Charleston Land Reuse Agency
June 13, 2023 2:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Chris Campbell, Chair	Citizen Member
Marylin McKeown, Vice Chair	Citizen Member
Ben Mishoe, Treasurer	City Manager
Emmett Pepper, Secretary	Council Member
Amy Shuler Goodwin	Mayor
Vacant	Citizen Member

Ex-Officio Members

Kevin Baker	City Attorney
Andy Backus	MOECD Director

Staff Present

John Butterworth

Others Present

None

1. Welcome and silent roll call

2. Adoption of Minutes from May 9, 2023

A motion was made to move the minutes of the May 9, 2023 meeting and passed by a unanimous vote.

3. Public Comment

Mr. Rollyson said that one of his reasons for attending this meeting pertained to affordable housing for vacant lots in the city. He has recently acquired a vacant lot and wants to know what affordable options are available. He also wanted to know if there were any recently acquired lots that are available for redevelopment.

John responded that he would email to Mr. Rollyson a list containing approximately 30 lots that the LRA will be marketing. John further stated that many of those properties are what the LRA slated as redevelopment lots. John said manufactured housing is probably the only alternative to getting to the dollar/square foot number that makes sense. Otherwise, the cost of construction is really high.

Mr. Rollyson asked if “manufactured” is the same as a doublewide, whereas prefab to Mr. Rollyson, means a modular home that is stick built in a factory and delivered. John said there is more investigation that needs to be done. Those products really seem to be converging. Once they are set up on a site, sometimes it is hard to distinguish one from another. The main difference seems to be one has a chassis and the other is delivered in segments. Many of the double-wide products now have 2 x 4 studded walls and other features that are found in stick-built homes. John to Mr. Rollyson that understanding the nuance differences he is asking about is important, but also looking for plans and exterior architectural characteristics that fit these areas. There are certain areas in the city, such as the East End, where modular homes would be out of place and not permitted by the city ordinance.

4. Reports of Treasurer, Vice Chair, Chair

Treasurer's Report

John stated that the current balance as of July 8, 2023 was $165,743.73. There are pending charges, namely, the asbestos abatement for the Sugar Creek School. The asbestos abatement cost was approximately $17,000.00.

Vice Chair Report.

Marylin had a few issues she wanted to bring up for discussion but wanted to have those discussions later in the meeting.

Chair Report

There was no Chair Report. Chris stated there were items that would be discussed during New Business.

Staff Report

John Butterworth had items of discussion that did not fit into any of the agenda items.

The first item involves the demo lien project with Chris Ansell, an attorney on loan to the LRA from the law firm Frost, Brown & Todd, as a newer attorney in town, his time with the project is finished. Chris provided a memo to the City Attorney's office with a draft of the filings and rationale with how to actually proceed with foreclosure on demolition liens. John is of the opinion that the City Attorney's office should be able to proceed from this point. John said that he worked with Chris some and they short-listed 5 properties that were of interest and as a demonstration of the process. After doing record room research, there were issues with three of the properties, leaving 2 properties on the short list. John said one of them may require additional research.

The second item involves a meeting John had with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. They were interested in understanding the communities in rural West Virginia. There was a conversation with Andy Bower, Vice President and Executive for the Charleston Region, and also Peter Dolcart, the Community Development Manager for the Federal Reserve Bank. They were interested in the work of the LRA. Andy, myself, along with Paige and his office. They were interested in the LRA as a tool for community housing development.

The third and final item, the Trail Accelerated Grant Program from the International Mountain Biking Association. John received some guidance on the program. The grant application period will run from August 1 – August 31. Jack Hoblitzell and others from the Kanawha Valley Trail Alliance were kind enough to set up a meeting with Andy Williamson, an extension professional from WVU with the Brad and Alice Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative. Andy actually wrote the program for IMDA. John will be forwarding GIS information to them about publicly-owned tracts, including some where the LRA has been involved and also city-owned and other tracts owned by the Housing Authority and other public partners. Hopefully, by the end of June, John hopes this group can visit the various sites and get input where the grant is concerned. The grant awards up to $30K, matched $1 to $1, $60K total. Budgeting can be discussed later on in the agenda. John will update the agency at the next meeting and probably ask for authorization to do a grant application at the next meeting as well.

Report of the Finance Committee.

Chris provided a draft of the fiscal year 2024 budget. This budget has been discussed for quite some time. Chris said this draft is, for the most part, a definitive picture of where the LRA's finances. Chris said that the ARPA funds are listed in revenue but they are not in the account. As John mentioned earlier, the account is currently at $165+/-. As projects are allocated, those funds will be obtained and transferred the funds into the account, but the allocations have to be taken care of first. In order to see what a workable budget is going to look like, John has spent a lot of time going through this, he and Chris have talked though some of the areas where expenditures are anticipated. Obviously, with the number of properties that the LRA owns, Chris feels this is an accurate depiction of what it is going to take to maintain and move some of the properties, including the redevelopment and conservation and strategic acquisition missions. The contract services have some definitive figures and there are other contract services items that we will have to figure out as the committee continues to manage some of the properties.

John reiterated that some of the figures are based through the City Manager's Office, shared with John by the Finance Director. All the expenditures over the past 2-3 years are prior spending and some of them are harder to categorize. John believes it will take another year to know exactly what property maintenance and the like will cost. John's hope is to increase revenue via property sales.

Chris stated that the budget can be amended at any point in time. Chris opened the matter up for discussion, but wanted a motion to approve the budget as part of the documentation the agency will keep up with at every meeting.

Marylin brought up the topic of side lot adoption as a strategy, not necessarily a program that we are trying to launch, but a strategy to dispose of some of its own private properties that the city now owns. Marylin sees a need for outward or public facing technical assistance, consulting services, etc. to help landowners who have adjacent properties that they would want to acquire. Marylin feels like it would be worth putting something together and seeing if more properties qualified through that approach. John added he agreed, even if such properties were not in the agency's inventory. Marylin said she understands the focus is on the agency's current inventory. She sees other areas where there is a need to help owners acquire side lots.

Marylin said the other need that was brought up this morning in the West Side collaborative meeting, attended by Matt Sutton and Chad Webb, was the vast number of properties that need rehab work, some sort of repair and the challenge of filling that need. Marylin acknowledged that it is not strictly the job of the LRA.

John said having a coordinator who has the extra time to develop the side lot program would be valuable. The outreach and education required are heavy. Mayor Goodwin agreed that a full-time person in this position is much needed and will give the LRA much needed traction to maintain momentum.

Someone on the committee mentioned to John that they have one person who they are currently helping navigate through that process. It is a property that has been vacant for approximately seven years. It has been owned by three or different owners over the past seven years. Hopefully, within the next nine months they will be able to take ownership.

The second part of this situation pertains to the ones who have a structure on the lots and how do we navigate that, due to the significant cost to demolish the structure. Ultimately, it is going to drop in the city's lap. How can the city end it sooner rather than later so it does not continue to deteriorate and impact surrounding houses.

John said as part of the conversation with Chris under the 12 redevelopments, rehab support was included as something that the agency wants to try to spur. One of the ideas that John wants to continue to develop is thinking about something that looks like a revolving loan fund. Speaking to RCCR and to Denise and Bernard Hamilton, there is a desperate need. Flipping gets a bad rap where poor workmanship occurs. However, we need renovation and that is how it works. Figuring out how to create opportunities whether it Is through acquisition of properties or just being able to put our finger on the funding scale a little bit to make projects work.

Chris pointed out that, by going through this, you will see strategies on redevelopment conversation, property purchases and contract services. Chris noted that the big number seen on the expenses is demolition costs. If the agency is going to see some of this redevelopment move forward, it will mean that some of the demolition is what we will be doing. We are seeing it with some of the property donations and the like. To speak to what everyone should be aware of, is that when there is a structure that needs to be demolished it would be nice if the agency could obtain that property with the probability, we will have to demolish the structure.

If the agency does not take care of this, it becomes the city's problem. This is not in line with the agency's plans for purchasing property. Ultimately, the LRA does not want to do demolition and take donation after donation, only to be a demolition service either. This only takes funds away from the mission that we have. It is a finite balance. However, the largest amount of expenditure money that we have for any one-line item is dedicated to demolition. That's the reality for the agency to get rolling.

Councilman Pepper assumed there was an ARPA funding summary document for the $1.5 million and asked how it interfaced with this budget. Chris said the ARPA funding would be addressed later in the meeting. But to answer Councilman's Pepper question specifically, if you start to look through what the agency has in property purchases and what the agency has in redevelopment, then figure that across a three-year period, which is we are looking for the extent of the limits of the ARPA funding. The numbers reflected in this 2024 fiscal year budget X 3 should be close to some of the ARPA funding. Both documents were created simultaneously to make sure the agency got a good vision moving forward. Obviously, at the end of the ARPA funding, the budget has to be revisited, but one of the plans is that the agency will be able to use this to be a catapult to move forward.

Councilman Pepper had three other items for discussion, along the lines of Marylin's earlier discussion. Councilman Pepper believes the agency has the opportunity to leverage or provide other benefits to the community in addition to the buying, selling, redeveloping and conserving.

The first item, one that Councilman Pepper discussed John, is the opaqueness of the tax sale. John and others involved have put the work in to make the process less opaque. Councilman Pepper said that it seems like there might be some way to pass on that information so the properties, ones the LRA would not be interested in purchasing but someone else may be interested in making the purchase, would have the benefit of accessing this information.

The second item Councilman Pepper brought up pertains to maintenance of sidewalks. The Councilman said this may be a discussion to be had with the administration at some point. He is aware of a sidewalk discussion that is simmering. Councilman Pepper feels strongly the city needs to repair the sidewalks with the same expectation it places on residents to maintain their property. Councilman Pepper said he is aware that more public agencies other than the city own sidewalks, i.e., CURA, Housing Authority, etc. Councilman Pepper asked if sidewalk repair included in the $50,000 or should the agency consider making that adjustment at a late.

The third item Councilman Pepper had involved the possibility of helping people who live next to our properties with sidewalk repair.

John pointed out that the line item for property maintenance did not anticipate sidewalk repairs. If that idea is developed further and the LRA wants to undertake that responsibility, the agency will need to do an amendment. John said he is of the opinion that repairs should be tied to end-use. Obviously, there is the factor of the public use of sidewalks and safety involved is essential. John said the $50,000 does not include sidewalk repairs.

Chris said that the places where the agency would have to consider that would be the strategic properties that the agency is planning on holding and obtaining adjacent properties to get a larger tract. For the initial properties the agency is looking to turn quickly, Chris agrees with John, sidewalk repair is more cost of the redevelopment piece in moving forward.

Chris asked if there were any other comments or questions pertaining to the budget.

Mayor Goodwin spoke on in regard to the sidewalk discussion. She mentioned that Dan was involved in getting an assessment that we had on our sidewalk development fund from a consultant that we brought in to study different sidewalk funds. The Mayor was not sure if anyone else in the agency had taken a look at that or would be willing to participate in that offer. The city does believe this is important and there are a lot of different ways to go about it. Some cities do it better than others. Some cities just partner with businesses. Some cities just partner with homeowners in the neighborhoods or selected neighborhoods. The Mayor agrees it is a topic for conversation, maybe not for this year's budget. It may not be a bad idea that it run through and supported through the CLRA.

The other item of discussion from Mayor Goodwin was that the City of Charleston now spends and has for the past couple of years close to $1 million in demolition. It is not lost on the Mayor that there are several houses in the city that are very close to being demolished. The Mayor emphasized that the city would much rather build than tear down. The inventory was so bleak at the beginning of her administration. She also feels compelled that no one wants to have a general fund in the amount of $1 million a year in demolitions and contractors' services. While it is a smaller chunk of change, the Mayor appreciates that there are a lot of city resources to gather in.

Marylin asked John if his salary was in the budget. John said his salary was not in the budget. Chris stated that John is currently a city employee and will continue to be a city employee within the Planning Department. However, his role will be more along the lines of being an executive director of the Charleston Land Reuse Agency, with the agreement that has been drafted. Chris said the staffing position mentioned earlier will be a fulltime assistant for John and be a full-time dedicated person to the agency to provide administrative support that will include, but is not limited to, following up with door-knocking, following up with emails and phone calls. John wears too many hats and everyone who works with him is appreciative of all that he has taken on, but he cannot do it alone. There are two drafted vacant positions in the budget. One position is for the coordinator, which is in the budget, and the other is for a director, which is John's position. The coordinator would report to John in the director position. Dan added that John's position is funded through the general fund. It is a permanent position. The assistant that we will be hiring is coming out of the LRA fund.

Chris went over the summary of the ARPA funding. The summary in the packets given to the attendees was a draft. It covers a three-year period. The funds allocated this year must be spent by 2026. Chris will provide the exact dates in the near future. In order for the LRA to fulfill its mission, which goes hand in hand with the budget, a determination has to be made in regard to project costs, funds available from the general fund and support that can be utilized from the ARPA funds. Chris said, based upon a review, what seemed to make the most sense and stay within the parameters of the LRA's strategic plan, is delineated with the categories at the top, with a description of each of the categories provided, including the costs of what has been identified cover. Regarding redevelopment, conservation and strategic acquisition, most of what the LRA is looking at is whether the acquisition of the property to purchase via tax sale, private purchase/donation, it involves a lot of the agency's contract services (maintenance, deed preparation, title examination, demolition of structures. etc.). Most of all, the agency wanted to make sure costs were disclosed in addition to the LRA's budget being parallel to the ARPA summary. Redevelopment is the largest part of that number at $900,000. Redevelopment, conservation, and strategic acquisition are the three key points of our mission, making up 85% of the total funds. Infrastructure and liability reduction in investment preservation make up 3% of the total. There are still important items that need to be addressed in addition to what is in the current budget, outside of the ARPA Funds. For example, Amity Drive, there is still work to be done there. It would not be wise not to include that work and not make use of the ARPA funds. Obviously, this would also help with the salary, benefits and training of the administrative support person across a three-year period. Chris said that concluded the breakdown of the ARPA funding summary. He asked if there were any questions or comments pertaining to the ARPA funding summary.

There were no comments or questions pertaining to the ARPA funding summary.

Chris asked for a motion to approve the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget and the ARPA funding summary. A motion was made by Mayor Goodwin to approve the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget and the ARPA funding summary. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Report of the Stakeholders Input Committee.

John said the public input session has not taken place as scheduled. Realizing the significance in rolling out the inventory and determining how to proceed with the partners, John had not been able to contact the partners as much as he had recently. John had meetings with all the non-profits housing developers, except for KISRA, over the past month and had productive conversations with them and now have solid ideas about the actual physical lots in the neighborhoods in which they do have an interest and the type of work they see themselves doing in the next three years. In consideration of the aforesaid conversations and due diligence, John is of the opinion that the agency is in a better position to proceed with a public input session.
John will be working to schedule the public input session scheduled, hopefully within the next three to four weeks. He will look into publicizing the session. The Goodwill Prosperity Center seems to be the best location, as discussed in prior meetings. The agency can begin the roll out of the properties they want to begin marketing right away.

Report of the Property Evaluation Committee.

Donation Request – 2669 Falcon Drive - John reported that the closing of this transaction has taken place and the check is in the mail.

Donation Request – 217 Britton Street – John reported that the closing of this transaction has taken place and the check is in the mail.

Donation Request – 1907 4th Avenue – The last conversation with Kevin's office was that Kevin was still working with the representative from Legal Aid and the owner. Jason Neal said Kevin had made a note he had given John a deed for this property to record. John said he would go back through his emails to make sure he had not overlooked something.

Donation Request – 1805 ½ 7th Avenue – John is still working on this request.

Donation Request – 806 A & B Woodward Drive –The LRA had agreed to accept it if the sellers paid for the demolition. John has not heard back from the sellers.

County Tax Sale – John provided a handout outlining the results of the May 18, 2023 county tax sale. He also included a copy of the bid letter. Regarding the bid letter, it was not 100% clear to John that the State Auditor's Office was going to allow the city to assert the right of first refusal on all the liens, but they did agree to honor the right of first refusal. Bids were placed on a total of 28 properties. The ones on the handout highlighted in red were redeemed prior to the auction. The total number of properties purchased is 20. Four of the properties are "no bids", which means there was a $50 bid placed on each of those. The remaining 16 were purchased for the minimum bid, which was back taxes. A total of $19,426.55 was spent on the purchase of 20 properties. Acceptance letters from the State Auditor's Office are forthcoming. John had a good conversation with Price Law Office. They do the title work for the Building Commission for the demolition program. John suggested to proceed with using Price Law Office. John will be talking with Kevin to understand the aspects involved with the work the recent law firms did regarding a current owner search. If quieting a title later is really the best path forward, more money may need to be spent up front to get a 40-year title examination. John will get back to the committee with his recommendations in this regard.

John said the LRA authorized an expenditure in the amount of $50,000 solely for the tax sale. So, there is still money to work with to pay for the title searches. At this point, John does not need any further authorizations.

John said there is an ongoing collaboration through the Abandoned Properties Coalition and also through the West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation. The West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation has spun off a new program whose efforts involve working with non-profit housing partners to spend funding they have on legal fees, quieting the title, pre-development costs, etc. Their team reached out to Andy Blackwood at Habitat and identified two lots on Barber Street in north Charleston. These are viable properties that the agency would have been interested in regardless. But because they had identified them, the agency served as straw party, asserting the right of first refusal, which has been done. The one action item John has from this is to ask the LRA if John could be authorized to see that the tax liens for those two properties on Barber Street be reassigned at the West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation so that they can spend their money and time perfecting the title and conveying them directly to Habitat. If the properties ultimately end up in Habitat's hands, these lots could count toward the 25 since the LRA was a key party to this. The LRA may consider having a part in future redevelopment projects as well. At this point, John needs authorization to reassign those liens to the West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation so that they can move forward.

Chris asked for a motion authorizing John to reassign city liens on the Barber Street lots to West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation.

Mayor Goodwin made a motion in favor authorizing John to reassign city liens on the Barber Street lots to West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation.

Chris asked if there were any comments or questions on the motion. Marylin asked if there were any other liens that were in the works to be assigned. John said that there is another lien that has been discussed and Marylin's involvement in this matter was integral, is a lot that is caddy-corner from her house on Garvin Avenue. Marylin and her neighbors have form their own informal neighborhood revitalization group. They are very interested in 730 Garvin Avenue. It has a shared garage and a shared driveway on it. They have previously purchased the lien and done the title work. John said the lien on 730 Garvin Avenue needs to be assigned as well. It seems feasible because there is a shared garage that bridges the property line. The LRA could serve as a straw party in a deed and purchase it for a minimum bid. Marylin said she thinks there should be an administrative fee charged in addition to the minimum bid amount. The state requires when the city asserts the right of first refusal to acquire a property, that city must offer the sale to landowners abutting the lot.

Mayor Goodwin amended her previous motion in favor of authorizing John to reassign city liens on the Barber Street lots to West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation, to also include a lot at 730 Garvin Avenue. The motion was approved and carries by a unanimous vote.

<u>1319 Stewart Street – Potential Acquisition</u> – John said that he had good conversations with the realtor. John has not submitted a formal bid yet but will be doing so within the next few days.

<u>Report on the Vacant Structure Ordinance</u>**.**

Dan said there was nothing new to update. There has been a good response to the billing. Most importantly, the city did get the attention of several vacant structure owners. Marylin asked if it would be helpful for the LRA to see the numbers on a certain basis. Dan said that was possible.

Unfinished Business.

1. Hope Cemetery – Chris said he spoke to Kevin last week concerning Hope Cemetery, but he does not believe there is sufficient data to provide an update at this point.

2. Build WV - John said that he attended the first steering committee meeting for the Larger Advantaged Valley Project. John says they are making good progress and Bowen's assistance is going to be indispensable.

New Business

LRA Staffing – Discussion took place earlier in the meeting concerning the two positions and the job descriptions for each position.

Chris asked if there were any questions or comments specifically on the coordinator position. The question was raised concerning space for the person chosen to fill the coordinator position. Dan said there was space in the front of the Planning Department office that would be available on a temporary basis. There is discussion about what we do with the inspectors. If something changes with that situation, then we would have two spaces available. The space out front should bridge that gap until a decision is made. Chris asked if a motion would be required to advertise the position. Someone said it should be confirmed that the ARPA funds will be available to help assist with paying the salary, benefits and training for this position. John asked if it would be worth forming a hiring committee. Chris said that a hiring committee should be formed. John said, based on his understanding, this position would be structured similar to that of the Business Improvement Director or liaison positions. Mayor Goodwin said she anticipates the process would be similar to hiring a new employee for the Planning Department. The hiring process would go through Matthew and Maria and perhaps someone from the CLRA, preferably the chair, may participate in that process. Dan said it is important to find someone that compliments John's skill set.

Chris said he would follow up confirming the ARPA funds allocation for a period of three years. Chris also needs to see if additional documentation is required. Dan also mentioned that he is hoping John gets some type of promotion out of this additional position. Mayor Goodwin said that this topic can be discussed offline.

Donation Request – 1449 6th Street – John was contacted by Raymond, the Statewide Chair of the Primitive Advent Christian Church about 1449 6th Street. It is the parson's chapel. It has been vacant for somewhile now. The trustees who are named on the deed are long gone. It is currently secured. John had taken photos that morning and said the structure does not seem to be in a serious state of disrepair. There is wind damage to the siding. Otherwise, it seems like a solid structure. As far as John can tell, it does not appear to be erroneously occupied. All the windows are in good condition. The owners do not have a need for it any longer. They are keeping the grass cut and maintaining the property adequately. The property is zoned for multi-family. There is a good parking lot at the rear that could be used for off-street parking.

Mayor Goodwin said that it seemed like a fairly substantial lot. John said it is a through lot. John said the houses in this immediate area are generally in good repair. There are a few multi-family structures in the general area. John does not have immediate plans about what could be done with the property, but seeing it not decline over the coming years seems like a worthwhile cause.

Dan said that churches are hard to adaptively reuse, but it has happened in other places in the city. The city adopted an adaptive reuse ordinance several years ago. This property is zoned residential. Normally the reuse applies only to residential. However, the code was changed to the adaptive reuse of a non-residential structure in a residential district. It could be a duplex or, with a conditional use permit, it could be used as an office space. There is some flexibility. Emmitt asked if there was something that restricts them from selling it in their bylaws. John said that was not the case. The owners took into consideration the real estate market and realized their probability of selling the property was not likely to happen. The seller does not know if they have title to the property because the owners are the trustee of the church and they do not know who the trustees. They are not quite sure if the church holds the title. There is definitely title work required before the agency proceeds with the offer.

There are provisions in the state code where abandoned church property can be awarded by a court to trustees who then sell the property. In the event all of the trustees are deceased, a court could appoint a trustee to arrange transfer of the property.

Dan said that where properties such as this are concerned, Kevin has mentioned in the past a warranty deed could be entered into and the LRA assumes the liability in the event that something may happen, which would be very unlikely. The only issue is that this could create a cloud on the title, should the property be sold. With a court appointed trustee, the LRA would also have the benefit of a court order establishing ownership and avoid future issues with the chain of title.

Chris suggested that John continue to have conversation with the church, see what information they can provide, and be certain to include Kevin Baker in the conversation.

Emmett Pepper spoke up and said he wanted to state the obvious, no one but the agency will be doing the aforementioned tasks. If the LRA does not do the work it will end up being vandalized. He is excited to see the agency taking this on.
<u>Donation Request – 1904 Iris Drive</u> – John said this request was discussed briefly last month. Kevin has already drafted a deed. The city conducted the demolition of the structure on the property. The current owner had previously said they were going to let the property go for taxes. If the property is donated, the agency has clear title instead of a tax deed. Emmett said that the tax deed is more valid than a regular deed. Chris asked if the city incurred the costs for

the demolition. John said that the city did incur the costs for the demolition. Chris asked if there was a demolition lien on the property. John said the lien has not be filed because the conversations were pertaining to a donation. The property is off Chandler Drive. John said he does not see a real clear path of redevelopment for this property. The Mayor said the best-case scenario would be if one of the neighbors would absorb the property.

Marylin asked if they needed a park in that area. If the property is sold for taxes, what did the agency realistically think another purchaser would do with the property. Dan suggested allowing trees and natural growth to take over the property.

Kevin had mentioned that a number of other houses around it had been torn down. Kevin seemed very interested in this property.

Chris suggested speaking to the neighbors on the right side to see if they would be interested in obtaining the property. John said he had not spoken to the neighbors yet.

Mayor Goodwin suggests hearing Kevin speak about his interest in acquiring this property.

Chris reiterated that the best bet on that property is to talk to one of the adjacent landowners to see if they are interested in expanding their lot and bringing it back into the tax base. Chris also suggested tabling this matter for further discussion.

<u>Annual Insurance Premium</u> – John said with the budget approved, the premium would be paid and the agency remains insured. There has been no significant change in the premium amounts that were established within the budget.

Mayor Goodwin asked if the LRA has reached out to or has anyone had an engagement with the DEP concerning the demolition grant cycle or the auditor's office? John said he and Dan met with the DEP 6 or more months ago. They seem interested in spending the money in smaller communities and have very interesting interpretations of the legislation that enabled the money. Mayor Goodwin said she is not a lawyer but she read it and it seems to her to be universal across all 55 counties. Dan said the DEP's take was that they could give all the money to Charleston. The Mayor said we do not want all of the money we just want $150,000 to put into our budget to do demos on several structures. They just gave $250,000.00 to Bluefield. Dan said they were looing for places where they could get good PR and that they can demolish ten houses in a small community. Mayor Goodwin asked the Chris to consider this if the city gets two or three houses in a row for demolition. John said he would reach out to their contact at the DEP to restart those conversations.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting July 11, 2023.