
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, January 20, 2011
Certification Hearing
Meeting Report

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

Mr. Olsen announced that the properties on the Certification Agenda were deemed determined as blighted at the November Hearing. He stated that the purpose of this 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: 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. Ms. Butler explained the hearing procedures and summarized the blighted conditions as set forth in the City's Blighted Property ordinance.

310 North 4th Street, owned by Angel Vasquez Gomes, of 10864 50th Avenue, FL1, Corona NY 11368, purchased February 2008.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step forward. Mr. Fernandez Chamarro, a contractor representing the property owner stepped to the podium. Ms. Kelleher provided him with a copy of the property packet and administered the oath to Mr. Chamarro.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record including the summary sheet outlining the property conditions listed on the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the property condition has not changed since the November Determination Hearing. She announced that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010. She stated that there is no water service, delinquent taxes, delinquent recycling and trash fees, unresolved codes and trades violations. She added that the property was condemned in 2008.

Mr. Chamarro stated that he is a licensed contractor who is being paid by the property owner to rehabilitate the property. He stated that the copper piping and water meter were recently stolen and he does not have the funds to hire a licensed plumber to replace the required plumbing. He stated that the owner did not make him aware of the delinquencies. He offered to apply for building and trades permits and work the details out with the owner.

Mr. Haver stated that this property has been in poor condition for years and that the Committee needs to see steady forward progress in the rehabilitation so the property can be legally occupied. He also noted the need for an interior inspection at the property.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to certify 310 North 4th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

1459 Fairview St, owned by Scott Kilpatrick, 1455 Fairview St, Reading, deed transferred October 2010.

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 attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the Determination Order and Certification Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010. She stated that although the 3rd floor window was replaced or repaired, no other conditions have improved. The property is still without water service and has unresolved codes and trades violations, along with delinquent recycling and trash fees and liens for these fees. She stated that the property has been poorly maintained for years and was issued citations for trash and debris along with high weeds and grass. She also stated that 2010 taxes are delinquent.

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

Public Comment

Ms. Butler inquired if any one present would like to offer comment. No one stepped forward.

BPRC Vote

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to certify 1459 Fairview Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

235 North 3rd Street, owned by Miguel Martinez, of 405 South 7th Street, Reading PA 19602, purchased in November 2004.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step forward. Mr. Martinez stepped to the podium. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Martinez and provided him with a property packet.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010. She stated that there has been no change to the property. There is no water service. The windows remain broken out and that there are unresolved codes violations. She stated that there are liens on the property for delinquent 2005 taxes, trash and recycling fees and water charges. She added that the property has been identified as vacant.

Mr. Martinez stated that he has been working to pay off his tax bills. He also stated that when he replaces windows they are shot out quickly causing a financial hardship. He stated that he purchases windows smaller than the window openings at the property because they are cheaper.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to certify 243 North 4th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

257 North 3rd Street, owned by Joyce and McCrea Boykins, 628 Spruce Street, purchase date unlisted.

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 attached

to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler announced that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice was mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010. She stated that conditions at the property remain unchanged. She stated that there is no water service, unresolved codes and trades issues, poor exterior maintenance, missing windows, and liens for 2002 property taxes. She stated that the property has been identified as vacant.

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

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to certify 257 North 3rd Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

207 North 4th Street, owned by Vic Properties aka Victoria Hernandez, of 179 Huron Street, Apt 1R, Brooklyn NY 11220, purchased April 2008.

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

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010.

Ms. Butler stated that while some progress has been made to pay off the water delinquency, water service is disconnected. She stated that unresolved codes and trades issues remain. She stated that although trades permits were pulled, no work has occurred.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to certify 207 North 4th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

213 North 4th Street, owned by Lobos Nine LLC, aka Ben Epstein, of 145 SE 15th Street, Brooklyn NY 11230, purchased in January 2006.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step forward. Mr. Eric Byrne, agent of the property owner stepped forward.

Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Bryne and provided him with a copy of the property packet.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler announced that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010. She noted that while the property has water service and the taxes are paid, unresolved codes issues remain. She stated that the property has been identified as vacant and that although trades permits were pulled no work has occurred.

Mr. Byrne stated that the property has been under contract with him since August 2010. He stated that he manages Lobos 1- 14, owned by Mr. Epstein. He stated that the properties are a mix of residential and commercial. The majority of the properties owned lie along the northern border of Ricktown. He stated that he is attempting to work out a development plan with Mr. Epstein. He described the problems with the former property manager. He expressed the belief that this property is in decent shape when compared to the other properties being considered this evening.

Mr. Olsen asked Mr. Byrne if the property owner would be willing to enter into a rehab agreement. Mr. Byrne stated that this property could be rehabbed and reused as a three (3) unit rental property.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to certify 213 North 4th Street as a blighted

property. The motion was approved unanimously.

300, 304, 306 North 4th Street, owned by Yanio Garcia, of 2228 Raymond Avenue, Reading PA 19605, all three properties purchased October 2009.

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

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that Determination Notices for all properties and Certification Hearing Notices for all properties were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that Certification Hearing Notices were posted on all properties on December 7, 2010.

Ms. Butler stated that conditions at 300 N. 4th Street is unchanged and has no water service, delinquent 2010 taxes, unresolved codes and trades issues for 2007, 2008 and 2010. She stated that trash and recycling fees are delinquent and that liens were filed for 2009 property taxes.

Ms. Butler stated that conditions at 304 N. 4th Street are unchanged and has no water service, delinquent taxes, delinquent trash and recycling fees and has unresolved codes and trades issues. She added that this property was also condemned.

Ms. Butler stated that conditions at 306 N. 4th Street are unchanged and has no water service, delinquent trash and recycling fees, delinquent taxes, and unresolved codes and trades issues.

Ms. Butler stated that all three (3) properties have been identified as vacant.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Lucky, to certify 300, 304, 306 North 4th Street as blighted properties. The motion was approved unanimously.

302 North 4th Street, owned by Mireya Pagan, 706 E 166th Street, Apt 5H, Bronx, NY 10456, purchased October 2008.

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or her agent to step forward. No one stepped forward.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on the property on December 7, 2010.

Ms. Butler stated that conditions at the property remain unchanged and that there is no water service, delinquent taxes, liens for recycling and trash fees, and unresolved codes and trades issues. She stated that the property has been identified as vacant.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Candelario moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to approve the determination of 302 North 4th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

930 and 932 Penn Street, owned by 531 South 14th Street, aka Angelo Amendolia, of 820 Nichols Street, Reading PA 19602-06, purchased August 2006.

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

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record and reviewed the documents attached to the packet, including the Summary Sheet which provides an outline of the property conditions listed in the attached affidavits from City staff.

Ms. Butler stated that the Determination Order and Certification Hearing Notice for both properties were mailed to the property owner on November 19, 2010 and that the Certification Hearing Notice was posted on both properties on December 7, 2010.

Ms. Butler stated that water service at 930 Penn Street has been abandoned in preparation for demolition. She stated that taxes for 2008, 2009 and 2010 are delinquent. She stated that a demolition permit has not been secured. She also noted the huge pile of demolition debris left by the property at the adjoining property.

Ms. Butler stated that while water service at 932 Penn Street is on, 2008, 2009 and 2010 taxes are delinquent and that there are unresolved codes and trades issues. She also noted the roof damage that leaves the property open to the elements. She stated that the property was condemned in 2009 and that the trash and recycling fees are also delinquent.

Mr. Bealer inquired if commercial use on the first floor will allow the certification of this property.

Ms. Kelleher stated that “vacant” is merely one of the nine (9) criteria in the state statute and that a property does not have to be vacant and have one of the remaining eight (8) issues.

Public Comment

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

BPRC Vote

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Grant, to certify 930 and 932 Penn Street as blighted properties. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other Matters

Ms. Kelleher announced that 161 Clymer Street has been demolished.

Mr. Olsen thanked Ms. Kelleher for arranging for the I Pads and paperless agenda service. He stated that this is a good move forward that will add to the streamlining of the Blighted Property Hearing process.

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to adjourn the hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary