



Pittsburgh Land Bank (PLB) Minutes
July 15, 2022

Convene:

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order.

Roll Call:

Emily Kauchak (PLB Coordinator) called the roll. Members Present: Vice-Chair Dr. Jamil Bey, Councilman Bobby Wilson, and Director Karen Brean. Director Steve Mazza joined the meeting after the roll was called.

The PLB Board did not have a quorum.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes:

Since there wasn't a quorum, no action to approve minutes was taken.

Chairman's Report:

Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group released the Pittsburgh Black Homeownership Report in March 2022; this report recommends increased funding and capacity for the Pittsburgh Land Bank to address the loss of affordable housing as one of many solutions.

PLB Staff Updates:

- GRB Law Agreement
 - The City has filed petitions to Quiet Title on multiple batches of properties included in the agreement. There are now five batches of properties in various stages of the process
- Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement Amendments
 - This agreement was held in the City Council for a post-agenda meeting. PLB/URA/City staff are waiting for discussions to be scheduled



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- Property Updates
 - Updated the status of PLB-owned properties at 243 Meadows Street in the Larimer neighborhood and 6 Boggs Ave in the Mt. Washington neighborhood

Finance Report:

Since there wasn't a quorum, no action was taken to approve the June Financial Report.

PLB staff did a comparison between the services and costs of the URA under their current contract and Bookminders accounting services. Director Brean asked for some clarification of services from URA versus Bookminders and clarification of the PLB staff recommendation.

Legislative Updates:

Updates were presented by David Geiger, Assistant Director of Strategic Affairs at the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Senate Bill 811 – (Sen. Wayne Fontana) Amendment to MCTLL.

Senate Bill 439 – (Sen. Argall) Reauthorizing the county demolition fund.

House Bill 1791 – (Rep. Twardzik) A vacant property registration and assessment act.

House Bill 2209 – (Rep. Abby Major) Allows land bank boards to achieve quorum virtually.

House Bill 2210 – (Rep. Tracy Pennycuick) Adds land banks to list of entities to be considered eligible for conservatorship.

Senate Bill 797 – Amends the neighborhood improvement district act to simplify the NID process and allow second class counties to participate in the creation of NIDs.

All bills are sitting and waiting to be scheduled for a floor vote. There are only nine days of session scheduled this fall in both the House and Senate and so it is hard to predict if any of these will get a vote. We plan to push for a vote on all the bills when the legislature returns in the fall, especially Senator Fontana's bill 811 which includes amendments to the MCTLL legislation, and we would like to see that pass before the end of October. We thank Senator Fontana for his efforts in advancing this legislation. Director Mazza asked if any of the bills had come out of committee. Mr. Geiger said that most of the bills have come out of the House and Urban Affairs Committee and would provide a report of where all bills stand, including the text of the bills.



New Business:

Vice-Chair Bey mentioned that the PLI has put out a new interface on their permits and licenses website that highlights how many properties across each council district are condemned and how many they got reports on. It's a good snapshot into what's happening across the city and the importance of us having a functional land bank. He thinks looking at that provides a good way of getting your head around the enormity of the problem that we're having with vacant lots and condemned properties across the City. Vice-Chair Bey said he would share the information about the site with the Board because it is very interactive and there are some filters you can use.

Director Karen Brean started a discussion of the Land Bank's functionality by stating that she has been asked by Tri-COG Land Bank, as a consultant, to help them with community outreach, particularly in communities of color. She asked in what community outreach PLB has participated. Was there an educational effort across the city? Vice-Chair Bey feels that the community outreach is not appropriate at this time because the PLB has not demonstrated that we are a functional land bank. We haven't cleared or transacted a single property. We could learn from other land banks that are functional such as Tri-COG or Westmoreland County. He feels that it might be time to reboot because we are no closer than we were in 2015. Director Mazza agreed with the Co-Chair and suggested we just need to pull the trigger. It is believed by all present that this is a discussion the full board needs to have on the pain points and obstacles. Ken Jones asked the Board members to have a little more patience because the Land Bank is almost there. They are now closer to being functional than they have been at any time. Legislation to be able to transfer property from the city to the PLB is what is needed. Councilman Wilson asked where the legislation is now. David Geiger explained that when the legislation was initially discussed in the standing committee it was held for three weeks and when it came back up, it was held for post agenda. We are hoping to hear shortly after Council comes back after the summer recess when the legislation will be scheduled. Since this legislation comes under the purview of the Director of Finance, Councilman Wilson said he would follow up with Finance to try to move it forward. Vice-Chair Bey would like David Geiger and the PLB/URA staff to prepare a briefing updating the Board and teeing up the next two or three steps at the September Board meeting.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Adjournment:

The Vice-Chair called for adjournment.

◇ Motion to adjourn. [B.Wilson/K. Brean] Passed unanimously.