

## **Pittsburgh Land Bank [PLB]**

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Convene:** Chair Called meeting to order. The City Clerk was unavailable, so URA staff was present to take notes. The group agreed that the video recording would be the official record of the meetings moving forward, with notes being taken to record motions, actions, and large discussion items.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Roll Call:**

Members Present: Rev. Burgess, Chair, Dr. Bey, Vice Chair, Director Leger, Treasurer, Karen Abrams, Senator Fontana, Councilman Lavelle

Absent: Councilwoman Kail-Smith, Tara Sherry-Torres, Steve Mazza

### **Approval of March Minutes:**

◇ Motion to approve March Board meeting minutes as submitted: **[Fontana/Leger]** Passed unanimously.

### **Report from Communications Committee:**

Committee chair KAbrams provided a report on the work of the committee, including:

- a standing recurring meeting,
- the establishment of social media accounts,
- the reviewed and approved scope of services for the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG) to provide communications and outreach services,
- the plan to push the community meetings back slightly, and
- the need to understand the available communications budget.

◇ Motion to Approve the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to enter into a contract with PCRG on behalf of PLB **[Leger/Lavelle]** Passed unanimously.

### **Report from Procurement Committee:**

Kyra Straussman, Real Estate Director for the URA, was invited to the table to provide an update on activities since the last meeting. She reviewed three separate scopes of services under discussion and sought Board acknowledgment to proceed into contracting.

◇ Motion to Approve URA-Irene McLaughlin contract for legal services on behalf of PLB, authorizing the PLB Executive Committee to approve terms **[Lavelle /Leger]** Passed unanimously.

◇ Motion to Approve URA-Center for Community Progress contract not to exceed \$25,000 payable by and under the terms of the Heinz Grant **[Bey /Leger]** Passed unanimously.

### **Other Actions:**

◇ Motion to approve Recording Secretary draft job description as prepared and presented by URA, and authorize the URA to deploy existing staff, reimbursed for services out of existing Land Bank funds. **[Lavelle/Fontana]** Passed unanimously.

Presentation by URA on Land Recycling System

Kyra Straussman introduced new URA staff, Bethany Davidson-Manager of Land Recycling, who will be the main liaison between the URA and PLB moving forward.

Straussman then provided a presentation of the overall Land Recycling System and current work to coordinate and align public agencies around this system, including possible future roles for the PLB. The group then had a brief question and answer period.

Abrams noted the importance of the integration of systems and inquired as to the coordination with Allegheny County and its other nascent land bank. Straussman noted that congenial open discussions are occurring, not direct collaboration at this time.

Leger acknowledged the existing ability to acquire and dispose of property at scale now, asking about the ability to fund and sustain the maintenance costs and legal liability of a large portfolio of properties. Straussman replied that the existing URA contract with Fourth Economy Consulting includes the writing of a business plan. Once that is complete we will better understand the resources necessary around holding and maintaining properties. Private Foundation resources, public bond issuance, and other mechanisms are typical of Land Bank financing for this.

Bey mentioned the cost of inaction and that those costs should be considered in this analysis, as well.

Straussman reference the Cost of Blight study completed by the Mon Valley Councils of Government in 2014.

Fontana asked about the potential to have a rotating acquisition and disposition process so as not to hold title for as long, as well as a faster, expedited process similar to the County's Vacant Property Recovery Program. Straussman informed the group of the State Land Bank Act provision for bulk quiet title action which may help with either shortened timelines and/or cost savings, as well as greater coordination which will hopefully provide for larger and more rapid blight elimination, possibly positively impacting property values more quickly.

**Next Steps:** Burgess commented that there are two major next steps for the PLB. First, to complete Policies and Procedures and a Strategic Plan. Once the PLB is operational, then a detailed business plan with day-to-day operations will need to be created.

**Adjournment:**

◇ Motion to adjourn. **[Bey/Leger]** Passed unanimously.