with the process of asking Council to deed it over. Justin noted that doing so relieves the Borough of responsibility regarding cutting grass and clearing sidewalks.

Winnie noted that she is responsible for transaction costs as well. We are allowing a resident to use land for a public purpose which increases quality of life in that neighborhood, which is also a positive consideration.

Deb made a motion for land bank solicitor and administrator to work with the Borough solicitor and manager on conveyance of 1000 Cherry St. to Deborah Spence prior to the Feb. 9 Borough Council meeting with the purpose of presenting it there. Twila seconded the motion. Discussion: Carol asked how many square feet? 6075 ft. Motion carried.

Grant opportunities: Housing Alliance of PA -- \$10,000 grant; deadline was prior to this meeting. Peggy applied for the grant last week after talking to Justin. The language was fairly generic so that it could be broadly applied. Part of the grant would be to possibly offer residence to folks who have suffered from Hurricane Ida. Winnie noted that grant awards should be announced by the end of February.

HB 2210 Update: Would allow land banks to bring conservatorship to the table as organizations that are involved in blight remediation. Twila made a motion for the LB administrator to reach out to Rep. Pennycuick and communicate our support for the HB2210.

Land Bank Pre-Screening Applications: One application from state of Wyoming (Jason Muson, SCAR Inc with a mailing address of Placer, CA. He is incorporated in Cheyenne, Wyoming). Peggy reached out and stated that the application was blank; he wrote back and sent everything again, so we do have that on the table.

Unfinished Business:

1. Blighted Property List: No news from BPRC.
2. Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales: December 9 Judicial Sale was delayed as Justin already reported in his section above.

New Business:

Board Training Follow Up: Zoom was recorded; training was helpful. We are looking for a Part Two regarding Ethics, Land Bank law, and conflict of interest policy. The latter needs to be reviewed by the Board every two years. Winnie will see if the landbank network will do the same training for everyone. Our new solicitor said he would be happy to share materials he has given in other places and that could be kept off the books since he already has it prepared. Peggy mentioned that she and Deb had gone to a state training and there is a handbook that she still has that could serve as a resource.

Other Comments: Winnie asked if any revisions to the rules and regulations had been approved by Council. Justin said he would have to go back and check. Once they have been approved, Winnie will submit them to Ginny to upload on the website.

Adjournment: Twila made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. on February 28, 2022.