

**DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY**  

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**CADILLAC TOWER**  
**65 Cadillac Square, Suite #3200 • Detroit, Michigan**  
**(Conference Room)**

**Tuesday, June 16, 2015**  
**2:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Marsha Bruhn  
Richard Hosey  
Larry Lipa  
Patricia Pernell-Shelton  
Erica Ward-Gerson

**Others Present:** Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) staff  
Public

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Ward Gerson called the June 16, 2015 Board of Directors meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

All board members were present and a quorum was met.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chairperson Ward Gerson called for the adoption of the agenda, noting that the order would be revised due to staff commitments. **Motion by Member Bruhn to adopt the agenda. Supported by Member Pernell-Shelton. MOTION APPROVED.**

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion by Member Bruhn to adopt April 21, May 4 and May 28, 2015 minutes. Supported by Member Hosey. MOTION APPROVED.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Kevin Simowski discussed the highlights of the past month at the Land Bank, including: DLBA being selected as a recipient for funds from both the IBM "Smarter Cities" grant and the Kresge Foundation; City Council approving the Land Bank's budget appropriation of \$11.8M, the MOU and the Land Transfer Agreement; recent conferences were held in Detroit, including Michigan Land Bank Leadership Summit and national Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conferences, where multiple Land Bank staff attended and presented. Mr. Simowski also noted that the DLBA's CDC status was restored, retroactive to November 2014. Finally, Mr. Simowski noted the DLBA finalized its plan to move to the Guardian Building. Mr. Simowski closed by noting the most recent new hire, Lucas Polcyn (staff attorney), as well as multiple interns from Rock Ventures, Ford Foundation and Kellogg Foundation having joined us for the summer months. Member Bruhn requested that Board Members be notified of any upcoming conferences.

## **STAFF, STANDING COMMITTEE & TREASURY REPORTS**

### **Legal Staff Report**

Michael Brady, General Counsel, confirmed Mr. Simowski's announcement regarding the recently signed lease for the office move to the Guardian. Mr. Brady reported back to the Board regarding previously announced RFQs, noting that a total of 8 outside counsels responded, all with diverse expertise and as a result all 8 were "pre-qualified" for services with the Land Bank, if a need arises. Mr. Brady then discussed the progress of the Nuisance Abatement Program, noting of 3,582 posterings to date, a total of 2,533 suits have been filed. Of the total suits filed, 627 resulted in receiving title, 95 resulted in donation of title and 206 achieved compliance. There were no questions from the Board.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Michelle Story-Stewart, Chief Financial Officer, provided the Treasurer's report to the Board. Mrs. Story-Stewart confirmed Mr. Simowski's announcement regarding recently awarded grants from JP Morgan Chase, IBM and Kresge. Mrs. Story-Stewart also discussed the recent negotiations with the City of Detroit's General Services Department and an RFP recently released for call center services. Mrs. Story-Stewart then distributed financials for the period ending May 31 and discussed key balance sheet and profit and loss figures. There were no questions from the Board.

### **Finance and Audit Standing Committee Report**

Member Hosey provided the Finance and Audit report to the Board. Member Hosey discussed the Committee's focus on reviewing plans for the Land Bank's upcoming projects and anticipated long-term spending. Member Hosey discussed the need for the Finance and Accounting department to be staffed up as operations continue to grow at the Land Bank. Member Hosey closed by noting that moving forward, all Finance and Audit Standing Committee meetings will be publically announced in accordance with the Michigan Open Meeting Act, as they anticipated inviting all Board Members.

### **Acquisitions and Land Reuse Staff Report**

Carrie Lewand-Monroe, Deputy Director, distributed a report summarizing the demolition program and inventory management of the Land Bank. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe noted that all Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) Round 2 funds are committed and as a result summer production numbers are beginning to steadily rise for the demolition program. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe also noted that the Inspector General visited Detroit, performing an audit of the Land Bank's HHF program and was complimentary of the practices observed. The audit results are expected in September or October. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe then discussed the ongoing Land Transfer with the City of Detroit, noting the significant increase in efficiency. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe explained that approximately 31,800 parcels would be transferred in the first phase, taking about 6.5 weeks, whereas a similar transfer of 700 properties in 2013 took nearly 6 months. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe noted that approximately 7,000 parcels will not be transferred until a later phase due to outstanding purchase applications with the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department. Mrs. Lewand-Monroe answered questions from the Board regarding the land transfer and a discussion ensued.

### **Disposition Staff Report**

Dekonti Mendis-Cole, Deputy Director, distributed the auction, side lot and community partners reports. Mrs. Mendis-Cole discussed the auction, which reached its one-year milestone in May: auctions increased to 3 per day; bid amounts began increasing with four auctions recently having winning bids over \$100,000; and, the anticipated positive effect of the recent launch of Flagstar's 300% Loan-to-Value program. Mrs. Mendis-Cole announced the Land Bank's "Own-it-Now" program, focusing on direct sales of Land Bank homes, to be launched soon. Mrs. Mendis-Cole discussed the uptick in the Community Partner Program. Mrs. Mendis-Cole closed by naming Disposition's 5 summer interns. Mrs. Mendis-Cole answered questions from the Board and a discussion ensued.

### **Public Affairs Staff Report**

Craig Fahle, Public Affairs Director, began by announcing the second round of Side Lot Fairs, to be held on June 27, July 11 and July 25 and inviting the Board members to attend. Mr. Fahle noted that the Reclaiming Vacant Land conference, which included a break-off session that took participants on a bus tour of Detroit neighborhoods, resulted in a spike in web traffic from different parts of the US and additional, positive media coverage. Mr. Fahle discussed the increasing open houses due to increased auctions and the need for more event staff. Mr. Fahle closed by naming Public Affairs' summer intern. Mr. Fahle answered questions from the Board and a discussion ensued.

### **Project Review Standing Committee Report**

Member Lipa provided the Project Review report to the Board, confirming the Acquisition and Land Reuse and Disposition staff reports. Member Lipa commended staff on the achievement of the Land Bank being recently looked to as a benchmark organization for other Land Banks.

### **Community Engagement Standing Committee Report**

Member Pernel-Shelton provided the Community Engagement report to the Board, confirming the Public Affairs staff report and commented on the staff's increased presence in the community.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sarah Pappas, owner of Fresh Cut Detroit, inquired regarding an outstanding application she had submitted with the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department for a property that is part of the Land Transfer Agreement. Chairperson Ward Gerson recommended Ms. Pappas to Deputy Director Mrs. Lewand-Monroe for further discussion.

Deborah and Roosevelt Ball, residents of the City of Detroit, wished to submit a feasibility study regarding a small group of properties they wished to purchase. Chairperson Ward Gerson recommended Mr. and Mrs. Ball to Deputy Director Mrs. Mends-Cole for further discussion.

Alexandra Oventon, resident of the Russell Woods neighborhood, indicated she currently lives in a home that she feels was incorrectly foreclosed by the Wayne County Treasurer and was subsequently transferred to the Land Bank. Ms. Oventon answered questions from the Board and Chairperson Ward Gerson requested an attorney speak with Ms. Oventon regarding the property in question.

Winona Bynum, Executive Director of the Detroit Food Policy Council, introduced herself and thanked the Land Bank Staff for their attendance at the recent Land Bank Summit.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairperson Ward Gerson opened the floor for any Old Business. None was outstanding.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Resolutions.**

**Resolution 06-01-2015**, regarding authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and sign an agreement for funds for certain renovation projects. Chairperson Ward Gerson provided an overview of the resolution and a discussion ensued. **Motion by Member Bruhn. Supported by Member Lipa. MOTION APPROVED.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Ward Gerson adjourned the meeting at 3:13 pm.