

Community Input Guides Demolition Planning

The Genesee County Land Bank (GCLBA) received a C.S. Mott Foundation, Focus on Flint grant for \$448,029 to demolish 30-35 of the nearly 3,000 Land Bank owned blighted houses. To collect resident input on how to prioritize blighted houses for demolition with limited funding, the Land Bank gathered input using a survey available for residents to complete on-line or in paper format. Land Bank staff encouraged residents to complete the survey by publicizing it on local news, social media, press releases, emails, presentations at neighborhood meetings and by making phone calls. Based on more than 400 survey responses, residents ranked the following factors based on what they felt was most important, with 0 being not important, and 10 being very important.

- ◇ Houses directly next door to occupied properties (score of 9.5 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses in areas where more people live, and homes are occupied (score of 8.9 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses near open schools (score of 8.7 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses that are burnt (8.5 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses with fire insurance funds (8.1 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses near local parks (8 out of 10)
- ◇ Houses on or near major roads (7.7 out of 10)



The Land Bank used this ranking to prioritize properties across city wards relative to the concentration of blighted houses in each ward. Properties were prioritized by creating a system of weights aligning with the collective ranking of each factor. The weights were then used to score each property. The highest scoring properties in each ward were then selected for demolition. The houses selected appear as funded demolition at www.flintpropertyportal.com. While some of these demolitions may become infeasible due to funding limitations, the Land Bank hopes to pursue demolition on the majority of these structures by the end of the summer 2021. Thank you to the C.S. Mott Foundation for providing the funding to complete these demolitions and to all the residents who shared their input on how we should prioritize demolitions with limited funding.

- By Christina Kelly & Melissa Hertlein

Message from our Executive Director, Michael Freeman, and Board Chair, Deborah Cherry



Deborah Cherry

Greetings from the GCLBA!

We hope that this newsletter finds you all safe and well. We are happy to report good news coming from the land bank. First, our Featured

Homes Program and vacant property sales are back on track and we have worked through a significant amount of the backlog we experienced from the shutdown. Furthermore, we have brought on additional capacity to get our vacant lot leasing program back up and running. Secondly, with staff vaccinations, our maintenance team will be working safely in the field again, which improves our community responsiveness. We understand that there have been delays, but our goal is to keep the community and our staff safe.



Michael Freeman

Finally, we have secured funding and initiated the demolitions of two key blighted apartment complexes on Stevenson Street and Lapeer Road impacting surrounding neighborhoods for years. And we are happy to announce that the EPA has granted our request to begin the demolition of Brown's Funeral Home on the City of Flint's East Side – which will help us deal with a serious hazard. While we are still mainly working remotely and our office is closed to the public to limit the spread of the virus, we are working diligently in managing our day to day work. I thank you all for your patience during this difficult time, and assure you that we will be nimble and able to manage the critical work of the GCLBA.

The Land Bank Welcomes Raul Garcia with Open Arms



Photo credit: Renee Harvey

As the former City of Flint's Blight Coordinator, Raul is not a stranger to the residents of Flint. Numerous block clubs, neighborhood associations, and residents relied on him for his assistance in addressing issues around blight. He is known for his reliability, passion for neighborhood work, and his devotion to Flint. These attributes are the reason Duane Bickford, Genesee County Land Bank Property Manager, has hired him as one of the Field Supervisors for the seasonal Weed and Trash Abatement program. Raul said, "I am excited to have this opportunity to return to neighborhood work and I am thankful to have this position. It allows me to serve residents and to give back to our city that I care so much about."

- Raynetta Speed

The Land Bank has officially launched Clean & Green 2021



Applications were released in January and more than 82 community groups applied to participate in the program this season. Successful applicants will be announced, and the season will officially be kicked off by mid-April. We look forward to another successful season! Thank you to all the program funders, including the Ruth Mott Foundation, and volunteers who are eager to make Flint area neighborhoods Clean & Green.

- By Christina Kelly & Melissa Hertlein

Taking Action to Prevent Dumping through Clean & Green

Illegal Dumping continues to be one of the biggest challenges residents and community groups face in Flint. During the last mowing season 80% of Clean & Green groups reported illegal dumping in their areas and specifically identified nearly 350 properties as dumping hotspots. This challenge limits the work that groups can do within their areas by taking up valuable time and resources to clean up the site, especially when it is a recurring issue. Land Bank is actively collecting location information on dumping sites through the Flint Property Portal with the help of Clean & Green volunteers and residents. Community members at large can help ensure the best data by reporting dumping through the Maintenance Message button on the Portal.



To prevent dumping, we are partnering with the University of Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center (YVPC) to pilot a project to implement and study illegal dumping prevention strategies with community-based group areas. This year, we offered Clean & Green groups with an opportunity to participate in the study and select sites for dumping prevention installations. In the Spring and early Summer, we plan to implement a series of site improvements to prevent dumping within selected group areas experiencing regular illegal dumping to see what works best. We will use this experience to apply best practices to other areas through the city to help to prevent and eventually eliminate illegal dumping. Thank you to our funders, partners and volunteers for working with us to clean up Flint area neighborhoods.

- By Christina Kelly & Melissa

The Long View

Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) receives properties through involuntary transfer after tax foreclosure. By the time that they become a part of the Land Bank's inventory, most of these properties have sat vacant and abandoned for many years.

Many have been vandalized, stripped, fire damaged, and have generally deteriorated into a condition unfit for occupancy. In addition to receiving structures in poor condition, most of the structures Land Bank receives were built prior to the 1970's when the U.S. first began regulating asbestos in building materials. This means that Land Bank accepts structurally deficient and potentially contaminated properties without the resources attached to these properties to address these issues. Ultimately, GCLBA's goal is to return properties to productive uses- ensuring that these properties return to community assets as property that is cared for and producing tax revenues for the municipality in which they are located. It often requires GCLBA take the long view, and coordinate funding and resources over a period of time before realizing success.

Success may be slow to materialize, but it is worth celebrating when it does! We are pleased to share two recent successes with you! Neighbors and the wider community are excited to see the former Arena East apartment complexes located on Lapeer Rd. and the former Greenview Manor complex off of Stevenson St.- visible from both Hurley Hospital and the Educare/Durant Tuuri Mott Elementary- turn into welcoming green spaces, inviting the imagination and investors to ponder possible future uses.

Arena East on Lapeer Rd. was abandoned prior to 2008 and tax foreclosed in 2013. GCLBA has made many attempts over the years to either market the property or obtain the funding needed to remove the blighted structures. Thanks to the City of Flint and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, GCLBA was able to commit to abatement and demolition of these long standing eye sores. Utilizing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Site Assessment Grants and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), GCLBA and funders have committed nearly \$640,000 to the cleanup.

Greenview Manor, located at 817 N Stevenson St., has been abandoned since 2011. The property was accepted by the Genesee County Land Bank in December in 2018. GCLBA was successful in achieving an EPA Multipurpose Grant in 2019 and has allocated more than \$280,000 of the grant toward the environmental clean up of the site prior to demolition. Over all, the project cost will be more than \$650,000 and is funded through various grants from the City of Flint CDBG, C.S. Mott Foundation, and EPA.

It has been a long time coming, but GCLBA is committed to the long view and continues to pursue resources needed to strengthen our community. These recent successes are scheduled for completion and will be ready for reuse by June 2021!

- By Faith Finholm



3332/3336 Lapeer Rd—Before



817 N Stevenson St. - Before



817 N Stevenson St. - During Demo



817 N Stevenson St. - Winter-grade

Brown's Funeral Home, A Eulogy

Brown's Funeral Home on Davison Rd. was built prior to 1950 and closed in 2007. The building was briefly repurposed in 2014 by a church group offering what was dubbed as "The Hell Experience" before being abandoned shortly after. In December 2018, the Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) received the property from the



Genesee County Treasurer after tax foreclosure. By that time, there had already been several smaller fires in the structure and the roof was caving in. GCLBA staff immediately set to work attempting to identify resources to address the 31,000 SF nuisance. Utilizing an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Site Assessment Grant, GCLBA was able to conduct some environmental studies on the site prior to the major fire in November 2020. The November 2020 fire left the site open to the elements and dangerous. As soon as GCLBA learned about the damage, staff reached out to EPA to request assistance with the removal of the building remains. EPA quickly conducted site visits and air monitoring to ensure community safety and started the process to get the necessary approvals to remove the hazard. GCLBA was notified in early March 2021 that EPA would initiate a removal action in April 2021 with a planned wrap up in June/July 2021.

We are grateful for our partnerships with EPA and Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy that enable GCLBA to amplify the impact of our limited resources. It's always with some heaviness that we pursue the removal of long-standing structures with history in our community, but it is also with relief and joy that we are able to make our community a safer and more attractive place to live. We can't wait to share more with you on the progress of the cleanup at Brown's Funeral Home.

- By Faith Finholm

GCLBA Spotlight: Alexandria T. Riley, Sales & Development Director

GCLBA Spotlight series features Land Bank staff and community members. The series is intended to highlight the important work our staff and community members do to keep the Land Bank running smoothly and to support our mission of restoring value to the community through

Today, we're interviewing the dynamic woman who leads the Sales & Development Team: Alexandria T. Riley. Recently, Alexandria joined the staff at the Land Bank and heads a team of four tasked with developing and selling vacant and abandoned properties.



Alexandria T. Riley

What did you do before you worked for the Land Bank, and what made you want to work here?

It has been a privilege to be a part of an amazing team at the Land Bank committed to serving the community – so I am grateful to have come on board. The opportunity for service with the Genesee County Land Bank Authority is unparalleled by any other in the region. The Land Bank is on the cutting edge of merging innovation and community engagement.

I worked as the Chief Development Officer for my home town – the City of Pontiac. I also operated a construction company and real estate firm as I am licensed as a builder and real estate broker. My position at the Land Bank provides me an opportunity to do work that encompasses all my passions – public service, real estate, and development.

How do you manage to bring so much passion to your work every day? What keeps you motivated?

It's easy to stay motivated when you know the importance of your work. We are working to expand access to homeownership to people, specifically those in underserved communities, where homeownership is necessary and offers the best chance to build generational wealth and break the cycles of poverty.

Genesee County Land Bank Completes Lead Safe Rehabs

The Genesee County Land Bank received a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) through their Lead Safe Home Program to fully renovate two vacant Land Bank-owned houses. Both houses are located in Flint neighborhoods as one is in Mott Park and the other in the Durant Tuuri

Mott target area. The repairs include full-code renovation that ensure compliance in electrical, mechanical, and plumbing as well as certifying the overall structure of the home is strong and supported. Kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms are updated with modern amenities. Both properties will be sold to low and moderate- income families as a means to safely house and assist in wealth building.

This effort was supported through a partnership with the Genesee County Habitat for Humanity (Habitat). Habitat co-managed the renovation. The benefits of these fully renovated properties include: greater protection to the health and safety for future homeowners, the value of these properties increases with comprehensive rehabilitations, reduces formerly vacant “eyesores”, and bolsters both homeowner and neighborhood pride.

The MDHHS Lead Safe Program offers assistance to low and moderate- income families in making their homes lead-safe. To date, the program has made upgrades to over 2,600 properties. More information regarding assistance through this program can be found at <https://www.michigan.gov>.

-Moses Timlin



914 University —Before



914 University —After

Photo credit: Renee Harvey



705 St Clair—Before



705 St Clair—After

Restoring Value to the Community

Land Bank crews do a limited number of housing renovations on properties received after tax foreclosure each year. Check out this example of how the crews did a makeover to make this house a home.

Realtor Listing:

3300 MENOMINEE ST, Burton

Agent: Dan Borgerding

Century 21 Signature Realty

Email: borgerdingd@aol.com

Cell 1-810-691-5555

Office 1-810-659-3161



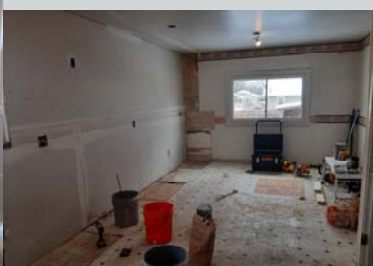
Bathroom —Before



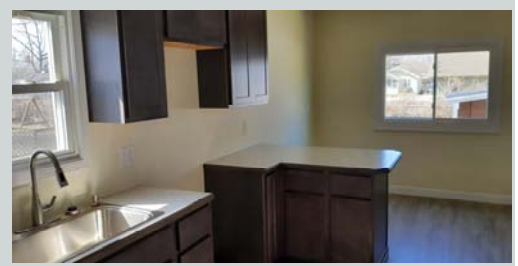
Bathroom—After



Kitchen—Before



Kitchen—After



Genesee County Land Bank Authority
452 S. Saginaw Street
Second Floor
Flint, MI 48502-1832

To receive our e-newsletter please sign up
on our website at:

 www.facebook.com/GCLBA
www.thelandbank.org

http://thelandbank.org/news_rpts.asp

New citywide program provides Flint residents with funding to renovate, improve homes



- ▶ Open to homeowners of all income levels
- ▶ Low- or no- interest loans of up to \$20,000
- ▶ Home repairs, renovations or improvements

TO LEARN MORE OR APPLY, VISIT Flint-HIF.org



GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK BOARD MEMBERS:

Hon. Deborah Cherry – Chair
Hon. Patricia Lockwood - Secretary
Hon. Bryant Nolden – Treasurer
Hon. Ellen Ellenbug
Hon. Santino Guerra
Hon. Shaun Shumaker
Hon. Charles Winfrey

GENESEE COUNTY LAND BANK CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chris Del Morone – Chair
Larry Petrella – Vice Chair
Cheryl Christoff
Tim Coleman
Gerri Hall
Rev. Jacob Hawkins
Deborah Holmes
Joe King
Eric Loper
Quincy Murphy
Harry Ryan
Edna Sabucco
Anoop Todd
5- Vacant Positions

Michael Freeman, *Executive Director*

Featured Homes Program

To find out which properties are available for sale, check out the Featured Homes section on our website, follow us on Facebook, submit your e-mail address on the Featured Home page of the Land Bank website to receive a weekly e-mail with that week's open houses— http://www.thelandbank.org/featured_homes.asp.

OPEN HOUSES

#SafetyFirst PROCESS

To be allowed entrance, you must:

- ✓ **Wear a Mask**
- ✓ **Bring Photo ID**
- ✓ **Complete a COVID-19 self assessment**



for FEATURED HOMES



CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO **810-257-3088**

www.thelandbank.org