Omaha Municipal Land Bank Board

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

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

Meeting Minutes: This document states the minutes before the Omaha Municipal Land Bank Board at the Public Hearing and Administrative meeting held on Wednesday, January 11, 2017.

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, January 4, 2017.

Members Present:  Rob Woodling, Chair
Randy Lenhoff, Vice Chair
Cathy Lang
Tom McLeay
Ken Johnson
John Heine
Estela Torres
Mike Riedmann
John Lindsay
James Thele, Planning Director
Ben Gray, City Council Member

Members Not Present:  Julie Stavneak
Diane Battiato
Julia Plucker

Director Present:  Marty Barnhart, Executive Director

Staff Present:  Jennifer Taylor, City Law Department
Debbie Hightower, Recording Secretary
PUBLIC MEETING:

Rob Woodling, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00am.
Woodling 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 by the door.

Roll call was taken with eleven (11) board members present (Julie Stavneak, Diane Battiato and Julia Plucker were absent).

Woodling informed the public that a notice of the meeting was published in the Daily Record on January 4, 2017.

Board Meeting Minutes

Motion by Cathy Lang to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2016 meeting as submitted. Randy Lenhoff seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Financial Report

Barnhart stated that the Finance Committee reviewed the November 2016 financial report including the budget for the year. He added that the balance as of December 31, 2016 is approximately $783,000.00. Barnhart added that the assessed value of property will be used and carried forward in the December 2016 report.

Lang requested an estimate of revenues for 2017.

Motion by Randy Lenhoff to approve the November 2016 financial report as submitted. John Heine seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

NEW BUSINESS:

Acquisition: 5927 North 24 Street

Barnhart presented information regarding the property at 5927 North 24 Street for acquisition approval. He explained that First National Bank offered the property “as is” to the Land Bank for $35,000.00. Barnhart stated $30,000.00 was offered and is contingent upon board approval. The comps in the area are between $41-66,000.00. He further stated that the Acquisition/Disposition Committee agrees that the home would be an excellent owner-occupied home.
In response to Lang, Heine stated that the Acquisition/Disposition Committee is recommending approval.

In response to McLeay, Barnhart stated he is developing a standard scorecard/checklist for the acquisition of properties. Heine agreed that a criteria checklist needs to be developed for acquisitions.

Woodling suggested that Omaha 100 be contacted to assist with connecting single-family home buyers to acquire properties.

After further discussion by the board, a motion was made by Cathy Lang to approve the acquisition of 5927 North 24 Street. Ken Johnson seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

**Acquisition: 3428 Kansas Avenue**

Barnhart presented information regarding the property at 3428 Kansas Avenue for acquisition approval. He stated the property is owned by First National Bank and is a single-family home (916 square feet, 3 bedroom, 1 bath) offered at $42,000.00. Barnhart stated that First National Bank agreed to an offer of $35,000.00 upon board approval.

In response to Johnson, Barnhart stated the property has been winterized but the property is purchased “as is” therefore the Land Bank is responsible for any plumbing issues.

Barnhart explained that the purchase price was based on comps. Heine added that the property needs to be priced to make it profitable to rehab or occupy. Riedmann further added that the goal is not to sell at top of the market but to make a fair return.

In response to Lenhoff, Barnhart recommends that the property be owner-occupied. Barnhart added that all offers will be due by the first Monday of the month with a purchase agreement and earnest deposit. It would be possible that the base asking price may go up pursuant to an auction on the following Friday that may take place if there are multiple offers.

Barnhart introduced Mary Wells who is the new Acquisition Director. Wells is a licensed real estate agent and understands comparable values and will be responsible for showing the properties.

In response to Woodling, regarding the Acquisition/Disposition Policy, and a preference for owner-occupied, Jennifer Taylor, Law Department, stated that the policy could be changed. Lang stated she has concerns with locking that in but is open to discussion. Johnson added that the goal is to make properties available for owner-occupied.
After further discussion by the board, a motion was made by Cathy Lang to approve the acquisition of 3428 Kansas Avenue. Estela Torres seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

**Property Sale: 3305 Saratoga Street**

Barnhart presented information regarding the sale of the property at 3305 Saratoga Street which was donated to the Land Bank in 2016. The total cost for the property is $850.00 consisting of $350.00 for closing costs and $500.00 for the clean out. He stated that Jarrod Evans, U Name It Construction, has made a full price offer of $6,000.00 with the intention to move a veteran into the property with a lease to own option. The property will also be improved by adding a garage to the west. The assessed value is currently $11,000.00 and could be assessed at approximately $55,000.00.

Woodling suggested there be a specific set of plans for the project to assure the home and garage fit the neighborhood. Barnhart agreed that approval of the sale could be contingent upon approval of the plans being submitted at the February 2017 meeting. Riedmann suggested that the approval be subject to approval of the Acquisition/Disposition Committee. Lang pointed out that plans should be required before review by the Acquisition/Disposition Committee.

After further discussion by the board, a motion was made by Cathy Lang to approve the property sale of 3305 Saratoga Street subject to plans submitted and reviewed by the board at the February 2017 meeting. John Heine seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

**Adopt a Lot: 5901 South 15 Street**

Barnhart explained that the property at 5901 South 15 Street was donated to the Land Bank. The property is 41 feet wide therefore not large enough to build on and has been available for a number of years due to tax delinquency. The property was made available as a garden lot property for $25.00 and was paid by Teela Mickels. The garden lot certificate requires that the property be maintained and turned into a garden for community betterment. Barnhart stated that Mickels’ family had owned the property years ago and would like to turn it into a garden with a historical marker.

In response to Lang, Barnhart answered that the property was not offered to the adjacent owners. The property was offered as a garden lot on the website. The adjacent property owners were not notified. Barnhart further stated that the garden lot certificate will be null and void if the property is not taken care of properly and will be inspected on a quarterly basis.

Lang suggested that a sign be added to prospective properties that says, “This property has the potential to become a garden lot…” as part of the community engagement issue. Barnhart
explained that Mickels will not own the property. The Land Bank will continue to own the property and maintain the liability insurance with the potential to own adjacent lots or sell the property to adjacent property owners.

In response to Johnson, Barnhart stated that Mickels will have a yearlong certificate/lease regarding the property and could be terminated earlier if a garden is not maintained.

In response to Torres, Barnhart stated that he did not talk to the adjacent property owners because Mickels came in for the Adopt-a-Lot.

Lang suggested that when a piece of property has been acquired that a sign be put up to increase the opportunities for all conversations to come forward. Lenhoff pointed out that the property was listed on the website.

McLeay questioned if the property is a Super Fund site and if so, has the soil been remediated from lead. Barnhart answered that he has not checked Omaha Lead. McLeay stated that he was concerned that food grown on a lead infested location could absorb some of the lead. Thele stated that, if needed, the City would clean the site for free or raised beds could be used but the tenant would need to know.

Johnson stated that it is disrespectful to not notify the single-family adjacent/abutting owners as to what is going on in their neighborhood. Barnhart answered that he will communicate through the Neighborhood Associations and send a letter and speak to the adjacent owners to make sure they are aware that the property is available.

After further discussion by the board, a motion was made by Randy Lenhoff to approve an Adopt a Lot lease for 5901 South 15 Street subject to review if the property is on the Super Fund list. Tom McLeay seconded the motion.

Ben Gray, City Council, stated that Teela Mickels runs an organization called Compassion in Action and coordinates a program that offers an opportunity for young individuals to maintain garden properties appropriately and are usually monitored by professional organizations such as “No More Empty Pots” and “City Sprouts”.

AYES: Johnson, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres
NAYS: Lang, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 5-2

Resolution to Cancel Taxes: OMLB Property Inventory

Barnhart requested approval of a resolution to cancel taxes on: 1) 4122 Hamilton, 2) 3305 Saratoga Street and 3) 5901 South 15 Street.

Lang requested that the tax amounts be made available to the board next time.
Motion by Randy Lenhoff to cancel the taxes for 4122 Hamilton, 3305 Saratoga Street and 5901 South 15 Street. Estela Torres seconded the motion.

AYES: Johnson, Lang, Lenhoff, McLeay, Heine, Torres, Woodling
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Legislative Report

Barnhart stated that the Vacant Property Registration Act was introduced by Senator-elect Tom Briese from Grand Island but there is a Vacant Structure Ordinance already in place for the City of Omaha.

Taylor, Law Department, stated that the Vacant Property Registration Act has not been introduced as of today. She stated that the City of Omaha passed a Vacant and Abandoned Ordinance at the end of 2015.

Lang suggested bringing forward all legislation that will impact the Land Bank. She questioned how the board can effectively participate in the legislative process? Gray answered that if there is a legislative bill that will be less restrictive than what is in place then there will be an active effort on the part of City Council and the staff to address any changes. The City Council gets daily updates and have an obligation and are able to respond in a timely manner.

Woodling suggested that the Executive Committee take a look at the process.

Lenhoff suggested asking the City lobbyist to notify the Land Bank of any legislation. Taylor stated that the City lobbyist monitors all bills daily and keeps her advised.

Reports

Executive Director: Organizational Excellence

Barnhart re-introduced Mary Wells, new staff member, who is responsible for acquisitions and is currently doing research of all properties that are unfit and unsafe and entering them into the database. Those properties will be checked to see how close they are to demolition. A letter will be sent to every property owner of record for possible purchase. He stated they will start in North Omaha between 30th and 36th and Hamilton and Lake in Prospect Village and the Deer Park neighborhood in South Omaha.

In response to Lang, Barnhart stated that the neighborhood associations have been notified in Prospect Village and Deer Park along with working with the City. Thele, Planning Director, verified that Prospect Village and Deer Park are two of the areas where the City is doing an extensive amount of rehabilitation and other work. The City is also acquiring property by working with Holy Name Housing in Prospect Village and Habitat in the Deer Park area. Holy Name has done a lot of rent to own units in Prospect Village and from that the City hopes to do some owner-occupied homes by working with the non-profits.
Barnhart further reported that Laura Heilman has been hired as the Communications Director to ensure there is good communication to neighbors, community groups and the community. Heilman will be overseeing the newsletter and working with OBI Creative. She will also be assisting in the office to continue to move forward both community wise and property wise.

Barnhart welcomed John Lindsay and Ben Gray as new non-voting members to the board.

McLeay requested a draft of a business plan with regard to demolition at the February 2017 meeting.

Barnhart stated that Estela Torres will be added to the bank account as Treasurer.

Heine questioned if each property to be purchased or acquired would need to be discussed at future meetings. Lang stated that the Acquisition/Disposition committee would need to score each property correctly before the board would approve a group of properties.

**General Public Comments**

There were no general public comments.

It was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at 10:20am.

Debbie Hightower, Planning Department
Recording Secretary