



---

## Pittsburgh Land Bank (PLB) Minutes

April 14, 2023

### Convene

The Chair called the meeting to order.

### I. Roll Call

Emily Kauchak (PLB Assistant Manager) called the roll. Members present: Rev. Ricky Burgess, Dr. Jamil Bey, Councilman Lavelle, Councilman Bobby Wilson, Director Steve Mazza, and Director Wanda Wilson.

The PLB Board had a quorum.

### II. Public Comment

**Billie Vaughn**, North Side resident. The PLB needs to support all development including private investors, CDC organizations, and community members. Let residents know properties requested by CDCs so they do not bid against them at the Treasurer Sale.

**Celeste Taylor**, Homewood resident also left a written comment. Echoes Ms. Vaughn's comments. PLB should support community members who would like to purchase property through the City.

**Danae Taylor** - Agrees with previous speakers.

**Free Blackwell** - Echoes Ms. Vaughn's and Ms. Taylors comments.

**Mileak Potter** - Agrees with other speakers. Working to develop and build a list of contractors to assist current owners and people who are looking to purchase and revitalize vacant and abandoned homes.

**Cydney Kennedy** - PLB needs to support community members purchasing property through the city.

**Jermaine Turner** - He is a contractor in Pittsburgh.

**Thomas Mullholland** lives in Wilkinsburg. Works with the Allegheny Land Trust and the Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative. Working with established community garden groups across the city to secure long term land tenure for them to grow food. They are optimistic for Land Bank to support this work.

**Neena Hagen** is a reporter from Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – observing for now, may have questions later.

**Pitt Law Wicked Problem Innovation Class** is specifically about vacant lot development into green space. The group works primarily through the Adopt-A-Lot Program but is also interested in working with the PLB to support these initiatives. Attendees from this class are:

- **Professor Stephanie Dangel** - Professor at Pitt School of Law who teaches the class.
- **Charlie Ellison** - President of Knoxville Community Council and member of the class. When is Land Bank going to be up and operational?
- **Jenise Shealy** - Also serves as a community member working for the nonprofit KBK to work with residents in the Hill District.
- **Emily Cumpston**, student at Pitt Law, hopes that the PLB can continue moving to perform the functions that, in theory, they could.
- **Sonita Petrell** - Hill District Resident, here to observe.
- **Michelle** - community member in class and is an amateur historian who echoes what others have said about getting the PLB into action.

### III. Chairman's Report



---

Approval of March 2023 Minutes

◊ *Motion to approve the March 2023 Board meeting minutes [Bey/Lavelle] Passed unanimously.*

Review of March 2023 Financial Report

◊ *Motion to accept the March 2023 Financial Report and approve the monthly expenditures [Bey/B. Wilson] Passed unanimously.*

Approval of the URA quarterly invoice pursuant to the URA-PLB Cooperation Agreement for quarter 1 of 2023

◊ *Motion to approve the URA to PLB Invoice [Lavelle/B. Wilson] Passed unanimously.*

Approval of change in November 2023 meeting date

◊ *Motion to approve the rescheduling of the November meeting date to Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00PM to adhere to the respective federal observed holiday [W. Wilson/Lavelle] Passed unanimously.*

The Chairman reminded Board Members to submit their Statement of Financial Interest before May 1st.

#### **IV. Staff Updates**

Emily Kauchak, Assistant Manager of the PLB, updated board members regarding the Land Bank's progress on five (5) pending property sales. The Purchase and Sale Agreement is being circulated for 6 Boggs Avenue. The closing for the property will be scheduled for May 2023. The objection period has passed for the three parcels on Flowers Avenue (Hazelwood). Staff did not receive any objections to the sale so closing will be scheduled. A predisposition public meeting for parties interested in the sale of 243 Meadow to the Urban Academy is scheduled for Monday, May 1, 2023.

PLB Staff shared an updated chart for properties included in the Pittsburgh Property Reserve ("PPR") Donation Agreement between the PLB, City, and GRB Law showing properties in various stages of the quiet title process as well as some that have been sold to Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

#### **V. Action Items**

The PLB participates in the URA's LandCare Program and reimburses the URA for maintenance and stabilization services performed on certain PLB-owned properties. The current agreement expired, and staff asked the board to approve an updated contract.

◊ *Motion to approve an updated contract with the Urban Redevelopment Authority to participate in their LandCare property maintenance program [Mazza/Lavelle] Passed unanimously.*

As the PLB ramps up its operations, the staff wishes to empower the URA Real Estate Director as an authorized signatory for documents related to title, real estate and settlement. Per the By-Laws, the Chairman will sign any Purchase and Sale Agreements and Deeds.



---

◇ Motion to empower the URA Real Estate Director, as an Authorized Signatory for documents related to title, real estate, and settlement **[W. Wilson/Lavelle]** Passed unanimously.

Land Bank staff would like to engage an accounting firm to prepare its required annual audit.

◇ Motion to authorize PLB staff to enter into an agreement for Audit services with Magee Maruca for the 2021 & 2022 PLB Audit **[Mazza/Lavelle]** Passed unanimously.

Action for quiet title services.

◇ Motion for approval for the PLB to enter into a contract with a suite of firms for services related to title, settlement, quiet title and tax foreclosure work, and other items on an as-needed basis **[Mazza/B. Wilson]** Passed Unanimously.

The PLB issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for services related to title, settlement, quiet title and tax foreclosure work. In addition to GRB Law, the following Law Firms have been selected.

◇ Motion to Approve a Resolution authorizing The Pittsburgh Land Bank to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Morant Law Offices and Orlans PC for Quiet Title Services **[W. Wilson/Lavelle]** Passed unanimously.

## **V. Legislative Update**

Sally Stadelman, Manager of the PLB, addressed two pending pieces of legislation relevant to the PLB's operations this year.

The Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement Amendment is currently before the City Council. Council briefings on the amendment were held in December 2022; a second internal briefing for City Council members has been scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup> at 1PM.

Progress is being made in both the Senate and the House for co-sponsorship of the Municipal Claims and Tax Lien Law (MCTLL) that Senator Wayne Fontana reintroduced at the State level (SB202).

## **Addition to Staff Updates**

Ms. Stadelman reviewed the first acquisitions from city inventory, working with the Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation (PHDC), Allegheny Land Trust and Community organizations. She introduced Justin Belton Manager of PHDC, who spoke briefly about the Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation's work in affordable housing. Thomas Mulholland added a few comments on the importance of community gardens to the neighborhoods.

Rev. Burgess then explained the 'Affordable Housing Gap.'

## **VI. Public Comment**



---

During public comment the Board Chair reminded speakers that this is a time for public comment only. It is not a time for interrogative. Questions posed to the board members and staff will not be answered during the meeting. If you have questions, please contact the staff.

**Barbara Daniels** - Wants to understand the process.

**Rico Rucker** - Trying to figure out how the Land Banking process works.

**Billie Vaughn** – had follow-up questions to Rev. Burgess comments about the Affordable Housing Gap and the Land Trust.

**Neena Hagen** – has questions for board members.

**Celeste Taylor** – Trying to understand the process through which CDCs are engaged and how individuals access properties. Many residents are interested in learning this, and it needs to be made clear.

**Emily Cumpston** – Having learned more about this process, wants to emphasize the importance of making sure it is accessible to community members.

**Free Blackwell** – Please make transparent the answers to questions they have for the City Council.

**Jenise Shealy** – no final comment thank you for your presentation

**Charlie Ellison** – Look forward to you attending the KnoxWatch meeting so they can get answers to questions.

**Sonita Petrell** – Learned a lot today & interested in learning more about the process and the end results for the community.

**Jermaine Turner** – looking for transparency and understanding of how lifetime community residents can get their hands on some of this land and some of these projects to where they're not cut out; to where they can gain some generational wealth for their families as well, instead of the PLB just giving this stuff to organizations.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The Chair called for adjournment.

◊ *Motion to adjourn. [Lavelle/assumed] Passed unanimously.*