
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, February 19, 2015
Determination Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:10 pm. He announced that a quorum was present. He welcomed Mr. Eyrich to his first BPRC meeting.

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, N. Eyrich

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

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

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Ms. Reed, to approve the January minutes as distributed. The motion was approved unanimously.

PROPERTIES TO BE RELEASED

Ms. Butler reported that 411 Elm Street no longer meets the blighted criteria. However, Ms. Potts stated that the Property Maintenance Division Manager would prefer that the property be tabled, as there are unfinished code issues.

411 Elm Street, Khoa Nhu Tran, 1221 Butler Street, Reading, Purchased June 2002

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to table 411 Elm Street until the next Determination Hearing.

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.

549 South 6th Street, Maria Reyes & Thelma Semedo, 727 Thorn Street Reading, purchased Nov 2012

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

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 December 22, 2014 and posted on the property on January 14, 2015.
- Delinquent water charges of \$2304.27; Residential Water Service off on November 13, 2013.
- Gas service off 2012.
- Electric service off.
- Delinquent Taxes \$2806.71 – 2013-14 City, County and School
- Trades – vacant, 2nd floor roof partially collapsed, structure in need of repair.
- Codes – placarded unlawful 2013, 1 NOV, 2 work orders, 7 QoL, failed inspection, \$100 in unpaid housing fees and \$929.31 unpaid miscellaneous
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Ms. Reyes stated that she moved here from New York in the fall of 2014 and she purchased the property in 2012. She described the problems associated with the receipt of notification for inspections. She stated that she requested notification by email.

Ms. Butler questioned if Ms. Reyes has developed an improvement plan. Ms. Reyes stated that the improvements required go beyond her abilities and she would like to demolish the property and rebuild. She stated that this property is a single family detached dwelling. She stated that she has started contacting the City to receive permission to demolish.

Mr. Bealer suggested that Ms. Reyes request a One Stop Shop, as that will gather all necessary departments who will need to approve the demolition.

Public Comment

None.

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 549 South 6th Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

520 A Birch Street, Jason Lee Harrell, 520 A Birch St, Reading PA, purchased May 2012

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

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 December 22, 2014 and posted on the property on January 13, 2015.
- Delinquent water charges of \$350.49; Residential Water Service on.
- Gas service N/A.
- Electric service on.
- Delinquent Taxes \$2716.97 – 2013-14 City, County and School
- Trades – N/A
- Codes – 1 NOV trash, maintenance and unsafe conditions; \$860 miscellaneous unpaid.
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Ms. Potts displayed photographs of the property depicting the unsafe conditions. She explained the maintenance needs to the property owner. She noted that the porch supports are improper, the deteriorated stairs, and the issues created by the lack of a drainage system.

Mr. Harrell stated that he purchased the property in 2012 and he described at length his communication problems with Property Maintenance and Building/Trades staff. He stated that he was finally able to obtain a meeting when he received a “5 day to comply” notice. He described problems with the postal service and communications problems with City offices.

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Harrell to explain the property improvements he plans. Mr. Harrell stated that he was given the wrong date for the BPRC Hearing and that he left numerous unreturned messages. He stated that he has gone through the court process for some of the alleged violations.

Ms. Butler again asked Mr. Harrell what property improvements he intends to make. Mr. Harrell again described his communication problems with City offices.

Ms. Butler stated that she gave Mr. Harrell ample opportunity to describe his plans to improve the property. She advised him to speak with Property Maintenance and Building/Trades before undertaking improvements. She promised to have these offices call him to begin those discussions and she and Ms. Kelleher took down his phone number.

Mr. Luckey inquired about the unpaid taxes at the property. Mr. Harrell stated that he recently paid the delinquent taxes but he forgot the receipt. Mr. Harrell also displayed approximately 10 green RAWA shut off notices and stated that he pays his bills on time.

Mr. Urena stated that he respects Mr. Harrell's desire to communicate with the City.

Mr. Bealer suggested that Ms. Reyes request a One Stop Shop, as that will gather all necessary departments who will need to approve the demolition.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to determine 520 A Birch Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

422 West Oley Street, Mayro Ubalso, 1114 Meade Street, Reading PA, purchased Sept 2013

Ms. Butler stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mayro Ubalso, with help from an interpreter.

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 December 22, 2014 and posted on the property on January 13, 2015.
- Delinquent water charges of \$1154.51; Residential Water Service off October, 1, 2007.
- Gas service N/A.
- Electric service off.
- Delinquent Taxes \$623.81 – 2014 City and County.
- Trades – unstable front masonry wall above 1st floor porch, structural damage masonry and wood deck, structural damage 3rd floor roof, vacant.
- Codes – Placarded unsafe 2013, 2 work orders, 1 No Show, 12 QoL, \$3899 unpaid housing and \$808 unpaid miscellaneous.
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response.

Ms. Ubalso, with help from an interpreter, stated that she was unaware of the issues with the property until January 2015. She agreed that the property needs to be repaired but she was unaware of the structural issues at the property. She announced her intent to transfer ownership of the property to two brothers from her church.

In response to a question from Ms. Butler, Ms. Ubalso stated that she obtained electrical permits but stopped the work when she learned of the structural problems with the property. She announced her intent to transfer the property to Noel Hernandez and Israel Ayala, who were sworn in by Ms. Kelleher and who testified that they intend to rehabilitate the property and reside there.

Mr. Bealer suggested that they request a One Stop Shop, as that will gather all necessary departments who will need to approve the project.

Mr. Eyrich reminded all that the blight designation travels with the property and that the transfer will not require the process to re-start.

Public Comment

None.

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to determine 422 West Oley Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

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. 111 West Elm, JJ Property Management Co., Paoli Pike, West Chester, purchased Jan, 2007
2. 205 Hudson Street, Ijeoma Okafor , Coatsville, PA, purchased Nov 2007
3. 806 Schuylkill Avenue, Juan Melo, 327 Greenwhich St., Reading, purchased May 2005
5. 610 Schuylkill Avenue, Arguello Einstein, Clifton NJ, purchased Dec 2005
6. 253 North 5th Street, Richard Miracia, 331 N 6th Street, Reading, purchased June 2004
7. 732 North 6th Street, Cathryn Scholl, 732 N 6th St., Reading, purchased Aug 1994
8. 716 A Moss Street, Veterans Affairs, Pottstown PA, purchased April 1976
9. 520 Birch Street, Walton Investments LLC, Pittsburgh PA, purchased Sept 2013
10. 940 Elm Street, Livin Rodriguez, 631 Elm St., Reading PA, purchased June 2011
11. 120 Peach Street, John Bollinger, Key West FL, purchased Aug 1999
12. 515 Wunder Street, Josephine & Genevieve Templin, 135 N 3rd St, Reading,
13. 1308 Spruce Street, Luis Torres, 102 S 6th Street, Reading, purchased May 2006
14. 235 South 13th Street, Arelis Martiinez, Brooklyn NY, purchased Aug 2011
15. 645 Moss Street, Juan Perez Sanchez, 645 Moss St., purchased June 2006
16. 643 Moss Street, Felix Jimenez, 643 Moss St., Reading, purchased April 2007
17. 1033 Buttonwood Street, PO Box 12691 Reading Pa 19612, purchased Aug 1987
18. 1048 Cherry Street, Stewart Rahmaan, New York NY, purchased Oct 2012
19. 824 Franklin Street, Miracia Richard, 331 N 6th St., Reading, purchased February 2002
20. 409 Elm Street, Erick Ciprian, 322 N 5th Street, Reading, Purchased Nov 2013
21. 1046 Moss Street, Alwifido & Barbara Rodriguez, 1046 Moss Street, Reading, purchased Aug 1999

The property owner of 1046 Moss Street asked to have her property removed from the

Consent Agenda and for the board to conduct a hearing. The board agreed.

Ms. Butler stated that these properties meet the blight criteria with notices mailed December 22, 2014 and posted on either January 13th or 14th 2015. In summary:

- 1. 111 West Elm** – Delinquent water \$3458.47 and water off since 2013, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$2236.61, Gas off, Codes – 3 work orders, 8 QoL, 6 NOV and placarded unsafe
- 2. 205 Hudson Street** – Delinquent water \$2577.87 and water off since 2010, Delinquent 2013-14 City, County and School taxes \$1261.42, Electric off, Gas off, Trades – unstable front and rear walls, vacant, dilapidated spouting; Codes – 2 Work Orders, 3 No Shows, 11 QoLs, 1 NOV, \$700 unpaid housing, \$2008.50 unpaid miscellaneous
- 3. 806 Schuylkill Avenue** – Delinquent water \$53 and water off since 2007, Delinquent 2011-14 City, Council and School taxes \$5524.91, Trades – damage to rear 1st floor framed porch, roof and siding; Codes – Placarded unlawful 2013, 12 QoL, \$850 unpaid housing and \$1270 unpaid miscellaneous
- 4. 610 Schuylkill Avenue** – Delinquent water \$3797.71 and water off since 2012, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$3952.63, electric off, Codes – placarded unlawful 2013, 2 NOV, 3 work orders, 3 No Shows, 16 QoL
- 5. 253 North 5th Street**– Delinquent water \$10,020.45 and off since 2012, Delinquent 2013-14 City, County and School taxes \$6676.45, Electric off, Gas off, Codes – placarded unsafe 2014, 4 NOV, 4 work orders, 1 No Show, 4 QoL, Failed inspection, \$1047.44 unpaid miscellaneous
- 6. 732 North 6th Street**- Delinquent water \$10,020.45 and off since 2012, Delinquent 2013-14 City, County and School taxes \$6676.45, Electric off, Gas off, Codes – placarded unsafe 2014, 4 NOV, 4 work orders, 1 No Show, 4 QoL, Failed inspection, \$1047.44 unpaid miscellaneous
- 7. 716 A Moss Street**- Delinquent water \$2049.57 and off since 2012, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$6062.56, Electric on, Codes – 5 NOV, 6 work orders, 18 QoL, \$2608.64 unpaid miscellaneous
- 8. 520 Birch Street** - Delinquent water \$826.06 and off since 2010, Delinquent 2014 City and County taxes \$798.84, Electric off, Codes – placarded unlawful 2014, 2 work orders, 4 No Show, 12 QoL, Failed inspection, \$2907.75 unpaid miscellaneous and \$1600 unpaid housing
- 9. 940 Elm Street** - Delinquent water \$4276.24 and off since 2008, Delinquent 2008-14 City, County and School taxes \$8168.83, Electric off, Trades – vacant 8+ years, major repairs needed, Codes – placarded unlawful 2014, 2 NOV, 8 work orders, 4 No Show, 25 QoL, Failed inspection, \$6257.89 unpaid miscellaneous and \$5800 unpaid housing.
- 10. 120 Peach Street** - Delinquent water \$53 and off since 2011, Electric off, Trades – vacant and unsecure, roof partially open, possible interior structural damage due to exposure to elements, Codes – 1 NOV.
- 11. 515 Wunder Street** - Delinquent water \$234.13 and water on, Electric off, Trades – major repairs needed, front masonry wall unstable, 3rd floor roof collapsed, damaged 1st floor siding, vacant; Codes –2 NOV

- 12. 1308 Spruce Street** - Delinquent water \$3363.89 and off since 2011, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$6076.34, Electric off, Gas off, Codes – 1 NOV, 2 work orders, 6 QoL, \$699.75 unpaid miscellaneous
- 13. 235 South 13th Street** - Delinquent water \$1011.40 and off since 2014, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$2706.99, Electric off, Codes – 2 No Show, 5 QoL, \$200 unpaid housing and \$500 unpaid miscellaneous
- 14. 645 Moss Street** - Delinquent water \$3467.97 and off since 2008, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$3397.45, Electric off, Codes – 4 NOV, 8 work orders, 28 QoL, \$4869.89 unpaid miscellaneous
- 15. 643 Moss Street**, - Delinquent water \$2030.97 and off since 2013, Delinquent 2012-14 City, County and School taxes \$3523.77, Electric off, Codes – 14 QoL, \$1053 unpaid miscellaneous
- 16. 1033 Buttonwood Street** - Delinquent water \$4397.35 and off, Delinquent 2013-14 City, County and School taxes \$1435.48, Electric off, Codes – placarded unlawful 2012, 4 NOV, 1 work order, 4 No Show, 25 QoL, \$100 unpaid housing \$4106.25 unpaid miscellaneous
- 17. 1048 Cherry Street** - Delinquent water \$1148.40 and off since 2013, Electric off, Codes –2 work orders, 1 No Show, 1 QoL, \$100 unpaid housing and \$366.69 unpaid miscellaneous
- 18. 409 Elm Street** - Delinquent water \$712.83 and off since 2011, Delinquent 2014 City and County taxes \$988.11, Electric off, Gas off, Trades – front wall missing, Codes – 2 NOV, 4 work orders, 1 No Show, 3 QoL, unfit for habitation
- 19. 824 Franklin Street** - Delinquent water \$3036.65 and off since 2013, Electric off, Gas off, Codes – placarded unsafe 2013, 6 NOV, 2 work orders, inspection failed.

Public Comment

None.

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

1046 Moss Street, Alwifido & Barbara Rodriguez, 1046 Moss Street, Reading, purchased Aug 1999

Ms. Butler stated that the property owner, Frances Rusbelis is present and was provided with a property packet. With the help of an interpreter, Ms. Rusbelis stated that she recently purchased the property. Ms. Kelleher confirmed Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Rusbelis, with the help of an interpreter.

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 December 22, 2014 and posted on the property on January 13, 2015
- Delinquent water charges of \$2838.32; Residential Water Service off since November

29, 2011

- Gas service – off 2012
- Electric service on
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Trades – Roof damage. Front concrete steps damaged, siding damage on garage
- Codes – 3 work orders, 11 QoL, \$1601 unpaid miscellaneous
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Ms. Rusbelis stated that the property is vacant and that she plans to rehabilitate the property within a reasonable period of time.

Ms. Potts displayed photographs of the property.

Ms. Butler suggested that Ms. Rubelis keep in touch with Ms. Potts about the rehabilitation.

Public Comment

None

BPRC Vote

Ms. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to determine 1046 Moss Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other Business

No other business was brought forward. The certification hearing will be held on the 3rd Thursday of April.

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

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, Secretary