

It's Weed And Trash Season!

Spring 2011

The Land Bank's seasonal property maintenance crews are again on the job doing weed and trash abatement, boarding, and securing properties and responding to complaints. Separate teams of seasonal workers are picking up trash and debris and cutting weeds throughout Flint and in Burton, Mt. Morris Township, Genesee Township, and Flint Township. This year's efforts started on April 4 and will continue through early November.



Flint. This year's work will include two complete cuts within the City of Flint on all abandoned properties with the first cut taking place between April and the end of July and the second cut taking place between August and late October or into early November. In addition to cutting weeds, our crews will be picking up trash and debris as well. Last year we removed over 1,500 tons of trash and we expect about the same this year.



Genesee County. Property maintenance crews also maintain Land Bank owned properties throughout Genesee County, but especially in the suburban communities adjacent to Flint where most of our out-county properties are located: Flint Township, Mt. Morris Township, Genesee Township and the City of Burton. In these areas we have two crews working continuously to cut weeds and remove trash.



Special Projects. During the growing season we will board and secure literally hundreds of houses in Flint and throughout Genesee County. Other special projects include cleaning up the Crim Ten Mile Race route one week prior to the race, and responding to various complaints from residents, local officials, and neighborhood groups for assistance with neighborhood clean-ups.



By Doug Weiland

From The Board Chair



Foreclosure Prevention Is Job 1.

Tax foreclosures set a new record this spring with about 2,900 properties being foreclosed. Numbers are merely statistics, but behind each foreclosure is a story and many of these stories are heart-wrenching examples of the effects of Genesee County's prolonged economic downturn. Many of these stories involve elderly home owners suffering from physical disabilities who rely on a small monthly Social Security payment that does not cover their modest living expenses.

That's why I have formed a task force of local officials and social service agencies to devise strategies that will reduce the human tragedy that we see each year as people face losing their homes. I have also been working with the C.S. Mott Foundation and Metro Community Development to implement a pilot program designed to help elderly and disabled home owners get caught up on back taxes and assist them in keeping their taxes current in order to save their homes.

As the task force completes its work, I will report the results to you and the community. Watch for an update in the next Land Bank newsletter.

Deborah Cherry
Genesee County Treasurer
Genesee County Land Bank Authority
Chair

New *edible flint* Program Supports Garden Starting

Rota tilling, compost (including delivery), soil testing, seeds, and even transplants are all being offered by *edible flint* to local urban food growers. For \$10, groups and individuals are receiving enough seeds and transplants to cover a 1,400 square foot garden and tilling, compost delivery, and soil testing for free. The purpose of the program is to increase Flint's capacity to produce healthy food, by reducing urban gardening and farming start-up costs.



edible flint is a network of individuals and organizations that are all unified by the mission of, "supporting Flint residents in growing and accessing healthy food in order to reconnect with the land and each other." The *edible flint* network is comprised of six different workgroups, each of which convenes around a specific focus of *edible flint's* mission. In addition to Garden Starters, workgroups exist around issues including healthy food access, education, and communication. There is also an *edible flint* Co-op that will collectively sell naturally grown produce at the Flint Farmers' Market for the second summer, starting July 2nd.

The new program is part of *edible flint's* Garden Starters workgroup. The plans of the workgroup guide the new program and are being supported by five new employees. Four full-time crewmembers and one full-time coordinator were recently hired to deliver the resources of the program. Services to 70 gardens and 300 kits of seeds and transplants will be delivered through the new program.

For more information on *edible flint* contact Terry at (810) 244-8530 or e-mail info@edibleflint.org. For more information on the new Garden Starter program call Deb at (810) 244-8547.

By Natalie Pruett

Land Available for Greening and Gardening

The Genesee County Land Bank has new policies and programs for vacant land re-use. For years, the Land Bank has been supporting greening and gardening of vacant land through the Adopt-A-Lot program. An Adopt-A-Lot Agreement gives groups or individuals permission to use and care for a vacant lot for one year. Groups and individuals have used these Agreements to do a variety of things with vacant land, from keeping the grass mowed to planting city-lot size vegetable gardens. There are currently 268 active Adopt-A-Lot Agreements. However, as dedication to caring for vacant land has grown over the years, the greening and gardening plans of many have outgrown Adopt-A-Lot.

Land Bank staff has responded to the increasing demand for longer-term access to vacant land. This past fall (2010) Land Bank staff wrote a new Vacant Land Re-use Policy that was unanimously approved by the Land Bank's Board of Directors in December. The goal of the policy is to accommodate the varying levels of dedication that groups and individuals have for caring for vacant land. Adopt-A-Lot still exists, but it is now one of several ways that groups and individuals can access vacant land held by the Genesee County Land Bank.

The "Vacant Land Re-use Policy", written by Land Bank staff and approved by the Land Bank's Board of Directors, has been transformed into "Land Available for Greening and Gardening", options for accessing vacant land.

- Adopt-A-Lot:
 - ◇ Is free
 - ◇ Is meant for care of land on a **year-to-year basis**
 - ◇ Is meant for projects that involve **little investment in the land itself**
 - ◇ Is most often used for short-term mowing and gardening
- Vacant Land Lease (2-5 year length):
 - ◇ Costs \$1 per year per lot
 - ◇ Is meant for care of land with a **2 – 5 year commitment**
 - ◇ Is most often used for longer-term greening and gardening projects
- Vacant Land Lease (2-5 year length) with Option to Purchase:
 - ◇ Costs \$1 per year per lot (while leasing)
 - ◇ Is meant for care of land with a **2 – 5 year commitment**
 - ◇ Is meant for projects that are **considering caring for the land permanently**
 - ◇ Is meant for projects that may involve **investing in the land itself**
 - ◇ Is most often used for long-term greening and gardening projects that are considering permanency and investing resources into the property



By Natalie Pruett

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program Shifting Into High Gear

Completed Rehabs in Genesee County. In the NSP program being administered by the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, twenty rehabs have been completed, 15 others are under construction, and approximately 25 more will be completed in several Genesee County suburbs including Burton, Flint Township, Mt. Morris Township, Genesee Township, Mt. Morris and Clio. Of the first twenty completed, over half have been sold and offers are pending on more.

Completed Rehabs In Carriagetown. The Land Bank has completed two rehabs of homes in Flint’s historic Carriagetown area. These homes were completely stripped down and rebuilt from the basements to the roofs in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood. In addition to being beautifully restored, the homes have been tested and received a Five Star energy rating, adding to their affordability by reducing utility costs.

More Rehabs To Come. In addition to these homes, there will be another 40 or more rehabbed in Flint using NSP funds in other neighborhoods including Mott Park on Flint’s west side, the Northwestern Neighborhood on Flint’s northwest side, the Grand Traverse area south of downtown, Fairfield Village near I-475 and Court Street, the Central Park neighborhood near Flint Central High School, the South Park Neighborhood near Thread Lake, and the Kearsley Park area on Flint’s east side.

Genesee County’s Newest Neighborhood is Coming. Coming soon will be Genesee County’s newest neighborhood – Smith Village located just north of downtown in Flint will have 83 new build homes under construction over the next year. This will be the only new subdivision under construction in Genesee County and will be built using NSP funds.



6237 Surrey Ln., Burton

Barbara Arvoy
 ReMax Town & Country Realty
 810-630-2200
 Listed at: \$59,900



**612 W. University Avenue
 (Carriage Town)**

Dan Borgerding
 Century 21 Woodland
 810-659-3161
 Listed at: \$49,900



**518 Mason, Flint
 (Carriage Town)**

Theresa Allen
 Royal Realty
 810-732-9210
 Listed at: \$46,900

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Genesee County Land Bank are working together to use federal recovery funds to make homeownership more affordable. We are restoring neighborhoods in great locations for eligible buyers like you. You can save 20% on the purchase of this newly renovated home with forgivable financing.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must have annual household income between:

| Household size | Annual Income |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 person | \$15,840 – \$47,520 |
| 2 persons | \$18,080 – \$54,240 |
| 3 persons | \$20,360 – \$61,080 |
| 4 persons | \$22,600 – \$67,800 |
| 5 persons | \$24,440 – \$73,320 |
| 6 persons | \$26,240 – \$78,720 |

2. Must have all judgments paid in full. No minimum credit score required, but must be able to get a mortgage with a lender.
3. Must reside in home (primary residence) for 10 years after the purchase in order to qualify for 100% forgiveness of financial assistance received.

By Doug Weiland

The date of the 2011 Genesee County Treasurer's Auctions of Tax Foreclosed Properties is as follows:

◇ **Friday, September 16, 2011**

Registration begins at 11:00 a.m.
Auction to begin at 12:00 noon

◇ **Friday, October 28, 2011**

Registration begins at 11:00 a.m.
Auction to begin at 12:00 noon



The auction takes place in the *Genesee County Administration Building, Harris Auditorium* (3rd Floor), 1101 Beach Street, Flint, MI.

Listings for the auction will be available around 30 days prior to the auctions as well as on the website www.tax-sale.info/genesee-county.

STAFF NOTES

Joining the Land Bank in February, **Cynthia Chandler** came on board as part of an on-the-job training program administered by Mott Community College.

Since coming to the Land Bank Cynthia has handled our reception desk answering phone calls and greeting guests in our office. In addition, she handles many inquiries using our property inventory database and our aerial photography software. **Teffony Jones** joined us in March under the same training program. Teffony has been processing initial requests for information on purchasing Land Bank owned properties and inquiries for adopt-a-lot and urban gardening requests. She gathers information from our database and aerial photography to assist the staff. Both have been wonderful to have on board.



Teffony Jones (left), Cynthia Chandler

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