



H O U R G L A S S

First Friday Noontime Forum Series
May 4, 2018 Forum Highlights

LANCASTER COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY

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- The Authority was established by ordinance by the Lancaster County Commissioners on June 22, 2016. The Authority is housed within the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. There is no dedicated office or staff. The Authority is governed by a seven-member board.
- The Authority is a countywide umbrella organization; municipalities may join if they choose. No property may be acquired unless the municipality in which it is located is a member of the Land Bank. The City of Lancaster is not included as they are pursuing their own land bank.
- There is a three-way Inter-governmental Cooperation Agreement between the Land Bank, the municipality and the school district. School districts have been very supportive.
- A land bank does not have the power of eminent domain.
- The mission of the Authority is to deter blight and to return vacant property to productive status using a unified, predictable, and transparent process, thereby revitalizing neighborhoods, and strengthening the County's tax base.
- The Authority can convey real estate without a redevelopment agreement. It can acquire property listed for judicial tax sale through direct purchase and obtain a quiet title judgment within 120 days. Additionally, it can discharge tax claims and liens, hold property tax-free and shares up to 50% of taxes for five years after redevelopment.
- A project could need the Land Bank when a property is caught in an extended cycle of blight, or subjected to inadequate rehabs that perpetuate sub-standard conditions. Obsolete land uses may have environmental conditions that represent an unacceptable risk for a developer. The Land Bank can remediate the environmental conditions and convey a clean site. The Authority has greater latitude in negotiating with developers than is possible under statutes governing Redevelopment Authorities.
- The statute allowing for the formation of a Land Authority does not specify a funding source. Municipalities pay \$5,000 to join the Authority. After the initial \$5,000 fee, an annual fee of \$1,000 is paid by the municipality.
- Three municipalities have joined the Authority – Columbia Borough, Marietta Borough and Lancaster Township.
- Columbia Borough was the first municipality in 2016 to sign the inter-government agreement. The Borough contributed \$100,000 to prime the pump. The first property was acquired in Feb. 2016. To date six properties have been acquired in Columbia Borough. Three properties have been resold. Borough funding was matched with \$68,452 in Federal Block Grant funding. Additionally, a \$200,000 line of credit was established at the

Community First Fund to finance renovations.

- Marietta Borough signed the inter-governmental agreement in September, 2017. Initial properties have been identified and funding is being sought to start acquisitions.
- Lancaster Township signed the inter-governmental agreement in November, 2017.
- The Lancaster Redevelopment Fund, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that can accept donations on a tax-deductible basis. Through the Fund, grants will be made to the Land Bank or Redevelopment Authority for specific projects to remediate blight and/or revitalize downtowns.
- To date the Redevelopment Fund has received \$100,000 from the S. Dale High Foundation; \$25,000 from the Steinman Foundation and \$5,000 from Caldwell, Heckles and Egan.
- More information can be found at <http://www.lchra.com/land-bank-authority>

