

Blighted Former Ramada Inn Slated for Demolition

A collaborative effort between the Genesee County Land Bank, Genesee County Treasurer, Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, and Mt. Morris Township will enable the Land Bank to



demolish the former Ramada Inn in Mt. Morris Township by the end of this year. The GCLBA received this 8.5 acre blighted and abandoned property in 2014 after tax foreclosure. The property, located at I-75 and Pierson Road within the main commercial district of Mt. Morris Township, includes a severely blighted 96,717 sq. ft. building. The property was originally developed in 1968 and abandoned in 2006 after two structural fires. Since then, the building quickly fell into disrepair, posing economic challenges and health, safety, and environmental threats to the community.

The property had been a financial drain on the GCLBA, local community, and police force. The GCLBA invested in legal, environmental, security and other costs at the property. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assisted with a 2011 asbestos survey and 2012 Removal Action cleanup of chemical hazards at the property. Due to the presence of asbestos throughout the building, the abatement and demolition of the structure is estimated to be about \$1,000,000. As detailed to the right, six sources of funding will be used to make this demolition a reality. This collaborative effort will strengthen this key corridor and help to create future development opportunities.

- By Cheryl McHallam

From The Board Chair Deborah Cherry

Major Eyesore Coming Down Soon



Thanks to the efforts of a number of people working together, the funds have been assembled to demolish the former Ramada Inn on Pierson Road in Mt. Morris Township. The project is estimated to cost about \$1 million dollars with funds coming from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Genesee County Treasurer, the Genesee County Board of Commissioners, the Land Bank and Mt. Morris Township.

The building, which has been abandoned since a fire took place about ten years ago, was foreclosed by the County Treasurer's office in 2014 and reverted to the Land Bank this year. It has been a major eyesore for years and is highly visible from I-75 and along the Pierson Road business corridor. Its presence has been detrimental to the businesses along Pierson Road and has been an unwelcome sight as people pass through Genesee County on the freeway. Work on the demolition will begin with asbestos removal and environmental abatement this fall with the actual demolition taking place later this year. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to get the funding in place to rid our community of this major eyesore.

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

Why Does the Land Bank Mow All Vacant Properties in Flint?

A decrease in Flint's population has generated an abundance of vacant properties; there are more houses and buildings available than there are people and businesses to fill them. There are approximately 22,000 vacant properties in Flint today, representing more than one-third of all properties in the city.

Because the Land Bank receives vacant properties through tax-foreclosure, it currently owns about one-third of vacant properties in Flint. Although it is not required to, the Land Bank mows vacant properties because it is dedicated to stabilizing and improving neighborhoods. As funding allows, the Land Bank mows all vacant properties in Flint, two thirds of which it does now own. It would cost \$7 million annually to mow the grass and remove trash from all vacant properties in Flint, once a month from spring to summer. The Land Bank has approximately \$1 million for weed and trash abatement in 2015.

Vacant Properties in Flint



7,500 Vacant Structures

23% Publicly Owned

77% Privately Owned

14,500 Vacant Lots

55% Publicly Owned

45% Privately Owned

2015 Vacant Property Mowing Plan

The Land Bank is mowing vacant properties in Flint and Genesee County again this year. Land Bank crews service vacant Land Bank properties outside of the city of Flint. Vacant properties located in Flint are mowed through a multi-faceted plan.

LAND BANK CREWS are mowing grass and removing trash from all vacant properties in Flint by following the City of Flint's Beyond Blight: Comprehensive Blight Elimination Framework.

- In April, crews mowed tall grass and removed trash from properties that were not visited in 2014.
- In May, crews started sweeping the city of Flint, mowing grass and removing trash from all vacant properties. Crews will visit all vacant properties in Flint at least once in 2015.
- Vacant and blighted properties that are next to occupied properties are completely mowed.
- Mow strips are used for vacant and blighted properties that are not next to occupied properties.



CLEAN & GREEN is in the midst of its largest year ever. This year, 57 groups are collectively maintaining more than 3,400 vacant properties in and around Flint through the Land Bank's Clean & Green program. The Land Bank awards stipends to community groups for their Clean & Green work. Many of the groups use the stipends to train and employ local youth in improving their neighborhoods.

Hundreds of vacant lots are being maintained this year through the Land Bank's **LOTS AVAILABLE** program. Through the program, the Land Bank makes its vacant lots available through Adopt-A-Lot agreements, Lease-A-Lot agreements, and Side Lot sales.

Last but not least, the Land Bank is planting **CLOVER** on thousands of vacant lots to reduce long-term maintenance needs and costs. Vacant lots are reseeded with clover as part of the demolition process.

- By Natalie Pruett

Chevy Commons: Moving into Phase 2



The Genesee County Land Bank will continue to manage the transformation of the old Chevy in the Hole manufacturing site, owned by the City of Flint, into Chevy Commons.

The City of Flint, the Genesee County Land Bank and others are working together to turn the site into a natural area along the Flint River. The site will include woodlands, grasslands, open space, walking paths through the property, and sitting areas.

The construction of Phase one of Chevy Commons, started in March of this year on 16 of the 60 acres of the site stretching east from Chevrolet Avenue, is about 80 percent complete with only landscaping and some plantings yet to be finalized. Phase two will include constructing an earthen cap, pathways and a low maintenance landscape on approximately 10 additional acres immediately east of Phase one. The work on this phase will hopefully begin in September/October of this year with \$400,000 in funding from the Genesee County Treasurer through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brown-field Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund. These funds will be used with funds remaining from Phase one to complete the project.

- By Cheryl McHallam

Genesee County Land Bank Wrapping Up Largest Blight-Elimination Program in Flint History

The Genesee County Land Bank is on track to demolish 1,786 vacant and dilapidated houses by the end of the summer under a \$22.7 million Hardest Hit Fund grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. All but 15 houses have already been demolished. This support from the state and federal government has enabled the Land Bank to make the single largest investment to date in blight elimination in the Flint Area.

“We congratulate the Genesee County Land Bank and the City of Flint for the impressive progress made toward re-inventing the city under this blight-removal program,” said MSHDA Executive Director Kevin Elsenheimer. “The project is a sterling example of federal, state and local governments working together for the public good.” The Flint area will be the first of the five communities in Michigan awarded a combined total of \$100 million in Hardest Hit Fund dollars to complete its demolitions under the program. The other communities awarded Hardest Hit Funds are Detroit, Grand Rapids, Pontiac and Saginaw. “Removing the worst houses on the block helps to stabilize neighborhoods, reduce crime and create opportunities for new investment”, said Deborah Cherry, Genesee County treasurer and chairperson of the Genesee County Land Bank. For more information about the HHF demolitions go to: <http://www.thelandbank.org/blightfree.asp>.

- By Christina Kelly

After More than 200 Demolitions, Civic Pride Increases in Civic Park

Civic Park Neighborhood has gone through tremendous change in the last few months and neighborhood pride is stronger than ever. Over 200 homes have been demolished by the Genesee County Land Bank with Hardest Hit Funding throughout this unique neighborhood that includes Flint’s largest National Register Historic District. Vacant and blighted homes that were once plaguing residents have come down and the atmosphere is one of hope and Civic Pride. “I can breathe better. It has taken the heaviness off. It almost looks like a different place,” says Lynn Williams a Civic Park resident and member of the neighborhood association “I see more children in the neighborhood, playing outside. More residents are planting flowers in their yards. A new family is moving in across the street from me.”

Civic Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) has been instrumental in creating a welcoming environment; the group celebrated their first anniversary in 2015. Neighborhood President Maurice Davis said the group works hard “for the betterment and safety of the neighborhood, were neighbors help neighbors.” CPNA was a major force behind getting funding for the demolitions in their neighborhood. In fact, it was the resident’s voices that made a difference. “We could not have gotten through the local Historic District review process without them,” said Doug Weiland, Executive Director of the Land Bank. This neighborhood is so committed to change, they meet twice a month, they have regular clean-ups, maintain properties with the Land Bank’s Clean & Green program, and are planning a Jazz Music Festival August 22nd and Gospel Extravaganza August 23rd in Civic Park.

Joy Tabernacle hosts the CPNA meetings at their historic church on Dayton and has been working for a number of years on blight removal and community empowerment. Rev. McCathern, Joy Tabernacle’s Pastor, sees the transformation, “allowing the vibrant landscape of the neighborhood to be seen in its original intention, beautiful trees and green spaces, the design of the homes. You are able to see the neighborhood with the elimination of blight. It has strengthened the neighborhood, reduced crime and created a sense of safety.”



Left: Corner lot with straw on recently demolished home with perennial flowers



Above: Photo of residents home next to a recently demolished home in Civic Park.



Above: Photo of residents home next to a recently demolished home in Civic Park.



Above: Beautifully maintained Clean & Green lot by Civic Park Neighborhood Assoc.



Public Notice from the Genesee County Treasurer Auctions of Tax Foreclosed Properties

Each year, the **Genesee County Treasurer** forecloses on tax delinquent properties if taxes aren't paid before the March 31st deadline. The **Treasurer** provides multiple notices and opportunities for extensions to prevent foreclosure. After the foreclosure is complete, the **Treasurer** is required to make properties not reversed or purchased by local governments available for sale at auction. Foreclosed properties that are not sold at auction are deeded to the Genesee County Land Bank at the end of the year. Details on the auctions are provided below. Additional details can be found at: www.tax-sale.info/genesee-county.

1st Auction: Minimum Bid Auction:

Date and Time: Thursday, September 17, 2015. *Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. Auction to begin at 12:00 noon*

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

2nd Auction: No Minimum Bid Auction

Date: October 29, 2015 (More information to come)

Listings of the properties included in the auction and auction rules will be available around 30 days prior to the auctions on the website: www.tax-sale.info/genesee-county.

Genesee County Treasurer
1101 Beach Street, Flint, MI 48502-1475
PHONE: (810) 257-3054 ■ FAX: (810) 257-3885
http://www.gc4me.com/departments/treasurer_s/index.php

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