



Pittsburgh Land Bank [PLB] Minutes
February 11, 2022

Convene:

The Chair called meeting to order.

Roll Call:

Dr. Walker called the Roll. Members Present: Rev. Ricky Burgess; Councilman Daniel Lavelle; Director Bobby Wilson; Director Wanda Wilson; Director Karen Breaun

Members Present Virtually: Dr. Jamil Bey; Senator Fontana

The PLB Board had quorum.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes:

◇ Motion to approve the December 2021 Board meeting minutes [**Lavelle/B.Wilson**] Passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

Director Doug Anderson resigned from the Pittsburgh Land Bank Board of Directors in December 2021. Formerly known as the Director of Finance with the City of Pittsburgh, he has taken on a new role with the PNC Bank. As the City works to fill this position, the Land Bank is hopeful that the Board seat will be filled as well.

Executive's Report:

- Dr. Diamonte Walker presented the Pittsburgh Land Bank Staffing Update
 - Greg Miller, former PLB Manager, resigned from his position with the Land Bank. During his time, he achieved significant milestones; these include but are not limited to the GRB Law Agreement between the PLB and the City, the PLB/PWSA Memorandum of Understanding, and overall improved relationships with CDCs, CBOs, and other land recycling stakeholders.

- URA/PLB Staff have a transition plan in place that will be overseen by Diamonte Walker, Greg Flisram, David Geiger, and Nathan Clark.
 - In the interim, ML Meier, Ken Jones, Matt Sanders, and Emily Kauchak along with other supporting staff will be the main points of contact.
 - Dr. Walker anticipates a larger discussion with the PLB Board at the board retreat. This retreat will elaborate on the Land Bank's successes and shortcomings in 2021, the updated staffing and work plan for 2022, as well as the ARPA funding allocations. This will include a short survey that will gauge Board Members' expectations, priorities, and other goals for the year ahead.
- Associate Counsel - Matt Sanders presented updates on the GRB Law Contract
 - The PLB Board approved a contract between the PLB, GRB Law, and the City of Pittsburgh to provide clear and free title to several properties in the Pittsburgh Property Reserve.
 - GRB is ready to file for the first twelve properties and receive additional properties to begin the title search process.
 - Councilman Wilson wanted to know more about the City's process for determining which properties are prioritized over others. Emily Kauchak answered that the City, being the client through the agreement, has final say over which of the properties GRB Law prioritizes. However, the Land Bank is free to weigh in and collaborate on this decision-making.
 - Associate Counsel - Matt Sanders presented the Quiet Title Timeline graphic
 - This graphic allows the Board to view a simplified version of the quiet title process that a property undergoes to receive clear and free title. Sanders clarified the difference between Personal and Alternative Service and how this changes the timeline. He also described the difference between filing an Answer to preserve a lien versus not filing an Answer to forgo a lien. This process is not necessarily linear and remains contingent on each property's unique circumstances.
 - In the best-case scenario, this process will take only a few months. But most likely, these properties will take significantly longer. This can stretch from only a few months to between four and six months; certain problem properties will have an even longer timeline.
 - Councilman Wilson clarified some points of the timeline and asked about the difference between the Treasurer's Sale and the Sheriff's Sale. Sanders responded that the Sheriff's Sale already quiets the title to properties.
 - Associate Counsel - Matt Sanders presented updates for the Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement
 - The Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement articulates a process for transferring properties between the PLB, URA, and the City.
 - PLB approved a MOU in December 2021 regarding terms for property transfers from the URA to the PLB. The PLB is currently working with the City on terms for property transfers from the City to the PLB. The City has requested that we hold off on executing the Amendment to the Tri-Party until a new Director of Finance is appointed.
 - PLB Coordinator - Emily Kauchak presented the Land Bank's 'Qualified End User' Considerations Scorecard
 - This Scorecard allows PLB/URA Staff to select an appropriate end user based on the following categories: general considerations, priority guidelines for commercial

properties, additional considerations for commercial properties, and discretionary information.

- Within these broad categories are specific, weighted criteria to determine the best candidate for a property.
- Rev. Burgess commended this process as being fair and equitable for all applicants that apply for Land Bank properties. Councilman Wilson inquired about the work done to get to this point and the engagement that the Land Bank has had with communities to inform the scoring.
- Dr. Walker emphasized that the PLB/URA Staff took January to work internally on community engagement. Additionally, there will be a 2022 Work Plan and Board Retreat to begin making the necessary policy changes and ramp up daily operations.
- Director Wilson requested similar resources on residential properties in addition to commercial/mixed-use properties.
- PLB Coordinator - Emily Kauchak presented the Land Bank's Disposition Process Graphic
 - This graphic allows the public to visualize the PLB's disposition process as it relates to the Policies and Procedures. This, along with the corresponding timeline, allows for a transparent and public process that adheres to community and neighborhood needs.
 - Sen. Fontana expressed concern with the timeline and how it relates to mortgage and interest rates that cannot be held for more than sixty days. He reiterated that this could discourage young residents from purchasing properties. Matt Sanders clarified that the six-month closing period could occur much sooner if applicant(s) were ready to move on properties.
 - Councilman Wilson asked how this process overlaps with the 'Qualified End User' Considerations Scorecard. Emily Kauchak answered that the scorecard allows applications to be numerically ranked and compared with one another in a more efficient manner.

Finance Report:

- URA's Director of Finance - Joe Karlovits reviewed the December 2021 and January 2022 Reports

◇ Motion to receive the Financial Report and approve the URA to PLB Invoice [**Brean/B.Wilson**] Passed unanimously.

Legislative Updates:

Senator Fontana discussed the following:

- Municipal Claims Tax Lien Law (MCTTL)
 - This bill has been largely stalled; however, Sen. Fontana hopes to move this through the Fiscal Code as another avenue to pursue.

New Business

- There was no new business

Rev. Burgess commented on the possibility of legislative annexation of Wilkinsburg in 2023. As part of the Tri-COG Land Bank, the PLB Staff should begin thinking about how the annexation of Wilkinsburg would affect its own operations if allowed to take place.

Rev. Burgess has introduced legislation to create an affordable housing finance and implementation committee to increase the amount of affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh. Rev. Burgess proposed three steps in this process:

- Create a vehicle to incentivize private developers to invest in affordable housing;
- Create a private-public partnership financial trust with revolving loan funds for both pre-development and development purposes; and
- A bond taken by the City of Pittsburgh that incentivizes affordable housing.

These financial tools, wielded in a coordinated, comprehensive, and collaborative way, will prove necessary in advancing affordable housing throughout Pittsburgh. Housing is a human right, and the City of Pittsburgh must raise the necessary funds to advance affordable housing and slow the displacement of low-to moderate income residents from the City.

Adjournment:

The Chair called for adjournment.

◇ Motion to adjourn. [**Lavelle/B.Wilson**] Passed unanimously.