



BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
March 21st, 2024 – 2:00 PM
Brisbane Building Conference Room 521
403 Main St. Suite 602
Buffalo, New York 14203

Call to Order by Board Chair, Brendan Mehaffy

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present: Brendan Mehaffy, Scott Bylewski, Daniel Castle,
Delano Dowell, Cavette Chambers, Jeremy Toth,
Adam McNeill, Catherine Amdur

Board Members *Excused*: Olowule McFoy, Karen Utz

Board Members *Absent*: Deborah Skulski-Wakelam

BENLIC Counsel *Excused*: John Sidd

BENLIC Staff: Jocelyn Gordon, Alexis Duwe, Benjamin Brown,
Matthew Azzano

HAND OUTS:

Agenda; Minutes of February 2024 Board Meeting; February 2024 Treasurer's Report; BENLIC 2023 Annual ABO Report; **Resolution #2024-6** Approval of Bid for Exterior Stabilization Repairs; **Resolution #2024-7** Approve Architectural Services—Cheektowaga ARPA Infill Initiative; **Resolution #2024-8** Bid Approval of 249 East, Buffalo—Complete Renovation Project; **Resolution #2024-9** Bid Approval of 702 Norfolk, Buffalo—Complete Renovation Project; **Resolution #2024-10** Bid Approval of 236 Brunswick, Buffalo—Complete Renovation Project

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of February 2024 Minutes:

The minutes of the February 24th, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting were presented and reviewed.

A motion to approve the February 2024 minutes was made by Adam McNeill, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

3. Treasurer's Report:

Executive Director Jocelyn Gordon presented the February 2024 Treasurer's Reports. As of February 29th, 2023, the Corporation's total balance was \$2,613,453.37.

A motion to approve the January Treasurer's reports was made by Adam McNeill, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

4. Presentation by Drescher & Malecki of 2023 Independent Audit

The results of the annual audit prepared by the accounting firm Drescher & Malecki were presented to the board by Charles Trottier and Corey Sveinsson-Skobel. The products of this audit serve as a third-party opinion on BENLIC's financial statements.

Charles Trottier reported that the auditing team received full cooperation from BENLIC staff and that every document asked for was delivered on time, as well as open and open access to BENLIC records. He noted that the Corporation has \$1.3 million in property assets and \$442,000 in property liabilities, leaving BENLIC with a total of \$3.8 million in net assets. This amount is \$500,000 less in assets from last year—mainly due to the sale of rehabilitated properties and an ongoing transformation of BENLIC's business model. In 2023, \$1.4 million of revenue came from sales, while \$200,000 came from grants. He also noted that this is an example of an overall trend of an increase in sales revenue and a decrease in grant revenue.

5. Approval of 2023 Reports

As required by the Authorities Budget Office, a series of reports are due by March 31st each year. The complete Annual Report includes:

- Financial Statements, Management Letter, Internal Controls

- Procurement Report
- Investment Report
- Property Report
- Performance Measurement
- Board of Directors Evaluations

The draft of the Annual Report was made available to the board for review. A few minor mistakes in the draft needed to be fixed before being submitted.

A motion to approve the 2023 ABO Report was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

6. Annual Review/Approval of Corporation Policies

BENLIC’s rules and procedures must be in congruence with the guiding documents such as The Land Bank Act and BENLIC’s Intermunicipal Agreement. BENLIC reviews and reapproves its Corporation Policies annually. No changes to the policies were suggested this year.

A motion to approve the Corporation Policies was made by Daniel Castle, seconded by Catherine Amdur, and unanimously carried as approved.

7. Election of Officers for 2024

For the three annually elected positions, Brendan Mehaffy will serve as Chair, Scott Bylewski as Vice Chair, and Adam McNeill as Treasurer.

A motion to approve the election of Board officers was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

8. Election of Committee Members, including Chairs of Committees

A chairperson and committee members must be selected annually for each of BENLIC’s four subcommittees—Governance, Audit and Finance, Real Estate, and Personnel.

The board members elected for each subcommittee are as follows: Jeremy Toth (chair), Brendan Mehaffy, and Cavette Chambers for the Governance Committee; Adam McNeill (chair), Jeremy Toth, and Delano Dowell for the Audit and Finance Subcommittee; Scott Bylewski (chair), Daniel Castle, and Cathy Amdur for the Real Estate Subcommittee; Daniel Castle (chair), Brendan Mehaffy, and Adam McNeill for the Personnel Committee.

A motion to approve the election of Board officers was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Cavette Chambers, and unanimously carried as approved.

9. **Resolution #2024-6** Approve Brokerage Services – Adams Street Infill Initiative

BENLIC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for real estate brokerage services for the listing and sale of the twelve single-family homes that will be constructed during the Adams Street Infill Initiative. The RFP was released on January 30th and five brokerages responded. The selected firm will market the homes in accordance with BENLIC’s NYS Homes and Community Renewal (NYHCR) approved marketing plan. This includes income-qualifying offerors,

assisting with various marketing initiatives, and working with Belmont Housing Services to offer pre-purchase counseling.

BENLIC staff recommended approving the proposal by MMB Realty Group for a 4% commission fee. A motion to approve the proposal was made by Adam McNeill, seconded by Cavette Chambers, and unanimously carried as approved.

10. Resolution #2024-7 Approve Architectural Services – Cheektowaga ARPA Infill Initiative

As part of the ARPA Infill Initiative, BENLIC plans to construct up to five single-family homes within the Town of Cheektowaga on vacant lots within its inventory. For these homes in Cheektowaga, BENLIC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) on March 7th, 2024. After reviewing the seven proposals submitted, BENLIC staff recommended approving the proposal by Eco-Logic Studios Architects due to their reasonable price, relevant experience, and reputation.

A motion to approve the proposal by Eco-Logic Studios Architects not to exceed \$64,500 was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Cavette Chambers, and unanimously carried as approved.

11. Rehabilitation Bid Approvals (Action Items)

BENLIC acquired 249 East Street, 702 Norfolk Avenue, and 236 Brunswick Boulevard (all in the City of Buffalo) via the 2022 Erie County In-Rem Vacant Auction. These properties are good candidates for BENLIC rehabilitation and are located in low-income neighborhoods. The properties have been cleaned out and will be fully rehabilitated and sold move-in ready.

Contractors have already been procured for roof replacement and asbestos abatement. Funding for these rehabilitation projects is provided by New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Land Bank Initiative program. On February 27th, 2024, bid packages for the rehabilitation of these three houses were released with a deadline to submit bids by March 19th, 2024. All bidders were asked to submit an M/WBE utilization plan with a requirement of at least \$40,000 worth of work per property to be done by M/WBE contractors.

The following three resolutions are action items requesting the approval of bids for the rehabilitation of these properties.

Resolution #2024-8 Bid Approval – 249 East, Buffalo – Complete Renovation Project (LBI Funded)

249 East Street is a single-family house located in the Black Rock neighborhood. It is the largest house out of the three. As much of the house's original woodwork will be salvaged and reused as possible.

Out of the three bids received, BENLIC staff recommended awarding the rehabilitation of 249 East to Sunset Custom Homes for \$494,200.

Resolution #2024-9 Bid Approval – 702 Norfolk, Buffalo – Complete Renovation Project (LBI Funded)

702 Norfolk Avenue is a single-family house in the Fillmore-Leroy neighborhood.

Of the three responses received, BENLIC staff recommended awarding the bid to the lowest bidder, Aurora Window Systems, a NYS-certified MBE contractor, for \$230,000.

Resolution #2024-10 Bid Approval – 236 Brunswick, Buffalo – Complete Renovation Project (LBI Funded)

236 Brunswick Boulevard is a two-family house located in the Hamlin Park historic preservation district. As part of the rehabilitation, the contractor is required to match the replacement windows to the existing windows as closely as possible. Almost all of the interior woodwork will be salvaged as well.

The only bid received was from Buccilli Renovations for \$426,300. BENLIC staff recommended awarding this bid to Buccilli Renovations.

A motion to approve all resolutions was made by Daniel Castle, seconded by Cavette Chambers, and unanimously carried as approved.

12. **Note and Mortgage Discharge: 39 Long Beach Lane, Evans**

The property at 39 Long Beach Lane, Evans was acquired by Mark Mazur and Clair Montroy in June 2023 for \$35,000. As part of the Vacant-to-Value program, the buyers would need to complete necessary repairs as outlined by the BENLIC property inspector within one year of their purchase. The property is subject to a \$50,000 note and mortgage lien in order to ensure the rehabilitation of the property by the buyers. The house was inspected by the BENLIC property inspector on March 6th, 2024, who found that all required work from the Note and Mortgage documents has been completed in a proper and satisfactory manner. Therefore, BENLIC is requesting that the Board of Directors approve the discharge of the lien.

A motion to approve discharging the \$50,000 lien on 39 Long Beach Lane, Evans was made by Scott Bylewski, seconded by Catherine Amdur, and unanimously carried as approved.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by _____ seconded by ____ and unanimously carried as approved.

NEXT MEETING: Board of Directors Thursday, April 18th, 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 _____