Community Briefing

The latest news about our programs and real state solutions

Fall 2020

Township to revitalize neighborhood with Land Bank program

Harrison Township and the Land Bank have executed an agreement to launch the Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative in the township’s Castlewood neighborhood, which is bordered by North Main Street to the west, Riverside Drive to the east, East Nottingham Road to the north, and Redwood Avenue to the south.

The program is designed to increase neighborhood property values by removing problem structures, refurbishing a small number of tax-delinquent homes, and then selling them to owner occupants. This strategy helps to demonstrate a market for improved homes and drive up comparable housing values. The Land Bank successfully completed three such home sales in the Dayton’s Pineview neighborhood, where the initiative was first piloted.

The township is budgeting $50,000 per year for five years toward the revitalization effort, and the Land Bank has committed $250,000.
The Land Bank has been assisting the city of Miamisburg with an effort to revitalize one of its neighborhoods through the Miamisburg CARES program. The city’s program features many parallels to the Land Bank’s Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative.

From the beginning, the city has wanted citizens to drive the development of a vision for the neighborhood; however, COVID-19 restrictions have made that difficult.

Enter technology. As a supporting partner of the Thriving Neighborhoods Initiative, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission has provided technical expertise in process design, data gathering, analysis, GIS data mapping and more. Now the agency has embraced the new challenge of helping Miamisburg obtain meaningful public participation in the planning process without in-person contact.

“Leveraging our technical capacity, we were able to launch a new suite of online public-engagement tools that supplement traditional methods,” said Martin Kim, MVRPC’s director of community and regional planning. “We were happy to lend our expertise to facilitate this process.”

MVRPC’s new tools are helping to keep Miamisburg CARES on track, allowing citizens to weigh in on potential improvements through a computer or smartphone app.

**Historic building renovation gains momentum**
In our last issue, we reported the Land Bank had purchased the tax lien on an abandoned, run-down commercial property in downtown Dayton and foreclosed on it. The plan was to sell it to the developer of the adjacent Reed-Steffan Building, an historic gem located at 18 W. Fifth St.

In late summer, the sale was finalized, and the developer, Columbus-based Triad Architects, quickly demolished the collapsing structure.

Triad’s vision is to renovate the historic building with a combination of new residential, office, and first-floor retail spaces. Officials foresee the vacant site becoming patio space and providing access to a lobby entrance for the second and third floors of the refurbished building.

"The Land Bank’s involvement was very important," said Triad owner Zach Price. "The delinquent taxes on the parcel combined with a negotiated purchase price and demolition costs would have made the project unfeasible."

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**Entities collaborate on EPA brownfields grant**
Four local jurisdictions have joined with the Land Bank to apply for a highly competitive EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition grant. The partners include the cities of West Carrollton and Riverside, Harrison Township, and Five River MetroParks. Winning the grant may become the first step in the reuse of up to four contaminated sites in Montgomery County.

The Assessment Coalition category allows one "lead" eligible entity to partner with two or more eligible entities that would benefit from the evaluation of a brownfield in their jurisdiction, but may lack the resources to manage an EPA grant.

The lead entity, the Land Bank, has managed the grant-application process and is prepared to utilize its experience in grant administration, program management, and reporting on behalf of the four jurisdictions.

West Carrollton officials hope the grant will eventually lead to the productive reuse of a 28-acre, PCB-contaminated site that was once Appvion paper company’s wastewater treatment plant.

“"The Land Bank is giving us a vehicle to attract the dollars necessary for a brownfield assessment so we know how to go about remediation," said Mike Lucking, West Carrollton’s economic development director. “We think the collection of projects from four jurisdictions gives us a stronger application.”

The $600,000 proposal was submitted on October 28. The award will be announced in the spring of 2021.

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