

**BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2021**

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The regular meeting of the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) was held on Thursday, April 22, 2011 at 11:30 am in Council Chambers of the City of Warren Municipal Building, 318 W. Third Avenue, Warren, PA.

**ROLL CALL**

Members present included Ray Pring, Denise Whipp & Chief Rodney Wren. Also, present were Nancy Freenock, City Manager, Vince DeJoy, Director of Zoning, Codes & Economic Development, Mike Holtz, DPW Director, Jessica Roudybush, Code Official and Ellen Nelson, BPRC Recording Secretary.

**GOAL OF BPRC**

Mr. Pring asked Mr. DeJoy what his thoughts are for the BPRC. Mr. DeJoy would like to see the BPRC work with the homeowner to eliminate blight. Mr. Pring agreed and asked how we are going to proceed. Ms. Whipp would like to nudge people to comply rather than take a property. Chief Wren added, anything we can do to save these properties and put them back into the Real Estate market.

Ms. Bee reminded the committee that there are 4 properties in the process. The first goal is for the owner to rehabilitate the property. She has a list of 9 additional properties that fit the description of blighted. Some would be demos, but others have a local owner that just need a push. Mr. Pring stated the committee would rely on Ms. Bee for pacing, so we don't get out in front of ourselves.

Ms. Freenock stated that demo is the last option and would like to see rehabilitation where possible. She would like to see a partnership with the owner and a contractor. Possibly the RDA could offer low interest loans that would be paid back at closing, but we will need to find a way to replenish the RDA funds as they are limited. She reported that the RDA was successful in auctioning 3 properties that the City took title to for unpaid sewer debts.

Ms. Whipp asked if there are any resources to help homeowners if they are not financially capable of doing these repairs. She asked if this is the responsibility of the BPRC or does this lie with the RDA.

Ms. Freenock stated that USDA has grants for owner occupied, but not tenant occupied properties. DCED small business loans may not include rentals. She added that Warren Forest EOC may be interested in more properties. Ms. Bee said these would not apply to vacant properties as they are not owner occupied.

Mr. Pring would like the BPRC to have a mission statement if there is not already one in place and asked that it be put on the next agenda. Ms. Nelson will check past minutes.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chief Wren made a motion to elect Ray Pring as Chairman. Ms. Whipp seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote by those present.

Mr. Pring nominated Denise Whipp as Vice Chair. Chief Wren seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote by those present.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Ms. Whipp and a second by Chief Wren, the minutes of the February 27, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved as presented by those present.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS**

NONE

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence received

### **PROPERTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION OF 2ND DECLARATION OF BLIGHT**

**500 Market Street** Ms. Bee stated that this property is under permitted construction. The owner lives in Florida but has a local contractor. The project was delayed over the winter, but they plan to resume shortly and have the home habitable late May or early June. All major interior construction is completed, and utilities are in. Plan to paint the exterior, repair the porch steps and possibly add a mud room to the back of the structure.

Mr. Pring asked if Ms. Bee had any concerns. She does not. Ms. Whipp asked if she is confident that the project will progress. Mr. Pring asked if the utilities are on. Ms. Bee replied that the electric is on, but not sure if the water is on. Mr. Pring asked if the original issues have been dealt with. Ms. Bee stated that it is still not habitable. The plumbing is in but there are no fixtures. Ms. Whipp feels it should come off the blighted list and if it does not progress it can be put back on. Mr. DeJoy asked if this process holds the owner's feet to the fire. Mr. Pring suggested tabling until the June meeting and invite the owner to attend the meeting. Ms. Freenock said to keep the property on the list until it is complete and habitable as this keeps it on staff's radar. Chief Wren said the Committee had requested updates monthly before COVID. Mr. Pring suggested tabling until June meeting which is when they plan to have the house habitable.

Chief Wren made a motion to table until the June meeting with an update on the progress. Mr. Whipp seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote by those present.

**100 W. Third Avenue (East Street School House Apts., Inc.)** Ms. Bee stated that the actual address for this property is 104 W. Third Avenue. Pre-COVID the owner, Mr. Huck, had a plan in place to demolish the structure. During a phone call to the owner last week, the owner stated the demo is still planned and waiting to hear on a grant application. The owner is working with Commissioner Eggleston to obtain grant money to help fund the demolition. Ms. Bee has been unable to reach Commissioner Eggleston.

Mr. Pring asked what comfort level Ms. Bee had to table action. Ms. Bee replied she did not feel we could proceed with action until Mr. Huck has been informed and invited to attend a meeting so the committee can hear from him what his plans are.

Ms. Whipp made a motion to table action to the May meeting and ask Mr. Huck to attend the meeting and/or provide an update with firm deadlines. Chief Wren seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote by those present.

### **PROPERTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION OF 1ST DECLARATION OF BLIGHT**

**211 Monroe Street.** Ms. Bee stated that this property was presented and was tabled with no decision. This is a small house. The owner had attended the meeting. The utilities are off, and it is still vacant. The City attempted to take to sale for unpaid debt, but the owner paid the sewer debt prior to the sale. The owner wants to cooperate but is not sure what her plan is. The trash has been removed and there have been no lawn maintenance issues.

Ms. Whipp asked what makes it blighted. Ms. Bee replied that it is vacant and lacks utilities. Ms. Whipp doesn't feel it should be blighted just because the owner does not live in it. Mr. Pring would like to hear from the owner about their plans. Ms. Whipp stated the maintenance issues have been resolved. She would like to table action or possibly remove it from the list. Chief Wren asked if there have been complaints from neighbors. Ms. Bee replied not in the past year.

Chief Wren made a motion to table action to the May meeting and asked Ms. Bee to reach out to the owner to obtain an update. Ms. Whipp seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote by those present.

**219 Liberty Street** Ms. Bee stated that this property has been vacant for many years. It is deteriorated and getting worse. The structure has issues to the back portion. The owner purchased in the tax sale and has walked away. This will go to the Judicial Sale in May. No fact sheet was done, does the committee want her to proceed. The Judicial Sale is scheduled for May 26 and the next BPRC meeting is May 27.

The City is applying for a grant to make the structure warm safe and dry. The owner will deed the property over to the City if the grant is awarded.

Mr. Pring would like Ms. Bee to move forward and formally present the property at the next meeting.

### **UPDATE FROM PLANNING COMMISSION/RDA ON BLIGHTED PROPERIES**

**111 Pioneer Street** Ms. Bee reported that the City took this property to sale for unpaid sewer debt. The property was given to the RDA, who then sold it at a public auction last week for \$37,500.00. Ms. Bee reported no change in the condition since the new owner took over.

Ms. Freenock asked Ms. Bee to send an email to the Solicitor letting her know a first declaration of blight had been declared on this property. Ms. Whipp wants confirmation

that proper notification was received. Ms. Bee will check her file to see if notification was received and will update at the next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Meeting Date/Time**

Ms. Whipp had expressed an interest in changing the date/time of the BPRC meeting as she had a conflict with another meeting. The conflict has been resolved so the BPRC meeting will remain as scheduled. This will be revisited in the fall.

#### **New Property**

Ms. Bee has a property on Locust Street that she would like to present to the committee for consideration. The owner is not cooperating, there are on-going property maintenance issues, outstanding citations, windows re boarded, inside has been gutted to the studs and floor joists, feral cats are living inside and it is vacant, so it is well qualified for blight. Mr. Holtz added that DPW could demo this small house with no problem, if we petition for Conservatorship. Ms. Bee will prepare a fact sheet for the next meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Pring asked if Ms. Bee could prepare a slide show of the properties on her list for the June meeting. This was done in 2017 when the committee became active again after several years hiatus.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Pring adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 11:30.

Minutes prepared by Ellen Nelson