

## Crowdfunding the Demolition of a Blighted Tax Foreclosed House

Gordon Young, a journalist and educator who grew up in Flint, worked with neighbors and the Land Bank to initiate an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign to demolish a blighted tax-foreclosed house in an otherwise stable neighborhood on the north end of Flint. Gordon Young is the author of *Teardown: Memoir of a Vanishing City*, a Michigan Notable Book for 2014.



The campaign will raise funds to demolish 6608 Park Belt, an abandoned house that became blighted after years of neglect and eventually a fire. Neighbors are eager to see the house demolished. Long-time resident Paulette Mayfield lives in and grew up in the house next door. "I worry that the empty house will start to define the whole neighborhood," she said. "This is a good, strong neighborhood but we need to get rid of that eyesore." Doug Weiland, Executive Director of the Genesee County Land Bank agrees with Mayfield that the house should be demolished. One abandoned and blighted house on a well-maintained block can destabilize the whole neighborhood," said Weiland. "Demolishing this newly foreclosed house sooner rather than later will help to stem the cycle of decline and send a message to surrounding homeowners that their neighborhood is worth investing in." To support the demolition of the blighted house, go to: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/fight-blight-and-spur-revival-in-flint-michigan>.

By Christina Kelly

### From The Board Chair

Deborah Cherry

### Amidst All The Demolitions, One Is Unique!



For the past year the Land Bank has been fortunate in being awarded about \$24 million in state and federal funds to demolish about 1,700 commercial and residential properties mostly in Flint.

But among all these properties one stands out as unique – 6608 Parkbelt Drive on Flint's northwest side. The reason this property is unique is that its demolition will be funded by people throughout the country that care about Flint. Many are Flint expatriates now living around the nation and others are simply people who are aware of the many challenges we have with blighted properties and want to do their bit to help.

Former Flint resident and author of *Teardown: Memoir of a Vanishing City*, Gordon Young has worked with the Land Bank and the neighborhood to launch an Internet crowdfunding campaign to raise \$10,000 in small donations to fund this particular project. In the first five days of the campaign over \$3,000 was raised which bodes well for the project's success. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a more in depth article about the project.

I simply want to add my thanks to Gordon and his efforts to help eliminate blight in his former hometown!

Deb Cherry  
Genesee County Treasurer  
Genesee County Land Bank Authority, Chair

6608  
PARKBELT  
DRIVE



# EPA Brownfield Site Assessment Grant Award

The **Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA)** was awarded a \$400,000 Site Assessment Grant for Hazardous and Petroleum Substances from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding for 2014 - 2017. The funds enable us to assess the condition of contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in Genesee County to help position them for remediation and re-use.



The assessment grant project will focus on three target areas where little to no financial resources are available to facilitate and support needed redevelopment: (1) tax foreclosed properties received by the GCLBA, (2) assistance to minority, disadvantaged, and small businesses within the City of Flint and surrounding communities, and (3) abandoned automotive and industrial sites.

The goals of this program are to **create jobs, address public health issues, and return abandoned or underutilized brownfields properties back into productive use.** Productive uses range from re-occupancy to re-purposing vacant space for parks, as well as open space and green innovation (including energy and agriculture) as defined in the City of Flint Master Plan.  
*By Cheryl McHallam*

## NSP2 Program Income Grant Award

Genesee County Land Bank was awarded \$396,440 in NSP2 Program Income funding to demolish 34 blighted houses in NSP2 Eligible Areas in the City of Flint. The overall purpose of the NSP 2 program is to address the negative effects of abandonment and foreclosure on neighborhoods. The new demolitions will help to eliminate blight and improve the quality of life for nearby residents. The program will support stabilization, greening, repurposing and reinvestments.



GCLB will apply for any future NSP2 Program Income Grants as they are announced.

*By Cheryl McHallam*

## Oak Street Senior Apartments Nearing Completion

The historic Oak Street School, formerly owned by the Genesee County Land Bank, will be transformed into the Oak Street Senior Apartments within 6-8 weeks. Glenn and Essence Wilson of Communities First, Inc. are looking for seniors age 62 and over to move into the 24 one-bedroom units in this uniquely restored low-income senior housing building. 6 of the units are barrier-free. Tenant rents are income based and include heat, air conditioning, and water and trash collection. Oak Street Senior Apartments also has a community room, library, and conference room and computer lab. If you are interested in applying for housing call the Oak Street Senior Apartments at (810)354-7400.

*By Heidi Phaneuf*



*(Photos provided by Communities First )*



# Beyond Blight Community Workshops

## 5-Year Comprehensive Blight Elimination Framework for the City of Flint

FLINT, MI – With support from the Genesee County Land Bank, the City of Flint hosted a series of public workshops in each of the nine Wards to share the newly drafted Five-Year Comprehensive Blight Framework. Participants heard highlights from the plan and shared their priorities for blight elimination activities in their area.

The Beyond Blight draft Framework follows on the completion of the *Imagine Flint* Master Plan, formally adopted in October 2013. The master plan called for a detailed plan around blight elimination with the goal of future neighborhood stabilization around Flint's population by eliminating blight in neighborhoods and improving the quality of life for residents while focusing on seven key activities for blight elimination. These include: demolition, code enforcement, waste removal, mowing, boarding, vacant lot reuse, and building rehabilitation and redevelopment

As the five-year cost of removing blight in Flint is estimated at roughly \$112 million, the Framework proposes collaborative blight elimination between residents, local government, institutions, community groups, and businesses and developers.

The *Imagine Flint* master plan, formally adopted on October 28, 2013, is the City's first official comprehensive plan since 1960. "We continually heard public safety, blight, and code enforcement were some of the top priorities for residents," said Megan Hunter, Director of Planning & Development. "This framework lets us begin to strategically assess our current neighborhood level conditions, community efforts and funding shortages. It stays respectful to the new land use plan and focuses strategies on how blight elimination efforts can impact city residents most efficiently. Having these specific Ward workshops will allow us to hear from residents and that can really strengthen this framework."



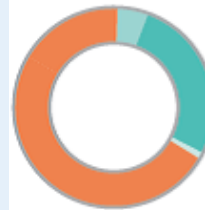
### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ELIMINATING BLIGHT IN FLINT?



When owners abandon properties and stop maintenance, the local community is left with the blight that follows and the responsibility of removing it.

### How much will it cost? \$112,201,135

COST BY ACTIVITY



**Demolition accounts for 67% of the total cost of removing blight over the next 5 years.**

# The Civic Park Neighborhood is on the Rebound!

After many years of disinvestment, neglect and blight, residents decided that it was time to join forces to become change agents for their neighborhood and form a neighborhood association. Raynetta Speed, the Community Outreach Coordinator of the Genesee County Land Bank and Regina Laurie, from Building Neighborhood Power have been helping the group get started.

The Association has been meeting every two weeks for the last few months. The members elected Maurice Davis as the President, Eric Williams as the Vice-President, Katrina Crater as the Secretary and Gloria Tucker as the Treasurer. The next meeting is Thursday, August 7th at 5.30pm. All Civic Park residents are welcome to participate. Meetings are held at Joy Tabernacle on the corner of Dayton and Chevrolet. However, the August 7th meeting will take place in the City Council Chambers at City Hall at the meeting of the Local Historic District Commission (HDC) at 5.30pm.



Civic Park has a local and national historic designation making it challenging to demolish blighted houses. However, residents remain hopeful that some blighted houses can be demolished in the future. Heidi Phaneuf, the Community Resource Planner with the Land Bank is working with the association and city staff to get permission from the City of Flint, Historic District Commission (HDC) to allow demolitions in the neighborhood. The association has agreed to hold a beautification/clean-up every Friday at 6.00pm to help restore pride in Civic Park. Everyone is invited to participate in this beautification effort. For more information about clean-ups and the Civic Park Neighborhood Association contact Maurice Davis at 810.234.6366.

*By Raynetta Speed*

**The dates for the 2014 Genesee County Treasurer's Auctions of Tax Foreclosed Properties are as follows:**

◇ **Thursday, September 11, 2014**

*Registration begins at 11:30 a.m.*

*Auction to begin at 12:00 noon*



The auctions will be held at the Holiday Inn Gateway Centre off Hill Road near the US-23 freeway.

**Location: Holiday Inn Gateway Center**  
5353 Gateway Center  
Flint, MI 48507

◇ **No Minimum Bid Auction** (*More information to come*)

◇ October 28, 2014

◇ October 29, 2014

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](http://www.tax-sale.info/genesee-county).

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