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**Blighted Property Review Committee**  
**Thursday, June 16, 2011**  
**Determination & Certification Hearing**  
**Meeting Report**

Mr. Olsen called the Determination & Certification Hearing to order at 6:10 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 or certified as blighted.

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

**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.

Ms. Butler asked the Committee to adjust the agenda to take 615 Church Street and 515 and 229 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street first. The Committee did not object.

**Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Mr. Grant to table 515 and 229 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street until the September hearing and to remove 615 Church Street from the blighted property list. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**1. 237 S 6th St, owned by Khoa Nhu Tran, 1221 Butler St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased March 1996**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step forward. Mr. Tran stepped forward with the translator provided by the City Quochung Ho Vo, from Global Arena.

Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Tran through the translator and provided him with a property packet.

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed and completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011.
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- Delinquent water charges of \$28.29
- Taxes paid
- Water Service On
- Gas Service Off – meter removed 10-3-05
- Electric Service Off
- The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and the condition is unchanged from the April Determination Hearing
- Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous codes citations from 1999, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008 and that the building was registered as vacant in 2006
- Delinquent Recycling charges of \$171.67
- Liens totaling \$370.60 for 2004, 2006 and 2008 Recycling

Mr. Tran through his interpreter stated that he tries to pay his taxes and bills. He stated that the property is vacant but he still pays his water charges. He stated that he cancelled trash and recycling services. Ms. Kelleher stated that the water charges are from April 2011.

Ms. Butler stated that the building is quite deteriorated and has no electric service.

Mr. Tran stated that the windows were boarded because they were broken out. The boards are present to prevent people from breaking into the property. He stated that he received Trades and HARB permits to fix the front porch and paint the exterior of the property. An inspection was conducted by a Property Maintenance Inspector and he was provided with four (4) months to correct the deficiencies. He questioned the delinquent trash and recycling charges as the building has been vacant.

Mr. Lucky explained that by ordinance all properties, vacant and occupied, are required to have trash and recycling service.

Mr. Tran stated that he contracts with a private trash hauler as needed.

Ms. Butler instructed Mr. Tran to go to the Citizens Service Center to obtain the delinquent recycling charges and to pay them at the Treasurers Office.

Responding to a question from Ms. Wolfe, Mr. Tran stated that the building has been alternatively occupied and vacant since he purchased it in 1996. He stated that he will fix the property if he cannot sell it.

Mr. Haver noted that Mr. Tran received Trades and HARB permits in early May however, Mr. Tran has not yet started to paint or fix the porch.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Wolfe, to certify 236 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**2. 112 S 6th St, owned by Angela Brazzle, 2206 Upper Gap Rd Coatesville Pa 19320, Purchased April 2006.**

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

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed and completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011.
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- Delinquent water charges of \$3,647.93
- Water Service Off
- Gas Service Off – meter removed 9-16-07
- Electric Service Off
- Delinquent taxes totaling \$308.88 for 2011
- The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant and the conditions unchanged
- Property Maintenance reports that the building was cited for blight in October 2007 and condemned at December 2007. The building was also cited for being unsecured in 2009
- Delinquent Recycling charges totaling \$294.59
- Liens of \$3,504.13 for water and recycling

### **Public Comment**

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

### **BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to certify 112 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

### **5. 123 S 6th St, owned by Ketty Antoine, 331 N 6th St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased August 2003**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or her representative to step forward. Ms. Antoine stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Antoine and provided her with a property packet.

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed and completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- Delinquent water charges of \$2,971.94
- Water Service Off
- Gas Service Off – meter removed 10-8-05
- Electric Service Off
- Delinquent Taxes totaling \$1146.22 for 2008, 2009, 2010
- Property Maintenance reports that there are numerous citations for maintenance issues and unsecured conditions in 1995, 1996, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling charges of \$330.24
- Liens for 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 taxes totaling \$2,129.96; \$2,543.88 for Water and \$688.50 for Trash and Recycling

Ms. Antoine explained that she is in the process of selling this property but must clear the delinquencies before the property is transferred to the new owner.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to certify 123 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**6. 125 S 6th St, owned by Esther & Gary Gebhard, 521 N Funk Rd Boyertown Pa 19512, No purchase date listed**

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

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed, completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- No delinquent water charges
- Water Service Off
- Gas Service Off – meter removed 4-20-98
- Electric Service Off
- Delinquent taxes totaling \$1,052.16 for 2009 and 2010
- The City Building Official reports that the building is vacant, and the conditions remain unchanged.
- Property Maintenance reports that there are 59 quality of life citations
- Delinquent Recycling charges N/A
- Liens of \$2,439.23 for 2009 and 2010 taxes.

**Public Comment**

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

**BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to certify 125 South 6th Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Mr. Haver reminded the Committee that the property owner's legal counsel issued a letter declaring no contest to the blighted property process when the Determination Notice was issued.

**7. 334 Chestnut St, owned by Allison Little, 330 Pine Street, Reading PA, No Purchase Date Listed**

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

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed, completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- Water delinquency totaling \$1,706.19
- No Water service
- Gas Service N/A
- Electric Service Off
- The City Building Official reports that the conditions at the building remain unchanged.
- Property Maintenance reports that the building was deemed in a state of collapse in 1999 and found to be unsafe. The City paid \$34,157.18 to demolish the rear of the structure in 2000. There are numerous quality of life violations.
- Delinquent Recycling charges totaling \$472.79

#### **Public Comment**

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

#### **BPRC Vote**

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to certify 334 Chestnut Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Ms. Butler suggested taking the next two (2) properties together.

**8 & 9. 945 and 947 Court St., owned by Brandon Bui, 125 Brettwood Dr Egg Harbor Twp NJ 08234, Purchased March 2010**

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

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed, completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner of both properties via first class and certified mail

on April 25, 2011

- Notice posted on both properties on April 27, 2011
- 945 Court -
  - Delinquent water charges totaling \$563.60
  - Water Service Off
  - Gas Service N/A
  - Electric Service off
  - Delinquent Taxes totaling \$337.69 for 2010
  - The City Building Official reports that the property was demolished by the City due to structural deficiency
  - Codes reports quality of life citations from 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011
  - Delinquent Recycling totaling \$448.59
  - Liens for the cost of demolition to be determined. Liens for water totaling \$2,963.60 and for recycling totaling \$448.59
- 947 Court -
  - Delinquent water charges totaling \$563.60
  - Water Service Off
  - Gas Service N/A
  - Electric Service Off
  - Delinquent Taxes totaling \$316.21 for 2010
  - The City Building Inspector reports that the property was demolished due to structural deficiency
  - Codes reports citations for trash, weeds, and maintenance from 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010
  - Delinquent Recycling totaling \$93.53
  - Liens for the cost of demolition to be determined. Liens for taxes totaling \$685.62 for 2010 taxes and for water totaling \$2,963.60

Mr. Lucky inquired if a vacant lot can be certified as blighted. Ms. Kelleher stated that the blighted criterion allows vacant lots to be certified if the cost of the outstanding liens is valued higher than the appraised value of the property.

Mr. Haver reported that the Reading School District is interested in taking ownership of the lots.

### **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 945 and 947 Court Street as blighted properties. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**10. 1154 Spring St., owned by Keldia Cabrera, 1945 Wickford Pl Reading PA 19610, Purchased June 2005**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner to step to the podium. Mr. and Mrs. Cabrera stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. and Mrs. Cabrera and provided them with a copy of the property packet.

Ms. Butler asked Ms. Kelleher if she received, reviewed, completed the Summary Sheet and if the Summary Sheet was an accurate representation of the supporting documentation. Ms. Kelleher replied affirmatively.

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

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on April 25, 2011
- Notice posted on the property on April 27, 2011
- Delinquent water charges in the amount of \$15,061.59
- Water Service Off in 2006
- Gas Service N/A
- Electric Service – no account
- Delinquent Taxes totaling \$2,709.06 for 2009 and 2010
- Trades reports that the building is vacant and in need of repair
- Property Maintenance reports that there are citations for quality of life issues and the building has been vacant since 2007
- Delinquent Recycling charges N/A
- Liens totaling \$4,442.89 for 2009 and 2010 taxes

Mr. Cabrera stated that Mrs. Cabrera purchased the property in 2005 and invested \$40,000 in the property. He stated that zoning approved the property for a Laundromat/hair salon and new water lines were installed for this use; however, money ran out and the water service upgrade was never completed. He added that Mrs. Cabrera is now on a payment plan to pay the back taxes.

Mr. Cabrera stated that someone wishing to operate a daycare at the property applied for zoning in February of this year but was denied due to the lack of off-street parking. He stated that the decision of the Zoning Hearing Board was not appealed to the Court of Common Pleas due to the cost of legal fees.

Mr. Cabrera stated that Mrs. Cabrera owns other properties and will take money from them to address the issues with this property. He stated that Mrs. Cabrera has worked with the past and current Building Officials to demolish an adjoining property so that off-street

parking can be provided.

Ms. Butler highlighted the numerous quality of life violations that exist at this property.

### **Public Comment**

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

Mr. Haver stated that this property meets the blighted criteria and encouraged the property owner to rehabilitate the property. He stated that the Cabrera's were provided with a rehab agreement today.

Ms. Butler stated that the Zoning Hearing Board denied the zoning permit due to the lack of an off-street parking drop off and pick up zone for the children. She noted that this intersection is a high traffic area and that safety issues exist without off-street parking.

Mr. Olsen suggested that the Cabrera's request a One Stop Shop meeting where all applicable City staff officials can go over the requirements for the proposed reuse of the property.

Mr. Lucky suggested that the property owners contact the SBA (Small Business Administration) to seek advice and counseling.

### **BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Wolfe, to certify 1154 Spring Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Mr. Olsen thanked the committee's staff for their continued work to improve the hearing process.

**Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Candelario, to adjourn the Certification and Determination Hearing.**

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary*