

MINUTES OF THE STARK COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION
JUNE 16, 2025

The Stark County Land Reutilization Corporation met for their regular meeting on Monday, June 16, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Stark County Regional Planning Commission Conference Room.

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, Bill Smith, John Arnold, Chris Hardesty and Alan Harold.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2025 MEETING

Arnold moved and Hardesty seconded to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2025 meeting. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumbar, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty, and Harold.

4. PUBLIC SPEAKS

5. TREASURER/FISCAL REPORT

Heather Cunningham reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for the month of May. Hardesty moved and Arnold seconded to approve the Treasurer’s Report for May as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumbar, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty, and Harold.

6. SIDE LOT/VACANT LOT PROGRAM REPORT

Sarah Peters provided the Side Lot Program Update:

Total Applications Submitted: 2,784

(20 applications were received since May '25 update)

Cities – 2,310

Canton: 1,829, Massillon: 193, Alliance: 288

Other Communities – 474

Beach City – 1, Bethlehem Twp – 77, Brewster – 9, Canal Fulton – 1, Canton Twp – 86, East Canton – 8, East Sparta – 2, Hartville – 3, Jackson Twp – 7, Lake Twp – 8, Lawrence Twp – 12, Lexington Twp – 79, Limaville – 2, Louisville – 3, Marlboro – 1, Meyer’s Lake – 1, Minerva – 5, Nimishillen – 6, North Canton – 2; Osnaburg Twp – 15, Paris Twp – 3, Perry Twp – 20, Pike Twp – 21, Plain Twp – 38, Sandy Twp – 42, Sugarcreek Twp – 6, Tuscarawas Twp – 2, Washington Twp – 6, Waynesburg – 6, Wilmot-1

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- Total Number of Applications under Preliminary Review: 7
 - Total Number of Applications Denied: 1066
 - Number of Canceled Applications/Fee Refunded: 189

- Total Number Pending Approval by Community: 11
- **Total Number of Approved Applications: 1,511**
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- Total Number of Approved Applications Pending Deposit Receipt / NIP Early Lien Release / Request for Foreclosure / Completed Foreclosure Proceeding / Forfeiture Request: 119
- Total Number Being Prepared for Transfer: 22
- **Total Number Transferred to Date: 1,370**

Vacant Lot Program Update:

Total Applications Submitted: 411

(1 applications received since May '25 update)

Cities – 284: Canton: 227, Massillon: 17, Alliance: 40

Other Communities – 127

Bethlehem Twp – 76, Canton Twp – 15, Hartville – 1, Jackson Twp – 4, Lake – 4, Lexington Twp – 9, Nimishillen – 3, Paris – 1, Perry – 1, Pike – 2, Sandy Twp – 7; Sugarcreek Twp – 1, Washington Twp – 4,

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- Total Number of Applications under Preliminary Review: 0
- Total Number of Applications Denied: 282
- Number of Canceled Applications/Fee Refunded: 26
- Total Number Pending Approval by Community: 1
- **Total Number of Approved Applications: 102**
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- Total Number of Approved Applications Pending Executed MOU/ Completion of Foreclosure Proceeding: 11
- Total Number Being Prepared for Transfer: 4
- Total Number Transferred to Date: 87

Arnold questioned if there has been a decline in activity for the Side Lot/Vacant Lot programs. Peters answered that activity appears to be slower compared to previous years, but we are only halfway through the year. A decline in demolitions may be contributing to fewer applications, as cleaned lots often spur neighbor interest. There was some discussion about how things compare to other Land Banks, pointing out that fewer teardowns and possibly broader economic factors might be having an impact.

Arnold moved and Smith seconded to approve the Side Lot/Vacant Lot Report as submitted. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumbar, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty, and Harold.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Targeted Acquisition Assistance Requests:
 - Habitat for Humanity – 9 Parcels

Peters stated Habitat for Humanity submitted applications for acquisition assistance of 9 parcels. Six properties are in the city of Canton and three properties are on Griffith Avenue in the city of Massillon. All of the lots are vacant except for 1952 3rd Street, which, if acquired, Habitat intends to preserve the home on that property.

Harold moved and Arnold seconded to approve the TAAP requests. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumber, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty and Harold.

- b. Approval to Accept Bid and Enter into Contract for Excavation Work for the former Starfire Gas Station on Columbus Rd.

Bob Nau provided an update regarding the Brownfield Remediation Grant project for Columbus Road Starfire. The Land Bank entered into an agreement this past January with Pandey Environmental to implement the Brownfield Remediation Grant awarded for that property. They are implementing the Buster approved Remedial Action Plan in accordance with the Voluntary Action Plan Program.

The current phase of work involves bidding out the excavation of contaminated soils, backfill and disposal component of the project. The excavation portion was advertised through the Land Bank's website. Two bids were received with the low bid coming from Buckeye Elm Contracting, out of Columbus. The consultant has worked with them in the past, and they have the capacity to do it. The second bid was from Environmental Remediation Contractors. There was a significant cost difference between the two bids which arose from the approach to shoring the property near the property line.

Zumber inquired about a performance bond. Bob Nau confirmed that both a bid bond and performance bond were required. Nau added that the consultant will be onsite daily during the approximately two-week excavation process to monitor progress closely. Harold asked if the funding for this component was part of the grant. Peters confirmed that it is reimbursable as part of the grant.

Arnold moved and Hardesty seconded to accept the bid and enter into contract with Buckeye Elm Contracting. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumber, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty and Harold.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Arts in Stark – 1014 Cleveland Ave NW – Request for Extension

Peters reported that the deadline for the ArtsinStark Demolition Assistance Program project is June 20th. Their demolition contractor has indicated that they will be unable to complete the project by this date. ArtsinStark has requested an extension to their agreement. A 60-day extension would extend the deadline to August 19th, allowing sufficient time for the contractor to complete the work, submit the required documentation for review, and facilitate the reimbursement process.

Harold moved and Arnold seconded to approve the request for extension. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumber, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty and Harold.

- b. FY24 Demolition & Site Revitalization Program – Grant Update

Peters provided an update on the FY24 Demolition and Site Revitalization Program. She reported that the Land Bank applied last year and was notified in late November that it would receive a \$500,000 county set-aside allocation for projects. The grant agreement has recently been executed, and the Land Bank has until December 31, 2025, to complete the projects.

The funded projects include:

- Demolition of a former church and residence on South Park Avenue in Alliance
- Demolition of the former Levitt House at Quail Hollow (Stark Parks property)
- Demolition of a former groundskeeper's house on Hills and Dales (Stark Parks property)
- Eighteen residential demolitions within the City of Canton

Peters noted that a previous effort to include a property with three buildings on the former Massillon State Hospital site was unsuccessful. The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) determined the site was ineligible for the demolition program, citing concerns about potential brownfield conditions due to the presence of above-ground tanks and other elements requiring further testing. A Phase I assessment has been completed, and the County is seeking guidance from DOD regarding potential future funding programs for the site.

Nau provided additional information regarding brownfield funding opportunities. He noted that the Greater Ohio Policy Center, a nonpartisan nonprofit focused on community revitalization, recently reached out to all Land Banks requesting input on the state budget for the next round of brownfield funding.

Nau explained that the House and Senate budget proposals differ significantly: the House version maintains the status quo, allowing funds to flow through land banks, making them eligible grant recipients. The Senate version would restrict eligibility to for-profit entities that have control of the property. It would prohibit funding for assessments (initial stage work) and limit funding to private-sector economic development projects only, excluding land banks from participation. Nau noted that this issue will proceed to a conference committee for resolution and wanted to bring the matter to the group's attention.

Harold moved and Zumbar seconded to permit the Executive Director to sign the letter as requested. Motion carried on a roll call vote as follows: Voting Aye – Zumbar, Smith, Arnold, Hardesty and Harold.

John Anthony provided an update on the demolition of properties along Lincoln Way in the City of Massillon, for which a Demolition Assistance Program funding agreement was executed on February 7, 2023. The demolition was conducted as an emergency action and utilized nearly the entire budget allocated for that year, with a funding commitment by the Land Bank of \$200,000 reimbursed to the city.

These properties have not yet been sold, but Massillon is considering a sale in the near future. It was noted that the properties currently have low appraised values on record, and it is uncertain what they will bring if sold at auction. However, as part of the settlement, any proceeds from the sale, including from the two additional properties not subject to demolition, appear to be eligible for reimbursement.

Harold recognized the city's representative, Chris Hardesty, for his stellar service and cooperation over the past several years that he's served on the board as he embarks on new adventures up in the city of Akron.

9. NEXT MEETING – July 21, 2025 - 9:00 a.m.

10. ADJOURNED