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**Blighted Property Review Committee**  
**Thursday, September 20, 2012**  
**Determination Hearing**  
**Meeting Report**

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:00 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 determined as blighted.

**BPRC Attendance:** L. Olsen, R. Corcoran, M. Wolfe, D. Luckey

**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.

**DETERMINATION HEARING**

Ms. Butler stated that the properties where owners are present will be taken first and the properties without owners present will be handled in the Consent Agenda format at the end of the hearing.

**740 Chestnut St, Nicholas Blanck, owner of 94 Mull Ave., Sinking Spring 19608, purchased Jan 2010**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. The attorney representing the property owner stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the attorney. A copy of the property packet was given to the attorney prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water N/A
- Delinquent Taxes 2009 taxes in collection

- Electric on
- Water Service on
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$90.56
- Codes – Notice for total rehabilitation issued 5/2/11
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that the front area of the roof appears collapsed and needs inspection as per his exterior inspection of the property.

Ms. Butler stated that the property is listed on the Hazardous Property document prepared by the Fire Department.

The attorney stated the property owner has been working to rehab the property. He stated that only the flooring needs to be replaced. He stated that the issue cited by Mr. Nicarry is caused by the Philadelphia-style drain with new shingles. Mr. Nicarry accepted the explanation and withdrew his comment.

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

Ms. Butler recommended approving the determination and reconsidering the condition of the property after an inspection occurs.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to determine 740 Chestnut Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**718 Chestnut St., Richard and Laoma Wagner, owners, 78 Muddy Creek Church Rd, Denver PA 17517 no purchase date listed**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Mr. and Mrs. Wagner stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the property owners. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owners prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$63.04
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Electric off
- Water Service off since 2008
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$90.56
- Codes – \$1870.75 in unpaid Work Orders, \$35 in unpaid QoL and \$200 in unpaid housing permits

- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that he did not observe any structure deficiencies as per his exterior inspection of the property.
- Lien filed for \$947.25 Nuisance Abatement

Ms. Butler stated that the property is listed on the Hazardous Property document prepared by the Fire Department.

The Wagner's stated that they were unaware of the delinquencies and that they are unable to complete the rehabilitation of the property. They stated that the property is regularly vandalized, the radiators have been stolen and the rehabilitation is beyond what they can handle. They said they plan to sell the property.

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

Ms. Butler recommended approving the determination and reconsidering the condition of the property after an inspection occurs.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to determine 718 Chestnut Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**921 Penn St, TEH Realty 38 LLC owner, 645 Penn Street, Reading 19601, purchased March 2012**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Anna Ortiz and Donna Vitabile, representing TEH Realty stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the TEH representatives. A copy of the property packet was given to the representatives prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$498.03
- Delinquent Taxes unpaid 2011 taxes
- Electric off
- Water Service on
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges N/A
- Codes – Notice of Violation for windows, interior maintenance and plumbing on 6-20-12; currently in extension period
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that he did not observe any structure deficiencies as per his exterior inspection of the property.

- Liens N/A

Ms. Vitabile stated that the property owner was aware of the maintenance problems when the property was purchased and is performing a complete rehabilitation. She stated that the property will be brought up to Code. She explained that the windows were boarded up for security purposes while the rehab is occurring. She estimated that the rehab will be complete within the next 60 days.

Mr. Corcoran asked when the property was purchased. Ms. Vitabile stated that the property was purchased on March 19<sup>th</sup> of this year. She stated that the property has four residential and one commercial units. The commercial unit was relocated to the second floor to allow the rehab of the first floor commercial space.

Mr. Olsen inquired about the addresses of this building and the adjoining building. Ms. Vitabile stated that the building is actually two parcels that use one address. Ms. Reinhart stated that the building is two parcels with two addresses: 921 and 923 Penn.

Mr. Luckey inquired if an occupancy permit was obtained from the City. Ms. Vitabile stated that an occupancy permit has not been issued.

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

Mr. Olsen recommended determining the property as blighted and reassessing the buildings eligibility in 60 days.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to determine 921 Penn Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**331 N 12<sup>th</sup> St, Cheryl Raven, owner, 333 N 12<sup>th</sup> Street Reading PA 19604, purchased July 1998**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Mr. and Mrs. Raven stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the property owners. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owners prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water N/A
- Delinquent Taxes N/A

- Electric – bad address
- Water Service on
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$90.56
- Codes – severe exterior maintenance issues
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that he did an exterior inspection and there are severe structural issues with the property and that he fears collapse which could affect the viability of the adjoining property
- Lien N/A

Ms. Butler stated that the property is listed on the Hazardous Property document prepared by the Fire Department.

Mr. Raven stated that all electrical and water facilities have been removed and that he has been preparing the property for demolition. He explained that the sewer was capped. He stated that he and his wife reside next door and they purchased the property to convert it to a garage; however, that application was denied. He stated that the back of the property is completely exposed and that he is applying for a demo permit next month. He stated that he intends to demolish the property himself.

Mr. Nicarry warned that only those experienced in the demolition field should demolish properties that are adjoined to other buildings. He noted that a rehab or demo order was issued.

Mr. Raven inquired about securing the adjoining property. Ms. Butler advised Mr. Raven to consult with the Trades Division during normal business hours.

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

Mr. Olsen recommended determining the property as blighted and reassessing the building's eligibility in 60 days.

**Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to determine 331 N 12<sup>th</sup> Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**122 N 4<sup>th</sup> St, Amocetia Beckford, 240 S 6<sup>th</sup> St Reading PA 19602, purchased July 2006**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Ms. Beckford stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the property owner. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$2419.42
- Delinquent Taxes 2009,10,11 in collections
- Electric on
- Water Service on
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$2930.41
- Codes – unpaid housing permits 2008-12, Violations for broken windows and unsafe water heating
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that the mortar joints at the front of the property are starting to fail. However there is no sign of severe structural damage as per his exterior inspection
- Lien \$950.63 for trash and recycling; \$2992.08 for 2010-11 taxes

Ms. Beckford stated that she was ill several months ago and the property went into arrears. She stated that she is working to correct the delinquencies and rehab the property.

Ms. Beckford could not answer when questioned about the approved zoning for the building. She was also unclear about the number of units currently in the property.

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

Ms. Butler suggested tabling this property to verify zoning and the number of existing units.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to table 122 N 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**230 N 4<sup>th</sup> St, Amocetia Beckford, 240 S 6<sup>th</sup> St Reading PA 19602, no purchase date listed**

Ms. Butler reminded the property owner that she remains under oath. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$1432.49
- Delinquent Taxes 2010-11 in collections (last payment 5-12-12)
- Electric on
- Water Service on

- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$1716.16
- Codes – \$125 in unpaid QoL Tickets for trash
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that the porch and porch roof are rotting and in a state of failure. He noted the need for replacement.
- Lien \$1775.52 for trash and recycling; \$3540.52 for 2010-11 taxes

Ms. Beckford made no comment.

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

**Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to determine 230 N 4<sup>h</sup> Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**140 S 8<sup>th</sup> St, Amocetia Beckford, 240 S 6<sup>th</sup> St Reading PA 19602, purchased Aug 2006**

Ms. Butler reminded the property owner that she remains under oath. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$609.42
- Delinquent Taxes 2010-11 in collections (last payment 8-7-12)
- Electric on
- Water Service on
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$2107.22
- Codes – \$967.50 in unpaid work orders for removal of trash and weeds; unpaid housing permit for 2000 and 2011
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated he did not identify structural problems during his exterior inspection
- Lien \$696.48 for trash and recycling; \$2349.81 for 2010-11 taxes

Ms. Beckford stated that she rehabbed the front of the property when she purchased it. She inquired why the Committee is considering blighting her property when she is trying to rehab it and repay the delinquencies. She stated that the property contains three units in two separate structures. Mr. Butler questioned Ms. Beckford about the configuration of the structures and the units. Ms. Beckford was unable to provide clarity.

Ms. Butler and Mr. Olsen suggested tabling the property until verification of the structures on the property could occur.

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

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to table 140 S 8<sup>h</sup> Street. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**49 S 10<sup>th</sup> St, Amocetia Beckford, 240 S 6<sup>th</sup> St Reading PA 19602, purchased Oct 1993**

Ms. Butler reminded the property owner that she remains under oath. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$946.60
- Delinquent Taxes 2010-11 in collections
- Electric on
- Water Service off 3-16-10
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$1274
- Codes – \$100 in unpaid QoL tickets, unpaid housing permits for 2007, 2010 and 2011
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated he did not identify structural problems during his exterior inspection
- Liens \$1583.01 for trash and recycling; \$2036.23 for 2010-11 taxes

Ms. Butler stated that this property is on the Fire Marshal's list of hazardous properties.

Ms. Reinhart stated that an interior inspection occurred last week.

Ms. Beckford did not comment.

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

**Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to determine 49 S 10<sup>h</sup> Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Ms. Butler requested a five minute recess at approximately 7:00 pm The hearing reconvened at 7:04 pm.**

**313 N 9<sup>th</sup> St, Khoa Tran, owner, 1221 Butler St Reading PA 19601, purchased August 2001**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Mr. Tran stepped forward and stated that he only understands some English and he requested that a translator be present.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to table 313 N 9<sup>h</sup> Street. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**511 Penn St., Lehigh Land Holdings Inc., 3140B W. Tilghman St, Allentown PA, purchased June 2002**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. Chris Mauger, tenant representing the property owner stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Mauger. A copy of the property packet was given to Mr. Mauger prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water \$25,203.42
- Delinquent Taxes 2009,10,11 in collections
- Electric – bad address
- Water Service off
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges N/A
- Codes N/A
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that there is no sign of structural damage as per his exterior inspection
- Lien N/A

Mr. Mauger stated that he has had his business in this building since May 2010. He stated that the building is composed of 511 and 515 Penn Street. He stated that the water delinquency is related to an issue with the water main. He stated that the property owner has been in contact with RAWA but RAWA refuses to provide a reasonable adjustment. He explained that the water main comes enters 515 Penn, then elbows over to connect to 511 Penn; however, the main is unconnected to 511 Penn. The owner is refusing to pay the charge. He noted that employees working in 511 Penn use the restrooms located in the 515 side of the building. He asked the Committee to provide the landlord time to settle this issue.

Ms. Butler stated that the Committee can not intervene in this water issue.

Mr. Luckey inquired about when this issue will be resolved. Mr. Mauger expressed the belief that RAWA is stalling.

Ms. Butler stated that Property Maintenance issued a violation to 511 Penn for failure to have water service, which makes the property unfit for human habitation.

Mr. Corcoran inquired if any portion of the property is used for residential purposes. Mr. Mauger stated that the building is commercial only. He again noted that people working in 511 use the facilities located in the 515 side of the building.

Mr. Olsen thanked Mr. Mauger for attending; however, he noted that the property owner should have attended himself. He suggested approving the determination of the property and re-evaluating the condition of the property in 60 days.

**Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to determine 511 Penn Street as blighted. The motion was approved by a 3-1 vote.**

**722 Chestnut St, Recycled Spaces LLC, PO Box 291 Haverford PA 19041, purchased July 2005**

Ms. Butler asked the property owner or his representative to step to the podium. David Telstar, owner of Recycled Spaces stepped forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to the property owner. A copy of the property packet was given to the property owner prior to the start of the hearing.

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 21, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on August 4, 2012
- Delinquent water N/A
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Electric – on
- Water Service off
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges N/A
- Codes – Notice of violation broken windows, damaged door, hole in wall. Unpaid work order for trash removal \$62.21
- Trades – Mr. Nicarry stated that there is no sign of structural damage as per his exterior inspection. He stated that Mr. Telstar has corrected the issues when they are identified.
- Lien N/A

Ms. Butler stated that the Fire Marshal has identified this as a hazardous property.

Mr. Telstar stated that he started repair work on the exterior of the property yesterday. He stated that he owns other investment properties in the City. He expressed the belief that this neighborhood will become viable when the passenger rail service is restored from the Philadelphia area.

Mr. Telstar agreed to allow an interior inspection for Property Maintenance, Trades and Fire.

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

**Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to table 722 Chestnut Street. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Ms. Butler inquired if the owners of the following properties are present and instructed them to come to the podium if they are present. No one stepped forward.

- **710 Chestnut St, William, Dexter and Anna Miller, owners, 1953 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester MA 02124, no purchase date listed**
- **712 Chestnut St., 710 Chestnut St, William, Dexter and Anna Miller, owners, 1953 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester MA 02124, no purchase date listed 1. Oath to all presenting testimony**
- **940 Penn St, Double 9 Winoutlet LLC owner, 390 W. Sedgley Ave, Phila. PA 19140, purchased Dec 2011**
- **437 S 6<sup>th</sup> St, Neil McClean, owner, PO Box 583 Berwyn PA 19312, no purchase date listed**
- **215 S 8th St, Maximo Cruz, owner. 15 S 8<sup>th</sup> Street Reading PA 19602, purchased June 2003**
- **560 Gordon St, Asghar Kahn, 560 Gordon St, Rdg, 19601, purchased August 2003**
- **324 West Greenwich St, Carlo Fontange, 425 Amherst St East, Orange NJ 07018 purchased June 2005**
- **33 S 2<sup>nd</sup> St, Yeri Martinez, 33 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St, Reading PA 09602, purchased Sept 2008**
- **1349 Locust St, Marcelline Mohamed, PO Box 14601 Reading PA 19612, purchased Feb 1996**
- **62 S 6<sup>th</sup> St., Marie & Maracia Richard, owner, 1743 Reading Blvd, purchased Jan 2003**

Ms. Butler stated that as none of the property owners are present the Committee will consider the properties in the consent agenda fashion. She entered the property packets into the record. In summary:

- **710 Chestnut St – notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off, 2009 Taxes in**

- collection, Electric on, 1 unpaid QoL tickets \$70, Notice of violation for peeling paint
- 712 Chestnut St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off, 2009 Taxes in collection, Electric on, \$178 unpaid work orders, \$600 unpaid housing fees, Notice of violation for peeling paint
- 940 Penn St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off and \$556.60 delinquent, 2009, 10 and 11 Taxes in collection, Electric off, Tax Lien \$2622.31
- 437 S 6<sup>th</sup> St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off and \$2607 delinquent, Taxes paid, Electric off, unpaid QoL tickets \$955.44, unpaid work orders \$395.44, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$174.74, Liens \$1824.50 water and \$178 in municipal liens, tree threatening the structural integrity of the roof
- 215 S 8th St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off and \$1625.89 delinquent, Taxes 2009, 10 and 11 in collection, Electric off, unpaid work orders, no windows creating a structural threat \$4210.69, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$746.97, Liens \$2929.82 taxes, \$1130.57 Trash and Recycling
- 560 Gordon St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off and \$2607 delinquent, Taxes paid, Electric off, unpaid QoL tickets \$955.44, unpaid work orders \$395.44, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$174.74, Liens \$1824.50 water and \$178 in municipal liens
- 324 West Greenwich St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water off and \$693.15 delinquent, Taxes 2011 in collections, Electric off, unpaid QoL tickets \$955.44, unpaid work orders \$2535.60, unpaid housing permits \$650, Delinquent Recycling \$184.09, Liens \$266.58 Taxes, burnt out garage demo order issued
- 33 S 2<sup>nd</sup> St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water on and \$334.18 delinquent, Taxes 2010 in collections, Electric off, unpaid work orders \$508.63, Citations for roof, spouting, trash, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$339.14, Liens \$654.89 Taxes and \$570.09 Trash and Recycling
- 1349 Locust St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water on and \$30.38 delinquent, Taxes 2009, 10,11 in collections, Electric off, unpaid QoL tickets \$200, unpaid work orders \$35.63, Delinquent Trash and Recycling \$1089.33, Liens \$1733.32 Trash and Recycling, \$1452.56 Water, \$1291.67 09 and 10 taxes
- 62 S 6<sup>th</sup> St - notice posted 8-4-12 and mailed 8-21-12, Water on and \$1840.65 delinquent, Taxes 2009, 10, 11 in collections, Electric on, Citations unsecure property, no water utility and illegal rental, Liens \$6394.36 DID Assessments, \$8862.28 taxes

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

### **Public Comment**

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. Corcoran moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to approve the determination of these properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to adjourn the determination hearing.**

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary*