

ANTI-BLIGHT COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Approved

April 20, 2012

Members

Thomas Mills - present
Milton C. Thomas, Esq. - present
Franklin Melzer, Esq. - present
James Caterbone - excused
Patricia Parry - present

Staff

Paul Zeiss - present

Special Counsel

Vincent J Freccia III, Esq. - present

1. Introduction of Committee Members

Meeting was called to order at 2:05PM by Mr. Freccia. This is the 1st meeting of this committee since the former ABO retired and Mr. Freccia introduced each member and the commission each is affiliated with. Mr. Mills is Chair of the Zoning Board; Mr. Thomas is on the Police Commission; Mr. Melzer is on the Fire Commission; Ms. Parry is on the Health Commission; Mr. Caterbone is a member of the BOR. Mr. Zeiss is the City's anti-blight officer and replaced the previous ABO after her retirement. Mr. Freccia is Special Counsel to the committee, as assigned by Corporation Counsel.

2. Election of Officers

Mr. Melzer nominated Thomas Mills for President; Mr. Thomas seconded. All voted for this. Mr. Thomas nominated Ms. Parry for Vice Chair and Mr. Melzer seconded. Ms Parry indicated that she would be happy to serve as secretary while she learns more about the committee. Mr. Thomas then nominated Ms. Parry for secretary; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously. Mr. Mills nominated Mr. Caterbone as Vice Chair; seconded by Ms. Parry. Vote carried unanimously.

3. Collection/Enforcement/Status of Previous Certified List

Mr. Freccia gave an introduction to the committee on past actions and reported that a check was recently received for fines assessed on a property from the previous certified list of blighted properties. 93-95 Stillwater Ave. is the only remaining property on the old list (certified blighted). There is a lien that is unresolved. The former Corporation Counsel could not recall if the matter had been resolved. Mr. Freccia will investigate.

Mr. Freccia informed the committee that the anti-blight committee is a creature of state statutes and city ordinance. He provided a handout of the recently amended city ordinance along with templates created to explain the actions of the committee. The committee was apprised of the state's current intent to increase fines on properties deemed blighted and Stamford may re-assess its fines if the state increases their fines. By ordinance, the fines assessed can only be used towards the work of the anti-blight committee. Currently, there is approximately \$450,000 in the City account.

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4. Presentation of Properties by Anti-Blight Officer

a) 1353 High Ridge Road – this property was damaged in storms in 2010. There are holes in the roof and there is damage to exterior and interior parts of the house. No one is living in the house. The health Department issued an order in 2000 and an appeal was upheld by the health commission. There is a reported settlement that was paid by the homeowners insurance (Allstate) but no work has been done. Pictures were provided to the committee. Ms. Parry moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

b) 39 High Street – a level one hearing was scheduled but the homeowners were a no show. The property is in foreclosure by the bank. Pictures were provided to the committee. Mr. Thomas moved the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

c) 158 Davenport Dr. – the registered letter sent was not picked up and the property owners were served by a sheriff. The property has been remediated and the matter is now closed.

d) 484 High Ridge Rd.: a/k/a 18 Longview -The house is abandoned. There is reportedly a family dispute and Zoning referred the matter to the anti-blight committee. There is a bank notice tacked to the door of the house, and has been in place since August 17, 2011. Pictures were provided to the committee. Mr. Thomas moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

e) 90 West Ave. – ABO reported that the property has been remediated and the matter resolved.

f) 150 Doolittle Rd. – A registered letter was not picked up. A sheriff then left notice. The house is abandoned and there is a report that the mortgage was under water. Pictures were provided. Ms. Parry moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Thomas seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

g) 46 Middlebury Rd. – ABO reported that the 1st complaint on this property was received in October 2011. A level one hearing was conducted with promises that the matters would be remediated by April 1, 2012. The house is uninhabited but the owner picks up mail. Pictures were provided and the property has not been remedied. Mr. Thomas moved that the property be certified as blighted; seconded by Ms. Parry. Vote carried unanimously.

h) – 38 Camp Ave. – ABO reported that a stop work order was issued several years ago when it was discovered that the garage was being built without a permit. A permit was pulled but there has been no further work since this. Pictures were provided. Mr. Thomas moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

i) 72 Vine Rd. – ABO reported on complaints and an abandoned car on the property. There are three mailboxes on the outside of the house and several entries, but the house is zoned as a two family. Pictures were provided. Ms. Parry moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously. There was a further discussion about referring the matter to

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zoning and/or the health department for an inspection. Ms. Parry moved that the HD be sent a letter asking it to inspect the house; Mr. Thomas seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

j) 157 Vine Rd. – ABO reported a level one hearing was held. Apparently, the wrong owner was notified so a corrected notification of a level one hearing is being processed. The matter was tabled.

k) 12 Eastover Rd. – ABO informed the committee that the property is abandoned and in foreclosure by BAC. Pictures were provided. Ms. Parry moved that the property be certified blighted; Mr. Thomas seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

l) 67 Travis Ave. – ABO reported that property was new construction that apparently sat for some time with no action. Pictures were provided. However, a light has been seen on in the house and a car has been in the driveway. Further investigation is warranted and the matter was tabled.

Added to the agenda

m) – 52 Briarwood Lane – ABO reported he met with the owner about 1 month ago and the owner did collect the paperwork to pull a permit to remedy the property. The abandoned cars have been removed. However, there has been no other action and owners live elsewhere. Pictures were provided. A discussion ensued about complaints on the long wait in getting permits approved. There is reportedly a delay in the engineering department. Mr. Thomas moved that the property be certified as blighted; Mr. Melzer seconded. Vote carried unanimously.

5. Certification of Blighted properties

Mr. Mills moved that the properties listed on the Agenda as:

a)1353 High Ridge Rd.; b) 39 High St.; d) 484 High Ridge Rd. a/k/a 18 Longview; f) 150 Doolittle Dr.; g) 46 Middlebury Rd.; h) 38 Camp Ave.; i) 172 Vine Rd.; k) 12 Eastover Rd.; and m) (added at the meeting) 52 Briarwood Lane be certified as blighted; seconded by Mr. Melzer. Vote carried unanimously.

6. Future Meeting Dates

After a brief discussion of future needs, it was agreed to schedule another meeting for next month and to evaluate the need for a schedule for future meetings then. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 23, 2012 at 4 PM.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Mills moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 PM; seconded by Mr. Melzer. Vote carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Parry
Secretary