



BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
April 18, 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, Oluwole McFoy, Karen Utz

Board Members *Excused*:

Board Members *Absent*: Deborah Skulski-Wakelam

BENLIC Counsel *Present*: John Sidd

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

HAND OUTS:

Agenda; Minutes of March 2024 Board Meeting; March 2024 Treasurer's Report; **Resolution #2024-11** Approval of City of Buffalo Vacant Lot ARPA Infill Sites – BENLIC Development LLC; **Resolution #2024-12** 146 Potomac, Evans – Side Lot Sale; **Resolution #2024-13** 0 Lancaster, Evans – Side Lot Sale

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of March 2024 Minutes:

The minutes of the March 18th, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting were presented and reviewed.

A motion to approve the March 2024 minutes was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

3. Treasurer's Report:

Executive Director Jocelyn Gordon presented the March 2024 Treasurer's Reports. As of March 29th, 2023, the Corporation's total balance was \$2,820,508.87.

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

4. **Resolution #2024-11** Approval of City of Buffalo Vacant Lot ARPA Infill Sites – BENLIC Development LLC

BENLIC is acquiring 45 vacant residential lots from the City of Buffalo. The lots will be used to construct single-family and two-family homes as part of the ARPA Infill Initiative. As the houses are sold, the sales proceeds will go toward building additional affordable homes in order to help to satisfy the need for moderately priced housing intended for first-time homebuyers and working families. Vacant lots were selected based on the City of Buffalo's vacant lot analysis which resulted in an initial list of vacant lots that were suitable for residential infill.

The plan to acquire these lots and build new houses has been presented to the respective neighborhoods during community engagement meetings held by BENLIC, HLL Architects, the City of Buffalo, and Mustard Seed Consulting. Residents have shown their excitement and support for this infill housing initiative.

The properties selected by BENLIC for this project are of strategic value to achieve its mission of returning property back to tax paying and productive use. Therefore, BENLIC requested that the Board of Directors approve the acquisition of these lots for ARPA Infill development.

A motion to approve the acquisition of the City of Buffalo owned vacant lots was made by Oluwole McFoy, seconded by Catherine Amdur, and unanimously carried as approved.

Dispositions

5. **Resolution #2024-12 146 Potomac, Evans – Side Lot Sale**

146 Potomac Avenue is the site of a former single-family house in the Town of Evans that was demolished by the Town in 2023. In March 2024, BENLIC received an offer from the adjacent property owner, Mark Riley, to purchase the vacant lot at 146 Potomac Avenue for \$10,000. He plans to merge the lot with his own, reseed the lot, and build a fence for his dog to have a larger yard.

6. **Resolution #2024-13 0 Lancaster, Evans – Side Lot Sale**

The wooded, undeveloped vacant lot at 0 Lancaster in the Town of Evans was acquired by BENLIC in 2019 via the Erie County In-Rem Auction. This property was marketed to neighboring property owners as part of BENLIC’s side lot sales program in 2022 and 2023. BENLIC received one offer from John Sitarski, owner of an adjacent wooded lot, for \$575. John Sitarski will merge the two aforementioned parcels.

A motion to approve the disposition of 146 Potomac Avenue and 0 Lancaster to the respective offerors was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Delano Dowell, and unanimously carried as approved.

7. **Note and Mortgage Discharge – 179 Westminster, Buffalo – Habitat for Humanity**

The single-family house located at 179 Westminster Avenue was acquired by BENLIC in 2016 via the City of Buffalo Homestead Program. Using BENLIC funds, the house was abated of asbestos containing materials and the interior was gutted. The property was disposed to Habitat for Humanity for \$4,000 in 2018 as an established community partner with the capacity to undertake the extensive renovations and ensure that an owner occupant will purchase the home. A note and mortgage lien was placed on the property to ensure its development.

The rehabilitation of 179 Westminster was completed in 2023, and a Certificate of Occupancy was issued by the City of Buffalo. BENLIC is requesting that the Board of Directors approve the discharge of the Note and Mortgage lien so that Habitat for Humanity may dispose of the house.

A motion to approve the discharge of the Note and Mortgage lien was made by Jeremy Toth, seconded by Daniel Castle, and unanimously carried as approved.

8. **Executive Director’s Report**

Jocelyn Gordon informed the Board of progress made in BENLIC projects.

The Adams Street Infill Initiative is on schedule for the anticipated start of construction in early June 2024. MMB, a NYS-certified Minority- and Women-owned real estate brokerage, has been selected as the brokerage that will market the properties. A community engagement meeting is scheduled for May 1st where BENLIC will explain the details of the project and invite community members to comment on the planned housing typologies.

The ARPA Infill Initiative is on track to begin construction in the winter of 2024-2025. BENLIC is currently interviewing construction management firms who will oversee the procurement of building materials and subcontractors and supervise construction. Lots in the Town of

Cheektowaga have been selected from BENLIC's inventory for the construction of five single-family homes using ARPA funds. Eco-Logic Studios will develop the plans for these houses.

NEXT MEETING: Board of Directors Thursday, May 23rd, 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 _____