Minutes
Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
8:00 AM Tuesday, June 15, 2021
Via Zoom

Board Members Present: Patrick Hogan, Mike LaFlair, Nancy Quigg, Jonathan Link Logan, El Java Abdul Qadir
Others Present: Katelyn Wright, John Sidd, Luke Avery-Dougherty, Terri Luckett, Shavel Edwards, Jeanne Mitchell, Kevin Cook, Rich Puchalski, Michelle Sczpanski, Craig Swiecki

I. Call to order

Mr. Hogan called the meeting to order at 8:01 A.M.

II. Roll Call

Mr. Hogan noted that he, Nancy Quigg, and Mike LaFlair were present and that they have a quorum.

III. Proof of Notice

Mr. Hogan confirmed that public notice of the meeting had been adequately posted.

IV. Minutes

Mike LaFlair moved to approve the minutes from the May 18 meeting. Nancy Quigg seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 18 MEETING.**

V. Executive Summary & Financial Statements

Ms. Wright noted that the statements through the end of April are attached.

Jonathan Link Logan and El Java Abdul Qadir joined the meeting.

VI. Old Business

A. Application to purchase 1641, 1631, and 1623 S Salina St, and 104 E Kennedy and 112, 116-118, 122-124 and 128 Delaware Street

Jonathan Link Logan informed the other board that he had attended a public meeting held by Mr. deVito the previous Saturday. He explained that there seems to be consensus that affordable housing is needed, but that the sticking point seems to be the size of the proposed buildings. He said that Mr. deVito stated several times that he could not feasibly build a smaller building. Attendees also expressed concern about how the property will be managed and that issue was not really addressed by the developer in his response. He perceived that those supporting the project seemed to take the position that any investment was better than none. He indicated that there didn't seem to be a way to reconcile the community's concerns if Mr. deVito cannot reduce the proposed density or address their concerns about management. Mr. LaFlair pointed out that there is a lot of investment happening on the Southside and that they should push back against that perception that there is not any investment happening in the neighborhood.

Pat Hogan noted that Mr. deVito is scheduled to present to the Westside TNT tonight and suggested that since they asked him to do community outreach they should probably table it again to give him time to attend this meeting, but that he agreed there were unresolved concerns about the management plan. Ms. Wright noted that these properties are still actively listed so continuing to table the item does not mean that they are missing out on other potential offers. Mr. LaFlair said that he is okay with tabling the item for the reasons Mr. Hogan stated, but that he does not want that to be interpreted as support for the proposal.

Nancy Quigg moved to table this item until next month with the intention that they will make a decision in July. El Java Abdul Qadir seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO TABLE THIS ITEM UNTIL NEXT MONTH.**

VII. New Business

A. Authorize sale of multiple properties

Ms. Wright described the offers received. Jonathan Link Logan asked Ms. Wright to refer the buyer of the two Richmond properties to landlord training courses since it is not clear that he has rental management experience. She confirmed that they would do so. Mike LaFlair said that he would have to recuse himself from the sale of a property to Housing Visions. Ms. Wright indicated that they could split that out into a separate resolution.

Jonathan Link Logan moved to authorize the Land Bank to sell multiple properties as amended. Nancy Quigg seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO SELL MULTIPLE PROPERTIES.**

B. Authorize the Land Bank to sell 143-45 McLennan to Housing Visions

El Java Abdul Qadir moved to authorize the Land Bank to sell 143-45 McLennan to Housing Visions for $1,000. Jonathan Link Logan seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS, EXCEPT MIKE LAFLAIR, VOTED TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO SELL 143-45 MCLENNAN TO HOUSING VISIONS. MIKE LAFLAIR ABSTAINED.**

C. Accept donation of 61 Hamilton in the Village of Jordan

Ms. Wright explained that County Legislator Ken Bush and the Town Codes Office have been encouraging the Land Bank to accept this property (a single-family home in need of demolition) via donation since 2019, but they have not had any demolition funds available for properties outside of the City. The County Legislature voted in early May to release $200,000 to the Land Bank, including $100,000 for demolitions. With this funding coming to them soon, the Land Bank is now in a position where they can consider accepting this donation. She noted that they have received a 2017 abstract and that John is reviewing this and ordering an update to ensure that there are no liens or judgements against the property before they take title. Mr. Hogan noted that Ken Bush has been a steadfast supporter of the Land Bank on the County Legislature.

Mike LaFlair moved to accept the donation of 61 Hamilton in the Village of Jordan. Jonathan Link Logan seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF 61 HAMILTON ST IN THE VILLAGE OF JORDAN.**

D. Sell 431 and 441 MLK West to Jubilee Homes

Ms. Wright explained that they are currently resubdividing these lots to create two building lots and that the lots are located across the street from the Creekwalk extension so they will have a nice view. She explained that Jubilee will build a single family home on each site to be sold to an owner occupant.

El Java Abdul Qadir moved to authorize the Land Bank to sell these parcels to Jubilee Homes. Jonathan Link Logan seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO SELL 431 AND 441 MLK WEST TO JUBILEE HOMES.**

E. Owner of 916 Cannon seeking relief from requirement to sell to an owner-occupant

Ms. Wright explained that this developer has made a good faith effort to sell this renovated home to an owner-occupant, but that they only offer he's received is from a couple in CO who state that they are relocating to Syracuse and wish to operate this property as a rental. She went on to explain that this group does good quality renovations and they are making every effort to comply with the requirements on other properties they have purchased from the Land Bank.

Ms. Wright explained that it is rare that developers ask for relief from this requirement. In one instance, the board allowed it in exchange for a $5,000 fee after the developer was able to demonstrate that they had made a good faith effort to sell to an owner occupant. The market, however, was much weaker then. In that case, the developer kept the property and acted as a landlord. In another instance, the board denied the request since the developer did not appear to have made a good faith effort to sell to an owner-occupant. In this case, the developer appears to have made a good faith effort to sell to an owner-occupant, but rather than retaining title and operating it as a rental himself, he'd prefer to sell to another landlord. She explained that the home has been on the market since December at a reasonable price and that they'd done good quality renovations so she was surprised that they haven't found an owner-occupant buyer.

The board discussed the pros and cons of this request and their concern about selling to an unknown out of town landlord. After some discussion, they agreed to grant the request if he can supply documentation proving that these buyers are relocating to Syracuse and will be local landlords.

Jonathan Link Logan moved to grant this buyer's request contingent upon him supplying documentation to Katelyn Wright showing that these buyers are, in fact, relocating to Syracuse. Mike LaFlair seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO GRANT THIS BUYER'S REQUEST CONTINGENT UPON HIM SUPPLYING DOCUMENTATION SHOWING THAT THESE BUYERS ARE, IN FACT, RELOCATING TO SYRACUSE.**

F. Award contract for 10 demolitions

Ms. Wright reminded the board that last month they voted to award a bundle of ten demolitions to the lowest bidder. After their vote she sent a contract to Scanlon Trucking, who was the low bidder, and he stated that he couldn't honor his bid because he'd forgotten to include one of the ten homes in his calculations when coming up with the total price. With his price increased, that makes Crisafulli the lowest bidder. She asked the board for their authorization to contract with Crisafulli for these 10 demolitions.

She went on to explain that these will be completed using City CARES funds and that these 10 will all be replaced with affordable housing (RNI). Nancy Quigg moved to authorize the Land Bank to contract with Crisafulli for these ten demolitions. Jonathan Link Logan seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS**

PRESENT VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO CONTRACT WITH CRISAFULLI FOR 10 DEMOLITIONS.

G. Renewal of labor law insurance policies

Ms. Wright apologized and explained that she hadn't received quotes on 6/14 as expected, but went on to explain that their policy renews on 7/1 and she'll likely have to go ahead and renew with the lowest bidder and then get the board's approval retroactively in July so as not to let their GL insurance lapse. John Sidd concurred that it is important not to let this coverage lapse. The board agreed this is the best course of action and stated that no action is needed at this time.

H. Authorize the Land Bank to enter into a funding contract with the City of Syracuse

Ms. Wright explained that this contract only pertains to the $500,000 coming from the City's general fund to assist the Land Bank with property maintenance expenses and that ARPA (federal) funds used for other purposes would be governed by a separate contract that has yet to be drafted. She noted that the previous Friday the mayor announced his intention to direct $5 million in ARPA funds to the Land Bank for demolition and property stabilization. She directed the board's attention to a draft contract attached – last year's with track changes showing what is different. She noted that this would eliminate demolition from last year's contract and direct all the funds toward property maintenance instead, but that she hopes there will not be any objection to this on the Council since those needs (demolition and stabilization) will be addressed with ARPA funds. She went on to explain that funding for maintenance is so important because that's what drives the Land Bank's annual operating deficit and these funds will keep the Land Bank solvent. Pat Hogan stated that he doesn't expect the Council to object to this.

Mr. Sidd recommended that Patrick Hogan abstain since he'll be voting on the other side of this contract as a Common Councilor. He agreed that he would do so.

Mr. Abdul Qadir moved to authorize the Land Bank to enter into this proposed funding contract. Jonathan Link Logan seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS VOTED TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO ENTER INTO THIS FUNDING CONTRACT WITH THE CITY OF SYRACUSE, EXCEPT FOR PAT HOGAN WHO ABSTAINED.**

I. Authorize the Land Bank to enter into a funding contract with Onondaga County

Ms. Wright explained that she is currently negotiating a few changes to this contract with the County Law Department. This states that the Land Bank will put projects out ot bid and then submit a PO to the County for their approval before proceeding with any work, and then will be reimbursed upon the completion of each project. She thinks that in 2017 this language was added by mistake since its common boilerplate in other County contracts, but noted that in practice the funds have always been released upon contract execution. She also noted that the proposed term ends 12/31/21, which would only give the Land Bank six months to spend the funds. This will be difficult under any circumstances, but especially if they have to get POs approved before proceeding with any work.

So she is trying to get the term extended to at least 12 months and get the section about a PO being required prior to proceeding with any work deleted and asking them to add a sentence that's been found in their previous contracts stating that funds will be released upon execution of the contract. Mr. Hogan asked if they should wait and vote once those changes are made. Ms. Wright suggested that they could authorize her to sign a contract that includes those changes so they might get it signed before July 20.

After some discussion board members agreed that this approach made sense. Nancy Quigg moved to authorize the Land Bank to enter into a contract with Onondaga County with the amendments discussed. El Java Abdul Qadir seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS VOTED TO AUTHORIZE THE LAND BANK TO ENTER INTO A FUNDING CONTRACT WITH ONONDAGA COUNTY AS AMENDED.**

VIII. Discussion

A. Policy re: community engagement on "large projects"

Ms. Wright explained that they have typically asked developers pursuing large, multi-million dollar projects to engage the community before coming to the board. In the case of Mr. DeVito's proposal, he declined to do so and she wonders if they ought to make it an explicit requirement going forward. She also thought that for private developers not experienced in this area, perhaps the Land Bank should provide them with more guidance re: what constitutes sufficient community engagement. Several board members suggested that it would be good for the developers to document for the board how they incorporated community feedback into their plans. Jonathan Link Logan suggested that the CAB should assist staff in developing a policy on this. All agreed that they would discuss further once some ideas were put down on paper and that this outreach needs to be done prior to a large project being placed on a board agenda.

B. State/Federal Funding Opportunities

i. Legacy City Access Program

Ms. Wright explained how this funding was added to the state budget and how NYS HCR designed a program that would help land banks, minority developers, and create affordable move-in ready homes for first-time homebuyers. She outlined how the program is designed to work and the properties that the Land Bank is currently advertising. Once they identify buyers for these clusters they'll come back to the board for contingent approval of these sales, then jointly apply to HCR for the grant funds to support these renovations.

El Java Abdul Qadir expressed concern that many minority contractors may not be able to show the equity on hand required by this program. There was some discussion about how potential buyers might partner or apply for grants to meet those requirements. Ms. Wright promised that she'd share advertising materials with the board as soon as possible.

C. Return to in-person meetings

Ms. Wright indicated that the CNY Philanthropy Center does not plan to reopen to the public until September and she is not sure whether the Governor will continue to extend the executive order allowing us to hold public meetings via zoom. She stated that she would keep an eye on this and inform the board if they were required to resume meeting in person. John Sidd noted that even if the public meeting is held in-person, individual board members can still participate remotely if necessary.

IX. Adjournment

Jonathan Link Logan moved to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Quigg seconded this motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN AT 9:28 A.M.**