

**BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
August 17, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) was held on Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 11:30 AM in Council Chambers of the City of Warren Municipal Building, 318 W. Third Avenue, Warren, PA.

ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Denise Whipp called the meeting to order. Members present included Chair Ray Pring, Douglas Hearn, Maurice Cashman, and Fire Chief Dave Krogler. Also present, Mike Holtz, City Manager; Randall Rossey, Director of Codes and Planning; Scott Taylor, Code Enforcement Officer; Jessica Trumbull, Codes and Recording Secretary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Josh Cotton - representing the Warren Times Observer
Khalid Hakim-owner 209 Jackson Avenue
John Arnt-owner 820 Carbon Place
Tim Huber-private citizen
John Walker-private citizen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Mr. Hearn and a second by Mr. Cashman, the agenda for the Thursday, August 17, 2023, meeting was approved, with those in attendance also in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. Cashman and a second by Mr. Hearn, the minutes from the July 20, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved as presented by all those present.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to come before the Committee.

2ND DECLARATION OF BLIGHT

820 Carbon Place - Mr. Arnt reports that he will now need to contact a judge to determine what can be done about the fact that there is no right of way, and it is landlocked, which makes it very hard to bring in materials to finish the rehabilitation on this property. He states that he bought this property sight unseen and is now stuck with it. According to Mr. Arnt the utilities have been turned on except for the heat which will be installed before winter. Mr. Arnt states that he should have something from the judge about the right of way by November, provided his research is complete. Mr. Taylor reported that there are no safety issues with this property and no other issues other than all the utilities are not on. A motion was made by Mr. Pring to table this property in consideration of 2nd Blight until November 16th unless substantial progress is made before then. There was a second by Mr. Cashman. All present were in favor.

128 Water Street – Mr. Taylor states that this property was under the control of the deceased owner's daughter, who lives out of state. Mr. Taylor reports that he and Mr. Rossey were in contact with Mr. Evans as a potential buyer, who visited the Codes Department numerous times but has not been heard from him since he took ownership in September of 2022. Mr. Taylor listed numerous property maintenance issues including broken windows, the need for a new roof, overgrown vegetation, no utilities on at present and severe clutter inside. There have also been reports of people going in and out of the property as well as staying inside. Chief Krogler made a motion to move this property to the 2nd Declaration of Blight with a second from Mr. Hearn. Motion carried unanimously by all present.

206 North Irvine Street – Mr. Taylor reports that this property was obtained by the property owner due to a predatory lending issue. The plan was to rehabilitate the house and a family member would live there. Property maintenance issues were brought to light with complaints of high grass and weeds. He was then alerted about the utilities being shut off to the property. Notices were sent to the property owner with no response. This property is posted as going to tax sale in September 2023. Mr. Rossey explained that if this property is issued a 2nd Declaration of Blight, he will be able to explain the property issues to any potential buyers. Mr. Cashman made a motion to continue with the 2nd Declaration of Blight with a second by Mr. Hearn. All present were in favor.

CONSIDERATION OF 1st DECLARATION OF BLIGHT

104 Water Street -. Mr. Taylor stated that he has been in contact with the architect and has seen the drawings for this property. Although they are near 80% completed, they cannot move forward until they are finished. Chief Krogler made a motion to table this property until the November 16th meeting. Mr. Cashman seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous decision.

209 Jackson Avenue - Mr. Taylor reported that other than a few minor property maintenance issues and the electricity being turned on, which will also be the main source of heat, this property has abated all other issues. Mr. Rossey recommended that this property be removed from blight status pending Mr. Taylor can verify that the heat source has been turned on. Chief Krogler made a motion to which the Codes Director make the decision to remove the blight status pending the electricity, which is also the heat source, has been turned on. Seconded by Mr. Cashman. All present were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chairman Pring gave permission to visitors Mr. Huber and Mr. Walker to voice their concerns about the property at **300 Hill Street**. Mr. Huber states that this property has been vacant for 5 years and he wanted to make the committee aware of some issues the neighborhood has had with the property. Mr. Huber reports that there was a water leak 2 years ago that he called the water department about and it has been turned off since. Mr. Huber spoke of the fact that this property is full of the owners' things and there has been no one around in the last six months since it has been deemed condemned by the city. Mr. Walker spoke of his personal history of the property and that when the owner moved out, he made an offer to buy the property and although the owner has refused, he has continued offering to buy it. In 2022 he brought in a contractor to assess the property and per Mr. Walker, the inside is in disrepair with the ceilings and flooring needing replaced and clutter everywhere. Mr. Walker states that he talked to the property owner once again and asked what his intentions were. The property owner stated that he was selling to his brother-in-law, the contractor. Mr. Walker alleges that he is reluctant to believe that because in previous years the property owner stated that his grandmother was going to buy it and another landowner was interested in buying it. Mr. Pring stated that this property was not on the agenda this month but will be back before the committee on September 21st.

UPDATE FROM PC/RDA

325 Prospect Street Mr. Rossey states that this property was before the committee in early Spring and was issued a 2nd declaration of blight. The RDA then purchased the property at the Max tax sale. The RDA has since entered into an agreement with a buyer who is very capable in rehabilitating the home. The buyer will have 2 years to rehabilitate the house, at which time, blight status can be removed.

OLD BUSINESS

21 Glade Avenue. Mr. Taylor reports that this property was sold at tax sale last fall. The house had fire damage and issues that needed to be abated. The new owner gutted and replaced everything in the home. This home has been completely rehabilitated and is currently listed as sale pending. Mr. Rossey added that this home was purchased and rehabilitated by the same person who is under agreement with the RDA on the 325 Prospect Street property.

The next meeting will be held Thursday September 21, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Mr. Cashman and seconded by Chief Krogler. All present were in favor.

Minutes prepared by Jessica Trumbull