

**BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
November 29, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) was held on Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 11:30 am in Council Chambers of the City of Warren Municipal Building, with Vice Chair Denise Whipp presiding.

Members present included Denise Whipp, Greg Fraser & David Cantrell. Also, present were Terry Williams, Director of Codes, Permits & Recreation Services, Jessica Roudybush Code Official and Ellen Nelson, Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. Fraser and a second by Mr. Cantrell, the minutes of the September 27, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Doug Hall, for 500 Market Street
Dr. David Brook, for 204 E. Fifth Avenue
Josh Cotton, Times Observer
Allen McIntosh, for 500 Market Street

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence received

PROPERTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION OF 2ND DECLARATION OF BLIGHT

500 Market Street. Ms. Roudybush, on behalf of Ken Hinton, reported that a second-floor framing inspection was done on October 24, electric rough-in is completed and the furnace has been installed, inspected and approved.

Mr. Hall clarified that the furnace is a large space heater being used as a temporary heat source. The gas line has been installed from the meter to the sidewalk, and now Columbia Gas is responsible from sidewalk to the main line. The old line was abandoned so a new line needs to be installed.

Mr. Fraser asked the status of the wiring. Mr. Hall replied that there are a few more things to complete on the second floor and anticipates finishing that in December. Mr. Fraser asked what type of heat will be installed. Mr. Hall will be installing radiant (floor) heat, using hot water, on the first and on the second floors.

Mr. Fraser made a motion to table action until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cantrell and passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Williams asked Mr. Huck to call and confirm the date of the next meeting as the December meeting may be cancelled due to the holidays.

204 Prospect Street. Ms. Roudybush stated that 204 Prospect Street and 3 Hinkle Street have the same owner and both properties were moved to first declaration of blight at the September meeting, but the letter was never sent so no further action can be taken today. The property owner, James Piehuta, has requested to be present via conference call. Ms. Roudybush made the call and Mr. Piehuta joined the meeting via telephone.

Mr. Piehuta has owned this property for 40 years. His intention was to update the property but left town. He states that this property is livable. Mr. Fraser asked the status of utilities. Mr. Piehuta said the electric is on. Mr. Fraser that the utilities need to be on in order to do renovations. Mr. Piehuta replied that he cannot afford to heat the house. He added that he has already done a lot of renovations – updated electric, bathroom, windows, plumbing, kitchen and porch. Front porch was removed after he received a property maintenance violation letter.

Ms. Roudybush stated that an electric permit was secured, and the electric was reconnected June of 2018. Also, the front porch was removed without a permit after the owner received a notice regarding the condition of the porch.

Ms. Roudybush asked if renovations were planned for the interior. Mr. Piehuta replied that there is not a lot of water damage, maybe one minor spot. Ms. Whipp commented that this property is listed for \$22,000 with realtor and wondered if 3 Hinkle was as well. Mr. Piehuta answered no it is not, he is dealing with the bank.

Ms. Whipp asked what his intentions and timeline are for each of the two properties. Mr. Piehuta is planning to work on both properties in the spring, maybe May.

Mr. Fraser suggested action be tabled until the January meeting.

3 Hinkle Street. Mr. Piehuta stated that the trees are to be addressed at this property. He has done some improvements - electric updated, windows and siding. Money is a problem, so he cannot give specific time frame. Mr. Fraser asked if he had a contractor and Mr. Piehuta said he will go with the most reasonable price.

Ms. Roudybush stated that the properties are both secure. Each year she has to send a letter about high grass and then Mr. Piehuta arranges for lawn care. She will send out first declaration of blight letter. Mr. Fraser asked how long the properties have been vacant. Ms. Roudybush replied, about 5 years.

Mr. Fraser suggested action be tabled until the January meeting.

PROPERTIES UNDER CONSIDERATION OF 1ST DECLARATION OF BLIGHT

204 E. Fifth Avenue. Ms. Roudybush stated that a notice of violation was issued for the roof. The owner, Michael Arnold, pled guilty but has not corrected the violation.

Dr. Brook stated that he is trying to purchase this property that is next door to his business. He has a sales agreement that is to be signed later today. The closing date is scheduled for March 15, 2019, contingent on being granted a variance from the City to install a parking lot. If the variance is not granted, they will renegotiate the agreement and he will turn it into green space.

Ms. Williams asked about the interior. Dr. Brook said about 2 years ago the owner took the inside down to a shell in an effort to improve the property but went no further. Dr. Brook offered to report back at the January meeting with an update.

Mr. Fraser made a motion to declare first declaration of blight subject to proof of service. Mr. Cantrell seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote. Dr. Brook was informed that the action taken today has no impact on him moving forward with the purchase.

705 W. Fifth Avenue. Ms. Roudybush reported that notice of first declaration of blight has now been mailed to both Mr. Clinton and to Ms. Clinton, joint owners of this property. A prospective buyer was working to renovate the property but has now walked away.

Mr. Fraser made a motion to declare First Declaration of Blight. Mr. Cantrell seconded the motion that passed by unanimous vote.

UPDATE FROM PLANNING COMMISSION/RDA ON BLIGHTED PROPERTIES

Ms. Williams provided updates on the following properties.

511 ½ East Street. RDA owns this property. DPW will perform the demolition now that they have approval from the neighboring property owner.

515 W. Fifth Avenue. This property was purchased out of the Judicial Sale. Permits have been pulled for electric and plumbing. The grass is being maintained. Owners are planning to live here when work is completed. No longer considered blighted.

102 Center Street. RDA owns this property and has a pending agreement with Keith Kophazy. This is pending resolution of an issue with moving the sewer line which goes through this property to the neighboring house. DPW will move the sewer line.

17 Conewango Avenue. This is in the conservatorship process. There are no interested buyers, so it will go to public sealed bid.

11 ½ Linwood Street. The Executrix is interested in gifting this to the RDA. Back taxes are owed that will need to be taken care of. This will be going to the Judicial Sale in the spring.

714 W. Fifth Avenue. RDA purchased this property from the Repository Sale. The property backs onto Washington Park and will be demolished. DPW will demo house.

708 W. Fifth Avenue. Conservatorship process is on hold. This will go to the Judicial Sale.

103 Jefferson Street. Renovations are completed, and the property managers have secured a tenant. Utilities have been turned back on and the furnace has been installed. The porch permit is still open and needs corrections.

East Street School. Mr. Huck has options on how to proceed. Nothing has been done to date. Ms. Williams has asked Mr. Huck to provide an update before the January meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

219 Liberty Street. Continue to talk with 2 potential developers. Money/extend of damages is the hold up. Current owner has walked away from the property and is willing to give it to an interested party.

After discussion Mr. Cantrell made a motion to cancel the December meeting. Mr. Fraser seconded the motion, that passed by unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Whipp declared the meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 11:30 am.

Minutes prepared by Ellen Nelson