
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, February 20, 2014
Determination Hearing
Meeting Report

Ms. Wolfe called the Determination and Certification Hearing to order at 6:08 pm. She announced that a quorum was present.

Ms. Wolfe 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: W. Bealer, D. Reed, M. Wolfe, D. Luckey

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

Ms. Wolfe stated that the minutes from the November meeting were distributed electronically. She asked if any committee member wished to make corrections or changes.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Ms. Reed to approve the November minutes as distributed. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Butler stated that the following properties will be removed from tonight's agenda:

- 111 South 11th Street
- 1420 Muhlenberg Street

Ms. Butler also noted that several properties tabled at the August and October 2014 Certification hearings will need to be considered at the April Certification hearing.

Ms. Butler stated that the following property will need to be delayed as an interpreter is required:

5. 625 Pine St, Florencia & Romonicto Perez, owner, 625 Pine St, purchased April 2012

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. 630 Spruce St, Benjamin & Hideki Spencer owners, 630 Spruce St, Rdg, 19601 no purchase date listed

Ms. Butler stated that the property owner passed away and that the property owner's niece will be speaking in the public comment portion of the hearing. 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 and certified mail and posted on the property on December 19, 2013 and December 20th respectively
- Delinquent water charges totaling \$337.14; Residential Water Service on
- Gas service on 2nd floor only
- Electric service on
- Delinquent Taxes \$1146.18 City, School and County 2012
- Trades: no structural issues visible
- Codes: broken windows and trash accumulation
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges N/A

Public Comment

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Carmela Boykins.

Ms. Boykins stated that the property will transfer to her through the property owner's estate when she can pay the transfer fees. She stated that she resides on the 2nd floor of the property with her children and her sons rent the first floor residential space. She stated that the roof repairs were delayed by the snow storm and that the trash in the yard stems from the removal of the trash accumulation in the garages. She stated that John Green is her trash contractor and that he will be removing the trash from the yard.

Ms. Boykins stated that she has a problem with the threat of blight as no one knocked on her door to advise her about the problems with the property. She stated that she has arranged a payment plan to repay the 2012 property taxes.

Ms. Butler explained that the property conditions did not occur recently and that the conditions at the property existed well before the snowy winter weather. She questioned the dangling electrical wires on the side of the house.

Ms. Boykins stated that the wires are inactive and they were left by the electrician who removed a second electrical system from the property. Ms. Butler advised Ms. Boykins to have the wires removed from the property.

Ms. Boykins described her plan to rehabilitate the property.

Ms. Bealer stated that he appreciates the work to clear the trash accumulation from the garages.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to determine 630 Spruce St as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Wolfe explained that the certification will be held in 60 days, which provides Ms. Boykins with time to begin taking corrective steps.

2. 150 Spring St, Donald Thomas, owner, 150 Spring St, purchased June 2006

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Thomas to step forward. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Thomas.

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 and certified mail and posted on the property on December 19, 2013 and December 20th respectively
- Delinquent water charges totaling \$251.01; Water on
- Electric on
- Gas inactive
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Trades: No visible structural issues
- Codes: 11 QoL's and 1 NOV for trash accumulation, weeds, missing gutters and downspouts and peeling paint
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling N/A

Ms. Butler reported that the property was originally considered as a blight candidate after the Property Maintenance office received complaints from the neighboring properties.

Mr. Thomas stated that the peeling paint was caused by the removal of vines from the exterior walls. He stated that new windows were installed on the first floor. He stated that he takes care of critical issues as they arise. He stated that he takes issue with the Quality of Life program as he has been working to address various issues. He noted that he uses a push mower on the grass and he should not be ticketed following a rain storm, as he needs to wait for the grass to dry before using the push mower. He stated that while he understands the neighbors' concerns, he has been working to pay his rent and work on the property. He stated that the work on the property has been delayed as he lost his job and he was recently hospitalized. He noted the need for recovery time before he can begin working again.

Mr. Thomas stated that he intends to address the issues in the back yard and that he finds the

blighted property process offensive. He expressed the belief that the process is “overkill”.

Ms. Butler noted that the property qualifies as a blighted property because the property meets the attractive nuisance criteria, defined by the law.

Public Comment

Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ed Terrell.

Mr. Terrell stated that he is a friend of Mr. Thomas and he verified that Mr. Thomas had surgery and was ill. He also verified that Mr. Thomas does indeed intend to repair the property. He expressed the belief that laws requiring people to live in a certain way are flawed, as people should be permitted to live in the way our conquerors want us to live. He also agreed that the blighted property process is “overkill.”

BPRC Vote

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 150 Spring Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Wolfe stated that the Committee understands the intent of Mr. Thomas to correct the issues with this property and that the 60 day period between this hearing and the Certification provides a window to begin taking corrective steps.

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. 1236 Marion St, Gloria Rodriguez, owner, 1236 Marion St, Rdg, 19604, purchased July 2002**
- 2. 1101 Douglass St., Albert Comfort, owners, CMR 402 Po BOX 894 APO AE VA 09180, purchased Nov 1995**
- 3. 617 Spruce St., William Copeland & Gail Culpit, owners, 617 Spruce St, no purchase date listed**
- 4. 612 Spruce St., Pierre Joseph, 846 Seven Gables Cir SE Palm Bay FL 32909, purchased March 2010**
- 5. 117 S 11th St, Jose Barrena & Jamie Jimenez , Owner, 84 Orange Ave Elmwood Park NJ 07407, purchased May 2006**
- 6. 312 S 11th St, David Crespo, 5918 57th St Maspeth NY 11378, purchased June 2006**
- 7. 517 S 11th St, Fredymar Perez Nieves & Aurea E Delgado, owner, 517 S 11th Street Reading PA 19601, purchased March 2011**
- 8. 528 S 11th St., Silvia Perez, owner, 11516 114TH PL # Ozone Park South Ozone Park NY**

11420, purchased Nov 2006

9. 519 S 11th St, BET Investing LLC, 1259 Northampton St PMB 309 Easton PA 18042, purchased July 2007

10. 1413 Muhlenberg St, Maria Sanchez & E Feliciano, owners, 1413 Muhlenberg St, purchased June 2004

No one stepped forward.

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

- All notices were posted and mailed on December 19th and 20th respectively
- **1236 Marion St:** Water delinquency \$1561.43 and off, Gas inactive, 4QoL weeds
- **1101 Douglass St:** Water Delinquency \$4316.35, water off, City County and School Taxes delinquent 2012-12 \$1910.99; Electric off, Gas inactive, Trades – damage and structural issues on the 2nd floor rear deck and roof overhang; Codes – 20 QoLs, 2 work orders, 1 No Show inspection, unpaid housing permits
- **617 Spruce St:** Water delinquent \$3353.52 and off; Electric off, Gas inactive, Delinquent City, County and School taxes 2012 \$532.90; damaged bricks at front right corner ground level, Codes – 1 QoL, 1 NOV broken glass, cracked masonry, missing downspout
- **612 Spruce St:** Water delinquent \$2820.07 and off 2012, Electric off, Gas inactive, Trades – damaged 3rd floor roof, wooden overhang and fascia, Codes – 11 QoLs, 3 work orders, 1 NOV broken front windows, trash accumulation, missing down spouts
- **117 S 11th St:** Water delinquent \$5876.62 and off, Electric and Gas off, Delinquent Taxes N/A, 16 QoL and rodent infestation,
- **312 S 11th St:** Water delinquent N/A and on, Electric off, Trades – boarded up and fire damaged, Codes –9 QoLs, 1 Work Order, 1 NOV unsecured, damaged, eyesore, trash and rodent infestation
- **517 S 11th St:** Water delinquent \$244.21 and off, Electric and Gas off; Delinquent City, School and County taxes N/A, Trades N/A, Codes – 14 QoL trash, 4 Work Orders broken windows, unsecured
- **528 S 11th St.:** Water delinquent \$2634.41 and off, Delinquent City, School and County Taxes N/A, Trades N/A, Codes –18 QoL and 2 work orders
- **519 S 11th St:** Water delinquent \$3922.40 and off, Electric off and Gas inactive, Delinquent City, School and County Taxes N/A, Trades N/A, Codes –18 QoL and 2 work orders
- **1413 Muhlenberg St:** Water delinquent \$2492.82 and off, Electric on and Gas off Delinquent City, School and County Taxes N/A, Trades N/A, Codes – 4 QoL and 1 NOV rear porch sagging, broken railing, broken windows and missing gutters

Ms. Butler stated that all of the above properties meet at least one of the blighted property criteria.

Public Comment

None

BPRC Vote

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, 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 on Thursday, April 17th at 6 pm in Council Chambers.

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to adjourn

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, Secretary

