



County land bank - Dayton Daily News (OH) - February 27, 2013 - page B1

February 27, 2013 | Dayton Daily News (OH) | ByJoanne Huist Smith StaffWriter | Page B1

Montgomery County's fledgling **land bank** will get an estimated \$1.1 million a year from delinquent property tax collections to fund operations, with the goal of transiting blighted, foreclosed, and abandoned properties into viable, marketable real estate.

The **County** Commission, on Tuesday, **awarded** five percent of the **county's** Delinquent Tax and Assessment Collection Fund to the **land bank**, officially known as the **Montgomery County Land Re-utilization Corporation**. **Montgomery County** was the last urban **county** in Ohio to adopt this funding mechanism for its **land bank**.

Land bank board member Douglas E. Harnish called the **land** re-utilization corporation "an implement of change."

"Any implement needs a power source, an engine, in order for it to be used for its designed purpose. In the case of the (**land bank**) this engine is money," Harnish said.

Prior to the vote, **Montgomery County** Treasurer Carolyn Rice, brought in speakers from around the **county** and the state to address the commission on the benefits of a **land bank**.

"The **land bank** isn't about that vacant and abandoned property. It's about the well cared for, well maintained home on either side of the vacant house," said Lucas **County** Treasurer Wade Kapszukiewicz, also chair of the **county's land bank**.

Montgomery County Auditor Karl Keith said he believes property values will continue to struggle here until the issue of the estimated 7,000 vacant and abandoned structures across the **county** is addressed. About 75 percent of owners who are delinquent on their property taxes never make a payment plan driving the **county's** delinquency tax rolls to \$90 million on 23,000 parcels.

That's where **Montgomery County's** new **land bank** can make a difference, Rice said.

Seven properties have been acquired and passed through the **land bank** since last August. One of those properties was the former Dayton Electroplate on Valley Street, which used to top the **county's** list of tax delinquent properties. Now, the new owner is demolishing the structures, remediating the site, and giving the entire area new promise, Rice said.

The new funding potentially could be used to establish a lot links program where a neighbor would have a chance to acquire abandoned properties adjacent to theirs, or for rehab and demolition, Rice said.

“The **land bank** board has kept its pledge to start small and evolve, but the time has come to provide the revenue needed to seriously address the problem,” said Rice, adding only properties with an identified new user will be accepted into the **land bank**.

Rice said the next step will be to meet with jurisdictions to explain what is available and urge them to get involved.

Currently, the **land bank** has Memorandums of Understanding with Dayton, Trotwood, Riverside, Kettering and Harrison Township. A similar memorandum is being negotiated with West Carrollton.

The delinquent property tax collections for the **land bank** would have gone to taxing authorities in the **county** such as schools, cities, park districts and libraries.

For example, the action will redirect an estimated \$242,639 from Dayton Public Schools, \$181,907 from **Montgomery County** Human Services and \$43,965 from Sinclair Community College.

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