

Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation

June 25th, 2019

Planning Dept. Conference Room, 1st Floor
County Office Building
1 DiPronio Drive
Waterloo, NY 13165

Directors Present: Jill Henry, Greg Lazzaro, Melissa Nesbit, Frank Sinicropi

Directors Absent: Gary Westfall, Bob Hayssen, Cindy Lorenzetti

Staff: Joe McGrath

Other Attendees: Lisa Keshel, Director of Real Property Tax

1. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Greg Lazzaro at 4:02 p.m. A quorum was present.
2. The March 26th, 2019 meeting minutes were approved by motion of Greg Lazzaro and seconded by Jill Henry. Carried 4 – 0.

3. Resolutions:

Resolution 19-31 Resolution Designating Two Properties for Demolition in 2019 – Moved by Henry and Seconded by Sinicropi. Mr. McGrath explained that this resolution designates 2146 W. Seneca Street, Ovid, NY and 1537 County Road 132, Willard, NY. Mr. McGrath explained that this resolution only allows for RFP for demolition of these properties and does not give authority to award. Mr. McGrath explained that the Willard property, is slated to be a new build partnering with Habitat for Humanity utilizing Romulus CDBG funding. The Ovid property, a two unit apartment house in the core of the village was originally assumed to be a rehab candidate, but after the engineer’s assessment letter which was distributed at this meeting it was decided it is a demolition candidate. The site could potentially be used for a new build or sold as a side lot sale. The eventual demolition of these properties will be funded by Enterprise Community Partners Inc.

4. CEO/President’s Update and Discussion Items:

- a. Welcome New Board Members: Mr. McGrath introduced and welcomed Melissa Nesbit, Executive Director of Seneca Housing Inc. and Frank Sinicropi, Seneca County Treasurer to the Board of Directors to the Land Bank. Mrs. Nesbit and Mr. Sinicropi gave brief remarks introducing themselves. Mr. McGrath also informed the board of the resignation of Gary Westfall leaving a vacancy on the Board of Directors. This comes after Mr. Westfall had confirmed over the phone months prior that he wished to remain on the board through the

end of the year. Mr. McGrath asked the board to consider potential replacements. The term of the board ends at the end of 2019.

- b. New York Land Bank Association Conference Summary: Mr. McGrath gave a summary of activities at the NYS Land Bank Association Conference held in Buffalo on June 12th to 14th. At this conference, Mr. McGrath summarized his main takeaways from the various workshops and site visits. From the conference presentations, Mr. McGrath explained that he could see how smaller organizational capacity building translates into more stable and predictable project outcomes. For example, utilizing QuickBooks software to track transactions and create budgets as well as reports allows land banks to streamline their financial reporting as well as create more accurate projection budgets. In doing this, Land Banks are able to bring to conclusion demolition, rehab, and new build projects with other development partners and funding sources because they can easily identify gaps in finances, utilizing the software. Part of this capacity building will also involve eventually hiring separate and dedicated legal services for the Land Bank as well as hiring separate and dedicated staff. Mr. McGrath believes that in order to begin to build this type of capacity in the Land Bank organization we will need to bring to fruition the rehab and sale of 16 Barker Street to Habitat for Humanity and the Varick Cluster of properties. If these sales net \$130,000 in unrestricted income then legal services, financial software, and one staff member could be covered for one year. If the Attorney General's Office or the NYS Legislature decide to continue funding Land Banks past 2020 then the FLRLBC could become self-sufficient by investing state subsidies in vacant and tax abandoned properties and selling two high dollar value projects a year. The Land Bank would become nearly self-sustainable only relying on the County for things like office space and tech support. Mr. Lazzaro and Mr. Sinicropi voiced that we should check on other small land banks accounting costs. They also suggested that we meet with the Finance Department to see if some of our funding can be intertwined in their processes.
- c. Varick Properties Update: The four properties in a cluster located on Route 89 are still in need of listing. Mr. McGrath explained that Chairman Hayssen reached out to him with concerns over approaching a neighbor through a side-lot sale on such a high profile property. He'd rather see the property listed on the open market prior to selecting a buyer. Mr. McGrath agrees that this is the best path forward. Mr. McGrath explained that the easiest way forward would be to list the properties as a package with Century 21 Real Estate, the prior approved real estate service for the Land Bank. In that advertisement, the board expressed that the requirements of demolition within 12 months of the burned down house would be a requirement. Mr. McGrath agreed and noted that the County Attorney said that this type of contract would be possible. The Board came to a consensus that the property should be listed with those terms made clear but did not pass a resolution.
- d. 101 Virginia Street Update: Mr. McGrath explained that InSite Architecture has conducted a site visit as the first phase of a planning study for the property. This study will produce draft floor plans with cost estimates and a financial pro forma that will allow the Land Bank to market the site as is with an RFP for Purchase and Development. Mr. McGrath is also working on identifying a contractor willing to submit a quote for clean out of the property. There may be enough funding left in the LISC grant to also conduct asbestos surveys on the

property.

- e. 16 Barker Street Update: The abstract has come back and the review needs to be completed by the County Attorney. The Attorney advised to not engage with the Contractor until the review is completed. The problem is that an out of state, estate filing needs to be attached to the abstract for it to be considered marketable or insurable. After the abstract is completed, we can engage with the contractor. Mr. McGrath has also worked with Seneca County Weatherization to submit a scope of work to potentially save some money on the entire project. This would need to be cleared with the project contractor.
- f. Century 21 Update: Mr. McGrath spoke with Nick Davoli on the phone who has listed 408 Railroad Avenue, Waterloo and 5172 State Route 414, Varick. These are both vacant properties that once held residential homes.
- g. Environmental RFQ Update: The RFQ has been advertised on Contract Reporter and the Land Bank has received 15 qualifications, the list has been distributed to the board at the meeting. Mr. McGrath asked the board to review the list for any past experiences or opinions on any of the consultants. No board member had any opinions on the list. Mr. McGrath explained that the Land Bank has been required to find a new environmental consultant by Enterprise Community Partners Inc. for grant funded projects as we do not have current pricing from our previous consultant, who was purchased by a larger firm. At the July meeting, the results will be shared with the board.
- h. Enterprise Grant Funded Projects: Mr. McGrath explained that Professional Engineer Jason McCormick visited each of the three projects slated to receive Enterprise Community Partner Inc. grant funds and that the demos have been covered by the resolution this meeting. The rehab project will be undertaken at 156 Fall Street in the Town of Seneca Falls. When an environmental consultant is identified and engaged we can begin to move the rehab project forward. Mr. McGrath also stated that he will be engaging with Habitat for Humanity and Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services regarding the property and potential development partners.

5. CFO Report:

Mr. McGrath distributed income statements showing the balances of the 3 land bank accounts in the months of April and May 2019. He stated that the LISC grant of \$150,000 has been completed and the closed out. Also attached is the bank statement for the savings account in which the Romulus CDBG program income was placed for the time being until the new build project can begin in Willard.

6. New Business:

Real Property Director Lisa Keshel stated that there may be issues regarding sewer/water re-levies on land bank properties. She is researching what the exact figure will be for the land bank

considering legal exemptions. At this point, she guesses that the total amount the Land Bank may owe could be \$7,000

7. **Adjournment:** A motion was made by Lazzaro to adjourn at 4:55 p.m. and seconded by Sinicropi. Carried 4 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe McGrath
CEO/President