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**Blighted Property Review Committee**  
**Thursday, August 21, 2014**  
**Determination 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 any of the 12 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, H. Urena, D. Reed, M. Wolfe, D. Luckey

**Staff Attendance:** L. Kelleher, T. Butler, Esq., K. Potts

Mr. Olsen stated that the minutes from the June non-hearing meeting were distributed electronically. He asked if any committee member wished to make corrections or changes.

**Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to approve the June minutes as distributed. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Ms. Butler recommended the following:

- 1459 Fairview Street can be decertified as the property was rehabilitated
- 1253 South Street can be removed from the process as the qualifying conditions at the property were corrected
- 1321 Perry Street, 1352 Mineral Spring Road and 1347 Church Street can be tabled as the utility status at the properties needs to be verified

**Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to approve the recommendations made by the Solicitor.**

**DETERMINATION HEARING**

Ms. Butler stated that the properties will be taken out of agenda order. The properties with owners or others willing to testify will be taken before properties not having representatives present and the properties without representation will be considered under a Consent Agenda. She explained the hearing process.

**1. 1038 Cotton St, Raymond Gehring, owner, 1043 Cotton Street Reading PA 19601, purchased Oct 1995**

Ms. Butler stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Raymond Gehring.

Ms. Butler entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail and posted on the property on June 17, 2014
- Delinquent water charges of \$3536.81 to ARB and \$148.21 to RAWA ; Residential Water Service off on June 19, 2012
- Gas service – meter removed 2002
- Electric service on
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Trades – Structure leaning toward 1036 Cotton and gross structural disrepair and collapse of rear wall
- Codes – 1 QoL for snow/ice removal, \$35 unpaid fines
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Mr. Gehring expressed that the word “collapse” is inapplicable in this case as the damage to the wall was caused by vandals. He questioned if 1036 Cotton is leaning towards his property or if his property was leaning towards 1036 Cotton. He suggested checking the properties with a level. He expressed his belief that the foundation at 1036 Cotton is damaged from an underground stream that was created by the clogged storm sewer. He stated that Public Works has told him that the storm sewer is privately owned as it is not on the City’s topographical map. He questioned if a storm sewer can be privately owned. He stated that no one has challenged his theory underground stream theory.

Ms. Butler questioned if repairs will be made to the damaged rear wall. Mr. Gehring stated that he purchased 150 bricks to make the repairs along with the mortar and other components; however, some of the bricks were stolen and he questioned repairing the wall due to the condition of the 1036 Cotton Street property.

Ms. Butler questioned if the water service will be reconnected. Mr. Gehring stated that there was a \$0 balance when the water service was turned off and he questioned how a utility could charge properties when the service is terminated.

Mr. Urena inquired if Mr. Gehring resides at the property. Mr. Gehring stated that he “sort of” lives there, as he occasionally resides at the commercial property he owns across the street. He stated that he currently uses the property for storage purposes. He explained that

he purchased the property as a starter home for his girlfriend's child. He also stated that he currently does not have property insurance covering the property.

Mr. Lucky stated that the property needs to be rehabilitated and occupied.

Mr. Gehring noted the need to first determine the ownership of the storm sewer.

Ms. Butler suggested that Mr. Gehring seek advice from an engineer.

### **Public Comment**

None.

**Mr. Lucky moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to determine 1038 Cotton St as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Ms. Butler stated that none of the remaining properties are represented tonight and she asked the board to consider them as Consent Agenda properties.

### **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Butler inquired if any one representing the following properties is present and inquired if anyone in the audience would like to provide comment on the following properties. No one stepped forward.

1. 1216 Linden St., Justin Koch, owner, 1216 Linden St, Rdg, purchased July 2000
2. 426 Lancaster Ave., Giovanni and Elaine Rampulla, 426 Lancaster Ave., Rdg, no purchase date listed
3. 1027 Franklin St., Jerry Martin owner, 1027 Franklin, Rdg., purchased June 2011
4. 618 Fern St, Antonio Lopez & Leslie Caraballo, owners, 618 Fern St, purchased Dec 2004
5. 170 W. Oley St, Cesar Melo, owner, PO Box 5843 Wyomissing Pa 19610, purchased Feb 2001
6. 543 Weiser St, Juan Del Rosario, Owner, 7508 Woodside Ln Apt 32 Lorton VA 22079, purchased May 2005
7. 632 Weiser St, Bankers Trust Co of CA Trust for Vendee Mortgage Tr., 1761 E. Saint Andrew Pl., Santa Ana CA 92705, no purchase date listed
8. 1414 Cotton St, James Billman Sr., 21 Columbia Ave Reading Pa 19606, purchased Aug 2006
9. 1412 Cotton St, Ethel/Rose Sigafos, owners, 1412 Cotton St, Rdg., purchased May 1996
10. 107 Walnut St, Odnie Paulemont, owner, 107 Walnut St, purchased April 2004
11. 1321 Mineral Spring Rd., JP Morgan Chase Bank Natl Assoc., owner, 1111 Polaris Pkwy Columbus OH 43240, purchased Aug 2013
12. 1345 Mineral Spring Rd, Jennifer and Michael Aston, owner, PO Box 276 Shartlesville

PA 19554, purchased April 2004

13. 1350 Mineral Spring Rd, Anatalia Ramos-Gonzalez, owner, 1721 Bellgrove St Lakeland FL 33805, purchased Aug 2007

14. 218 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Gilma Mari Jimenez De Santiago, owner, 218 N 2nd St, purchased Nov 1994

15. 47 S. 10<sup>th</sup> St, Andres Romero Juarez, owner, 47 S. 10<sup>th</sup> St, purchased April 2014

16. 444 S 9<sup>th</sup> St, Fermim Perez, owner, 444 S 9<sup>th</sup> St, purchased May 2014

17. 442 S 9<sup>th</sup> St, Jessie Eady, owner, 520 Franklin St Apt 4 Reading Pa 19602, no purchase date listed

18. 1204 N 6<sup>th</sup> St, Gail and James Bartley, owner, 717 E Walnut St Allentown Pa 18109, purchased March 2007

19. 835 Muhlenberg St, Eastern Development Prop Trust, owner, 701 S Broad St Philadelphia Pa 19147, purchased June 2011

20. 1036 Cotton St, Frederic Bastien and Garcia Piverger, owner, 1043 2748 SW 120<sup>th</sup> Ter Miramar FL 33025, purchased June 2013

Ms. Butler stated that these properties meet the blight criteria. In summary:

- All notices were posted and mailed on or about June 17, 2014
- **1. 1216 Linden St** – Water delinquency and water off, Gas meter removed, settlement of concrete steps, QoLs for trash, weeds, animal waste and 3 NOVs \$215 unpaid fines
- **2. 426 Lancaster Ave.** – Water off, Gas meter removed, partially collapsed concrete wall at front of property, QoL grass/weeds, trash, 1 NOV \$300 unpaid fines
- **3. 1027 Franklin St.** – Water delinquency \$2017.43 and water off 2012, Electric off, Gas off, Boarded up first floor windows, missing upper windows, exposed to elements, 3 work orders, QoL grass/weeds, trash, 3 NOVs and \$1093.57 unpaid fines
- **4. 618 Fern St** – Water delinquency and water off 2013, Electric off, gas off, QoL grass/weeds, trash, no hauler, snow ice removal, 1 NOV, \$1900 unpaid fines
- **5. 170 W. Oley St** – Water delinquency and water off 2012, Electric off, gas meter removed 2005, damaged and unstable garage wall and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor rear soffit, 3 Work Orders, QoL grass/weeds, trash, snow ice removal, \$3480.92 unpaid fines
- **6. 543 Weiser St** – Water delinquency and water off, Electric off, damaged garage roof, QoL trash, grass/weeds, 1 Work Order, \$1623.75 unpaid fines and fees
- **7. 632 Weiser St** – Water delinquency and water off 2010, Electric Off, Gas Meter removed 2006, Front porch roof damaged beyond repair, QoL grass/weeds, trash, dumping, 4 Work Orders, \$6069.13 unpaid fines and fees
- **8. 1414 Cotton St** – Water delinquency and water off 2012, \$3174.61 unpaid 2011, 2012 City, School and County taxes, Electric off, 5 Work Orders, QoL grass/weeds, trash, snow and ice removal, \$3534.19 unpaid fines and fees
- **9. 1412 Cotton St** – Water off 2013, Electric off, Porch rotting, 1 Work Order, QoL grass/weeds, trash, snow and ice removal, \$2984.25 unpaid fines
- **10. 107 Walnut St** – Water delinquency and water off 2004, Electric off, Gas off, Dormer rotting, front façade separating from structure, QoL trash and dumping, 1 NOV, \$70

unpaid fines

- **11. 1321 Mineral Spring Rd.** – Front and side soffit damage, siding missing, water damaged façade, leaking gutters, porch damaged. QoL grass/weeds, trash, 2 NOVs, \$330 unpaid fines
- **12. 1345 Mineral Spring Rd** – Water delinquency and water off 2012, Electric off, Damaged 1<sup>st</sup> floor porch roof, QoL snow and ice removal, trash, grass/weeds, \$517 unpaid fines
- **13. 1350 Mineral Spring Rd** – Water delinquency and water off 2014, Electric off, Damaged foundation, porch and porch roof
- **14. 218 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St.** – Water delinquency, Electric off, Gas off, damaged masonry wall and damaged 2<sup>nd</sup> floor chimney, 1 Work Order, QoL grass/weeds, 3 NOV, \$675 unpaid fines and fees
- **15. 47 S. 10<sup>th</sup> St** – Water delinquency and water off 2014, Electric off, Gas meter removed 2003, Boarded up and broken windows, exposed to the elements, QoL trash, 2 NOV, \$210 unpaid fines
- **16. 444 S 9<sup>th</sup> St** – Water delinquency and water off 2012, Electric off, porch rotten and façade separating from structure, QoL grass/weeds, trash, 2 NOVs, \$815 unpaid fines and fees
- **17. 442 S 9<sup>th</sup> St** – Water delinquency and water off 2012, \$1027.79 2012 City, County and School taxes, Electric off, Gas off, Bricks missing, front soffit rotting, deteriorated mortar joints and roof shifting, 1 Work Order, QoL grass/weeds, trash, recycling hazardous materials, snow and ice removal, placarded unsafe, \$789.19 in unpaid fines
- **18. 1204 N 6<sup>th</sup> St** –Water delinquency, Structural damage, porch deck and roof due to car accident, 2 NOV, \$100 unpaid fees
- **19. 835 Muhlenberg St** – Water delinquent and water off 2013, Electric off, Gas meter removed, Boarded up, partially collapsed ceiling visible, 3 Work orders, QoL trash, grass/weeds, \$3573.44 unpaid fines and fees
- **20. 1036 Cotton St** – Water delinquency and water off 2006, Electric off, Gas off, Leaning towards 1038 Cotton St., QoL grass/weeds, trash, snow and ice removal, \$1879.39 unpaid fines and fees

#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **BPRC Vote**

**Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to determine the consent agenda properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### **Other Business**

No other business was brought forward. The certification hearing will be held in October. There will not be a non-hearing meeting in September.

**Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to adjourn.**

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, Secretary*