

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BERKS COUNTY BLIGHTED PROPERTY
REVIEW COMMITTEE**

JANUARY 28, 2025

Denise Commings, Vice Chair, called the meeting of the **BERKS COUNTY BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE (BPRC)** to order at approximately 2:35 P.M. on January 28, 2025. The meeting was held as a public meeting by way of the Zoom virtual platform and allowed for full Committee and public interaction during the meeting and hearings. The following Committee members were present during the meeting:

Denise Commings, Vice Chair
Commissioner Michael Rivera
Lee Olsen, AIA

Chairman Eileen Kastura and Secretary Ronald Heim were absent. After Roll Call, Vice Chair Commings declared a quorum.

Also in attendance were:

Pauline Klopp, Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks
Joan E. London, Esquire of Kozloff Stoudt, P.C., Solicitor
Michelle Bare, Manager, Borough of Wyomissing
Amy Beakley, Manager, Borough of Hamburg
Ryan Wessner, Code Official, Borough of Hamburg
Joshua Young, Code Enforcement Officer, Borough of Kutztown
Glenn Bertolet, Kraft Municipal Services
Jeffrey Hogg, Kraft Municipal Services
Jeff Fiant, Kraft Municipal Services
William Frymoyer, Code Official, Cumru Township
Sydney Youngblood, Esquire (on behalf of owner of 727 State Street, Borough of Hamburg)
Janet Schumaker, Owner, 708 Chew Street, Borough of Hamburg
Marissa Bennett, Karasch (Court Reporter)

The minutes of the meeting of November 12, 2024 meeting had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously by the members present.

Under Old Business, Vice Chair Commings announced the Determination Hearing for the property located at 708 Chew Street, Borough of Hamburg. Solicitor London read

into the record the hearing exhibits, including notices, affidavits of municipal officials, and photographs of conditions on the property. Janet Schumaker, the owner of the property, was present in the meeting room for the hearing, and testified that she lived in Klinesville, and was making efforts to clean up the property but was having difficulty because of working at several jobs, and no light, heat or electricity in the property. She admitted to the accumulation of junk and debris, a condition confirmed by the Borough Manager and Code Official. At the close of testimony and evidence, a motion was made by Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, the members present voted 3-0 for a determination of the property as meeting three or more characteristics of blight contained in Berks County Ordinance No. 09-2014. Upon motion of Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously to close the hearing.

Vice Chair Commings announced the Certification Hearing for the property located at 727 State Street, Borough of Hamburg. Solicitor London read into the record the hearing exhibits, including notices, affidavits of municipal officials, current photographs of the condition of the property, and the transcript from the hearing at which the property had been determined to be blighted. The Borough Manager and Code Official advised that the conditions have continued unabated. Attorney Sydney Youngblood appeared for the record owner, Awine Affordable Homes, LLC, and stated that the property had a buyer and presented a letter asking for continuance of action. A copy of this letter is attached to these Minutes. The Borough Code Official expressed skepticism. At the close of testimony and evidence, a motion was made by Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, to certify the property as blighted, but to defer issuance of the order for a period of ten (10) days to allow owner's counsel to produce a signed, valid agreement of sale for the property. Upon motion of Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, the members present voted unanimously to close the hearing.

Vice Chair Commings requested a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-1, certifying the property at 103-105 East Main Street, Borough of Kutztown, to the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks for possible acquisition. The Code Official for the Borough of Kutztown, Joshua Young, confirmed to the Committee that the property remained in the same condition as it was at the time of determination and certification of blight. Upon motion of Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously to adopt the Resolution.

Vice Chair Commings addressed the following items of New Business:

- a. Authorization to advertise a Certification Hearing for the property located at 63 Hemlock Road, Cumru Township, Pennsylvania and send notice to homeowner. Upon motion of Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously in favor. Hearing will be conducted at the next scheduled meeting on March 25, 2025.

- b. Authorization to advertise a Certification Hearing for the property located at 102 E. Penn Street, Lenhartsville Borough, Pennsylvania and send notice to homeowner. Upon motion of Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, the members present voted unanimously in favor. Hearing will be conducted at the next scheduled meeting on March 25, 2025.
- c. Authorization to advertise a Certification Hearing for the property located at 1853 Old Lancaster Pike, Cumru Township, Pennsylvania and send notice to homeowner. Upon motion of Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously in favor. Hearing will be conducted at the next scheduled meeting on March 25, 2025.
- d. Authorization to advertise a Certification Hearing for the property located at 1306 Penn Avenue, Wyomissing Borough, Pennsylvania and send notice to homeowner. Upon motion of Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, the members present voted unanimously in favor. Hearing will be conducted at the next scheduled meeting on March 25, 2025.
- e. Authorization to send a First Strike letter for the property located at 1741 Paper Mill Road, Wyomissing Borough, Pennsylvania. Upon motion by Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously in favor.
- f. Authorize to remove the property located at 264 Friedensburg Road, situated in Mt. Penn Borough, Pennsylvania from the blighted property process. Discussion followed as to verification from the Borough that the property had been sold and that there had been sufficient progress to remove the property from the list. Upon motion by Mr. Olsen, with a second by Commissioner Rivera, the members present voted unanimously in favor.
- g. Authorization to remove the property located at 2319 Fairview Avenue, situated in Mt. Penn Borough, Pennsylvania from the blighted property process. Discussion followed as to verification from the Borough that the property had been sold and that there had been sufficient progress to remove the property from the list. Upon motion by Commissioner Rivera, with a second by Mr. Olsen, the members present voted unanimously in favor.

Mr. Olsen commented that the 1741 Paper Mill Road property was a hotel property, and not the usual residential properties referred to the Blighted Property Committee.

With no additional business items, a motion was made by Mr. Olsen with a second by Commissioner Rivera to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously by the members present, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:39 pm.

BERKS COUNTY BLIGHTED
PROPERTY REVIEW
COMMITTEE



Ronald Heim, Secretary