

MINUTES OF THE STARK COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION  
December 21, 2020

The Stark County Land Reutilization Corporation met for their regular meeting on Monday, December 21, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in the Stark County Regional Planning Commission Conference Room. The option to participate via teleconference was made available.

Board Members Present

Alex Zumbar  
Janet Creighton  
Lem Green  
John Arnold  
Bill Smith

1. CALL TO ORDER BY SCLRC CHAIRMAN, Alex Zumbar
2. ROLL CALL – Board Members Present

Roll call found the following Board members in attendance: Alex Zumbar, Janet Creighton, John Arnold, Lem Green and Bill Smith.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2020 MEETING

Green moved and Creighton seconded to approve the minutes of November 16, 2020 meeting. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith, - Abstained, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC SPEAKS - None

5. TREASURER/FISCAL REPORT

Heather Cunningham reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month of November. Arnold moved and Green seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Roll call vote: Zumbar - yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

Payment Post Approval/Budget Transfer Approval

Cunningham stated it was necessary to pay the City of Canton \$107,394.00 prior to requesting the reimbursement from OHFA for the eight NIP demolitions. The deadline for the reimbursement request was December 14, so to avoid losing the funds, staff went ahead and processed that payment. The budgeted amount for OHFA NIP program disbursements was \$200,000 and previously spent was \$96,496.07, which would have brought that line item over \$3,890.07. Being requested for approval is the post payment of \$107,394 to the City of Canton, and the transfer of \$3,890.07 from the Miscellaneous line item to the OHFA NIP line item. This action does not change the overall budget.

Zumbar moved and Green seconded to approve the post payment and budget transfer. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

6. SIDE LOT/VACANT LOT PROGRAM REPORT  
**Lynn Carlone provided the Side Lot Program Update:**

**Total Applications Submitted: 2,065**  
*(4 applications were received since Nov. '20 update)*

Cities – 1,725  
Canton: 1,364, Massillon: 134, Alliance: 227

Other Communities – 340

Bethlehem Twp – 30, Brewster – 9, Canal Fulton – 1, Canton Twp – 64, East Canton – 7, East Sparta – 2, Hartville – 3, Jackson Twp – 6, Lake Twp – 6, Lawrence Twp – 11, Lexington Twp – 40, Limaville – 2, Louisville – 2, Marlboro Twp. – 1, Meyer’s Lake – 1, Minerva – 3, Nimishillen – 6, North Canton – 2, Osnaburg Twp – 15, Paris Twp – 3, Perry Twp – 14, Pike Twp – 20, Plain Twp – 34, Sandy Twp – 40, Sugarcreek Twp – 6, Tuscarawas Twp – 2, Washington Twp – 5, Waynesburg – 4, Wilmot -1

- Total Number of Applications under Preliminary Review: 0
- Total Number of Applications Denied: 875
- Number of Canceled Applications/Fee Refunded: 71
- Total Number Pending Approval by Community: 33
- **Total Number of Approved Applications: 1,086**

- Total Number of Approved Applications Pending Deposit Receipt / NIP Early Lien Release Approval / Request for Foreclosure / Completed Foreclosure Proceeding: 96
- Total Number Being Prepared for Transfer: 36
- **Total Number Transferred to Date: 954**

**Vacant Lot Program Update:**

**Total Applications Submitted: 229**  
*(5 Applications received since Nov. '20 update)*

Cities – 190; Canton: 167, Massillon: 9, Alliance: 14

Other Communities – 39

Bethlehem Twp - 15, Canton Twp – 7, Hartville – 1, Jackson Twp – 2, Lake – 1, Lexington Twp – 2, Perry – 1, Sandy – 5, Sugarcreek Twp – 1, Washington Twp – 4

- Total Number of Applications under Preliminary Review: 0
- Total Number of Applications Denied: 171
- Number of Canceled Applications/Fee Refunded: 7
- Total Number Pending Approval by Community: 10
- **Total Number of Approved Applications: 41**

- Total Number of Approved Applications Pending Executed MOU/ Completion of Foreclosure Proceeding: 2
- Total Number Being Prepared for Transfer: 0
- Total Number Transferred to Date: 39

Green moved and Creighton seconded to approve the Side Lot/Vacant Lot report as presented. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

#### 7. ADOPT SCLRC 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Creighton moved and Arnold seconded to adopt the 2021 SCLRC Meeting Schedule as presented. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

#### REVIEW OF THE 2021 BUDGET

Bob Nau highlighted the Demolition Program Expenses for \$325,000, which has been broken down between Residential for \$75,000 and Commercial/Industrial for \$250,000. In the 2020 budget there was an allowance of \$200,000 for general demolition, and there was no distinction between residential and commercial demolitions. As a result of the HOF project, the 2020 budget was revised for an additional \$400,000. The 2021 demolition budget does reflect the additional money for Alliance's project.

Also highlighted was the RPC Administration line item under Contracted Expenses for \$250,000. RPC's agreement is currently at \$189,000, but as of October 10<sup>th</sup>, the cost to administer the program exceeded this amount at \$202,739. It is being proposed that the budget amount be increased to \$250,000. This increase to the budget would not automatically change the agreement, but that would be an additional item for discussion. Much of this increase is getting Sarah Peters assistance as she is the only resource at this time. Nau indicated that his plan was to first reallocate some internal resources to assist Peters and see where that goes before hiring somebody. The major increase to the budget takes into account the hiring of another staff member. Nau pointed out that with RPC's budget, it is a time and material, not to exceed amount. For instance, this year RPC's costs went over about \$13,000, which the agency wrote off, but last year came in under budget in the amount of \$12,900, so instead of \$189,000 it was approximately \$176,000. RPC has gone over the contract amount two of the last three years, and we end up having to write it off. That is a financial challenge for the agency.

Green asked Zumbar if he had reason to anticipate any significant difference in the collections next year, and is this number satisfactory to him as an estimate. Zumbar stated that remains to be seen; he expects some change, but it shouldn't be major. They have managed to do well with the DTAC amounts, so those amounts are doable.

Creighton asked Nau if the increase of the RPC contract of about \$60,000 is to hire another full-time person after the first of the year. Nau stated it will be a two-pronged approach; handle it in-house initially to see what the work load looks like, and if it is warranted, then that would put the agency in a position to be able to hire another person. The way RPC is set up is there are about 50 different accounts that staff charge their time to. Creighton asked if that person would then get their full salary from this other account plus an additional one from the Land Bank. For example, if an employee already

worked at RPC receiving a salary working on X, then this person is asked to help with the Land Bank, is this employee still going to earn their initial full salary amount plus get additional money doing Land Bank work. Nau stated an employee's salary stays the same; time worked is just charged off to a different fund. Because of the way we are set up, staff can charge their time off to the various projects they are working on.

Green asked if RPC employees have accounts they charge their time to. Nau stated they have different work codes that staff charge off to depending on what they are working on. Creighton asked when the last time was the Land Bank increased the RPC budget. Nau stated in February 2018 the contract was increased from \$180,000 to \$189,000, which was more of a cost of living adjustment. But previous to that, the contract was increased to \$180,000 in October 2014, so it has been approximately three years since the contract has had any significant increase.

- 9:15 Public Hearing – 2021 Budget

Zumbar went into a public hearing for the consideration of the 2021 SCLRC budget. Zumbar asked if anyone was present to speak in favor of the budget.

Nau stated the Board was provided the initial budget for review last month. He previously highlighted the two major changes. The other item that was not in last year's budget is the \$300,000 for the Brownfield Assessment Grant.

Zumbar asked if anyone wanted to speak in opposition of the 2021 budget. Smith asked how much of the commercial/industrial demolition amount of \$250,000 was considered for Alliance. Nau stated based on the numbers Alliance gave last year, it was in the range of \$200,000. Smith asked if the \$250,000 RPC administration fee is due to the anticipated heavier load, and is this permanent, or would this number be changed year to year depending on the anticipated work load. Nau stated that would be up to the Board, but the contract is for time and materials, not to exceed amount. If the agency doesn't hire somebody this year, it would be well under that \$250,000, but this increase not only covers the normal activities, but also allows for some new activities. Nau stated they haven't seen any of the HOF paper work come in, and the fact that Alliance wants to use in-kind service match will create a lot of administrative challenges. RPC's current contract is for \$189,000, so if the Board is willing to discuss this, the change would have to be to our contract to administer.

Zumbar asked Nau what potential new programs he was looking at undertaking for the Land Bank. Nau stated there has been discussion on developing a rehab program, which many other land banks do. RPC administers a rehab program on behalf of the Commissioners, so the agency does have some expertise in this area. RPC has received a fair number of requests from people to pick up some properties. There is a program where properties owned by the banks are being offered, but most of those properties are pretty bad, but the Land Bank has the ability to acquire property, clean-up title, and partner with entities to do rehab in neighborhoods. RPC does not currently have the capacity within the existing cost structure to take on additional projects. Nau believed that the brownfield work and gas stations are big opportunities for us for developing some capacity with it. Peters has had some conversations with other entities like Community Building Partnerships, and they are doing a lot of work in the neighborhoods. Habitat provides a continued area of growth. It depends on what the Board wants RPC to do, and we can do it, but it's just making sure we've got the resources in place. Creighton asked if there would be a work session of this Board before RPC engaged in any additional programs such as housing rehab. Nau stated absolutely. Zumbar recognized that there is definitely an

opportunity for the Land Bank to enhance its revenue stream and other areas of revenue beyond the DTAC funds should be considered.

Zumbar stated if there is no other person to speak on the 2021 budget, he declared the public hearing closed.

Creighton moved and Arnold seconded to adopt the 2021 budget. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### a. Targeted Acquisition Assistance Program Requests

- Habitat for Humanity – Parcel #246132/246133, 216847, 212071, 215592, 206331
- Habitat for Humanity – Parcel #609096, 600503, 608151, 600188, 612302, 605607, 605138/605139
- Canton Township – Parcel #1314996

Smith moved and Arnold seconded to approve the above-noted TAAP requests as submitted. Roll call vote: Zumbar -yes, Creighton - yes, Green – yes, Smith – yes, Arnold – yes. Motion carried.

#### 8. Old Business

- Starfire Update – Columbus Road Project

Nau stated the Starfire on Whipple Ave has got its *no further action* letter, so it's a matter of disposing of that property in some manner. Regarding the Starfire on Columbus Road, they did encounter some contamination on the site, but this was not unexpected based on the preliminary work. Another seven or eight soil borings will be done on the perimeters of the property to determine the extent of the actual contamination. That will go a long way in terms of their action plan that they have to submit to BUSTR. It's a slow process, and the best-case scenario puts it being completed by summer.

- HOF Village Project – Demolition Update

RPC has not received any paperwork from the HOF. Work is being done, but progress is slow. The extension to their agreement stated the project would be done and all the paperwork submitted by December 31<sup>st</sup>, so another extension to the contract may be necessary.

Thorley stated the Ohio Historical Society approved the Land Bank's records retention schedule on November 20<sup>th</sup>. While we have not destroyed any records of the Land Bank, it can now be done moving forward.

#### 9. Next Meeting – January 25<sup>th</sup> - 9:00 a.m. - The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.