
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, October 18, 2012
Certification Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:10 pm. He announced that a quorum was present.

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 certified or determined as blighted.

BPRC Attendance: L. Olsen, R. Corcoran, H. Urena, M. Wolfe, D. Luckey, G. Seidel

Staff Attendance: L. Kelleher, T. Butler, Esq., M. Reinhart; B. Nicarry

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. She provided a copy of the property packet to all property owners and representatives present before the start of the hearing.

CERTIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Butler stated that proper legal notice was not provided to the property owners at **456 Douglass Street and 930 North 5th Street**. These properties were scheduled for a Certification Hearing tonight. She suggested tabling those properties until December.

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to table 456 Douglass Street and 930 N 5th Street. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Butler stated that the conditions at **418 Douglass Street and 231 Walnut Street** no longer meet the blighted criteria set forth and she recommended that the board vote to remove these properties from the list.

Mr. Seidel moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to remove 418 Douglass Street and 231 Walnut Street from the blighted process. The motion was approved unanimously.

122 N 8th St., owned by William Woolworth III, of 122 N 8th St, Reading, purchase date Feb 2010

Ms. Butler stated that she recommends that the Board also remove this property from the process; however, the property owner requested an opportunity to address the Board. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Woolworth.

Mr. Woolworth stated that he is frustrated by the various processes used by the City over the past few years. He stated that he purchased the garage, which is really a carriage house and sits behind his rental property on North 8th Street, two years ago to preserve it. He expressed the belief that the City has lost its mind because Codes refuses to partner with people. He stated that rehabbing the garage was on his list. He stated that due to the City's insistence he needed to stop corrective work on a rental building to correct the deficiencies at the garage. He expressed the belief that the approach is illogical. He stated that he owns 10 other Reading rental properties and stated that he is thinking of selling them and buying rental properties in West Reading and Wyomissing. He noted that his frustration is shared by others.

Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to remove 122 N 8th Street from the blighted process. The motion was approved unanimously.

401 Oley Street, owned by Christine Talarico of PO Box 7004 Wyomissing, purchased Aug 2005

Ms. Butler stated that the property owner is not present; however, the equitable owner of the property is present. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Brent Truscott.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on August 20, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 22, 2012
- Delinquent water charges totaling \$1611.75
- Delinquent Taxes \$10,345.83 for 09, 10, 11
- Electric off
- Gas on
- No Water Service
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling charges totaling \$277.62
- Codes - Unpaid QoL \$970, unpaid work orders \$989.13
- Trades - no exterior structural deficiencies

Ms. Butler stated that the owner filed for bankruptcy, which has been discharged.

Mr. Truscott stated that his firm purchased the note on the property approximately six months ago through NAI as the broker and was unaware of the issues with the property. He stated that the purchase of the note was made along with notes on other properties. He

stated that the firm plans to foreclose at the December 7th Sheriff Sale. He stated that to date the firm has invested a lot of legal expenditures on this property. He stated that they have also started to begin paying off the various delinquencies. He stated that when the property is rehabbed it will be sold for owner occupancy. He stated that the value of the judgment was between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

Ms. Wolfe inquired if the transfer of ownership will affect the certification of the property. Ms. Kelleher and Ms. Butler stated that the certification attaches to the property, not the ownership.

Mr. Olsen and Mr. Lucky applauded Mr. Truscott for their desire to return this property to owner occupancy and correct the property's problems.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the transfer of title will trigger the required City Health and Safety Inspection. The inspection can help design the rehab plan.

Mr. Olsen and Mr. Lucky stated that the City will monitor the rehab of the building and advise the BPRC on when it can be removed from the list.

Mr. Urena inquired if the City can assist citizens by locating licensed contractors. Ms. Kelleher stated that selecting the proper contractor is the responsibility of the property owner. She suggested that the property owner contact Trades and request a list of all licensed contractors. She noted that Painting Contractors must now be licensed by the State due to lead standards.

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

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Seidel, to certify 401 Oley Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

126 N 3rd St, owned by Melissa Santiago of 139 1/2 N 3rd St Reading PA 19601, purchased Nov 2010

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Melissa Santiago stepped to the podium with her interpreter Yolanda Rosario. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to the property owner and her translator.

Ms. Butler entered the property packet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on August 20, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 22, 2012
- Delinquent water charges totaling \$123.08

- Delinquent Taxes 2009, 2010 and 2011
- Electric off
- Gas off
- No Water Service
- Codes – Citaton for failure to repair deteriorated wood and protect surfaces
- Delinquent Recycling Charges totaling \$143.76
- Trades - no exterior structural deficiencies

Through her interpreter, Ms. Santiago stated that she does not plan to reconnect the utilities until the house is repaired. She stated that she just started a new job; however, she had been unemployed and was receiving SSI. She stated that contractors she hired in the past ripped her off and then she became ill. She stated that she is uncertain of the cost to repair the property. She stated that ultimately she would like to reside at the property.

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

Mr. Seidel moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to certify 126 N 3rd Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Butler stated that none of the other property owners are present and there is no one seated in the audience to provide public comment, therefore, the remaining properties listed on the agenda will be handled in the Consent Agenda format.

Ms. Butler entered the property packets into the record. She stated that all notices were mailed to the property owners on August 20, 2012 and posted on the properties on August 22, 2012. She stated that all properties meet the blight criteria, in summary:

2270 Northmont Blvd, owned by Windsor Way Holdings LLC, 5672 Allentown Pike, Reading PA 19605, purchased September 2012 - Water service on, Electric off, Gas off, the building is in a serious state of disrepair and the roof is questionable, Citations for failure to repair roof, gutters, illegal rental, Work Order for \$227.81

132 Crestmont St., owned by Norman Pitz, of 132 Crestmont St., Reading, no purchase date listed – Water off \$2257.56 delinquent, Electric off, Gas off, Deteriorated bricks, broken windows, front porch roof collapsing, Unpaid QoL \$1860, Citations for failure to repair porch roof, downspouts and flashing

1502 Luzerne St., owned by Wayne and Mattlin Locus, of 1502 Luzerne St, Reading, purchase date Nov 1999 – Delinquent water \$3020.60, Water off, Electric off, Roof in disrepair, plastic sheeting on roof, Unpaid QoL \$1100, Unpaid Work Orders \$860.28; Delinquent Recycling \$344.64; Liens for Water \$2708.76, Nuisance Abatement \$361.25

631 Park Ave, owned by Kathleen Shollenberger, of 631 Park Ave, Reading, purchase date June 2004 – Water off \$3020.60 delinquent, Electric off, Plastic sheeting on roof suggests damaged roofing, 9 unpaid QoLs high grass/weeds \$1100, Work Orders \$800.28, Delinquent Recycling \$344.64, Liens for \$2708.75 RAWA, \$361.25 Nuisance Abatement

7 Nottingham Ct., Isidro Reyes-Mondragon of 7 Nottingham Ct., Reading, purchased March 1998 – Delinquent Water \$3288.68, Water Off, Electric off, No visible exterior structural issues, Unpaid QoL \$595, 4 unpaid Work Orders \$493.05, Citations trash and weeds, Delinquent Recycling \$251.11, Liens for Municipal Claims \$303.75, RAWA \$2212.76, Recycling \$322.06

251 N 6th St, owned by 251 N 6th St Realty Corp, aka Daren Bolten, 1110 Caton Ave Apt 8 Brooklyn NY 11218, purchased May 2004 – Water Off, Delinquent Water \$5627.39, Delinquent Taxes \$3773.43 for 09, 10, 11, No exterior structural issues, Citations unsecured, Unpaid Work Orders and unsecured \$416.30, Unpaid QoL \$560, Liens \$4766.18 taxes for 08, 09, 10, 11 and Municipal Claims \$148.86

144 N 2nd St, owned by Kim Bailey, PO Box 276 Reading PA 19603, purchased April 1995 – Delinquent Water \$1572.13, Water Off, Delinquent Taxes \$2221.85, Electric and Gas off, Needs new roof and support for front porch, Citations failure to repair porch, chimney, rook, Unpaid Work Orders \$536.22, Delinquent Recycling \$544.98, Liens \$2759.94 09, 10, 11 taxes, Recycling \$616.18, Municipal Claim \$237.34

146 N 2nd St, owned by Robin Rovell Reber, 1415 Scott St Reading Pa 19607, purchased Feb 2011 – Delinquent Water \$798.62, Water off, Electric and Gas off, No exterior structural issues, Citation failure to repair roof, downspouts, porch, Unpaid Work Orders \$159.69, Liens \$1164.81 Taxes

741 Neversink Alley, owned by Antonio Falu, 725 McIlvain St Reading PA 19602, purchased Feb 2008 – Delinquent Water \$4103.50, Water off, Delinquent Taxes \$1145.42 for 09, 10, 11, Electric off, Gross neglect and disrepair, Citation for failure to demolish, Unpaid Work Orders \$675, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$1917.81, Liens \$3030.65 Taxes for 06, 08-11, \$3043.46 RAWA, \$1364.07 Trash and Recycling, \$675.11 Nuisance Abatement

743 Neversink Alley, owned by Antonio Falu, 1127 Cotton St Reading PA 19602, purchased Nov 2005 – Delinquent Water \$1695.27, Water off, Delinquent Taxes \$1098.86 for 09, 10, 11, Electric off, Gross disrepair and neglect, Unpaid Work Orders \$363, Citation for failure to demo, \$603.14 Trash and Recycling, Liens \$121.75 Nuisance Abatement, \$1611.52 19 for 11 Taxes, \$1746.90 08-10 Trash and Recycling, RAWA \$1015.32

Ms. Butler again asked if the owners of any of the listed properties were present. No one responded.

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

Ms. Butler stated that each of these properties meets the blight criteria.

Mr. Seidel moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to approve the certification of these properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Mr. Urena to adjourn the certification hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary