
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, April 3, 2025
Hybrid Meeting / Council Chambers
Certification Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Keith called the Certification Hearing to order at 6:04 pm. He announced that a quorum was present.

BPRC Attendance: J. Keith, A. Boyd, J. Keith, C. Miller – in person and P. Rye - virtually

Staff Attendance: H. Scheuring, M. Mayfield, Esq and L. Kelleher – in person

Mr. Keith asked the Board to consider the February Determination meeting minutes that were distributed electronically along with the Certification agenda.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to approve the minutes from the February Determination Hearing as distributed along with the Certification agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

PROPERTIES TO BE REMOVED FROM THE PROCESS

None

Mr. Keith explained the purpose of the BPRC process. He stated that Ms. Mayfield will conduct the hearing.

CERTIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Scheuring. Ms. Kelleher stated that Ms. Scheuring will remain under oath until the hearing adjourns.

6. 62 S 6th St, Maria Antoine, owner, 62 S 6th St, Reading, Purchased May 2024

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Prince, the contractor retained by Ms. Antoine to rehab the property.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property.

Ms. Scheuring entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges - \$7408.16, Water off 2013
- Delinquent taxes - \$8514.58 2023-24 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 4 Work orders, 17 NoV, Placard unsafe and failed inspection 2013, \$8430.50 unpaid, 4 QoL Trash, 7 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Snow

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Mr. Prince stated that the property owner contracted with him to develop an action plan for the rehab of the property. He described the severe miscommunication between the property owner, her sons and him about the required work. He stated that he has purchased various supplies required for the rehab and he added that he has grown tired of not being paid.

Mr. Prince stated that a Property Maintenance inspection was conducted, and the property failed. He stated that the property owner does not appear to have the financial wherewithal to pay for the items requiring repair.

Ms. Antoine arrived at the meeting and Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to her.

Ms. Antoine described her health problems since she purchased the property, noting that her condition requires additional tests, which is why she hired Mr. Prince.

In response to a question from Ms. Mayfield, Ms. Antoine stated that she has authorized Mr. Prince to testify, she agrees with the action plan he created for the property and she agreed to pay Mr. Prince. She noted that HARB has already approved her application to make improvements to the exterior of the property.

Ms. Mayfield explained the difference between the HARB Board process and the BPRC Board process and their functions. She stated that the BPRC considers the overall condition, interior and exterior, of the property to first determine then possibly certify the property as blighted. She stated that no one appeared at the determination hearing to represent this property. The property is now being considered for blight certification and if certified as blighted it is eligible for eminent domain. She reiterated the conditions listed by Ms. Scheuring.

In response to a question from Mr. Rye, Ms. Antoine stated that the property is vacant.

Ms. Antoine stated that as the weather has warmed, she plans to work with Mr. Prince to make the property code compliant while she deals with her health issues. She noted her intent to rent the apartments out to low-income individuals.

When questioned about the zoning for the property, Ms. Antoine stated that her son has handled the zoning.

Mr. Prince stated that when hearing their financial plan for the rehab he became concerned, and he took them to Rodney Ridley so they could apply for the Alvernia Jump Start program and they were given the application package.

Ms. Antoine stated that she will hear if their financial application was approved in 4-6 weeks.

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Harvey Antoine.

In response to a question from Ms. Mayfield, Mr. Antoine stated that if their financial application is approved the rehab should be completed in 12-15 months. He stated that he has been working with counsel at Alvernia about various components for this property. He noted that the need for parking for the 20-22 units can be covered at the 6th and Cherry parking garage. He stated that the building is 10,000 sq ft – commercial on the first floor and residential above.

In response to a question from Mr. Miller, Mr. Antoine stated that the property is currently for sale, but they will be taking it off the market soon.

In response to a question from Mr. Miller, Ms. Kelleher stated that the City does not currently bill the property owner for the fencing installed to secure properties that are unsound.

Ms. Mayfield stated that the property owner will need to reimburse the City for the fencing and install their own fencing if they do not wish to continue the charges. Mr. Antoine noted his understanding.

Mr. Rye inquired if they are seeking financing for the entire project from Alvernia. Mr. Antoine replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Miller inquired if the committee could obtain the application from Jump Start. Ms. Mayfield stated that she was unsure and if documents were provided certain information would need to be redacted. She stated that any decision can be conditional on providing the requested documentation. Mr. Antoine agreed.

Mr. Rye noted that this building is the same scale as 100 S 4th Street, which was recently appraised in the \$3M (+ or -) range. He predicted that the rehab of this property would be a multi-million-dollar project, as it is in a historic district.

Mr. Antoine stated that while he and his mother originally predicted that the rehab could be completed during the summer of 2025 but the need to obtain City permits and other approvals would probably push the completion of the project to summer 2026. He added that the first floor would be some type of commercial use like a lounge or coffee shop.

In response to a question, Ms. Mayfield stated that the plan proposed is not an architectural plan, but a prospectus outlining the project cost and the predicted profit from rent.

Mr. Rye expressed concern about the structural integrity of the building due to the lengthy period it has been vacant. He noted that without architectural plans, the actual renovation cost cannot be obtained. He added that this property no longer meets the building/fire code requirements and bringing old properties into compliance with the current building/fire codes is expensive.

Ms. Antoine stated that if the Alvernia funding doesn't get approved, she plans to sell another investment property to finance the rehab. She noted her plan to retain the current layout of the property.

Mr. Antoine agreed to provide an architectural drawing or plan if the property is tabled until August. She stated that she plans to make the improvements required by HARB.

Ms. Mayfield again explained the difference between the HARB requirements and the requirements that the BPRC can attach to the decision on this property, including reimbursing the City for the cost of the fencing which was installed to secure the property to protect public safety.

Public Comment

None

There was a lengthy discussion about tabling the property and adding conditions.

Mr. Keith moved, seconded by Mr. Rye, to table 62 S 6th Street until the August determination hearing, conditioned upon providing proof of financing from Alvernia's Jump Start program, providing architectural drawings, providing zoning, allowing an interior inspection, submission of a rehab plan, entering into a payment plan for back taxes and water charges, and reimbursing the City for the cost of the fencing and other fees. The motion was approved unanimously.

**12. 604 N 9th St., Marco V. Castro, owner, 418 Green St Rdg, Purchased Sept 2017
Aug 2023**

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Castro.

Ms. Scheuring entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges - \$80.50, Water on
- Delinquent taxes – N/A
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 5 Work orders, 7 NoV, Failed inspection 3-18-25, \$23759.14 unpaid, 7 QoL Trash, 16 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Snow

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property. She explained that the recent failed inspection was caused by the interior conditions such as lack of smoke alarms/detectors. She stated that this property is zoned as a single unit in the R3 zoning district and there is a history of rental permits at the property.

Mr. Castro stated that he began working on the exterior of the property and with that complete, he is transitioning to improve the interior. He stated that he purchased the property as a 3-unit. He stated that he is unsure when the interior rehab will be completed.

Mr. Rye applauded the appearance of the property, when compared to prior photos.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the Zoning Board denied the conversion to a 3-unit property in 2023.

Ms. Mayfield stated that if the property is tabled, Mr. Castro will need to attempt to obtain zoning to retain the 3 units and continue to improve the interior after obtaining the proper building/trade permits.

Public Comment

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 604 N 9th St. until the August Certification Hearing, conditioned upon the property receiving zoning to remain a 3 unit property, allowing an interior inspection prior to the August hearing and continuing to

make the improvements to the interior after obtaining building/trade permits. The motion carried unanimously.

16. 225 S 6th St., HDCLQL1 LP, owner, 8 W King St Suite 821 Lancaster, Purchased Dec 2023

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Krauter and Mr. Kaminski.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property.

Ms. Scheuring entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges No service - vacant property
- Delinquent taxes N/A
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 1 work orders, 2 NoV \$586 unpaid,
Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Ms. Scheuring stated that the unpaid fees are related to work orders and these fees carry with the property. She stated that this is a recertification due to the change in ownership. She displayed photos of the fenced in vacant lot

Mr. Kaminski stated that this property and the adjoining properties are owned by HDC (Housing Development Corporation) MidAtlantic, a 50-year-old company that provides affordable housing. He added that HDC operates other affordable sites within Reading. The co-owner is Landis Quality Living (LQL) the owner of a retirement community in Lancaster. This one block area will be developed into 46 age restricted affordable apartments. A funding application has been submitted to PHFA (PA Housing Finance Agency). A decision is expected in July (2nd application – 1st was denied). He noted that there are 11 sources of financing for this \$20M project. An additional \$1.25M will be provided for selective demolition, environmental remediation and stabilization of the building that will be retained. The City has committed \$1.5M in federal funds to this project. He added that General Contractor Authur Funkinon is also an owner.

Mr. Kaminski stated that they are currently working with the City and the City consultants to pass \$1M to a non-profit affiliate of Mr. Funkinon to put the demo out to bid. He stated that Mr. Funkinon has obtained a building permit to replace/repair the roof on the original building which will stabilize the building, noting that the roof caved prior to their purchase of the property. He added that the property was brought to their attention by the former

Reading CD Director and he encouraged HDC to purchase the property for this type of development.

Mr. Kaminski stated that since taking ownership they pay the bills assigned to this property. in a timely fashion and they will be happy to pay the amount noted by Ms. Scheuring for the work orders.

In response to questions from Mr. Rye, Mr. Kaminski stated that groundbreaking will not occur until the tax credit application is approved on or around July 12th and the equity closing occurs. They are predicting groundbreaking in the summer of 2026. He added that in 2025 the stabilization of the original building will occur after the roof work is completed. The other row homes on the property will be demolished. The 2nd phase of the project will add additional units in a structure that will be built above the parking lot. He added that the group is in the process of hiring a local property manager who will be responsible for maintenance.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Rye moved, seconded by Miller, to remove 225 S 6th Street from the process. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. 754 N 9th St., A Group of Four NY LLC, owner, PO Box 770098 Woodside NY, Purchased Feb 2015

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Pelaez.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges N/A, water service on
- Delinquent taxes \$556.17 2024 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 16 work orders, 22 NoV, \$15667.67 unpaid, 32 QoL Trash, 25 QoL Weeds, 3 QoL Snow

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Ms. Pelaez stated that she is one of the owners of this LLC. She stated that this property has

11 units over a commercial unit.

Ms. Scheuring confirmed that the property has zoning for 11 residential units and one commercial unit. She stated that the next inspection is scheduled for August 19, 2025.

Ms. Pelaez stated that she cannot predict when the interior renovations will be completed.

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Torres.

Both Mr. Torres and Ms. Pelaez objected to allowing additional interior inspections as they do not want to be exposed to additional citations and fines.

After Ms. Mayfield explained that this inspection is just a site visit that will allow Ms. Scheuring to inform the Committee about the condition of the interior, stressing that citations and fines will not occur during or after the visit, Mr. Torres and Ms. Pelaez agreed to allow Ms. Scheuring to see the interior of the property.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Mr. Rye, to table 754 N 9th Street, conditioned on the inspection/review of the condition of the interior. The motion carried unanimously.

24. 308 S 6th St., Best Better Totally Opportunity LLC, owner, 204 Windsor St Reading, Purchased Oct 2023

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Soriano.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$1983.82, water service on
- Delinquent taxes \$1217.27 2024 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – Failed inspection 3/6/25, 16 work orders, 22 NoV, \$840 unpaid, 3 QoL Trash, 4 QoL Indoor furn outdoors, 3 QoL Hazardous waste

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

Mr. Soriano stated that he owns this LLC and that he was unaware of the blighted property

process. He stated that the property is unoccupied and requires a total rehab. He stated that this property has zoning for a 2-unit. He stated that he completed the roof repair and will now begin work on the interior, noting that he applied for construction permits April 2. He expressed the belief that he can have the interior completed by the August hearing

Ms. Scheuring stated that the next inspection is scheduled for July 21st.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Keith moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 309 S 6th Street, until the August hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

8. 833 Schuylkill Ave., Gumerindo Cruz Silverio, owner, 625 Weiser St Reading, Purchased May 2023 -

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Cruz, fiancé of the property owner. Ms. Cruz asked Mr. Soriano to assist her with translation.

Ms. Schuering displayed current photos of the property and entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet and she entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail on February 7, 2025
- Delinquent water charges \$81.23, water service on
- Delinquent taxes N/A
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Property Maintenance – 1 work orders, 12 NoV, Failed Inspection 1/23/25, \$7210 unpaid, 38 QoL Trash, 7 QoL Weeds, 4 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance

Note: delinquent Water includes sewer, trash, and recycling

With assistance from Mr. Soriano, Ms. Cruz stated that the one-unit property is currently unoccupied, and the renovation is 90-95% complete.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the next inspection is scheduled for May 23rd.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Keith moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 833 Schuylkill Ave, until the

August hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Scheuring stated that the following properties do not have representation at this hearing and each property meets at least one (1) of the required blight criteria as follows. (*Note the numbers match those on the Property Summary Sheets*).

Notices were mailed to all properties on February 7, 2025.

1. 429 A Locust St. Jorge Patricio Pacheco, owner, 3229 State Hill Rd, Rdg, Purchased April 2024 - Delinquent water charges \$101.27 Water on; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance – 1 work order, 4 NoV, \$970 unpaid, 2 QoL Trash, 4 QoL Weeds

7. 645 Locust St., Eugenio Rosario-Diaz, owner, 645 Locust St, Reading, Purchased Nov 2023 – Delinquent water charges \$9613.23 Water off 2013; Delinquent Taxes N/A, Property Maintenance – Placard unlawful & failed inspection 2015, 12 NoV, 7 work order, \$16,145.13 unpaid, 26 QoL Trash, 24 QoL Weeds, 2 QoL Motor Vehicle nuisance

12. 1103 Spruce St., Andre Murphy, Danae Jenkins & Kenneth Murphy, owners, 1103 Spruce St Reading, Purchased Oct 2024 - Delinquent water charges \$1721.12, Water off 2013; Delinquent taxes \$1991.96 2023-24 City, County, School; Property Maintenance – 3 Work orders, 3 NoV, Failed Inspection 2015, \$10823 unpaid, 4 QoL Trash, 10 QoL Weeds

15. 812 Bingaman St., Jeovani Delgado, owner, 229 S 6th St. Reading, Purchased Nov 2023 – Delinquent water \$592.61, Water off 2019; Delinquent taxes N/A; Property Maintenance – 2 work orders, 14 NoV, Failed inspection 2023, \$1385 unpaid, 2 QoL Trash, 2 QoL Weeds,

17. 311 Hollenbach St., Golden Circle Realty LLC, owner, PO Box 664 Adamstown PA, Purchased July 2022 – Delinquent water charges \$15402.26, Water off 2012; Property Maintenance – 12 NoV, 6 Work Orders, Failed inspection 2022, \$8904.67 unpaid, 12 QoL Trash, 16 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Indoor Furniture Outdoors, 1 QoL Snow, 2 QoL Motor vehicle nuisance

18. 617 Clinton St., Golden Circle Realty LLC, owner, PO Box 664 Adamstown PA, Purchased July 2022 – Delinquent water charges \$11721.09, Water off 2012; Delinquent property taxes \$10729.37 2016-24 City, County, School, Property Maintenance – 5 NoV, Failed inspection 2013, Placard unlawful 2014, \$39298.76 unpaid, 10 QoL Trash, 7 QoL Weeds, 6 QoL Indoor Furniture Outdoors

19. 670 Schuylkill Ave., Jacqueline Varela, owner, 382 W Merrick Rd Freeport NY, Purchased Nov 2021 – Delinquent water charges \$1027.17, Water off 2015; Delinquent taxes \$1878.83 2024 City, County, School, Property Maintenance – 1 NoV, \$475 unpaid, 4 QoL

Weeds,

23. 913 Oley St., Randy Weidner, owner, 913 Oley St Reading, Purchased April 2000

– Delinquent water charges \$6478.11, Water on; Delinquent taxes \$1560.31 City, County, School, Property Maintenance – 4 NoV, \$70 unpaid, 6 QoL Trash, 3 QoL Weeds, 2 QoL Indoor Furniture Outdoors

27. 228 Moss St., Ingenious Consulting SVCS LLC, owner, 640 Masonic Way Unit 1061, Belmont CA, Purchased July 2017–

Delinquent water charges \$56386.15 Water off 2008; Delinquent taxes \$1091.88 2024 County, School, Property Maintenance – 3 Work orders, 19 NoV, Failed inspection 2017, Placard unlawful 2016, \$12665 unpaid, 11 QoL Trash, 6 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL Indoor Furniture Outdoors

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to certify the consent agenda properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mayfield stated that the following 1417 Monroe St and 739 Franklin St require separate board consideration.

14. 1417 Monroe St., JM Diamond Enterprises LLC, owner, 2 Albert Lane Reading PA, Purchased Aug 2023

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to remove 1417 Monroe from the process. The motion was approved unanimously.

25. 730 Franklin St., Brian J Skiles, owner, 706 Franklin St Reading PA, Purchased Nov 1997

Ms. Mayfield stated that the owner has claimed that he is in bankruptcy. This requires confirmation and she suggested tabling the property.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Ms. Woodward, to table 730 Franklin St. until the August hearing so the status of the owner's bankruptcy claim can be ascertained. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Keith announced that the next determination hearing will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025 and the work session is scheduled for Wednesday, May 28, 2025. Both will be conducted hybrid – in-person and Zoom.

The hearing adjourned on motion of Mr. Miller and Mr. Rye at approximately 7:50 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher CMC,
Secretary*