

MINUTES
WARREN COUNTY BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE
Warren County Courthouse
September 15, 2022
12:00 noon
Commissioners' Conference Room

The regular meeting of the Warren County Blighted Property Review Committee was called to order by Chairman Paul Pascuzzi at 12:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: John Phillips, Jeff Eggleston, Paul Pascuzzi
Members Absent: Rick Brewster, Kenneth (Rusty) Zigler
Staff Present: Dan Glotz, Laurie Burdick
Guests Present: Josh Cotton (Times Observer), Jeff Labesky (Sheffield Twp. Supervisor), Vince Peterson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously with a motion by John Phillips and second by Jeff Eggleston. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. (#82) - Route 948, Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-006-326400 - owned by Frank E. Leichtenberger, Jr.

Paul Pascuzzi stated that this property is a house that is and has been falling down for years and includes an old abandoned metal well building across the road. The supervisors passed a Resolution #516 at their January 18th meeting and invited Mr. Leichtenberger to their meeting, which he did not attend. Sheffield Township Supervisor, Jeff Labesky, stated that Mr. Leichtenberger approached the Sheffield Township Office and indicated that he was planning to get a demolition permit to tear the house down, but that did not happen. Paul Pascuzzi stated that if Mr. Leichtenberger should call the office again for a demolition permit, he should be directed to the Building Code Agency. Jeff Eggleston then made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to invite Mr. Leichtenberger to the next Blighted Property Review Committee meeting to present a plan to remediate the blight. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

2. (#83) - 63 2nd Mill St., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-354-925800 - owned by Fairhill North 2

Paul Pascuzzi stated that the township passed a Resolution on July 5th. The owner has an address in Pittsburgh, so we have an absentee owner. The property is a nuisance, with broken windows and a grass violation. The owner

did receive notification. Because of the physical condition, the property is a public nuisance, it is an attractive nuisance to children, is an unsafe structure, dilapidated, fire hazard, no utilities, vacant, unoccupied, etc. Supervisor Labesky stated this has been vacant for approximately 8 years. Phil Gilbert was not in attendance but provided information that the 2021 taxes are delinquent and property will go to Upset Sale in 2023. Jeff Eggleston then made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to invite the owner to the next Blighted Property Review Committee meeting to present a plan to remediate the blight. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

The board asked for additional photographs from Sheffield Township since there is only one photograph in the file.

3. (#84) – 209 Second St., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-356-473-900 – owned by James Martin Richwalsky

Paul Pascuzzi stated that this is another absentee owner, who lives in Ohio. The property includes an old trailer full of old paint cans with broken windows, abandoned, and uninhabitable. The owner indicated that he thought somebody else was looking after the property, but that person passed away five (5) years ago. The Township Resolution was passed in May of 2022. The owner was given notification and we have a signed certified card showing that he received the notification. Supervisor Labesky stated that this is an unsecured structure and the doors are wide open. Paul Pascuzzi stated that this property is unoccupied, an attractive nuisance to children, and utilities are disconnected. Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to invite the current owner to the next Blighted Property Review Committee meeting to explain the condition of the property. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

4. (#85) – 89 Cottage Ave., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-359-197600 – owned by Kathy Spencer, deceased (son Jake Spencer lived there)

Paul Pascuzzi stated that the owner, Kathy Spencer, is deceased, but her son had lived there. The property has been an on-going nuisance problem along with grass ordinance violations. Jacob Spencer doesn't respond to the township's request for clean-up or grass mowing. The structure has been involved in a fire and is a public nuisance. Constable Young has tried numerous times to locate Jacob Spencer, but he is missing in action.

Phil Gilbert was not in attendance but provided information that the property is in Repository and a bid has been submitted for purchase. The intent is to demolish and build new. Bid was sent to County/Township/School Board for approval. Mr. Gilbert recommended waiting on taking action as this will most likely change hands in the next month.

Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to keep in contact with the Tax Claim Bureau and invite the current owner on record after a three-week period of time to the next Blighted Property Review Committee meeting. A vote was taken and all were in favor; motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. (#75) - 16 E. Main St., Columbus Twp., Parcel #CY-371-517700 – owned by Larry Barker

Larry Barker is going to put an ice cream shop at this location and will be invited to the October meeting.

2. (#77) – 200 Horton Ave., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-359-633200 – owned by Amy Bailey

Amy Bailey was invited to today's meeting. Laurie Burdick stated that she had received an email with photographs from Haylee Ellis (who resides in the house). Paul Pascuzzi read aloud the email from Ms. Ellis, indicating that they replaced all of the broken windows and started recaulking the windows that weren't broken. The front porch has been jacked up and stabilized to the best of their ability without cement, and they took out all of the windows on the front porch, as well. Supervisor Labesky stated that he would dispute that information and said the main issue is that the front porch is falling off the house. He would beg to differ that the porch windows were taken out, opposed to falling out. He doesn't feel the porch was jacked up as they indicated. Jeff Eggleston stated that the issue was that the porch was collapsing, which is a hazard to the community, so he suggested that the RDA needs more proof that the porch has been remediated, and the porch does not have to have windows, as long as there is no broken glass. Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to move the property on to the Planning Commission with the understanding that we add sending a letter to the owner outlining the general concerns, so we have proof of remediation. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

Proof would be pictures of the condition the porch is in and that at the very least, the front porch roof has been secured, so it's not a hazard to the community.

Further, this item is tax delinquent and will be on the Upset Tax Sale list in September of 2023.

3. (#79) – 14 West Main St., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-356-7748 – owned by Vedo L. Andrea, et al.

This property is in falling-down condition, uninhabited for years, broken windows, and no utilities. Supervisor Labesky took pictures of the house and stated that the front porch where the steps are is where the main sag is. Owner has been notified that it is blighted. He said people from the neighborhood are working on the house. The owner was invited to this meeting but did not attend (she is in the hospital.) Part of the beam needs to be replaced. It is being covered up but has not been structurally fixed. Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to move this item on to the Planning Commission. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

4. (#80) – 17 Hall St., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-356-757400 – owned by Dennis Peterson

Paul Pascuzzi stated that Dennis Peterson was invited to attend the meeting

today but did not attend. Structure is falling down, water runs through the foundation from the back hill, it is uninhabited, and no utilities. This property started as a blighted property by Sheffield Township once in 2021 but ownership was being transferred between brothers. The township waited for transfer but house remains in same condition. Supervisor Labesky stated that it has been unoccupied for over 10 years and when it rains, water runs through the residence. The neighbor was interested in purchasing this property and tearing down the house. The house is not salvageable as far as Supervisor Labesky is concerned. Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips, to move this item on to the Planning Commission. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion carried.

Vince Peterson arrived at the very end of the meeting and had been stranded in traffic. He stated that he has received quotes for tearing the house down and there is too much money that needs to be put into it for what he can afford. He said they bought it at tax sale and had big hopes for it. Paul Pascuzzi suggested he speak with the neighbors to see if they might be interested in purchasing the property, and further stated this is a health issue and suggested that everything be secured, including doors and windows. Mr. Peterson stated that everything is locked up. Mr. Pascuzzi informed him that this will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

5. (#81) – 336 Horton Ave., Sheffield Twp., Parcel #SH-367-22530 – owned by James Winschel

Dan Glotz received a call from “Jennifer” who has some ties to this property, but stated she was going to be late to the meeting due to being stranded in traffic on Route 6. She expressed that the house has been re-wired and re-plumbed, and that they have been working on the interior. Supervisor Labesky stated that this property has been a problem for many years but he feels it can come off the list. They are cleaning the place up and are living there, and it appears that they are working on the inside. Dan Glotz stated that the taxes were going to be paid today, which is otherwise scheduled for the Upset Tax Sale on the 26th. Jeff Eggleston made a motion, with a second by John Phillips to table this item until next month and send the owner a letter asking for photographs of the remediation. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

A discussion took place regarding blighted properties that are still considered unsafe and the owner moves a renter into the structure. It was suggested to email a template for a placard to post on blighted properties so it can't be occupied. Staff will get this out to the municipalities that are in the program, along with instructions for using the placard.

A second discussion took place regarding the Fire Escrow Ordinance, which Paul Pascuzzi explained to Supervisor Labesky. Staff will email a copy of the Ordinance to all of the municipalities.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 1:18 p.m. with a motion by John Phillips and second by Jeff Eggleston. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, October 20, 2022 @ 12:00 noon in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 1st Floor, Warren County Courthouse.

Respectfully submitted,



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