
Blighted Property Review Committee

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Meeting Report

Committee Members Attending: L. Olsen, M. Candelario, D. Luckey, W. Bealer

Others Attending: M. Mayes, L. Kelleher, D. Wright, J. Kromer, K. Pick, M. Mayfield, V. Spencer

Mr. Olsen called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He announced that a quorum was present.

Public Comment

No one offered public comment

Agenda and Minutes

Mr. Olsen asked the Committee to review the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the March meeting.

Mr. Luckey stated, with regards to a statement made in the March minutes, that he has not had any prior dealings with NHS. He stated that his remark was based on the need for every partner to have sufficient funding in place to undertake rehabilitation projects.

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to approve the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the March meeting.

Hearing Procedures

Mr. Olsen called the Committee's attention to the hearing procedures attached to the agenda. Ms. Kelleher stated that these procedures were drafted shortly after the Committee began to meet. She noted the need for the Committee to review these procedures in preparation for the Determination Hearing. Mr. Olsen asked the Committee to review the procedures and be prepared to discuss and approve them at the May meeting.

POM Areas

Mr. Olsen stated that the Committee needs to begin discussing the placement of POM areas. Ms. Kelleher suggested placing a POM area in each Council District, with focus on the gateway or main roads.

Mr. Bealer inquired about selecting areas in Historic Districts. Ms. Kelleher stated that as the Historic Districts have facade grants and a recognition program each May during Historic Preservation Month, the Committee should consider selecting POM areas outside the historic districts.

After considerable discussion and review of a City map the Committee selected the following POM areas:

- Council District 1 - Park Avenue to Lancaster Avenue - Noble Street to the Lancaster Avenue Bridge.
- Council District 2 - Chestnut Street to South 16th Street - Cotton Street to the Haak Street
- Council District 3 - Oley Street to Walnut Street - North 13th Street to North 10th Street
- Council District 4 - Windsor Street to Perry Street - North 13th Street to North 10th Street
- Council District 5 - Schuylkill Avenue to city-line - West Douglass St to city-line
- Council District 6 - Washington St to West Greenwich Street - Schuylkill Avenue to North 4th Street

Update on Target Properties

Mr. Mayes and Mr. Wright distributed an April 14th memorandum from the Chief Building Inspector providing an update on the target properties. Eight of the target properties have requested additional time for rehabilitation and eight properties will receive determination letters.

There was a discussion on the contents of the letter. The letter was deemed legally sound.

Mr. Mayes and Mr. Wright distributed a list of the Determination sheets for the properties receiving letters.

Ms. Kelleher noted the long standing problem and delays with the rehabilitation of 530-532 Penn Street. She stated that these properties have been vacant for approximately 15-20 years. She stated that the memo notes a lawsuit started in

2004. She suggested pushing forward with the Determination Letter. Ms. Mayfield suggested allowing the lawsuit to run its course, as it is unknown how the lawsuit will affect the Blighted Property process. Mr. Mayes suggested providing 530-532 Penn with 30 additional days then moving forward with the Determination Letter. He stated that this process may finally move the owner into taking positive action. He noted the number of people who have requested that the City take action on this property.

Draft Partnership Agreements

Ms. Mayfield reported that the agreements have not been prepared. Mr. Bealer noted that Allentown uses a gentleman's agreement with their partners. Mr. Pick questioned the Committee's ability to enter into agreements. He stated that the agreement may need to be between the partner and the City and/or Redevelopment Authority. Ms. Mayfield offered to research and report back.

There was a discussion on the demolition of 155 Walnut Street. Mr. Spencer questioned how this property will be reused. Mr. Mayes reported that this property is still owned by the original owner. However a lien for the cost of demolition has been placed on the property. Ms. Mayfield stated that the process to take the property for \$1 is underway. The committee requested monthly updates. Mr. Pick reported that there are several liens on this property.

Mr. Bealer reported that the demolition of this property has stimulated the owner of the adjoining property to begin rehabilitating his property. However, it was noted that very little rehabilitation has taken place since the demolition. This property will need careful monitoring.

During the discussion on the use of this property for off-street parking, Mr. Bealer stated that the Planning Commission objects to the overuse of vacated lots for off-street parking due to the fact that off-street parking spaces create the need for driveways to be cut into curbs, which eliminates curbside parking spaces.

Ms. Mayfield noted the need for the Committee to be prepared to demolish 118 West Elm. She stressed the need for the Committee to remain focused and positive when dealing with this property.

Updates

Inclusion of ADD, OCR, Garden Properties, etc.

Mr. Bealer reported that he is working to incorporate ADD, OCR, etc onto the

blighted property map.

Grants

Mr. Mayes reported that Council is considering a CDBG amendment that will provide approximately \$170,000 for the Blighted Property Review Committee.

Codes

Mr. Bealer reported that he will be having monthly meetings with Mr. Mayes and Mr. Wright about the target properties and other issues.

Other Business

Ms. Kelleher reported that the seventh member of the Committee is about to be appointed.

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk

FOLLOW-UP ISSUES

- Review Hearing Procedures, be prepared to discuss and approve at May meeting
- Update on Target Properties
 - Letter of Determination to 530-532 Penn Street
 - Progress report on rehab of 155 Walnut
- Ability of the BPRC to enter into partnership agreements (M. Mayfield)
- Committee reports