



BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
January 25th, 2024 – 2:00 PM  
Brisbane Building Conference Room 521  
403 Main St. Suite 602  
Buffalo, New York 14203

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Call to Order by Board Chair, Brendan Mehaffy

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present: Brendan Mehaffy, Scott Bylewski, Catherine Amdur, Daniel Castle, Delano Dowell, Karen Utz, Oluwole McFoy, Cavette Chambers, Jeremy Toth

Board Members *Excused*:

Board Members *Absent*: Deborah Skulski-Wakelam

BENLIC Counsel *Excused*: John Sidd

BENLIC Staff: Jocelyn Gordon, Alexis Duwe, Benjamin Brown

HAND OUTS:

Agenda; Minutes of December 2023 Board Meeting; December 2023 Treasurer's Report; **Resolution #2024-1** Approval of Conceptual and Schematic Infill Design Services; **Resolution #2024-2** Authorize BENLIC to Enter into a Subrecipient Agreement With The City of Buffalo for Administration of ARP SLFRF Program; **Resolution #2024-3** Authorize BENLIC to Enter into an American Rescue Plan Allocation Agreement with County of Erie; **Resolution #2024-4** Disposition of 109 Humason, Buffalo; **Resolution #2024-5** Disposition of 78 Diane, Cheektowaga

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of December 2023 Minutes:

The minutes of the December 21st, 2023, Board of Directors Meeting were presented and reviewed.

A motion to approve the December 2023 minutes was made by Oluwole McFoy, seconded by Catherine Amdur, and unanimously carried as approved.

3. Treasurer's Report:

Executive Director Jocelyn Gordon presented the December 2023 Treasurer's Reports. As of December 31st, 2023, the Corporation's bank balance was \$2,176,062.20.

A motion to approve the December Treasurer's reports was made by Karen Utz, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

4. **Resolution #2023-23** Resolution #2024-1 Approval of Conceptual and Schematic Infill Design Services

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, BENLIC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a professional and qualified architectural services firm to provide schematic and conceptual designs. These conceptual designs will assist BENLIC in community engagement activities and influence its future infill development strategy. The conceptual designs are for infill homes as part of BENLIC's ARP Affordable Housing Infill Initiative.

Out of the six responses received, BENLIC Staff requested the bid from Hamilton Houston Lownie (HHL) Architects for \$107,500 to be approved. The Board determined that HHL Architects possesses the technical skill, licensing, training, reputation, integrity, judgment, and expertise necessary to provide the professional architectural services needed for BENLIC's ARP Affordable Housing Infill Initiative.

A motion to approve the proposal from HHL Architects was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Oluwole McFoy, and unanimously carried as approved.

5. **Resolution #2024-2** Authorize BENLIC to Enter into a Subrecipient Agreement with the City of Buffalo for Administration of ARP SLFRF Program

After months of discussion, the City of Buffalo and BENLIC will enter into a formal agreement regarding the allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) Funds. The City of Buffalo will provide ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) to BENLIC during fiscal years 2024-2026 for the purpose of completing an affordable housing infill development program. These new homes will be constructed on City of Buffalo-owned vacant lots which will be transferred to BENLIC for development. The money received for this program will be recycled so that the program can be repeated until all funds are expended. This subrecipient agreement also clarifies details such as insurance minimums, environmental procedures, and types of homes built.

A motion to approve the Subrecipient Agreement was made by Daniel Castle, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

6. **Resolution #2024-3** Authorize BENLIC to Enter into an American Rescue Plan Allocation Agreement with County of Erie

For the aforementioned ARP Affordable Housing Infill program, BENLIC will also receive ARP funds from Erie County. The County of Erie will provide thirteen million five hundred thousand dollars (\$13,500,000). County-provided funds will only be used to build single-family homes, whereas the City-provided funds may be used to construct multi-family homes. The county-provided funds may also be used to construct homes outside of the City of Buffalo, particularly in the Town of Cheektowaga and potentially in other municipalities as well. For new construction using County-provided funds, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments will be required as well.

A motion to approve the Subrecipient Agreement was made by Daniel Castle, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

7. Dispositions:

**Resolution #2024-4** Disposition of 109 Humason, Buffalo

BENLIC acquired 109 Humason Avenue, Buffalo via the 2020 BENLIC—City of Buffalo Property Acquisition Agreement. Funding from the Enterprise Community Partners grant was used to rehabilitate the home. BENLIC Invested almost \$200,000.00. An additional \$10,000 grant was provided by the M&T Foundation which was used to build a back deck.

The property was listed for sale in July 2023 for \$165,900. As a grant-funded project, qualified offers must make no more than 100% of the Erie County Area Median Income adjusted for household size. An offer was approved by the Board in September, however that offer fell through due to failure to secure financing.

BENLIC has received an offer from Alyssa Renee Scott for \$160,000. A motion to approve the disposition was made by Karen Utz, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

8. **Resolution #2024-5** Disposition of 78 Diane, Cheektowaga

BENLIC acquired 78 Diane Drive, Cheektowaga via the 2021 Erie County In-Rem Auction. This vacant house was completely rehabilitated by Buffalo C.H.I.L.L. Contracting using \$96,773.90 from BENLIC's general fund.

As this project was not financed by any external grants, there are no income restrictions on its disposition. 78 Diane Drive was listed for sale in October 2023 for \$223,900. A cash offer was approved in December, but the sale fell through due to a lack of response from the offeror.

An offer was received from Daniel Covert for \$235,000. A motion to approve the disposition of 78 Diane was made by Karen Utz, seconded by Catherine Amdur and unanimously carried as approved.

9. Note and Mortgage Discharge: 44 Sunset, Amherst

In 2021, the vacant lot at 44 Sunset Court, Amherst was sold to the Town of Amherst for HUD HOME program-funded affordable housing development. In January 2024, the Town of Amherst has informed BENLIC that the site is unfeasible for development due to unsuitable soil. The foundation would require 29 helical piles. The cost of building this foundation would increase the cost of the development well beyond what is financially feasible, especially for sale to a low-income homebuyer.

BENLIC Staff recommend discharging the \$50,000 Note and Mortgage lien on the property. The Town of Amherst will own and maintain the parcel. A motion to approve the discharge of the lien was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

10. 2024 Personnel Committee Report

The Personnel Committee evaluated salary information and delivered their recommendations. The Committee considered changes in the cost of living, the change in work that BENLIC staff are performing, and median salaries for comparable positions. The Personnel Committee recommended a 5% increase in salary for each staff member.

A motion to approve the 5% salary increase was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Karen Utz, and unanimously carried as approved.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by OJ McFoy, and unanimously carried by acclamation.

**NEXT MEETING: Board of Directors Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**

Location: Brisbane Building Conference Room 521, 403 Main St. Suite 602, Buffalo, New York 14203

Recorded by: Matthew Azzano, BENLIC Staff  
Submitted for Approval: Jocelyn Gordon, Executive Director

Adopted by BENLIC Board Members on \_\_\_\_\_