
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, March 17, 2016
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. Twyman 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 defined 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, B. Twyman, M. Wolfe, D. Luckey, W. Bealer

Staff Attendance: L. Kelleher, F. Lachat, Esq., K. Potts

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

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to approve the October minutes as distributed. The motion was approved unanimously.

PROPERTIES TO BE RELEASED

None.

DETERMINATION HEARING

Mr. Olsen 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. He explained the hearing process. He stated that Mr. Lachat will run the hearings.

1. 146 Elm Street, Samuel Sanchez, PO Box 5801 Reading PA 19610, Purchased May 2010

Mr. Lachat stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Sanchez.

Mr. Lachat entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail February 15, 2016 and posted

on the property on February 22, 2016.

- Delinquent water charges of \$4510.63; Residential Water Service off.
- Gas service off 2012.
- Electric service no response.
- Delinquent Taxes \$2305.33 – 2013-15
- Trades – bricks falling out at soffit and roofline.
- Codes – 4 NoV, 4 No Shows, 7 QoL weeds, 10 QoL trash/rubbish, \$880 unpaid housing fees, \$2545 unpaid miscellaneous
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Mr. Sanchez stated that he is on a payment plan for the delinquent taxes. He questioned why he should reconnect the utilities when the property is vacant. He stated that he in the process of rehabbing the property. He expressed the belief that this process encourages abandonment.

Mr. Sanchez stated that he plans to repair the brickwork in the spring. He stated that he is willing to allow an inspection of the interior of the property. He stated that when the property is rehabbed, he plans to reside at the property. He also noted his intent to go on a payment plan for the delinquent water charges.

Mr. Sanchez stated that he did not receive the notice provided by first class mail and that his only notice of this hearing was the notice posted on the property. He claimed that the PO Box number used by the City is incorrect.

Mr. Sanchez suggested that the City be more helpful to those who are rehabbing their properties by offering financial assistance. He described his financial problems causing delays in the rehab of the property.

Mr. Lachat asked Mr. Sanchez to outline his timeline and steps for the rehab of the property. Mr. Sanchez stated that he needs more time to rehab the property and he suggested that the City provide him with a \$25K grant to assist with the rehab.

Mr. Luckey asked Mr. Sanchez to define his timeline, as he has owned the property for six (6) years. Mr. Sanchez requested more time. He stated that if he hits the lottery he can rehab the property.

In response to a question about the PO Box number, Mr. Sanchez admitted that the number used is correct.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 146 Elm Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Sanchez objected to having his property taken away through this process. Mr. Olsen explained the process and the timelines required by the process.

3. 425 Spring Garden Street, Peter Gulden, 425 Spring Garden St, Reading PA, purchased Oct 2011

Mr. Lachat stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Gulden.

Mr. Lachat entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail February 15, 2016 and posted on the property on February 22, 2016.
- Delinquent water charges of \$1848.10; Residential Water Service off.
- Gas service on.
- Electric service no response.
- Delinquent Taxes \$437.37 – 2014-15
- Trades – front windows boarded up, front soffit missing, deteriorated condition.
- Codes – 11 QoL Trash/Rubbish, 1 QoL pool maintenance, 1 QoL indoor furniture
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Ms. Gulden expressed the belief that some of the tickets issued for issues with the yard to the side of the property were improperly issued as she does not own this lot. She stated that she at one time resided at the property with her daughter but when the neighborhood deteriorated she moved away and turned off the utilities. She stated that she plans to have her niece reside at the property after the property is rehabbed. She complained about the deteriorated condition of the neighborhood and stated that several neighbors are afraid to come outside.

Ms. Gulden stated that she plans to restore the water service when someone is residing at the property. She noted that relatives live in this block and keep regular checks on the property to avoid break-ins. She stated that the property is filled with her deceased father's belongings.

Ms. Gulden stated that her brother-in-law is rehabbing the property so it can be occupied.

Public Comment

None.

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 425 Spring Garden Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Luckey encouraged Ms. Gulden to rehab the property.

5. 836 Elm Street, Manuel Mizhquiri & Maria Saquisla, 313 Pine St., Reading, purchased March 2014

Mr. Lachat stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Ms. Saquisla, with assistance from the translator.

Mr. Lachat entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail February 15, 2016 and posted on the property on February 22, 2016.
- Delinquent water charges of \$2654.43; Residential Water Service off.
- Gas service N/A
- Electric service no response.
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Trades – front windows boarded up.
- Codes – 2 Work Orders - \$525 unpaid, 2 NoV, Failed inspection, 5 QoL Weeds, 7 QoL Trash, 1 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$4209.19 unpaid.
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

With assistance from the translator Ms. Saquisla questioned why water charges are applied to a vacant building and she questioned the Property Maintenance fines and fees. Mr. Lachat explained that the questions regarding the water charges need to be addressed with RAWA and the Property Maintenance fees and fines need to be addressed with Property Maintenance.

Ms. Saquisla explained that her hectic work schedule has interfered with the rehabilitation of this property. She stated that she is unable to use contractors due to the high costs charged. She requested more time to rehabilitate the property so she can move her family into this property. She stated that she has started paying down the water charges and she recently made a \$500 payment.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Bealer moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to determine 836 Elm Street as blighted. The

motion was approved unanimously.

7. 332 Cedar Street, Francis Silletto, 1148 Perkiomen Ave Apt 1 Reading PA 19602, Reading, purchased June 1987

Mr. Lachat stated that the property owner is present and was provided with a property packet. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Pacharelo.

Mr. Lachat entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail February 15, 2016 and posted on the property on February 22, 2016.
- Delinquent water charges of \$2160.71; Residential Water Service off.
- Gas service off
- Electric service no response.
- Delinquent Taxes \$217.94 - 2015
- Trades – some windows boarded up and some windows missing, roof covered with tarp, sidewalk obstructed
- Codes –Placarded unsafe, 3 NoV, Failed inspection, 7 citations, 1 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$105 unpaid.
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Mr. Pacharelo stated that he did not receive the mailed notice. He explained that he purchased the property from Mr. Silletto last year but he has not yet recorded the deed. Mr. Lachat and Ms. Potts explained that the City must use the owner information associated with the deed. He suggested recording the deed so the correction in ownership is changed.

Mr. Pacharelo questioned the water charges for a vacant building. He stated that he has started fixing the wall and the roof. He distributed photographs. He estimated that the work would take about one (1) month to complete. He stated that his son is helping with the work.

Public Comment

None.

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to determine 332 Cedar Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

**13. 944 Madison Avenue, Elma and Vidal Velez, 944 Madison Avenue, Reading PA,
purchased April 1999**

Mr. Lachat stated that the property owner is not present; however, neighbors of this property wish to testify on the record.

Mr. Lachat entered the following conditions into the record from the property summary sheet as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class mail February 15, 2016 and posted on the property on February 22, 2016.
- Delinquent water charges of \$2884.11; Residential Water Service off.
- Gas service off
- Electric service no response.
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Trades – N/A
- Codes –Placarded unsafe, 5 NoV, 1 citation, 5 Work Orders - \$647 unpaid, 5 QoL Trash, 4 QoL Weeds, 4 QoL indoor furniture outside, never inspected, \$105 unpaid.
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling – no response

Public Comment

Michael Edward Borr stepped to the podium. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath.

Mr. Borr stated that he is constantly calling the police to report illegal entry into this house. He stated that this property has become a drug house. He stated that when the Fire Department entered the house he noticed that all ceilings on all three floors were collapsed. He expressed the belief that the Fire Fighters took photos.

Mr. Borr explained the improvements he made to his home and how his home is being damaged by water, mold, bedbugs, etc. coming from this vacant property. Mr. Borr stated that this property received insurance money to repair the roof; however, the property owner walked away and kept the money. He described the water damage he has experienced due to the unrepaired roof at this property.

Mr. Borr again complained that this property is commonly used as a drug house, noting that the boarding is ripped off to allow entry. He added that drugs are much more expensive than they had been in the 1960s.

Mr. Lachat suggested that Mr. Borr report these issues to Building Trades, as they may be able to assist with a potential solution.

Mr. Bealer asked how long the property has been vacant. Mr Borr stated that the property has been vacant for at least a year, possibly longer. He again noted the number of illegal entries into the property and described safeguards he takes in case his property is compromised.

Mr. Luckey moved, seconded by Mr. Twyman, to determine 944 Madison Street as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Lachat asked if any of the following property owners are present. No one responded.

2. 434 South 9th Street, Robin Fishburn, 434 S 9th St, Reading, Purchased Nov 2000

4. 956 N 11th Street, Rafaela Fernandez, PO Box 6463 Wyomissing PA 19610, Wyomissing PA, purchased August 2005

6. 834 Elm Street, Josias Pina, 834 Elm Street, Reading PA, purchased October 2015

8. 905 Mulberry Street, Marie Josee Noel & Jonas Guerrier, 772 Bradley St West Hempstead NY 11552, purchased June 2006

9. 213 Cedar Street, Jessica Bailey, 5118 Allentown Pike Temple PA 19560, purchased Sept 2013

10. 1314 Kenney Street, Stephan & Helen Kobylakiewicz Jr, 1314 Kenney St, Reading PA, purchased March 1971

11. 206 Belvedere Street, Lucinda & Thomas Purcell, 206 Belvedere St, Reading PA, No deed date

12. 138 S 12th Street, Kenneth Stoudt Sr., 138 S 12th St., Reading PA, purchased June 1986

13. 944 Madison Avenue, Elma and Vidal Velez, 944 Madison Avenue, Reading PA, purchased April 1999

14. 1010 Washington Street, Alesia Bell & Brian Harris, 1010 Washington Street Reading, purchased Nov 2000

15. 726 Moss Street, Gary Jones, 135 N 3rd St, Reading, 5247 Brasswood Dr Stone Mountain GA 30088, Purchased Nov 2005

16. 252 Pear Street, Brian Booker Wiggins, 252 Pear Street, Reading, purchased Sept 2013

17. 254 Pear Street, Juana Padilla, 254 Pear Street, Reading PA, purchased June 1989

18. 619 Clinton Street, Maribel Gonzalez, 257 Perry Ave Greenacres FL 33463, purchased Sept 2015

19. 426 S 7th Street, Frances Torres, 1231 Robeson St., Reading, purchased Oct 2013

Mr. Lachat stated that each of the following properties meet at least one (1) of the mandated blight criteria. All properties were mailed hearing notices on February 15, 2016 and were posted on either February 22nd or 24th.

2. 434 South 9th Street – Delinquent water \$2427.80, Water off, 3 Work orders - \$912.04 unpaid, 4QoL weeds, 2 QoL trash, open and unsecured

4. 956 N 11th Street - Delinquent water \$3582.83, Water off, \$3460.83 in delinquent 2014-15 taxes, Trades – front window broken, No electric, trash on front porch, Codes – 1 Work order - \$285 unpaid, 3 NoV, 3 No show, Placard unlawful, 16 QoL trash, 4 QoL inside furniture outdoors, \$3165.50 unpaid

6. 834 Elm Street – Delinquent water \$7067.24, Water off, \$3175.18 delinquent taxes 2013-15, Trades – windows boarded up, Codes – 2 Qork Orders - \$157 unpaid, 2 NoV, Inspection failed, Placarded unlawful, 5 QoL Grass, 3 QoL Trash, 1 QoL indoor furniture outdoors, \$4636.81 unpaid

8. 905 Mulberry Street – Delinquent water \$4893.23, Water off, Gas off, \$5257.19 delinquent taxes 2013-15, Trades – windows boarded up, Codes – 6 Work orders - \$1307 unpaid, 7 NoV, Inspection failed, Placarded unlawful, 6 NoV in citation, 6 QoL trash, 6 QoL grass, open and unsecured, abandoned

9. 213 Cedar Street – Delinquent water \$2412.75, Water off, Gas off, Delinquent taxes \$1316.33 2-14-15, Trades – windows boarded up and missing, siding partially off property, Codes – 1 Work order, 4 NoV, 2 Citations, Never inspected, Placarded 2013, 10 QoL Trash, 3 QoL Weeds, 2 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$2701.75 unpaid

10. 1314 Kenney Street – Delinquent water \$4324.96, Water off, Gas off, \$3326.26, Delinquent taxes 2013-15, Trades – partial collapse 3rd floor roof, Codes – 1 Work order - \$167 unpaid, Placarded unsafe 2015, 1 QoL Weeds, Never inspected, \$202.25 unpaid

11. 206 Belvedere Street – Delinquent water \$2631.24, Water off, Gas off, \$4127.81 unpaid 2013-15 taxes, 2nd floor windows broken and open, disrepair, Codes – 1 Work order - \$230

unpaid, 6 NoV, 5 QoL Weeds, 3 QoL trash, 2 QoL no snow removal, \$1010.31 unpaid

12. 138 S 12th Street – Delinquent water \$3702.75, Water off, \$1115.81 delinquent taxes 2014-15, Trades – front soffit missing, baker’s alley boarded up, trash on front porch, Codes – 1 Work order - \$107 unpaid, 2 NoV, 7 QoL Trash, 6 QoL Weeds, 1 QoL unregistered vehicle, \$812 unpaid

14. 1010 Washington Street – Delinquent water \$1257.51, Water off, Gas off

15. 726 Moss Street – Delinquent water \$7956.26, Water off, Gas off, \$4015.06 delinquent taxes 2013-15, Front door and 1st floor windows boarded up, Codes – 9 Work orders - \$837 unpaid, 4 NoV, 2 Citations, Placarded unlawful 2015, 8 QoL Weeds, 4 QoL Trash, 2 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$5086.62 unpaid

16. 252 Pear Street – Delinquent water \$5954.56, Water off, Gas off, \$3041.17 delinquent 2013-15 taxes, Trades – Front door boarded up, 2nd floor windows broken and open to elements, Codes – 9 Work orders - \$1064 unpaid, 5 NoV, 5 No shows, 15 QoL weeds, 13 QoL trash, \$15414.01 unpaid

17. 254 Pear Street – Delinquent water \$4163, Water off, Gas off, \$1955.42 delinquent taxes 2013-15, Trades – 1st floor door and windows boarded up, 2nd floor windows open to the elements, Trash in side and rear yard, Codes – 5 Work orders - \$1018 unpaid, 2 NoV, Fire Damage, 3 QoL Weeds, 15 QoL Trash, 3 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$3237.70 unpaid

18. 619 Clinton Street – Delinquent water \$837.48, Water off, Gas off, Trades – 1st floor front windows boarded up, roof missing, Codes – 4 Work orders - \$665 unpaid, 2 NoV, 10 QoL Trash, 7 QoL Weeds, 2 QoL indoor furniture outside, \$1671.76 unpaid

19. 426 S 7th Street – Delinquent water \$3132.42, Water Off, Gas off, \$3873.39 delinquent taxes 2013-15, Codes – 8 Work orders - \$2201 unpaid, 5 NoV, Never inspected, Placarded unlawful 2013, 10 QoL Weeds, 12 QoL Trash, \$1461 unpaid

Public Comment

None.

Ms. Wolfe 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 May 18th.

Twyman moved, seconded by Mr. Luckey, to adjourn the hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, Secretary