
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, December 16, 2010
Determination Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:01 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 determined as blighted.

BPRC Attendance: D. Luckey, D. Reed, L. Olsen, A. Grant, W. Bealer, M. Candelario. M. Wolfe

Staff Attendance: L. Kelleher, S. Haver, T. Butler

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

A. 363 N 2nd St, Martin Jermaine, owner, of 622 Pine St Reading Pa 19602, Purchased Jan 2002

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. The property owner was not present.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges of \$1270.89
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and exterior maintenance is needed and notes the lack of an interior property maintenance inspection as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous trash and rubbish citations.
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$787.22
8. Liens for 2007, 2008 and 2010 taxes and abatement charges

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner to step forward. No one responded.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler inquired if anyone present would like to comment on the subject property. No one responded.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to approve the determination of 363 N 2nd Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. 104 N 4th St. Three Brothers Corp, owner(s), 4614 5th Ave # 3fl Brooklyn NY 11220, Purchased May 2006

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step forward. Mr. Acosta stated that he is one of the property owners. William Colon stated that he is employed by Mr. Acosta.

Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Acosta and Mr. Colon and provided Mr. Acosta with a property packet.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. No delinquent water charges
4. Water Service On
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and exterior maintenance is needed
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous high grass \ weeds and trash and rubbish citations and that the property owner was "no show" for scheduled interior maintenance inspections
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$67.02
8. No liens

Mr. Acosta provided a copy of his NY driver's license and requested that future correspondence be mailed to 5629 Remsen Pl Apt 3, Flushing NY 11378.

Mr. Acosta described his work to maintain the property. He stated that he wants to convert the property to a three (3) unit rental property but was advised by the Zoning Administrator that off street parking will be required. He stated that he is attempting to purchase a neighboring property and will demolish it so off street parking can be supplied to support the

rental property.

Mr. Lucky inquired if the property is zoned for rental use. Mr. Acosta stated that the property is not zoned for rental purposes.

Mr. Haver inquired if there is a local property manager. Mr. Acosta replied affirmatively. He advised Mr. Acosta to obtain a zoning permit before undertaking any interior renovations. Ms. Reed agreed and noted that the new Zoning Ordinance prohibits conversions of single family properties into multi unit rentals.

Mr. Acosta distributed photos of the property and entered them onto the record. He expressed his agreement to an interior property maintenance inspection.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one came forward to speak.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Lucky moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to approve the determination of 104 North 4th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. 239 S 6th St, Keith Jackson, owner(s), 930 N 2nd St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased Jan 2009.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges of \$1060.90
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant, unsecured and open to the elements. He reports that the exterior requires maintenance and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous maintenance related citations.
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$620.49
8. Liens of \$1569.85 for 2008 and 2009 taxes.

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one

stepped forward.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the determination of 239 South 6th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. 1158 Buttonwood St, Dwight Amole and Rose Torres, owner(s), 846 Whitner Rd Reading Pa 19605, Purchased Feb 1998

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. No one stepped forward.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges of \$1497.94
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant, deteriorated and unstable. He also reported that the damaged cornice presents a public safety hazard to the public sidewalk below and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous maintenance related citations and a Notice of Violation for failure to comply with rental registration regulations.
7. No delinquent Recycling charges
8. Liens of \$3154.76 for 2007, 2008 and 2009 taxes.

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to approve the determination of 1158 Buttonwood Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. 644 N Front St, Walter Barerra , owner(s), 3020 Curtis Rd Sinking Spring Pa 19608, Purchased May 2009.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. Mr. Barerra stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Barerra 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:

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges of \$601.12
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and unsecure. He also reported that there is debris piled at the rear of the property and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous Notices of Violation for trash, high weeds and that the property is vacant. Work orders were put out to secure the building and abate the trash and weeds.
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$367.19
8. No Liens but 2010 City property taxes in the amount of \$746.40 are unpaid

Mr. Barerra stated that he is working to clear the delinquencies and perform property maintenance. He provided a copy of a check in the amount of \$140.50 that was paid to the City for securing the property.

Mr. Lucky asked Mr. Barerra about his intentions. Mr. Barerra stated that he had retained the services of an architect to review the property's reuse.

Mr. Haver reported that NHS assessed the condition of the property and found the rehabilitation needs to be too extensive and unfeasible under federal program regulations.

Mr. Barerra stated that the architect's initial opinion was to demolish the building due to its extreme deterioration.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the determination of 644 North Front Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

**F. 158 W Green St, Amin Farouk Ghorah , owner(s), 216 Holiday Ln Blandon Pa 19510,
Purchased Jan 2005**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. Ghorah stepped forward and Ms. Kelleher administered the oath and provided Mr. Ghorah 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:

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges of \$1116.66
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and the upper levels are unsecured and open to the elements. He also reports that the exterior of the property is in poor condition and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous maintenance related and unsecured building citations
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$95.53
8. Liens of \$1898.97 for 2007, 2008 and 2009 taxes.

Mr. Ghorah stated that the water was turned off in 2006 and that he plans to begin paying on the back taxes in January 2011.

Mr. Haver noted that a fire caused severe damage to the roof of the property. Mr. Ghorah stated that he repaired the roof.

Mr. Lucky inquired if the property was ever occupied. Mr. Ghorah stated that the property was always vacant.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Paul Endigo, owner of 156 West Green Street. Mr. Endigo distributed photos of the property showing the interior damage caused by the roof damage. He reported that Mr. Ghorah has

not repaired the roof of 158 West Green Street and that his property is being damaged due to the damaged roof. He also stated that he was in the Codes Office at the same time as Mr. Ghorah and overheard the Codes Inspector directing Mr. Ghorah to repair the roof of the property several months ago.

BPRC Vote

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Lucky, to approve the determination of 158 West Green Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

G. 338 Madison Ave, North 4 St LLC aka George Hutchinson, owner(s), 155 Phillips Park Dr South Williamsport Pa 17702, Purchased June 2008

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. No water delinquencies
4. No Water service
5. The City Building Official reports that the building has several broken out windows and has a structural crack. He reports that the exterior requires maintenance and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there was a Notice of Violation for maintenance conditions in July 2010.
7. No delinquent Recycling charges
8. No liens; however 2010 property taxes of \$1570.28 are unpaid.

Ms. Kelleher explained that water service for this property is provided through an adjoining property, as per the Reading Area Water Authority.

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one came forward to speak.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the determination of 338 Madison Avenue as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

H. 1121 Birch St., Joseph and Ruth Matter, owner(s), Po Box 12821 Reading Pa 19612, Purchased Date Note Listed

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Water delinquencies totaling \$2719.30
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and boarded up. He stated that exterior maintenance is required and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there have been Notices of Violation and citations for maintenance conditions, along with rubbish and weeds
7. Delinquent Recycling charges totaling \$294.59
8. Liens in the amount of \$670.60 for recycling and abatement
9. 2010 property taxes of \$1127.96 are unpaid.

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to approve the determination of 1121 Birch Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

- I. 470 Schuylkill Ave, Jeannie Alexis , owner(s), 125 E Charles St Wernersville Pa 19565, Purchased Aug 2007

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Ms. Alexis stepped forward and

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath and provided Ms. Alexis 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:

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. No delinquent water charges
4. Water Service On
5. The City Building Official reports that there is significant trash and debris in the rear of the property and that the security fencing is down. He also stated that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous trash and debris citations.
7. No delinquent Recycling charges
8. Liens of \$2891.82 for two (2) years of back taxes

Ms. Alexis described her attempts to keep the building maintained and her desire to use the building for a church. She stated that she will work to clear the back taxes.

Mr. Haver agreed that Ms. Alexis has attempted to maintain the property. He stated that the Zoning Administrator advised Ms. Alexis that church use is prohibited in an MC zoning district.

Mr. Grant inquired if Ms. Alexis was willing to enter into a rehab agreement. Ms. Alexis agreed to enter into a rehab agreement. She promised to repair the roof and rehabilitate the interior of the property.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe to approve the determination of 470 Schuylkill Avenue as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

J. 127 N. Front St., Jose Santiago-Rivas, owner(s), 314 W Oley St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased Oct 2003

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. Santiago-Rivas stepped forward and Ms. Kelleher administered the oath and provided Mr. Santiago-Rivas 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:

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. No delinquent water charges
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and unsecured in the upper floors. The damaged cornice presents public safety hazards to the sidewalk below. Roof material and down spouts are missing. He added that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous Notices of Violations for trash and weeds along with abatement work orders
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$280.60
8. No liens but 2010 property taxes are unpaid.

Mr. Santiago-Rivas stated that he has pulled permits to begin working on the property. He stated that he never received recycling bills. He stated that he is behind in property tax payments because he has been laid off. He stated that he has replaced the windows but they are broken out again shortly after they are replaced or repaired.

Mr. Haver stated that Mr. Santiago-Rivas pulled building permits on November 3rd. He asked Mr. Santiago- Rivas if he was willing to enter into a rehab agreement.

Mr. Santiago-Rivas stated that he will enter into a rehab agreement but noted that his resources are limited because he is not working. He noted the difficulty he has had obtaining financing for building improvements due to the economy and the building's vacant condition.

Mr. Lucky expressed hope that Mr. Santiago-Rivas will continue to rehab the property.

Mr. Olsen asked Mr. Santiago-Rivas how he intends to use the building after it is rehabilitated. Mr. Santiago-Rivas stated that there will be a business on the first floor and residential units on the upper two (2) floors. Mr. Olsen reminded Mr. Santiago of the need to obtain zoning permits.

Mr. Santiago-Rivas promised to clear his delinquent recycling charges.

Public Comment

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to William Pagan, who stated that he owns 139 and 137 West Oley Street. He expressed his belief in Mr. Santiago-Rivas intentions to rehab the property.

BPRC Vote

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to determine 314 West Oley as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

K. 121 N. 3rd St., Herbert Mixon, owner(s), PO Box 14341 Reading Pa 19612, Purchase Date Not Listed.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. Mixon stepped forward and Ms. Kelleher administered the oath and provided Mr. Mixon 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:

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Delinquent water charges in the amount of \$786.77
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and boarded up. He reports that the stucco is detaching from the brick facade and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there are Notices of Violations for trash and weeds
7. Delinquent Recycling charges of \$141.93
8. Liens list \$688.74 owed for 2007 and 2008 taxes. 2010 property taxes are also unpaid.

Mr. Mixon stated that he purchased the property in 1989 and he distributed photographs of the property. He stated that he plans to continue working on the property. He stated that he has retained the services of J.C. Ehrlich for weed control.

Mr. Haver noted the last construction permit was pulled in 1994. He noted the diligent work of surrounding property owners to rehabilitate their properties. He stated that this property is an eye-sore.

Mr. Mixon stated that he plans to continue to work on the property then reside in one of the two (2) residential units. He expressed his desire to enter into a rehab plan.

Mr. Lucky noted that the building has been vacant for 21 years. Mr. Haver reported that the building never had an interior inspection.

Mr. Grant described the statutory definition of blight and noted that this property meets the requirements as it is vacant, has no water service and has two (2) years of delinquent taxes.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 121 N 3rd Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

L. 431 Buttonwood St., Scott Stephany Napolean , owner(s), 249 N Front St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased Oct 2009

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

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

1. Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on November 5, 2010.
2. Notice posted on the property on November 8, 2010
3. Water delinquencies totaling \$1536.55
4. Water Service Off
5. The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and the first floor is boarded up; however, the basement windows and upper windows are unsecured and open to the elements. He stated that the amount of trash and debris in the rear yard represents a fire hazard and that an interior inspection has not been conducted as of December 3, 2010
6. Property Maintenance reports that there have been Notices of Violation for trash, weeds and an unsecured property
7. Delinquent Recycling charges totaling \$385.27
8. No liens however the 2010 property taxes are delinquent.

Ms. Butler again asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. No one stepped forward.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to approve the determination of 431 Buttonwood Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other Matters

Ms. Kelleher reminded the Committee that the owner of 161 Clymer promised to provide notice of demolition prior to this hearing. The notification was not received to date.

Mr. Olsen announced that the Determination Hearing was concluded at approximately 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary