

Land Bank Commission Minutes
February 17, 2010

Meeting Date: February 17, 2010 (Regular Meeting)

The meeting was called to order by the Chair Grace Blagdon at 11:30 a.m. at the Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center, 3805 W. 12th, Little Rock, AR 72204.

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Grace Blagdon, Chair
Commissioner Arlen Jones
Commissioner Susan Chan
Commissioner Andy Francis
Commissioner Willis Smith
Commissioner Brad Walker
Commissioner Keith Wingfield
Commissioner Hillis Schild
Commissioner Mike Robinson

Commissioner Absent:

Staff and Board Members

Bruce Moore, City Manager
Ward Hanna, Assistant Director of Housing and Neighborhood Programs
Tasha Smith, Administrative Assistant
Brittany Jefferson, City Attorney
Director Hendrix, Board of Directors
Director Adcock, Board of Directors
Director Richardson, Board of Directors

Approval of Minutes-

Commissioner Andrew Francis made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Arlen Jones**. Motion carried.

Staff Reports –

Staff reported that the **Redevelopment Administrator** resigned. The position has been and advertised. The deadline for applying is February 19, 2010. Staff reported that they hope to make a quick decision on the new hire.

City Lien Foreclosure- Code Enforcement has been working very close with City Attorney office to ensure that appropriate state statues are followed. Ward Hanna

reported there will be a code officer that works exclusively within the two focus areas.
City Attorney Britton Jeffers that have been submitted to the City Attorney's office.

The City Attorney updated the donation letter and the letter mainly grammatical errors. It reads as follows:

City of Little Rock
Land Bank Commission

Staff Person's Name Telephone (501) 371-4848

Redevelopment Administrator Email [Insert]

February 17, 2010

Property Owner's Name
Mailing Address
Mailing City, State, and Zip

Re: [Real Property Address]

Dear Property Owner:

The City of Little Rock Land Bank Commission is interested in acquiring certain properties within the Stephens and Central High School neighborhoods. You have received this letter because you are a property owner within the boundaries of this focus area.

The Land Bank's intent and purpose for acquiring these properties is to reduce blight in the area and to stabilize and increase property values within these neighborhoods. By assembling land into the City's Land Bank, we will be able to promote affordable housing to our citizens, restore the neighborhoods to their once vibrant status, and improve the overall health and safety of the neighborhoods within the City.

If you have any interest in selling your property, or in the alternative, donating the property to the Land Bank as a taxable deduction, please contact [STAFF PERSON'S NAME], Redevelopment Administrator for the City of Little Rock at (501) 371-4848 or via email at [EMAIL].

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Grace Blagdon
Land Bank Commission Chairman

Commissioner Chan move the second paragraph of the donation letter to be changed to “ to promote affordable housing”

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he had concerns that the data used to map from the tour he took in September; several properties appeared to be unsafe and vacant were not noted on the maps he received.

Commissioner Francis would like to respectfully take a different approach, and have staff update the list rather than send a letter. There is plenty of property to work on that we know are vacant and unsafe. Ward Hanna stated is in the process of updating the unsafe vacant, would like to make recommendation to go ahead and send the donation letter, once the list has been updated.

Kirk Rodgers asked in what way is the data was flawed and noted that he can only provide maps with the data that is provided

Commissioner Wingfield moved to accept the amendment changes to the donation letter in the second paragraph “to promote affordable housing” to our citizens; seconded by Willis Smith. Motion carried.

The budget for Land Bank is; CDBG has \$200,000 and \$42,000 in General fund dollars still exist.

The City of Little Rock NSP2 received funding in the amount of \$8.6 million. The consortium includes The Little Rock Housing Authority, Black Community Developers, and Habitat for Humanity.

Andre Bernard, Shelly Ehenger and Black Community Developers attended training for the NSP2 funding. It is a three year grant program.

City Manager Bruce Moore stated we are going to complete 100 structures. He stated he is very excited about the program. The timeline to begin is three years from the time the contract is signed by the City Manager. The three partners will have to sign the document signed by April. The Consortium will meet February 18, 2010 at 10:30. The City of Little Rock will hire additional staff to meet the requirements for the grant funding.

Committee Reports-

Legal and Political Affairs

Commissioner Francis stated he prepared a draft of the resolution to solidify the commission's focus area. **Commissioner Francis** noted that The Land Bank will focus on acquisition of properties in our focus area, The resolution should include a list of the vacant properties and any vacant and unsafe property that city has identified and to authorize staff to distribute to Homeowners Associations in the area. The resolution also directed information for staff to publish in the newspaper.

Commissioner Wingfield asked to amend the resolution; Page 2 Line 35, includes the word "not" after "can". Commissioner Schild wanted to make a correction to Line 14 lower case Roman Numeral 2 "before you wish to donate your property"

Commissioner Francis moved the Land Bank to receive the resolution presented by Legal and Political Affairs; seconded by Commissioner Wingfield. Motion carried.

Administration and Operations

No Report

Marketing and Development

Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Schild, Commissioner Blagdon and Ward Hanna were present at the meeting. The mission for the sub-committee is to make sure the **Commissioner Chan** develops tools, forms, and worksheets for property acquisition and disposition. **Commissioner Wingfield** reported the commission is putting together a Land Bank exhibit for the NUSA Conference in May. The Land Bank is scheduled to conduct a workshop for one hour and thirty minutes during the conference as well. Dan Kildee is a key note speaker, and all presentations should be ready by March. The committees will meet on February 25th in Ward's office at City Hall at 1:30 p.m. to discuss logistics for the conference.

Old Business-

The commission would like the Land Bank minutes be available the first week after the meeting is held. It was reported that The Arkansas Historic Alliance has committed to assisting the commission with the historic preservation issues should they arise.

New Business-

A side lot, a form is being developed for distribution. There are ninety six lots in The Rolling Pines Subdivisions some of which may be eligible for this program.

Commissioner Wingfield recommended that we contact individuals adjacent to the side

lot to gauge their interest. Director Hendrix asked where are the side lots located. It was reported that the lots are located off Sardis road outside of the focus area boundary.

Commissioner Schild received a letter from a CDC for purchase regarding a condemn structure. **Commissioner Schild** stated she will submit to staff. **Commissioner Robinson** stated the desire to reduce the number of property forms from the several used in Genessee County or two.

Discussion was held on side lot procedures.

Commissioner Wingfield stated if a property is donated, then the Land Bank should conduct a Phase 1 Environmental.

Election of Officers

Commissioner Wingfield moved to re-elect Grace Blagdon as chair of Land Bank; seconded by **Commissioner Francis**.

Vice-Chair Brad Walker recommended Mike Robinson for Vice-Chair of Land Bank Commission; seconded by **Commissioner Wingfield**. Both motions carried.

The commission was reminded that NUSA Conference is May 26-29. The Land Bank Commission presentation will be May 28 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Citizen Communication

Citizen Robert Jones stated it would very beneficial if a representative of the Arkansas Historic Alliance was representative on the Land Bank Commission. The distributing of the Land Bank positions need to be fair.

Director Hendrix stated she would like to increase the commission by two members. She noted that there are not enough residents by race on the commission. Land Bank Commission is a nine member board with seven Caucasian and two African-Americans. **Commissioner Grace Blagdon** and **Commissioner Hillis Schild** both represent Ward 1. The summary of the reason for increasing the Land Bank Commission is in the proposed ordinance.

Citizen Cheryl Warden stated **Director Adcock** has dignified what At-Large means representation on the board. She would like an At-Large position to be added to the Land Bank Commission.

Director Adcock thanked the Land Bank Commissioners for doing a fantastic job.

Adjourn