

Suffolk County Landbank Corporation Board Meeting
Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning
H. Lee Dennison Building, 11th Floor
Hauppauge, NY 11788

In-Person and via ZOOM Video Conference

August 11, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.

Verbatim Meeting Minutes

PRESENT:

Board of Directors:

Peter Scully, Deputy County Executive
Natalie Wright, Commissioner, SC Dept. of Economic Development and Planning
Hon. Robert Calarco, Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislature
Hon. Thomas Cilmi, Suffolk County Legislator, District #10
Hon. Rich Schaffer, Supervisor, Town of Babylon
Cara Longworth, Empire State Development
Sidney Joyner, Director of Real Estate, SC Dept. of Economic Development and Planning

Staff Present:

Sarah Lansdale, President, SC Landbank Corp.
Robert Braun, Counsel, Suffolk County Dept. of Law
Dorian Dale, Director of Sustainability, SC Dept. of Economic Development and Planning
Janet Gremli, Dept. of Health Services
Matthew Kapell, Project Manager, Suffolk County Landbank
Mikael Kerr, Project Coordinator, SC Landbank Corp.
Colleen Badolato, Secretarial Assistant, SC Dept. of Economic Development and Planning
Brian Petersen, PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP

Natalie Wright: This is August 11, 2021 scheduled meeting for the Landbank Board of Directors and for the record we do have a quorum present. The Notice of the Meeting followed the Open Meetings Law; and due to the ongoing pandemic, this will be a hybrid meeting held in person at the H. Lee Dennison Planning Library Conference Room, Babylon Town Hall, and electronically via ZOOM. All votes on Board actions and resolutions will be done via roll call, and we ask that Board members clearly state their name and their vote when their name is called. Matt, will you conduct a roll call please.

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Here

Natalie Wright: Here

PO Rob Calarco: Present

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Here

Sidney Joyner: Present

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Here

Cara Longworth: Here

Matt Kapell: Seven

Natalie Wright: Great, and we'll move into the **Public Portion**. The Public Portion will now be open to individuals to present at the two in-person meeting locations and via Zoom to individuals who submitted a request to the landbank@suffolkcountyny.gov . Do we have any public comments for this meeting?

Mikael Kerr: I believe so. An individual from New Hour was scheduled to speak. Liz, is that you?

Liz Justesen: I am here with New Hour. I am waiting for Serena. Serena has the proposal. I don't know why she, hold on.

Mikael Kerr: Okay.

Liz Justesen: I apologize. She booked that she was New Business. She should get right on.

Natalie Wright: Maybe what we can do is move into **New Business** and then when Serena does come on, we'll go back to the public comment portion. So moving into New Business, we have one item. It is to **Review and Approve the Minutes from June 23, 2021**. They're attached as Exhibit "A". Is there a motion to approve?

Peter Scully: Motion to approve.

Natalie Wright: Scully with a motion to approve. Is there a second?

Sidney Joyner: I'll second.

Natalie Wright: Joyner with a second. All in favor? Oh right, we're doing roll call. Thank you. Matt, will you do a roll call please.

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Yes

Natalie Wright: Yes

PO Rob Calarco: I'll abstain. I wasn't at the last meeting.

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yes

Sidney Joyner: Yes

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Yes

Cara Longworth: I will abstain as well, as I was absent.

Matt Kapell: Five

Natalie Wright: Great, the motion passes. Moving into, it looks like Serena is still not here, so moving into the Staff Report.

Mikael Kerr: Sure, thank you Natalie, and good morning Members of the Board. So we have a few updates for the brownfields and the zombie program. So, so far to date, we've had now two properties start paying their back taxes: 97 Old Quogue Road has paid in full, and then 860-866 2nd St, Ronkonkoma. This one is in the new batch of properties we received. So, we sent out all the letters. I got all the green cards back. They've all been notified. Two of them have gotten in touch with me. This individual, he already paid \$25,000 and provided us a receipt. It's of \$251,000, so we're still moving forward with our process doing the Phase I, doing the Phase II and hopefully, he can continue to pay throughout that time and make a real dent in it. We have

Leg. Thomas Cilmi: Mikael, what's that address again? I'm sorry.

Mikael Kerr: Sure, it's 860-866 2nd St., in Ronkonkoma.

Leg. Thomas Cilmi: Okay, thanks.

Janet Greml: Mikael, if I could add, that's one of the few sites that Mikael and I actually went to and spoke to people there. So, it's interesting that he paid some money after our visit.

Mikael Kerr: Yeah.

Janet Greml: So, it may have helped.

Cara Longworth: How many years is that \$251,000 in arrears and built up?

Mikael Kerr: It's about four years. It's very highly assessed. Okay, and we have ten Phase I's pending. As Janet mentioned, we have been doing our visits, our site visits to all the properties. We still have a few more and once we complete that and try to speak with everyone, we'll move forward with doing our Phase I's on all the new properties. Phase II's – we have one that we completed recently, and we have one pending. So, this is one of the recent Phase II's that we just completed. Janet, do you want to give us a little overview?

Janet Greml: Sure. This is 169 Sycamore Ave. in Islandia. This was Dennis Hickey, Hickey Carting. If that's a familiar name, think for some folks. I went there and they were, I actually worked two years to get access to the property without getting a warrant. It was a little tricky, but it happened with the attorney and Mr. Hickey agreeing to do that. So, when I went there, they were also more than compliant as far as letting me go through buildings and look at everything. The workers there at Cider Environmental, I think we spent eight hours the first day and six hours the second day. There was a lot of stuff to look at, a lot of violations and a lot of issues, but they were also very helpful because there was so much stuff to move out of the way to get to anything, piles of tires, and tanks and heavy equipment. So it was very helpful. They were more than accommodating to us. So, it's done and we'll wait for that Phase II to see what the real damage is at the site, other than housekeeping.

Mikael Kerr: So, hopefully, we'll get that soon. So, this is just a quick update, everyone's familiar with the slide. We've only closed so far on 156 Grant Ave. this year. We have three pending sales and those, there's no real updates since our last Board meeting on those. Oh, Janet do you want to

Janet Greml: I want to comment again. 156 Grant Ave., right after they closed the property owners engaged a consultant and contractor to begin work ASAP. So, I was there at that site and they have done their initial – there's three parts to their initial work as far as soil contamination and soil vapor and they've done the first portion of that to date.

Mikael Kerr: And, so, this is just a list of our new brownfields properties. As I mentioned before, the first one here, 1215 Little East Neck Road, they have indicated to us that they're making the payment. I haven't been able to verify that yet, but they said they're going to pay it, the \$83,000 that they owe, in full in the coming days, so we're keeping an eye on that one and hopefully, we can get that.

Sarah Lansdale: That's in Wyandanch. Just to note for the Supervisor.

Mikael Kerr: Yeah.

Janet Greml: Also, Mikael, that's the second site that we visited. We only visited two sites. That was one and the other was the, so both of them are paying now, so letters do one thing, but I think our presence makes a difference.

Dorian Dale: It must be the crowbar you carry with you.

Laughter

Janet Greml: The power of the pen.

Sarah Lansdale: Very intimidating.

Mikael Kerr: Matt, do you want to give an update on the Zombies?

Matt Kapell: Sure. I'll start with the first two. These are transfers to United Way. We are planning on closing next week on those two. Then, I'll go down to 7 and 8 which are both Habitat transfers and we, Mike do you have an estimate on when we're closing?

Mikael Kerr: Probably within the next couple of weeks.

Matt Kapell: Okay. And then we have three projects currently, that we're just getting started, which are 31 Oakland Ave. in Bay Shore, 1442 North Clinton St. in Bay Shore and 248 Crooked Hill Rd. in Brentwood. And those are all just beginning to get started. So, we're back to work on several houses, and that's basically it.

Mikael Kerr: That's pretty much it for the Staff Update, unless anyone has any questions from the Board?

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: I have a question. Where are we at with that one property that we did a wall raising on in I think it was Central Islip was it?

Mikael Kerr: Caleb's Path I believe.

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yeah.

Matt Kapell: I don't have an update, but I will follow up with Habitat.

Natalie Wright: Any other questions?

Mikael Kerr: Natalie, I do see that Serena from New Hour has joined.

Natalie Wright: Great. So, we will go back to the Public Comment portion and it looks like we have Serena, I can't see the last name, Liguori maybe, with New Hour, I believe?

Serena Liguori: Yes, Good Afternoon. How are you?

Natalie Wright: Good Afternoon. And just as a reminder, yes, you have three minutes.

Serena Liguori: Yes, thank you all for talking with us. I'm the Executive Director of New Hour for Women and Children Long Island. We're a 7-year old non-profit, and I'm joined by Liz Justesen, our Vice President of the Board, an attorney, as well as Rochelle Kelly-Apson, our Board member. We are located in Brentwood on the premises of Sisters of St. Joseph, which is overseen by Sister Tisa Fitzgerald. She is a nun who really pioneered housing for women coming home from prison and jail in Queens. We would very much like to be considered for a foreclosed parcel of property at 1375 Ohio Avenue in Bay Shore, which is just a hop, skip and a jump from our space. While we have very low recidivism rates with the women that we provide services to in the jails and across Long Island, our rates of recidivism, the rate at which women and children return to prison and jail is 2%, opposed to the County and the Island-wide rate of 65%. However, one of the challenges is safe housing, and we were given a donation foundation grant of \$100,000 from A New Way of Life in California. We are part of a housing pilot model project and we are looking to develop a space in a home that would hold four women in year one, six women in year two, who are absolutely entrenched in the program that we have here with our social worker and a house manager who lives onsite. We're looking to support the community. Our mission, of course, is to empower justice impacted women, children and families, and our members are very much a part of the community and give back in many ways. We have a robust program in both the Suffolk and Nassau jails, and we have onsite here in Brentwood, our office space, where women come to meet us and receive reentry services. So, housing is the biggest challenge in terms of stability, and we would like to be

considered as a non-profit that may be able to at least apply for an RFA to develop that space into a safe transitional home for women.

Natalie Wright: Great. Thank you so much.

Serena Liguori: Thank you.

Natalie Wright: Moving into the Board Actions, the first item we have on the Agenda is: **Resolution 2021-16**, this is **AMENDING THE REAL PROPERTY DISPOSITION POLICY**, and Sarah, do you want to give some background on this?

Sarah Lansdale: Definitely. So, New Hour and another not-for-profit organization, Developmental Disabilities Institute, have both reached out to us requesting properties be transferred from the County to the Landbank to their organizations for various uses. New Hour has explained their request. DDI would like to use properties through the Landbank for group homes. When we were looking at our Disposition Policy, one of the things that we looked at and flagged was the restriction for non-profits to utilize properties, typically non-profit, tax-exempt status and are able to, when they are acquiring properties, those properties are free of property taxes. Our Disposition Policy, when it was originally adopted, had language that contained that they would have to pay for a period of five years property taxes. So we, on Page 13 of 15 of the Disposition Policy, which is in your packet, we've added language that says that "unless the property will be utilized in direct support of the organization's mission ", so, thereby lifting that exemption and allowing them to petition the Town Assessor for property tax relief. And, I just also want to preface that this would be one of a couple of steps. This is the first request would be, if the Board is in favor of this, it would be amending the Disposition Policy. We would then also release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to develop a list of non-profit organizations who would be eligible. That list would be approved by this Board, as a possible next step, and then each time there is a property that would be identified, again, it would come before the Board and also, before the County Legislature for your consideration. So, there are checks and balances in this. We're anticipating no more than two or three properties a year in this class or this type of transaction, and it would be very measured and there would be vetting. We've spoken about making sure that there would be input from the local town, either by form of town resolution or a letter of support to make sure that there was concurrence at the town level on the proposed end use by a non-profit. Also, we've spoken about and would also coordinate with DSS to make sure that there wasn't an overabundance of uses of either group homes or other types of uses in neighborhoods.

Cara Longworth: Is this specific just to residential uses?

Sarah Lansdale: Yes.

Cara Longworth: Okay.

Peter Scully: I'll make a motion to approve.

Natalie Wright: Scully with a motion to approve.

Cara Longworth: I'll second.

Natalie Wright: And, Longworth second. Matt, will you do a roll call please.

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Yes

Natalie Wright: Yes

PO Rob Calarco: Yes

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yes

Sidney Joyner: Yes

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Yes

Cara Longworth: Yes

Natalie Wright: All right, the resolution passes. Moving on to **Resolution 2021-17**, this is **AUTHORIZING PAYMENT TO THE VILLAGE OF LINDENHURST**. Sarah, do you also want to give backup on this one?

Sarah Lansdale: Sure. I'll flip it over to Mike in a second, but at one of our prior Board meetings, we had come to the Board and requested a negotiation with the Village of Lindenhurst on a sale of a tax lien in the Village, where we hadn't taken into account the Village taxes as part of the sale. We reached out, as we were authorized by the Board, to the Village and made a proposal. The proposal was to split the proceeds proportionally, whatever the County and the Village taxes were. So, Mike do you want to provide the specific breakdown of that?

Mikael Kerr: Sure, so we sold the property for \$250,000. There were Village tax liens of \$33,684 and County Liens of \$288,857, so what we offered to the Village was a proportional share of \$26,108.91 and they agreed to that, so we were just coming back to the Board now to request to actually be able to cut the check to them.

Natalie Wright: Any questions? Is there a motion?

Cara Longworth: I'll make a motion.

Natalie Wright: Longworth with a motion. Is there a second?

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Cilmi seconds.

Natalie Wright: Cilmi with a second, and Matt, will you do a roll call please.

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Yes

Natalie Wright: Yes

PO Rob Calarco: Yes

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yes

Sidney Joyner: Yes

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Yes

Cara Longworth: Yes

Matt Kapell: Seven

Natalie Wright: Great. Resolution 2021-17 passes. Third resolution, **Resolution 2021-18, AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL SIXTY (60) DAYS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A RENT-TO-OWN PROGRAM**. I'll hand it over to you, Sarah.

Sarah Lansdale: Yes, so the Board has authorized us, previously, to enter into discussions with Long Island Housing Partnership on a pilot rent-to-own program for a family that has been displaced. We have been working with Long Island Housing Partnership for the past few months and we need an additional

60 days so that they can continue to confirm the eligibility of the family and their income and sources, as it's changing because of the pandemic, the shifting sands of the family's situation. So, we're just requesting another sixty days. Hopefully, that will be our final request. The family is on good ground to, they've moved into the house, they've been paying the rent to us, but we do not want to continue to be the landlord in this instance. So, we're just asking for one sixty (60) day extension.

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Motion by Cilmi.

Natalie Wright: Motion by Cilmi. Is there a second?

Sidney Joyner: Second.

Natalie Wright: Joyner with a Second, and Matt, will you do a roll call please.

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Yes

Natalie Wright: Yes

PO Rob Calarco: Yes

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yes

Sidney Joyner: Yes

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Yes

Cara Longworth: Yes

Matt Kapell: Seven

Natalie Wright: Great, so Resolution 2021-18 passes. No Old Business or Correspondence. Next Steps - the Next Landbank Board Meeting will be held on October 21, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. If there's no other questions or comments, is there a motion to adjourn?

Cara Longworth: Motion

Natalie Wright: Longworth with a motion, and is there a second.

Sidney Joyner: Second

Natalie Wright: Joyner with a second. Can you do a roll call please?

(Roll Call by Matt Kapell)

Peter Scully: Yes

Natalie Wright: Yes

PO Rob Calarco: Yes

Hon. Thomas Cilmi: Yes

Sidney Joyner: Yes

Hon. Rich Schaffer: Yes

Cara Longworth: Yes

Matt Kapell: Seven

Natalie Wright: Wonderful! With that, the meeting is adjourned. I hope everyone has a wonderful afternoon and an enjoyable summer.

Meetings adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

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