



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.
Real Estate Committee – 2023
City Hall, One Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE

Danielle Browne – City Council President Dr.
Darren Morton – Comptroller
Stephanie Vanderpool – Assessor
Donna M. Jackson, Secretary

REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Friday, February 24, 2023 at 3:30PM

Mayor's Conference Room – City Hall, 1 Roosevelt Square, Mt. Vernon, NY

1. Call of the Meeting – Comptroller Morton, at 3:38 PM

2. Roll Call by Deputy Clerk Jackson
 - Comptroller Darren Morton
 - Council President Danielle Browne
 - Assessor Stephanie Vanderpool
 - Joyce Brown, Counsel, City of Mount Vernon

We have a quorum
Absent: none.
Additional Participants: Alyssa Gillespie, Assistant Corporation Counsel

3. Motion to adopt the minutes – moved by Council President Browne, Seconded by Assessor Vanderpool, VOTE: ALL AYES.

4. ELECTION OF 2023 OFFICERS: (1) Chair, and (1) Secretary per Chapter 205, Section 205-5 of the Mount Vernon City Code.
 - **Chair of the Real Estate Committee**
Motion: Assessor Vanderpool moves for Comptroller Morton to be the chair for 2023, Second: Council President Browne
On the Question: Comptroller accepts the nomination.
VOTE: ALL AYES

 - **Secretary of the Real Estate Committee**
Motion: Assessor Vanderpool moves to nominate Deputy Clerk Jackson as Secretary, Second: Council President Browne
On the Question: DC Jackson accepts the nomination.
VOTE: ALL AYES

5. Guests In-Person and online:

- **Ruthanne Becker, Senior Vice-President of Rehabilitation Services, The Mental Health Association of Westchester, Inc.** She discussed ESSHI Housing for homeless citizens. Her organization seeks a parcel of land or a building in Mount Vernon for approximately 70 individuals and their families with homeless and mental health qualifying conditions including 35 low income families. Assessor Vanderpool asked about Ms. Becker's interest in property on High Street. Ms. Becker noted there were issues with zoning and parking on High Street, and then COVID happened and priorities shifted. They were unable to move forward, even though an architect developed plans. She is happy to share them with Assessor Vanderpool. Ms. Browne asked about the population the organization assists; Ms. Becker noted they want to work with all of the service providers in Mount Vernon to let them know this opportunity is available. Comptroller Morton asked for clarity – individuals and families or just individuals? Ms. Becker noted both. There is a range – we would examine the population to see what their needs are. Comptroller asked if this is permanent or transitional housing? Ms. Becker noted it is permanent. We are not looking for people to be transitional we want them to remain housed. Vanderpool asked if there are other facilities of this kind in Westchester. Ms. Becker noted this is their first ESSHI project, they own 5 smaller apartment buildings in Westchester but not at this scale, we are able to build into the budget security, facility maintenance. Morton asked if they were looking to purchase an apartment building or land? Ms. Becker noted either, but near transportation. THE office of mental health will pay for a feasibility study and an architect to design it and get community feedback. Browne asked how you determine the need? Becker noted we work very closely with Westchester County Continuum of Care; they source shelters, co-occurring issues. Morton noted we can look at inventory to see if there is something that fits. The best that he can imagine is possible vacant land, we do not know of any existing facilities, but once the list of properties is made public there may be something. Please do research – there is an apartment building that was vacant for at least a decade, on Sidney and Archer avenue; there is some renovation happening. Also, there is 187 Cottage avenue to explore. Ms. Becker is looking for 80,000 square feet, in other places ESSHI has converted schools and hotels. Comptroller Morton
- Esther Osimeh – 331 South 2nd Avenue is her interest.
- Floyd Adams – here to retrieve the list of housing available for sale if it is available.
- Barat Singh – came last year and put in an offer on the property (328 South 1st avenue) and is following up on the property offer.
- Sullivan Ranger – has a property in Mount Vernon, resident since 2018, interested in 234 East 5th Street the Betty Shabazz home.

RESPONSES:

Comptroller Morton: The City has compiled properties that either didn't receive a bid or bid didn't go through and properties are still owned by the city. We then directed appraisals for each of the properties. Before we could consider offers, we needed to assess the values. We completed all except for 52 Mersereau. Most people know about these properties because they were formally on the list. But this committee needs to review and establish how it will offer these properties. We need to consider, is there someone abutting the property who has been caring for it, who has been in the property offer pipeline, providing offers? At the end of the day the city's responsibility is to obtain the best market value for the properties. Now that the value has been established, the City will publish the list of the appraisal values, and people may submit their offers, and the City will consider the offers received. As Ms. Osimeh will tell you, she has been in this process for years.

Comptroller Morton noted an 8-week timeframe to publicize the list. He clarified the real estate term "abutting".

Assessor Vanderpool asked if this committee will determine properties for potential municipal use? Comptroller Morton affirmed. To that end, the Committee will:

- a) Send out letters to city departments to determine space needs.
- b) Departments will respond so we have it on record
- c) The remaining real estate inventory is reviewed against proposals received
- d) The Real Estate Committee determines what items will go for auction
- e) City Council approves that submitted list by super-majority (4 out of 5)

6. Correspondence Received:

- RecovRE Holdings LLC submitted letters dated 2/17/23 requesting to purchase
 - i. 106 Hillside Avenue
 - ii. 52 Mersereau Avenue
 - iii. 146 S. 13th Avenue
- RecoverRE Holdings, LLC submitted letters dated 2/2/23 requesting to purchase
 - i. 234 East 5th Street
 - ii. 328 South 1st Avenue
 - iii. 331 South 2nd Avenue
- A letter received on 2/17/23 from Albert Gordon to purchase 146 South 13th Avenue

7. To be discussed

Some of the city properties evaluated are currently occupied. The city is a landlord. Occupants have received letters from the Comptroller's Office regarding tenancy issues. The Comptroller is working with corporation counsel on lease agreements. One of the properties, 106 south 12th, a two family, one unit is vacant, the other apartment has a family residing there. We notified Section 8 to cease and desist payments to whomever they perceive to be the owner, because the city is the owner and has not ever received payments. That will be discussed in executive session. There are a few other properties on the list that are occupied, with responsive tenants. In connection with 52 Mersereau – I have asked corporation counsel to initiate the eviction process so the city can appraise.

Motion for executive session to discuss legal matters. Moved by Assessor Vanderpool, Seconded by Council President Browne. ALL AYES. Entering Executive Session at 4:33pm.

Motion to come out of executive session at 4:57PM. Moved by Council President Browne, Seconded by Assessor Vanderpool. ALL AYES. Exited Executive Session. Comptroller Morton noted: No decisions were made by the Committee in the executive session.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn 4:58pm. moved by Council President Browne, Seconded by Assessor Vanderpool. ALL AYES. Meeting adjourned at 4:58PM.

****NOTE THAT REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL BE CHANGED TO NOON ON THE LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH.**