



BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
August 18th, 2022 – 1:00 PM
Via Teleconference Buffalo, New York 14203

Call to Order

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present: Brendan Mehaffy, Scott Bylewski, Daniel Castle,
William Reece, Catherine Amdur, Jeremy Toth,
Karen Utz, Cavette Chambers,

Board Members *Excused*: “OJ” McFoy, Delano Dowell

Board Members *Absent*: Deborah Skulski-Wakelam

BENLIC Counsel Present: John Sidd

BENLIC Staff: Ben Brown, Marjorie McAllister

HAND OUTS:

Agenda; Minutes of June 2022 Board Meeting; June & July 2022 Treasurer's Reports; Resolution #2022-13; Resolution #2022-14, Resolution #2022-15, Resolution #2022-16, Resolution #2022-17, Resolution #2022-18

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of June 2022 Minutes:

The minutes of the June 23rd, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting were presented and reviewed.

A motion to approve was made by William Reece, seconded by Daniel Castle, and carried as approved with Karen Utz abstaining.

3. Treasurer's Reports:

Program Manager, Marjorie McAllister, presented the June 2022 and July 2022 Treasurer's Reports. As of July 31st, 2022, the balance was \$3,328,035.71.

A motion to approve was made by Scott Bylewski, seconded by Catherine Amdur, and unanimously carried as approved.

4. **Resolution #2022-13** Approve Bid for 172 Garner Avenue, City of Buffalo— Complete Rehab Project

BENLIC acquired 172 Garner Avenue, Buffalo NY via its 2020 BENLIC-City of Buffalo Property Acquisition Agreement. The property was a good candidate for BENLIC rehabilitation as a single-family home in within a low-moderate income neighborhood in The City of Buffalo. The property has been cleaned out and stabilized. BENLIC is requesting that the board approve the bid by Sunset Custom Homes to complete a complete rehabilitation of 172 Garner Avenue.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Scott Bylewski, seconded by Karen Utz, and carried as approved. Jeremy Toth abstained.

Resolution #2022-14 Approve Bid for 109 Humason Avenue, City of Buffalo— Partial Rehab Project

BENLIC acquired 109 Humason Avenue, Buffalo NY via its 2020 BENLIC-City of Buffalo Property Acquisition Agreement. The property was a good candidate for BENLIC rehabilitation as a single-family home in within a low-moderate income neighborhood in The City of Buffalo, providing an opportunity for a first-time homebuyer. The property has been cleaned out and stabilized. Funds for rehabilitation will be provided by Enterprise Community Partners.

A previous contractor was hired for this property, unfortunately, their contract has been cancelled due to lack of progress. BENLIC is therefore requesting that the board approve the bid to complete the rehabilitation project by Buccilli Renovation.

The BENLIC Property Selection Subcommittee has fully reviewed and vetted the following RFF submissions for 2022 and has identified those properties appropriate for acquisition by the Corporation.

A motion to approve the above properties for acquisition was made by William Reece, seconded by Dan Castle and carried as approved. Jeremy Toth abstained.

5. **Resolution #2022- 15** Disposition of 9838 Utica Street, Town of Evans

The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC) acquired the vacant lot located at 9839 Utica Street in cooperation with the Town of Evans during the 2022 Erie County In-Rem Auction. The parcel is located in the Lake Erie Beach community and is partially wooded. Prior to BENLIC acquisition, Evans Officials submitted a formal letter of interest from adjacent property owner, Daniel Catalino. Town Officials support a sale to Mr. Catalino.

BENLIC is requesting that the board approves the disposition of 9839 Utica Street to Daniel Catalino for \$1,700.

A motion to approve the disposition of 9839 Utica Street was made by Cavette Chambers, seconded by Karen Utz, and unanimously carried as approved.

6. **Resolution #2022 - 16** Approval of Additional 2022 Erie County In-Rem Acquisitions

The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC) and the towns and villages in Erie County have engaged in a Request for Foreclosure (RFF) process for the year 2022 in which towns and villages identify those respective properties they would like BENLIC to consider for acquisition. The RFF process is outlined in the Rules and Procedures of the Corporation.

BENLIC is requesting that the board accepts the recommendation of the Property Selection Subcommittee and acquire the following properties from the 2022 RFF: 4468 South Buffalo Street, Village of Orchard Park and 3196 W. Pleasant Drive, Town of Hamburg. Both are new communities that BENLIC has not worked in before.

A motion to approve the acquisition was made by Cavette Chambers, seconded by Karen Utz and approved by acclamation.

7. **Resolution #2022-17** Approve Engagement for General Counsel Legal Services

BENLIC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for General Counsel Legal Services on June 30, 2020, with a submission deadline of July 14, 2020. The list of firms that responded to the RFP were used as a list for well qualified legal representation to represent the landbank going forward. BENLIC engaged Hancock Estabrook, LLP for legal services beginning on September 1st, 2021. BENLIC proposes to continue representation from Hancock Estabrook, LLP for another one-year term to assist BENLIC. These services would include representation during negotiations, attending monthly Board Meetings, and reviewing resolutions.

A motion to approve was made by Cavette Chambers, seconded by Jeremy Toth, and approved by acclimation.

Resolution #2022- 18 - Accept Grant – NYS HCR Land Bank Initiative Phase I

New York State Homes and Community Renewal (NYS HCR) has awarded The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (“BENLIC”) a Land Bank Initiative Phase I grant in the amount of \$200,000. An additional “Phase II” grant program will be released by NYS HCR to fund additional Land Bank activities in the future.

BENLIC requests that the Board of Directors accepts and implement the NYS HCR Land Bank Initiative grant.

A motion to approve the grant was made by Karen Utz, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

Marjorie McAllister delivered the Executive Director’s report. Matthew Azzano will rejoin the team in September as BENLIC’s Assistant Program Coordinator.

The vacant and abandoned property auction was held on July 27th, 2022. Board member Scott Bylewski played an important role in facilitating the auction. 32 properties were acquired.

BENLIC is also working with Scott Bylewski and the rest of the legislature to amend the Erie County Proceeds Distribution Policy for enhanced clarity and understanding. BENLIC has issued a request for bids by contractors interested in the Adams Street Infill Housing Initiative. A Q&A session was held on August 1st. Bids are due to be opened on August 31st and will be reviewed by a committee which includes board member Catherine Amdur.

Given the fluctuating job market and inflation, and in keeping with the recommendation suggested in the Strategic Plan, an a HR consulting firm is being requested to write a compensation plan for BENLIC.

Staff members Jocelyn Gordon and Ben Brown will be attending the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference in Chicago 9/7-9/9.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Scott Bylewski, seconded by Daniel Castle, and approved by acclamation.

NEXT MEETING: Board of Directors – 1 p.m. September 22nd, 2022

Location: Virtually via Zoom

Recorded by: Matthew Azzano, BENLIC Staff

Submitted for Approval: Jocelyn Gordon, Executive Director

Adopted by BENLIC Board Members on _____