



Pittsburgh Land Bank (PLB) Minutes
October 7, 2022

Convene:

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Roll Call:

Emily Kauchak (PLB Assistant Manager) called the roll. Members Present: Rev. Ricky Burgess, Dr. Jamil Bey, Councilman Daniel Lavelle, Councilman Bobby Wilson, Director Karen Brean, Director Wanda Wilson

The PLB Board had a quorum.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes:

◇ Motion to approve the September 2022 Board meeting minutes **[B. Wilson/ Lavelle]** passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

After regular meeting business, the PLB board of directors will be engaging in a public briefing on takeaways and lessons learned from attending the 2022 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference hosted by the Center for Community Progress.

PLB Staff Updates:

- Emily Kauchak introduced PLB/URA Team members who work with the PLB to advance its mission
 - Susheela Nemani-Stanger – Deputy Executive Director of the URA
 - Shannon Barkley – Senior Counsel for the Legal Department at the URA
 - Mary Lisa (ML) Meier – Assistant Director of Real Estate Transactions at the URA

Several other URA staff members were introduced following an organizational chart of the URA and PLB.

- Pittsburgh Property Reserve (PPR) and GRB Law Agreement
Currently GRB Law is working to file petitions to quiet title on 57 city-owned properties in a few batches:

- First Cohort – Fourteen properties have received quiet title; there is a 30-day appeal window
- Second Cohort – Service complete, waiting for Respondents to file response
- Third and Fourth Cohorts – Petitions Initiating the case have been filed; awaiting service
- Fifth Cohort – Petitions are being filed initiating the case

In answer to questions from the Board, Emily Kauchak explained that these properties are listed on the Land Banks’s website under the heading “Resources”. She further explained the relationship between the City, PLB and GRB Law under the contract and how the City determined which batch these properties fell into.

- Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement Amendments
 - PLB Manager working with Finance Department to schedule a briefing with City Council
 - Proposed amendments to the Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement will allow the PLB, URA, and City of Pittsburgh to engage in mutual transfers of Real Property.
 - Currently, the City cannot transfer property to the PLB. The property the PLB currently holds came from the URA through a separate MOU.
- Property Updates
 - 243 Meadow Street (124-P-199)
 - PLB has partnered with the URA project manager assigned to Urban Academy’s campus expansion project.
 - The PLB is working with the project manager and the Urban Academy to determine how the PLB’s assets can best support the project.
 - 6 Boggs Avenue (4-L-133)
 - PLB/URA staff plan to release an updated application to purchase property and inform previous applicants when it becomes available.

Finance Report:

The Board members received copies of the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Expenses year-to-date, and Available Fund Balances in the board packets for review. They also received a copy of the year-to-date URA – ARF Invoice to the PLB for review. Sally Stadelman, PLB Manager, advised the Board that, because they are negotiating some pro-rated charges due to staffing changes during the year, the Board will approve the invoice at the next meeting.

Legislative Updates:

David Geiger, Assistant Director of Strategic Affairs at the Urban Redevelopment Authority, said there have been no legislative updates since the last Board meeting. The House has not been in session and there has been no movement on the legislation. We are hopeful that when the House comes back into session at the end of the month that we will see action on Senate Bill 811 and, hopefully, the House will pass it.

While the Senate was in session, neither of the two House bills, HB 2209 and HB 2210 which are both in the Appropriations Committee, were reported out.

Public Briefing on the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference

After the PLB Assistant Manager gave an overview of the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference, there was discussion of the Detroit Land Bank's Side Lot Program. The Detroit Land Bank acquires and sells 200 to 300 parcels a month. They market these properties to adjacent property owners proactively with a clear title. The adjacent property owners have 180 days and then it graduates into the neighborhood lot program wherein anyone within a few blocks who has a plan for future use can purchase the property. The price goes from \$100 to \$250.

Chairman Burgess commented on the Detroit LB's auction process which does not give preference to anyone who buys land. The highest bidder at the end of the auction day gets that property. Although the majority of their property goes to low-income buyers, it does not have to. We do want to help community-based organizations, but we also want to help individuals. At some time, we will have to have that conversation about priority in terms of land but that is going to be a continuing conversation about that tension. If you prioritize groups, most of them do not have the resources to claim the property at that time so you are holding it for them for x number of time. So, there will always be that tension of wanting to clean the properties as fast as possible and about being very thoughtful about who becomes the ultimate owner and what is the ultimate purpose of that property. That is a tension we have felt over the years and one we will have to continue to juggle at the Land Bank.

Discussion from the Board pointed out that the PLB has an opportunity to correct the system to be more equitable at the same time. The PLB can have an affordable housing pipeline and a pipeline for moving properties that don't fit into that vision of affordability and there is value in that as well. This approach is going to be different in every neighborhood because it is not one size fits all.

New Business:

Homes Within Reach Conference

The PLB Manager asked for board approval of expenditures for her to attend the annual 2022 Homes Within Reach Conference to be held in Hershey, PA, December 7th - 9th. The Annual Meeting of the PA Land Bank Network: Acquiring Blighted Properties in Changing Markets will take place during the event.

◇ Motion to approve the payment of the expenses of a staff person driving to the Homes Within Reach Conference [**Lavelle/Bey**] passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Adjournment:

The Chair called for adjournment.

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