
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, December 15, 2011
Certification Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:10 pm.

Mr. Olsen announced that the purpose of the hearing was to consider if the conditions of the properties on the agenda met the conditions set by the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended and the City of Reading Blighted Property Review Committee Ordinance, and could be certified as blighted.

BPRC Attendance: L. Olsen, W. Bealer, H. Urena, M. Wolfe, G. Seidel

Staff Attendance: T. Butler, S. Haver

Mr. Olsen asked Ms. Butler, attorney from the City's Law Department, to conduct the hearing. Ms. Butler explained the hearing procedures and summarized the blighted conditions as set forth in the City's Blighted Property ordinance.

CERTIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Butler announced that there were three properties that failed to meet one of the determinants of blight under the provisions set forth in the Urban Redevelopment and Blighted Property Acquisition Act (Act of May 24, 1945, P.L. 991, 385 §12.1, as amended June 23, 1978 P.L. 556, 94 §2; 35 P.S. §1712.1). As such, she requested that the Committee consider removing them from the Blighted Property list and releasing them from the blight remediation process. They are:

- 1. 417 Tulpehocken St, owned by Buy We Will LLC, 157 N. Front Street Reading 19601, Purchased May 2005**
- 2. 820 Buttonwood St, owned by Jack Shultz, 1801 Cambridge Ave Apt A18 Wyomissing PA 19610 Purchased December 2009.**
- 3. 1017 Cotton St, owned by Martin Leyva-Hernandez1976 Perkiomen Avenue Reading, PA 19606; Purchased November 2011 at tax sale**

In addition, Mr. Haver noted that Citibank had been in contact with him and has responded to most of the outstanding issues at 632 Weiser Street including remediating code violations and winterizing and securing the property. Citibank also indicated that they would resolve the outstanding water bills and trash and recycling liens. Mr. Haver recommended that the Committee consider tabling the following property until the February 2012 BPRC meeting:

4. 632 Weiser St, owned by Bankers Trust Co of CA Trust For Vendee Mortgage Tr, 1761 E Saint Andrew Pl Santa Ana CA 92705, No purchase date listed

Mr. Olsen requested a motion removing the three properties from the list and tabling the fourth property.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to remove 820 Buttonwood St, 1017 Cotton St and 417 Tulpehocken St from the blight list, and to table 632 Weiser St until the February hearings. The motion was approved unanimously.

CERTIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Butler stated that the properties will be taken out of agenda order. The properties with owners or others willing to testify will be taken before properties not having representatives present.

5. 856 North 8th St., formerly owned by Charles K. Millard Sr et al, 1150A N 10th St Reading PA 19604, No purchase date listed

Purchased by Leroy Keffer, Jr., 804 Joan Terrace Reading, PA 19611. Deed dated December 6, 2011.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Former owner Lillian Millard stepped forward; Ms. Butler issued the oath to Ms. Millard and provided her with a copy of the property packet.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents and affidavits submitted and attached as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on October 21, 2011
- Delinquent water paid
- Water Service on
- Electric Service - unknown
- Gas Service is inactive as of January 2011
- Delinquent taxes N/A
- Trades reports that the property is fire damaged and that no building permits have been issued

- Property Maintenance reports that the property was fire damaged in January 2011 and received numerous Quality of Life violations.
- Delinquent trash and recycling fees \$135.46
- No Liens

Ms. Millard stated that the property had recently been sold to Leroy Keffer, Jr, 804 Joan Terrace Reading, PA 19611. She had tried to contact him through the realtor, Joshua Abraham and Century 21 without success to inform him of the hearing. It was noted that there is \$7200.00 in fire escrow money is being held by the City.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Seidel moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to approve the certification of 856 N. 8th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. 1042 Windsor St., owned by Marin Albu of 3269 Chestnut Street in Reading, PA 19605. Purchased October, 2011.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. Albu stepped forward; Ms. Butler issued the oath to Mr. Albu and provided him with a copy of the property packet.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents and affidavits submitted and attached as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on October 21, 2011
- Delinquent water paid
- Water Service on
- Electric Service - unknown
- Gas Service unknown
- Delinquent taxes N/A
- Trades reports that a building permit has been issued for doors, roof, siding, and floors, and a rehabilitation agreement has been received.
- Property Maintenance reports that the property is severely damaged and the chimney has collapsed. There was a 2009 violation for high grass and weeds.
- Delinquent trash and recycling fees: no account listed
- No Liens

Mr. Albu stated that he purchased the property in October of 2011 and has plans to repair the property as his primary residence. He has obtained building permits and submitted a

rehabilitation agreement to the CD office. He stated that he understands that the property has serious roof and structural damage, and was working his way up to the roof by clearing out and disposing of debris from the lower levels.

Mr. Haver asked Mr. Albu if he has experience with similar rehab projects in the City. Mr. Albu responded that he had experience with similar projects but not in the City of Reading. Mr. Bealer stressed the importance of securing the roof to prevent further water damage as recently occurred with 334 Chestnut St, and to keep the City apprised of his progress of the property. He also told Mr. Albu that he had 180 days to complete the rehabilitation, and at such time the Committee would consider removing the blight certification on the property.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to approve the certification of 1042 Windsor Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. 259 West Oley Street., owned by Robert Mendez, 131 Hichborn St Revere MA 02151, Purchased March 2010

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. Mendez stepped forward. Ms. Butler issued the oath to the property owner and his attorney and provided them with a copy of the property packet.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents and affidavits submitted and attached as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on October 21, 2011
- Delinquent water totaling \$534.87
- Water Service Off since November, 2001
- Electric Service Unknown
- Gas Service – meter removed in 2007
- Delinquent taxes for 2010 of \$942.49
- Trades reports that there are no building permits. A dumpster permit was issued in October. Property is boarded up and in dilapidated condition.
- Property Maintenance reports that the property has numerous violations from 2008 and 2009 and was declared unfit for habitation
- Delinquent trash and recycling – no account
- Liens totaling \$942.49 for unpaid taxes 2010

Mr. Mendez stated that he will start repairing the property tomorrow. He obtained a permit

for repairing the sidewalks and needed to cut down a tree. He is working on getting permits for plumbing and electrical work, and that the property had 6 units.

Mr. Haver instructed Mr. Mendez to complete and sign a rehabilitation agreement and would leave one in the Codes office for him pick-up. Mr. Haver told Mr. Mendez that the rehabilitation agreement would allow 180 days to complete the work and obtain housing permits, at which time the blight certification would be removed.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

BPRC Vote

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Urena to approve the certification of 259 West Oley Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Butler inquired if the owners or any one representing the following properties are present and inquired if anyone in the audience would like to provide comment on the following properties.

- 8. 228 Moss St, owned by Martin & Alan Hyneman, 3808 Reiff Pl Reading PA 19606, Purchased Dec 2008**
- 9. 833 Bingaman St, owned by Agustin Torres Perez, 833 Bingaman St, Reading 19601, Purchased July 2004**
- 10. 100 Neversink St, owned by Jack Shultz, 1801 Cambridge Ave Apt A18 Wyomissing PA 19610 Purchased December 2009 – Peter Lengel (new owner), 200 Neversink St**
- 11. 633 S 17 1/2 St, owned by Jack Shultz, 1801 Cambridge Ave Apt A18 Wyomissing PA 19610 Purchased December 2009 – Carl Bomberger (new owner), 622 S 17th ½ St**
- 12. 316 North 10th St., owned by Gerardo Rojas-Chavez, 28 South 10th Street, Purchased August 2004 – Carmen Roman Padilla (new owner), PO Box 414 Tobyhanna Pa 18466**
- 13. 310 Heckman’s Ct., owned by Donna L. Conrad, 16 Woodside Ave Temple PA 19560, No purchase date listed**

No one stepped forward.

Ms. Butler entered the property packets into the record. In summary:

- **228 Moss St** - Delinquent water \$15,731.78, Water and Electric off, unpaid 2009, 2010 and 2011 taxes of \$2508.80, vacant
- **833 Bingaman St** – Delinquent water \$5,772.57; water off. Delinquent trash of \$499.16. Delinquent taxes from 2009, 2010, 2011 of \$967.44. 2009 violation for trash and rubbish; owner claims occupancy but failed to respond to request for inspection
- **100 Neversink St.-** Delinquent water \$2,403.38, Water, Electric and Gas off, unpaid

2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 taxes, Grass and Weeds violations 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and poor maintenance citations 2009 and 2010, Delinquent Trash and Recycling and Liens

- **633 S 17 1/2 St.** –Delinquent water \$1.676.96, Water Service off, Unpaid 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010 taxes, Liens and Delinquent Trash and Recycling, vacant and boarded
- **316 N. 10th St.** – Delinquent water \$826.00; service off. Cited for illegal rental, hazardous materials, failure to maintain, grass, weed and illegal structure 2008, 2009 and 2011. Delinquent trash. Vacant.
- **310 Heckman’s Court** – Owner is not contesting certification and will sign demolition waiver.

Ms. Butler again asked if the owners of any of the listed properties were present. No one responded.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

Ms. Butler stated that each of these properties meets the blight criteria.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Seidel, to approve the certification of these properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to adjourn the certification hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Steven Haver