

# Omaha Municipal Land Bank Board

# MINUTES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

**Regular Meeting:**

9:00 AM, Jesse Lowe Conference Room – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Omaha/Douglas Civic Center  
1819 Farnam Street

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**Meeting Minutes:** This document states the minutes before the Omaha Municipal Land Bank Board at their Public Hearing and Administrative meeting held on Wednesday, November 4, 2015.

**Certification of Publication:** Omaha Municipal Land Bank Board Administrator certifies publication of this agenda in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha on Wednesday, October 28, 2015.

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**Members Present:**

Tom McLeay, Chairman  
Jamie Berglund, Vice Chair  
Ken Johnson  
Cathy Lang  
Scott Semrad  
John Heine  
Julie Stavneak  
Diane Battiato  
Mike Riedmann (arrived at 9:10)

**Members Not Present:**

Randy Lenhoff  
Julia Plucker  
James Thele, Planning Director

**Director Present:**

Brittany Jefferson

**Staff Present:**

Jennifer Taylor, City Law Department  
Debbie Hightower, Recording Secretary

**PUBLIC MEETING:**

Tom McLeay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:07am, introduced the voting and non-voting board members, as well as the City staff. He stated that the Nebraska Open Meetings Law is in effect and a copy is available in the room for review. He further stated that copies of the agenda are located in the back of the room. McLeay explained the procedures of the meeting.

Roll call was taken with nine board members present (Randy Lenhoff, Julia Plucker and James Thele were absent).

McLeay informed the public that a notice of the meeting was published in the Daily Record on October 28, 2015 and was verified by Debbie Hightower, Recording Secretary.

Motion by Cathy Lang to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2015 meeting. Ken Johnson seconded the motion.

AYES: Berglund, Johnson, Semrad, Lang, McLeay  
MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

Jefferson stated that she met with Resolution Partners on October 21, 2015 and went over a statement of work and a timeline for the strategic plan. An agreement was executed on October 30, 2015. She stated she has been in contact with the Center for Community Progress and an agreement will be executed soon. Jefferson reiterated that it is very important to participate in the Strategic Planning Session and she will send out five options (dates and times) for the upcoming session.

McLeay added that the Strategic Planning meeting will set the tone for the Land Bank and time and dedication is needed for success.

Jefferson reported that she met with the City, Mutual of Omaha and the Peter Kiewit Foundation and will meet with the Robert B. Daugherty Foundation on November 9, 2015 and the Walter B. Scott Foundation on December 1, 2015. She stated she will put together a general guide with regard to the reporting requirements for each grant.

McLeay stated that 2015 funds have been received and most of the resources have been secured for the 2015 and 2016 operating budget. He added that once the strategic plan is in place there will be a need for programmatic funds to acquire desirable properties.

Jefferson reported that on October 27, 2015 an agreement was executed with Bland and Associates for the remainder of 2015 for short-term accounting services. An October 2015 report was supplied and shows that total liability and equity is \$417,000.76 and net revenue was \$412,109.17. She added that the disbursement of funds are still needed from a few donors.

McLeay stated that the Finance Committee will include the District 4 voting member. He stated that an individual has been identified in District 4 to serve on the board but has not been

appointed by the Mayor. Joel Cota, Mayor's Office, confirmed that Antonio Zarazua has agreed to serve on the board and his application has been submitted to the Mayor's office.

McLeay stated that he and Semrad were appointed to the board for a one year term. Jennifer Taylor, Law Department, City of Omaha, confirmed that board members shall serve until a replacement has been appointed.

McLeay reminded the board that all officers will be voted on at the December meeting.

Jefferson stated that she met with Lang and Heine from the Governance Committee on October 22, 2015 to discuss the proposed changes to be considered for the Nebraska Land Bank Act as submitted to the board members. She added that one recommendation from the Governance Committee to the board to consider was to modify the filing report from January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 28th. She stated that a community group asked that there be an architect or structural engineer on the board as a represented expertise or appoint a non-voting board member that has that expertise.

Motion by Cathy Lang to recommend the adoption by the State Legislature of the amended Land Bank ordinance with the exception that the filing date be moved to February 28th. Jamie Berglund seconded the motion.

AYES: Berglund, Johnson, Semrad, Lang, McLeay

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

McLeay pointed out that with regard to additional expertise being warranted, he was of the opinion that the Land Bank is an owner and not designed to be a developer and architects and engineers are involved in more detailed parts of development.

Jefferson stated that procurement was also discussed at the Governance committee and there was mention of adopting a model for procurement that are in line with federal guidelines such as the City's procurement model.

McLeay suggested that there be a formal written policy for a procurement process with an amendment to the policy and procedures and by-laws. After further discussion it was agreed to table the procurement process until the next meeting.

Jefferson suggested scheduling committee meetings once a month at the same time each month. The board was in agreement and Jefferson agreed to send a doddle out.

Jefferson reported that she did a presentation to the Greater Omaha Chamber board. She stated that she still continues to meet with neighborhood groups and also leaders in the neighborhood alliances. She was a guest of the Mutual of Omaha Foundation at the Philanthropy Day Luncheon. In addition, she stated that she has recently met with the Director and Assistant Director of the Planning Department with regard to vacant and abandoned property data. She further stated that she met with the County Treasurer to get a better understanding of the tax lien certificate purchasing and possible properties to acquire. She stated that she will continue to meet with board members and city council members and has several meetings scheduled with

development partners. Furthermore, she added that she is working with Jennifer Taylor from the City Law Department to meet with the Nebraska State Bankers Association.

Charlie Gould, 5819 William Street, appeared before the board representing Omaha Together One Community (OTOC). Gould stated that he serves on the Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Action Team which shares the commitment to improve housing in the neighborhoods and is engaged in an effort to support the establishment of the proposed Abandoned and Vacant Property Registration ordinance. He further added that OTOC looks forward to working with the Land Bank in the future to make Omaha an even greater place to live.

Jennifer Taylor, City Law Department, stated that she met with the Nebraska Bankers Association to discuss possibilities to set up a program to support the Land Bank by donating properties that are hard to maintain. She added that there will most likely be an amendment to exclude the Land Bank for possibly one year with regard to the proposed Vacant and Abandoned Property ordinance. In response to McLeay, Taylor answered that City-owned property is technically subject to the Vacant and Abandoned Property ordinance.

Spencer Danner, Human Rights and Relations Director, City of Omaha, stated that he is dealing with “slum lords” on a daily basis. He added that several landlords have recently purchased many abandoned homes and are renting them to refugees with large families even though the homes are not functional. He suggested that the Land Bank discuss their future role with acquiring vacant and abandoned property and offered to answer any questions with regard to fair housing and abandoned properties. Danner advised the Land Bank to utilize the City’s procurement program by working with Planning or Public Works.

Johnson questioned if there is a legal remedy by the City if a property owner is leasing substandard housing to individuals. Taylor answered that the City process is complaint driven and the individuals living in these houses do not complain or they will lose their housing. She added that another issue is there are not enough code enforcement inspectors to address the problem.

Joel Cota, Mayor’s Office, stated that he attends the Refugee Task Force on a monthly basis and offered to provide contact information or assistance on all refugee issues.

It was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at 10:00am.

Debbie Hightower, Planning Department  
Recording Secretary