

ALBANY COUNTY LAND BANK CORPORATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2014, 5:30 pm
200 Henry Johnson Blvd., 2nd Floor
Albany, NY

Present: Duncan Barrett, Katie Bronson, Phil Calderone, Tammy Cumo, Todd Curley, Corey Ellis, Pamela Harper, Steve Krokoff, Michael Jacobson, Charles Touhey

Excused: Mike Keegan

Guests: Dave Friedfel (Albany County Department of Management and Budget), Christine Hmiel (Habitat), Pat Jeffers (Albany County Office of the Executive)

Called to order at 5:37pm by Chair Mike Jacobson, with a quorum of directors present.

I. Introductions

- a. Jacobson welcome board members and the public to the first official meeting of the Albany Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors. The Board invited members of the public to comment after each topic of discussion in addition to the allotted time at the beginning of the meeting.
- b. Board members introductions along with the introduction of Todd Curley, a proposed Board member.

II. Public Comment

- a. Tom McPheeters
 - i. McPheeters presented a document created by a coalition of individuals and community organizations under the name "Community Voice for the Albany County Land Bank". The document outlines eight policy recommendations for moving forward. McPheeters is eager to work with the board and commends Jacobson and others for open dialogue.
 - ii. MOTION by Calderone to adopt the document as a set of guiding principles as the board develops by-laws, policies and operating procedures. Ellis seconded the motion. Board discussed timing and implications of adopting the guidelines, particularly whether it was too soon to adopt a particular set of recommendations with little time to review. Calderone clarified that his motion is to adopt them as guiding principles, not as absolute resolutions. Motion carried.

- b. David Schachne
 - i. Representing Albany Housing Coalition. Schachne recounted a building that had been up for auction three times in last 30 years but never developed, and offered his services for training and workforce development in housing renovation.
- c. Mark Robinson
 - i. Representing the City of Albany's 5th Ward. Robinson is supportive of the land bank and urged the board to consider his constituents and ensure that residents have a stake in the outcomes. Robinson said that the land bank can provide guidance for development and he looks forward to working with the board, especially on community outreach.
- d. Arlene Way
 - i. Representing Arbor Hill Development Corporation. Way is excited for the potential of the land bank and shared some of the research that AHDC has done in Arbor Hill, West Hill, West End, Sheridan Hollow and North Albany. Worked with University at Albany on building conditions and crime studies and is working with neighborhood associations on visioning and planning for comprehensive revitalization based on community input. Way hopes the land bank listens to those recommendations and partners with the community.
- e. Susan Holland
 - i. Representing Historic Albany Foundation. Holland has been involved with land bank efforts since 2011. Historic Albany staff conducted a count of vacant buildings in 2001 and in 2007 founded the Solution to Vacant Buildings committee. Holland noted that the land bank is another tool to fight blight and offered her services in connecting with property owners and sharing knowledge of buildings and neighborhoods.
- f. Barbara Smith
 - i. Smith has been an Albany resident since 1984 and spoke as an individual, not as a representative of other roles. Smith is disappointed by the lack of inclusiveness at the leadership level of the land bank and challenged the board to think about full empowerment and equity on the Board of Directors, not just the Community Advisory Committee.
- g. Roger Markovics
 - i. Representing United Tenants and the Community Land Trust. Markovics expressed his profound respect for the board members

and looks forward to meeting new members. Markovics described the land trust model of permanent affordability and noted that housing affordability is a major problem.

- h. Julia Long
 - i. Long's father, Ernest Long, bought property in Albany that was subsequently sold at auction following a mortgage fraud incident with the Urban League. Long is the sole beneficiary of her father's estate and is trying to get her family's property back. Long hopes the land bank considers those victims and makes an effort to return property to rightful owners.

III. Executive Director Job Description

- a. MOTION made by Ellis to approve the job description for Executive Director; seconded by Touhey.
 - i. Discussion: Board discussed priorities for hiring, including an emphasis on inclusivity, qualified candidates, experience, academic credentials, passion and willingness to learn. The Board discussed including a salary range in the job description. Jacobson noted that doing so may cause qualified candidates to self-select out of the process and that the board will negotiate the right salary for the right candidate. Harper emphasized the need to make sure the hiring process is fair and transparent.
- b. MOTION by Calderone moved to approve the job description with an amendment to require residency in Albany County within six months of appointment. Bronson seconded and motion carried unanimously.

IV. Community Advisory Committee description approval

- a. Jacobson stated that the Board's top priority is inclusiveness and creating ongoing opportunities for participation, feedback and involvement.
- b. The board discussed whether the job description should first be made available for public comment before accepting applications. County Executive McCoy said that the County will develop a land bank website where this and other documents can be posted. Jacobson noted that a formal public comment period would delay the call for applications until after the August board meeting and that in the interim, the board would continue to meet and make decisions without the presence of an advisory committee. Jacobson made a MOTION to approve the current description with the understanding that it will be distributed and open for comments and amendments while concurrently accepting applications. Harper seconded the motion.

- i. Discussion: Krokoff expressed concern that there would be confusion over various versions and drafts that may exclude good applicants.
- ii. Calderone proposed an AMENDMENT to the motion to approve a *draft* description that will be distributed and open for comments and amendments and approved by the board at the August meeting. Jacobson accepted the amendment. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. The board will post a draft of the Community Advisory Committee description on the website to allow for public comment and feedback before soliciting applications.

V. Audit Firm

- a. Members of the board met with Albany County's audit firm SaxBST LLP and are awaiting an audit proposal.

VI. Transfer of properties from the County

- a. David Friedfel sent a letter to the County Legislature to request 85 foreclosed properties that are within the land bank's target areas to be pulled from the auction. These properties are not being transferred to the land bank yet, just removed from the auction list.

VII. Team to recommend rehab or demolition

- a. Board is assembling a committee tasked with restoring existing inventory to liveable conditions, where possible. The committee's analysis will inform the land bank's application for funding from the NYS Attorney General's office. Those with expertise in this matter and interest in participating should reach out to Jacobson.

VIII. Resolution 222

- a. County Legislature passed Resolution 222 to allow the County to apply for CDBG funds through NYS Homes & Community Renewal on behalf of the Land Bank. Next funding round is expected in Fall 2014. Only projects outside of the City of Albany in Albany County will be eligible for funding, because Albany is a CDBG entitlement community.

IX. Acquisition and Disposition of Property

- a. Discussion delayed until Community Advisory Committee is in place.

X. Ratification of By-Laws

- a. Barrett made a MOTION to approve the by-laws; Harper seconded.

- i. Cumo noted that there are some duplicative sections that need to be amended. Board agreed to table the motion.
 - ii. Ellis made a MOTION to form a by-laws committee with Cumo as committee chair. Bronson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. County Executive's office will assign a full-time counsel to work with the Land Bank.

XI. New Business

XII. Adjourn

- a. Barrett made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting; Bronson seconded. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.

Next meeting

July 15th, 2014
5:30 p.m.
200 Henry Johnson Blvd
Albany, NY, Second Floor

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Hmiel Schudde
Director of Development
Habitat for Humanity Capital District

*As approved,
William Barrett, Sec.*

Approved July 15, 2014