

Blight Commission Meeting
February 5, 2020 @ 1:00 pm

In Attendance: Dennis Marker, City Manager; Ken Murchison, CEO & Zoning Administrator; Penny Thompson, Tax Assessor & Building Official; Paul Camping, Chair of Citizens Advisory Board for Residential & Urban Renewal; Phil Cyr, Caribou Nursing Home Administrator; Christine Solman, Planning Board Secretary; Denise Lausier, Executive Assistant City Manager's Office

Dennis Marker put together a spreadsheet of all of the tools identified at the last meeting. For each tool he identified the type, awareness needs, resource, property affects, associated costs, time and what is already in the City's toolbox. The Commission reviewed and discussed the tools.

Paul Camping explained Writ of Attachment – it's an attempt to collect, gives authority to go after other property to seize it and sell at auction if need be, it's a legislative action. Dennis Marker will look into this.

Dennis Marker commented on some of the tools:

- Certificates of Occupancy – expanding use as to what it was previously used as. Needs sharpening.
- Notices of Violations – Sharpen Ordinances.
- Public Outreach – do better with what we have. Perhaps educational tools, we could create flyers etc.
- Eminent Domain – can create financial incentives to the private party.

Dennis Marker – need to identify what the budget impacts are if we implement tools.

Ken Murchison – Tax Acquired Properties:

- Need to start at two years in the lien process. Inspected at cost of the City for asbestos and then abated for cost. With an additional cost to take it down, around \$17,000 for a tumbled down house. Perhaps will be able to work with Public Works on the trucking aspect of things, we would be able to save on costs.
- Penny Thompson – Sincock and Birdseye ended up tax acquired, the bill of demolition was added.

Penny Thompson – Dangerous Buildings:

- There is a process with specific deadlines that would culminate with the amount spent (then invoiced to the owner) to clean up the dangerous building made as a special tax assessment to the owner as part of the annual tax commitment. In the two cases that the City of Caribou has used the dangerous building statute in the past, the owner did not pay the taxes and the City took the building through the automatic lien foreclosure process.
- Ken Murchison – Amish community may have interest in taking down some of the old barns and salvage the lumber.

- Penny Thompson – also talked with Derick St. Peter, Creative Carpentry on barn boards. Penny asked him if he would be interested in taking some down as well and salvage the lumber.

Paul Camping – Notice of Violations:

- Add fines on the list of tools. Ken Murchison stated that assessing fines comes from Code, which uses State Statute. Ends up going to civil court at the end of the day.

Penny Thompson – 80K Certifications:

- In her understanding this is for land use violations. Once certified, Code Enforcement Officers could take them to court. Would help in cost versus having a lawyer, it would be part of the CEO's job. This is being offered this summer to be certified.

Paul Camping – using Sanford as a template, they have a lot of good ordinances in place. We could emulate it cheaply.

Dennis Marker – we need to create a summary narrative to take to the Council and public. What we want to impose or sharpen etc. If not in the tool box, what will it take to add to it. What kind of resources, people, timing etc.

Paul Camping – City wide zoning efforts?

- Ken Murchison – working on Comp Plan and in that it will be looked at.
- Phil Cyr – Planning Board has been talking about that for over a year.
- Christine Solman – a lot of it has been cleaned up since the 80's.
- Dennis Marker – identify uses on properties and see if zoning is in line with that. Look at existing uses, desired future uses and current zoning. Planning Board has looked at this for years. Also, do our development standards mirror what we want to put in place.
- Dennis Marker added to tools – rezoning for redevelopment.

Dennis stated that we need research development for some of these tools. Each Commission member was given tools to research.

Assignments:

- Paul Camping –
 - Land Banking; Seeding for Land Bank
 - Vacant Lot Policy
- Ken Murchison –
 - Winterization Program (work with Lisa Plourde)
 - Affordable Housing Regulations (work with Lisa Plourde)
 - Licensing Absentee Landowners (work with Lisa Plourde and Chief Susi)
 - Registering of Rentals (work with Lisa Plourde)
 - Property Ombudsman – Dennis Marker explained that this is an intermediary go between with Code Enforcement and the property owner. Should be a citizen that is knowledgeable or may be more of a Planning Board function; someone that the person with a violation could go to. More of a voice for the property

owners. Paul Camping commented that it may be more like someone who knows Code and what happens if don't comply. Dennis Marker stated that this position would be hired and funded by the City to represent the property owner.

- Christine Solman –
 - Workplans – working with people to do own work. Dennis gave an example: a notice of violation goes out with multiple issues. A workplan says let's meet and talk, establish a time frame of completion with repercussions if don't abide by that time frame, like a contract. Penny Thompson added, could enter into a consent agreement with the City Council and it would become a more formal agreement.
- Phil Cyr –
 - Beautification Contest
 - Caribou Garden Club
- Dennis Marker –
 - Enforcement Activities List
 - Writ of Attachment
- Denise Lausier –
 - CDBG Home Maintenance Program
- Christina Kane-Gibson –
 - Rental Assistance Program, commercial
 - Caribou Arts Council
- Penny Thompson –
 - Landlord Laws
 - 80k Certification

Dennis Marker stated that we need a summary statement on this is what the tool is. This is what it will take to get it implemented, one page max for now. We have seventeen tools that need researching.

Dennis Marker also shared with the Commission, in Utah there is a city that broke up the community into eight sections. They would receive awards for the most improved, the best dressed etc. They made up garden stakes with the year, the award and the city logo. They had a big presentation for the public and had an award night. All done by a beautification committee.

Paul Camping suggested an adopt a neighborhood, adopt a highway or adopt a street program.

- Dennis Marker suggested maybe certain corridors.
- Phil Cyr commented that people are more apt to do small areas not owned by anyone.

Dennis Marker added to the tools – NMDC, building condemnation, Amish community, fines, development review, adopt a street, adopt a park.

Next meeting; Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 1:00 pm.

Tools	Type	City Tool Box		Use Perception 1 - Very Bad 3 - Accepted 5 - Very Good	Awareness Needs			Resource			Property Affects				Associated Costs				Time			
		Use			City	Public	Investors	Financial	Labor	Education	Financial	Use	Structures	Title	City	Private	Investor	Stk Hldr	City	Private	Investor	Stk Hldr
Rezoning for Development	Action	IN	Infrequently	4	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			\$\$				\$\$\$			
Development Code Revisions	Action	IN	Frequently	4	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		\$\$				\$\$			
Tax Acquired Properties	Action	IN	Frequently	2	x	x	x	x			x			x	\$\$				\$			
Imposition of Fines	Action	IN	Infrequently	2	x	x		x			x				\$\$\$	\$			\$\$			
Demolition	Action	IN	Frequently	2	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		\$\$\$\$				\$\$\$			
Building Condemnation	Action	IN	Rarely	1	x	x					x	x	x		\$\$\$\$	\$			\$\$\$	\$		
Eminent Domain	Action	IN	Rarely	1	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$			\$\$\$	\$\$		
Land Banking	Action	OUT		4	x		x	x			x			x	\$\$\$		\$	\$	\$\$		\$	\$\$
Adverse Possession	Action	Unknown	Never	2	x	x	x	x		x				x	\$\$	\$			\$\$	\$		
Blight Survey	Product	IN	Rarely	4	x	x	x			x					\$				\$\$			
Certificates of Occupancy	Product	IN	Needs Sharpening	3	x	x						x	x		\$\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$	\$\$	\$	\$	
Notices of Violation	Product	IN	Needs Sharpening	2	x	x				x	x	x			\$	\$			\$\$\$			
Liens	Product	IN	Frequently	2	x	x	x	x			x			x	\$\$	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	
Work Plans	Product	OUT		4		x	x		x			x				\$	\$	\$	\$\$			
Writ of Attachment	Product	Unknown		2	x	x	x	x			x			x	\$\$	\$			\$\$			
Mechanic Work Liens	Product	Unknown		2	x	x	x		x		x			x	\$\$	\$\$	\$		\$			
Public Outreach	Program	IN	Needs Sharpening	5	x	x				x		x			\$				\$			
Education	Program	IN	Needs Sharpening	5		x				x		x			\$\$				\$\$			
Facade Improvement	Program	IN	Never	5	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		\$\$\$	\$\$	\$	\$	\$	\$\$	\$	\$
Matching Funds Opportunities	Program	IN	Rarely	5	x	x	x	x			x				\$\$\$	\$\$	\$	\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$
Blight Funds	Program	IN	Frequently	4	x		x	x			x				\$\$\$				\$\$\$			
TIF Zones	Program	IN	Frequently	4	x		x	x			x	x			\$\$	\$	\$	\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$	
Revolving Loan Funds	Program	IN	Infrequently	4	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	\$\$\$\$	\$\$	\$\$		\$\$	\$\$	\$	
80K Certifications	Program	IN	Rarely	3	x					x	x	x			\$				\$			
Taxation	Program	IN	Frequently	3	x	x	x	x			x			x	\$\$	\$\$	\$\$		\$\$	\$	\$	
Adopt-A-Street	Program	OUT		5	x	x			x		x	x			\$	\$			\$	\$\$		
Adopt-A-Park	Program	OUT		5	x	x			x		x	x			\$	\$			\$	\$\$		
Beautification Contest	Program	OUT		5		x				x	x	x			\$	\$\$	\$	\$	\$	\$\$	\$	\$
Winterization Programs	Program	OUT		4		x		x	x			x	x			\$		\$		\$		\$
CDBG Home Maintenance	Program	OUT		4	x	x		x	x		x		x		\$\$\$	\$\$		\$	\$\$	\$\$		
Rental Assistance Program	Program	OUT		4	x	x	x	x			x	x			\$\$\$	\$\$	\$	\$	\$\$	\$	\$	\$
Enforcement Activities List	Program	OUT		3		x				x	x				\$				\$			
Seed for Land Bank	Program	OUT		3	x		x	x			x			x	\$\$		\$	\$	\$		\$	\$
Ordinances	Regulation	IN	Frequently	3	x	x	x			x		x	x		\$				\$\$			
Vehicle Registrations	Regulation	IN	Regularly	3		x		x		x	x	x			\$	\$			\$	\$		
Home Occupation Regulations	Regulation	IN	Regularly	3	x	x	x			x		x			\$	\$			\$\$\$			
Development Regulations	Regulation	IN	Needs Sharpening	3	x		x			x		x	x		\$				\$\$\$\$			
Dangerous Buildings	Regulation	IN		3	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	\$\$	\$			\$\$	\$		
NFPC	Regulation	IN	Frequently	3	x		x			x		x	x		\$	\$	\$		\$\$	\$\$	\$	
Property Maintenance Code	Regulation	IN	Regularly	2	x	x				x		x	x		\$	\$\$			\$\$\$	\$\$		
Vacant Lot Policy	Regulation	OUT		4	x		x			x		x			\$	\$\$			\$	\$\$		
Affordable Housing Regulations	Regulation	OUT		3	x	x				x		x			\$\$				\$\$	\$	\$	
Register Rentals	Regulation	OUT		2	x	x	x			x	x	x			\$		\$\$		\$		\$	

License Absentee Owners	Regulation	OUT		2	x	x	x			x		x		\$	\$\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	
Landlord Laws	Regulation	OUT		2	x		x			x	x	x		\$\$	\$	\$		\$\$	\$	\$	
Amish Community	Stakeholder	IN	Rarely		x	x			x			x	x		\$				\$		
Planning Board	Stakeholder	IN	Frequently		x		x			x		x	x		\$				\$\$		
Blight Commission	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x					x		x	x		\$				\$\$		
CEGC	Stakeholder	IN	Regularly		x		x	x			x	x			\$		\$		\$	\$	\$
Fatih Based Help	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x	x			x			x			\$\$				\$	\$\$	
Fort Fairfield Housing Authority	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x	x		x	x	x	x	x					\$\$				\$\$\$
Caribou Housing	Stakeholder	IN	Frequently		x	x		x		x	x	x		\$\$\$					\$\$\$		
RSVP	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x	x			x	x		x					\$\$		\$		\$\$\$
Aroostook Agency on Aging	Stakeholder	IN	Regularly		x	x				x		x					\$\$\$				\$\$\$
FSS	Stakeholder	IN	Frequently		x	x		x		x	x	x		\$\$	\$				\$\$	\$	
Rotary	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x			x			x				\$\$				\$\$	\$	\$\$
Police	Stakeholder	IN	Frequently		x	x	x			x		x		\$\$\$\$					\$\$\$\$		
Code Enforcement	Stakeholder	IN	Frequently		x	x				x		x		\$\$\$\$					\$\$\$\$		
CDBG	Stakeholder	IN	Regularly		x	x	x	x			x			\$\$	\$\$				\$\$	\$\$	
Landlords	Stakeholder	IN	Rarely		x	x		x	x		x	x		\$			\$\$\$	\$			\$\$\$
ACAP	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x	x		x		x	x	x		\$	\$		\$\$	\$	\$		\$\$\$
USDA	Stakeholder	IN	Infrequently		x		x	x			x			\$\$	\$\$	\$			\$\$	\$\$	\$\$
NMDC	Stakeholder	IN	Regularly		x	x	x	x		x	x			\$\$	\$		\$\$\$	\$	\$\$	\$\$	\$\$
Caribou Garden ClubContest	Stakeholder	OUT			x	x			x		x	x		\$	\$				\$\$		\$
Property Ombudsman	Stakeholder	OUT			x	x	x			x		x		\$\$					\$\$\$		
Caribou Arts Council	Stakeholder	OUT			x	x			x		x	x		\$	\$				\$\$		\$\$