
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, June 1, 2023
Hybrid
Certification Hearing
Meeting Report

Michelle Mayfield, Esq. introduced herself to all present. She explained that the City's attorneys are unavailable for this hearing and that as she serves as Special Counsel to the City, the City attorneys asked her to conduct this hearing. She called the Certification Hearing to order at 6:19 pm. She announced that a quorum was present.

Ms. Mayfield announced that the purpose of the hearing is to consider if the conditions of the properties on the agenda meet any of the 12 conditions defined by the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the City of Reading Blighted Property Review Committee Ordinance and can be certified as blighted.

BPRC Attendance: T. McMahon and W. Bealer– in person and H. Urena and M. Wolfe – electronically

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

Ms. Mayfield stated that the minutes from the April Determination hearing were distributed electronically. She asked if any committee member wished to make corrections or changes.

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was approved unanimously.

PROPERTIES TO BE REMOVED FROM THE PROCESS

None.

Certification Hearing

Ms. Mayfield reviewed the hearing process.

Ms. Kelleher stated that there two (2) property owners registered to provide testimony – 826 Pear St. in person and 830 Thorn St. virtually.

**24. 826 Pear St., Ramon Acevedo, owner, 5103 Casa Grande Rd, Temple PA 19560,
Purchased Oct 2016**

Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Acevedo. A property packet was provided to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

Ms. Mayfield 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 May 1, 2023
- Delinquent water charges \$8110.58, Water on
- Delinquent taxes \$2003.09 2022 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – Poor condition, Roof in disrepair, Windows missing
- Codes – 3 NoV, \$13,105 total unpaid, Failed inspection 1/25/23, 5 QoL Trash, 6 QoL Weeds, 2 QoL Snow & Indoor furniture outdoors
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – N/A

Mr. Acevedo questioned how the water delinquency could be increasing as there is no plumbing equipment in the property and he has not started water service since he took title to the property. He stated that he recently paid off the taxes and he provided a copy of the receipt from the County Treasurer.

Mr. Acevedo questioned the high amount due to Property Maintenance, noting that he will contact the division to discuss this issue. He stated that he changed his the mailing address with Property Maintenance but not with the County Treasurer which is how the tax delinquency occurred. He agreed that the property is in poor condition and he is working with his neighbors to address quality of life issues as they occur.

Mr. Acevedo explained that his work on the property was disrupted by the pandemic and the restrictions created by his workplace. He stated that those restrictions were recently lifted and he immediately began working on the property. He provided photos of the improvements. He noted his intent to complete the rehab by October 2023 and to rent the property out. He added that he recently applied for financing to complete the rehab and he pulled building/trade permits for building, HVAC, electrical and plumbing work.

Mr. Bealer stated that the receipt from the County Treasurer shows that the tax delinquency has been cleared as of today and he stated that the photos provided show a new tongue and groove porch decking and the overgrown vegetation cleared from the back yard.

Mr. Acevdo stated that the house wrap shown on the photos being displayed on the screen in the room are protecting the open windows until the framing is installed and the windows are replaced.

In response to a question from Mr. McMahon, Mr. Acevedo stated that he performed the property repairs made to date; however, now that he has obtained funding he will be hiring contractors to make the remaining repairs so the rehab can be completed prior to the birth of his child in October. He stated that he is aware of the potential consequences if he does nothing to prevent the certification of his property and he intends to rehab the property to prevent it's certification.

Ms. Wolfe suggested that Mr. Acevedo meet with Ms. Scheuring to prepare a rehab plan. Ms. Mayfield agreed, noting the need for the rehab to be completed prior to the date of the next Certification Hearing in early October.

Mr. Urena thanked Mr. Acevedo for attending and for his commitment to the rehab of this property, which is preferred by this Board, rather than certification.

Ms. Scheuring asked Mr. Acevedo to contact her about the rehab plan and she offered to assist him with updating his address with the County Treasurer.

Public Comment

There was no public comment for this property.

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to table 826 Pear Street until the October Certification Hearing and require the submission of an approved rehab plan within 60 days. The motion was approved unanimously.

25. 830 Thorn St., Shark Investments I LLC, owner, PO Box 13404, Reading PA, Purchased May 2021

Ms. Mayfield inquired about the ownership of this LLC. David Lugo, connected to the meeting virtually, stated that he is the sole owner of this LLC.

Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Lugo. A property packet was emailed to the property owner on the day of the meeting.

Ms. Mayfield 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 May 1, 2023
- Delinquent water charges \$8192.18, Water on
- Delinquent taxes \$2689.51 2021-22 City, County, School
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service N/A
- Trades – Fire damaged, No 2nd floor windows, No utilities

- Codes – 1, Work Order, 4 NoV, \$1800.50 total unpaid, Failed inspection 4/26/23, 8 QoL Trash, 1 QoL Weeds
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – N/A

Mr. Lugo stated that the fire took place in August 2022 and the length of the investigation by the City Fire Marshal and his insurance company delayed his ability to rehabilitate the property. He stated that he recently pulled building and electrical permits and he described his plan to complete the rehabilitation of the building. He noted that this is his first experience with the blighted property process.

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Scheuring.

Ms. Scheuring stated that the property failed its inspection in April 2023 and she verified that building and electric permits were pulled. She encouraged Mr. Lugo to complete a rehab plan.

Ms. Scheuring displayed photos taken in March 2023 and May 2023 showing the improvements over the last two (2) month period.

Mr. Lugo inquired about the need for a rehab plan as the rehab process is almost completed. Ms. Scheuring stated that having a rehab plan will eliminate the need for frequent inspections and slow the inspections to once per year.

Mr. Lugo noted his intent to begin to work on paying off the tax and water delinquencies. He stated that the is covered by fire insurance and the City is holding his fire escrow money, which can be released after the rehab is completed to the City's satisfaction.

Mr. Urena thanked Mr. Lugo for his work to improve the property over the last two (2) months

Public Comment

There was no public comment for this property.

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. McMahon, to table this property until the October Certification Hearing. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. McMahon asked Mr. Lugo if he owns 39 S 2nd St. noting the deplorable condition of this property which is directly across from RACC. Mr. Lugo stated that he and Shark Investments I also own this property and he is also working to rehab the property.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Mayfield 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)*

All properties received notice of the hearing mailed March 1, 2023 and the properties requiring posting were posted on the 18th of May.

- 1. 742 N 11th St., Value Rentals of Reading LLC, owner, PO Box 402, Temple PA 19560, Purchased Nov 2021-** Delinquent taxes \$2022.48 2022 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$57.39; Water off 12/27/22; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Condemned and vacant; Codes – \$240 total unpaid
- 2. 622 N 8th St, David Crespo, owner, 622 N 8th St Reading 19601, Purchased Aug 2022** - Delinquent taxes \$3644.80 2021-2022 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$830.74; Water off 2/24/20; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Boarded up first floor, vacant; Codes – 9 NoVs, Failed inspection 9/8/22, 4 QoL Trash, 3 QoL Weeds, \$4555 total unpaid
- 4. 730 Bingaman St, Francisco Dominquez, owner, 407 S 9th St Reading, Purchased Jan 2022** (Tabled at Aug 2022 Determination Hearing) - Delinquent taxes N/A ; Delinquent water \$76.72, Water off 5-13-13; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Poor condition, Exterior rear detached from the structure, No utility Service; Codes – 1 Work Order, 3 NoV, Failed inspection 8/25/22, 2 QoL trash, 4 QoL weeds, \$4802.46 total unpaid
- 6. 906 N 5th St, Andres Hernandez, owner, 142 N 10th St., Rdg PA, Purchased May 2006** (Tabled at Aug 2022 Determination Hearing) - Delinquent taxes N/A ; Delinquent water \$360.99, Water on; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; N/A; Codes – 1 Work Order, 7 NoV, Failed inspection 4/24/17, 13 QoL trash, 14 QoL weeds, 5 QoL Indoor furniture outdoors, \$17349.06 total unpaid
- 9. 450 Schuylkill Ave, Wilson Laboy, owner, 200 E Robeson St Lot 34 Lakeland FL, Purchased Dec 1994** - Delinquent taxes \$405.62 2022 City, County; Delinquent water \$13,576.01; Water off 6/24/14; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Vacant, Poor condition, Doors boarded up; Codes – 1 Work Order, 3 NoVs, 4 QoL trash, \$850 total unpaid
- 11. 209 Hudson St, Rafael Andrade Fuentes, owner, 209 Hudson St. Reading PA, Purchased Aug 2004** - Delinquent taxes \$963.32 2021-22 City, County; Delinquent water \$4067.46; Water off 11/14/22; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades No roof, Poor condition, Condemned; Codes – 1 Work Order, 2 NoVs, 2 QoL trash, 1 QoL snow/ice, \$460 total unpaid
- 12. 1145 Cotton St, Golden Circle Realty Inc, owner, PO Box 664 Adamstown PA, Purchased July 2022** - Delinquent taxes \$23,334.69 2009-22 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$12,987.77; Water off 5/1/12; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Poor condition; Codes – 3 Work

Orders, 5 NoV, Failed inspection 9/8/22, 29 QoL trash, 16 QoL weeds, 3 QoL Indoor furniture outdoors, \$12,702 total unpaid

14. 1260 N 10th St, Francisco Rivera, owner, 1260 N 10th St Reading PA, Purchased Nov 2013 - Delinquent taxes \$3995.65 2021-22 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$10,055.77; Water off 3/26/23; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Boarded up, Vacant; Codes – 4 Work Orders, 11 NoV, 6 QoL trash, \$5242.88 total unpaid

15. 155 Pear St, Robert and Isabella Sheperson, owner, 28 Northgate Ln, Willinboro NJ, Purchased Aug 1962 - Delinquent taxes N/A; Delinquent water \$76.72; Water off 7/20/16; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Vacant and boarded up; Codes – 2 Work Orders, 2 NoV, 13 QoL trash, 9 QoL weeds, 1 QoL Indoor furniture outdoors, \$1829.50 total

16. 110 S 9th St, Julio Reyes, owner, 102 S 9th St Reading PA, Purchased June 1999 - Delinquent taxes \$5071.01 2021-22 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$32,386.14; Water off 7/29/12; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades - Rear in poor condition, Stop work order for unpermitted construction; Codes – Placarded unsafe 11/20/12, Failed inspection 10/15/13 \$4895 total unpaid

22. 338 Moss St., Marlon Chang, owner, 1002 Josephine Dr, Temple PA 19560, Purchased Sept 2019 - Delinquent taxes \$2595.46, 2-21-22 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$13,269.01; Water off 9/4/09; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Boarded up and vacant, Poor condition; Codes – 1 Work Order, 3 NoV, Placard unlawful 7/16/13, 7 QoL trash, 12 QoL weeds, 1 QoL indoor furniture outdoors, \$2898.81 total unpaid

30. 121 W Greenwich St., Karen Loose and David Warren, owner, 7625 Lakeside Ave, Harrisburg PA, Purchased July 1994 - Delinquent taxes \$3828.88 2021-22 City, County, School; Delinquent water \$4567.44; Water ?; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades Vacant, Poor condition; Codes – 2 NoV, 6 QoL Trash, \$1645 total unpaid

31. 8 Nottingham Ct, Peter Raber owner, 8 Nottingham Ct, Reading, Purchased March 1993 (Tabled at Oct 2022 Determination Hearing) Delinquent taxes N/A; Delinquent water \$5003.68 Water on; Electric N/A; Gas N/A; Trades N/A; Codes –2 Work Orders, 9 NoV, 3 QoL Weeds, \$2169 total unpaid

Public Comment

None.

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

Due to the need to attend another hearing, Ms. Mayfield was excused from the meeting at this time.

Mr. McMahon described the Redevelopment Authority's plan to begin to address the certified properties and asked for input about which properties should be addressed in this first round.

Ms. Kelleher suggested acquiring the 10 properties owned by PA Artists in the South 6th and Plum Streets area. Ms. Scheuring agreed.

Mr. Bealer suggested 209 Hudson Street. He asked Ms. Kelleher to send him the BPRC property packets for the PA Artists properties.

Mr. McMahon stated that the Redevelopment Authority is holding a blight work session on Monday, June 5th at 1 pm and he asked Mr. Bealer and Ms. Kelleher to attend.

No other business was brought forward. Ms. Kelleher announced that the next Determination Hearing will be held on Thursday, October 5, 2023. This hearing will be conducted via hybrid – both in-person and Zoom.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. McMahon, to adjourn the hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, Secretary