# GREATER SYRACUSE
# PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Minutes
Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, July 18, 2013, 10:30 A.M.
333 W. Washington Street, Suite 130
Syracuse, NY 13202

**Board Members Present:** Vito Sciscioli, Dwight L. Hicks, Dan Barnaba

**Board Members Absent:** Mary Beth Primo, Jim Corbett

**Others Present:** Katelyn Wright, Ben Walsh, Nora Spillane, Andrew Maxwell

## I. Call to order

Vito Sciscioli called the meeting to order at 10:37 A.M.

## II. Roll Call

Mr. Sciscioli noted that he, Dwight Hicks, and Dan Barnaba were present and that Mary Beth Primo and Jim Corbett were unable to attend and excused.

## III. Proof of Notice

Mr. Sciscioli noted that proper notice of the meeting had been posted.

## IV. Old Business

**<u>Resolution to approve a funding agreement with the City of Syracuse</u>**

Dan Barnaba inquired as to what was expected of the land bank in exchange for the funds. Vito Sciscioli summarized that the land bank was to accept as many foreclosed properties as the board considers being fiscally prudent and which have no flaws in title, environmental contamination, or certain other characteristics. Mr. Sciscioli also summarized the recapture clause it the contract, stressing that it is important to gauge spending in accordance with collection projections. Mr. Barnaba asked why the purchase price was $151 for each property and Ms. Wright explained that it covers the City's cost of ordering title work to complete the foreclosure. Mr. Barnaba asked whether if the City's cost is reduced due to the volume of transactions being processed that savings would be passed on to the land bank. Ms. Wright indicated that she would inquire with the Finance Department.

Dan Barnaba motioned that the board pass a resolution authorizing the GSPDC to enter into a certain funding agreement with the City of Syracuse. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE GSPDC TO ENTER INTO A CERTAIN FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SYRACUSE.**

**<u>Resolution to accept certain properties from the City of Syracuse</u>**

Ms. Wright explained that in her estimates of the cost to acquire and maintain these properties she did not account for unknown cost of repairs, evictions, or revenues from rental income. Characteristics of some specific properties were discussed. Ms. Wright explained that properties not recommended for acquisition were known brownfields and large, unimproved properties with no frontage. Mr. Barnaba asked whether it was best to foreclose on these to enforce the threat of foreclosure. Ms. Wright indicated that the City is not inclined to foreclose on contaminated sites and enter the chain of title, but that other methods of acquisition were currently being researched by the City Law Department and that an Open Space component of the City's Comprehensive Plan, currently being developed, would provide further guidance on whether it was best to hold these landlocked parcels in the City's inventory or in the land bank's and that once a conclusion was reached these properties would likely be revisited.

Dan Barnaba motioned that the board pass a resolution authorizing the acquisition of certain parcels of real property. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY.**

## V. New Business

**Resolution authorizing the Chair of the Board to engage the services of an accounting firm**

Dan Barnaba described that the Hiring Committee had solicited bids for accounting and bookkeeping services and asked Ms. Wright to interview the top two candidates. Based on Ms. Wright's findings the Committee recommends the Board engage the services of Bowers & Company.

Dan Barnaba motioned that the board pass a resolution authorizing the hiring of an accounting firm. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE HIRING OF AN ACCOUNTING FIRM.**

## VI. Discussion

**Office Location**

Katelyn Wright briefly described the different strengths and weaknesses of potential office locations. She made an effort to identify spaces in which the GSPDC could initially locate while gauging the need for additional staff and square footage. Shared space was offered in City Hall Commons, Home HeadQuarters, and Washington Station. Washington Station proved to be the most affordable and offered a degree of independence compared to remaining located within a government-owned building.

Nora Spillane explained that the proposal was approved by OCDC that morning and that there would be no rent charged, but that the GSPDC would be charged for internet access, copying and printing. Ben Walsh offered that his staff's administrative assistant would be available to answer the GSPDC's main line and help with administrative support and that he would further research the steps necessary to enter into an agreement with the land bank in order to provide these services in-kind.

Dan Barnaba motioned that the board authorize the Chairman of the Board to enter into a license agreement with the Onondaga Civic Development Corporation for the use of office space at 333 W. Washington Street. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD TO ENTER INTO A LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE ONONDAGA CIVIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR THE USE OF OFFICE SPACE AT 333 W. WASHINGTON STREET.**

**DBA**

Ms. Wright indicated that the full name Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation was proving unwieldy and asked whether the board would be amendable to filing a DBA in order to use a shortened name in promotional materials. The board agreed that Greater Syracuse Land Bank would be simpler, but all agreed that this should be discussed again on August 13 with the full board in attendance.

**Personnel Policy**

Ms. Wright indicated that a resolution to enter into an employment agreement for the position of ED/CFO was proposed for the agenda for today, but that she wished to wait until a Personnel Policy was developed and adopted, which would address fringe benefits, prior to signing such an agreement. In order to facilitate an August 15 start date, this policy should be on the August 13 agenda. Mr. Sciscioli explained that he and Mr. Sidd could work to draft a Personnel Policy based on other organizations. Mr. Barnaba described a few differences between his company's personnel policy and the benefits requested by Ms. Wright. Mr. Sciscioli stressed that the cost estimates provided by Ms. Wright supported his assertion that a benefit of hiring staff privately rather than contracting with the City for professional services was a substantial savings in fringe benefits. He requested that Ms. Wright obtain and forward to him formal quotes on health, vision, and dental insurance. Mr. Barnaba expressed that the board would return Ms. Wright's letter with a counter-offer in a timely manner, allowing for agreement upon a benefits package by the time the Board considers a personnel policy on August 13.

**VII. Adjournment**

Dwight Hicks motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dan Barnaba seconded this motion. All board members present unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 11:57 A.M.