



Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank

Board of Directors Meeting

Date: April 15th, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Abessinio Stadium

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Rick Gessner** at **12:05 PM**.

Roll Call

Present:

Rick Gessner, Hal Schneikert, Van Hampton, Cassandra Marshall, Bob Weir, Sean Parks, David Ross, Elliott Larkin

Absent:

Maria Cabrera, Michelle Harlee, Ernest Congo, Leroy Tice, Susan Frank

Staff Present:

Bud Freel, David Reynolds, Becky Vogel

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the **January meeting minutes**.

Motion approved unanimously.

Old Business

Gibraltar Property

The Board reviewed three potential pathways for the Gibraltar property:

- Conversion to a residential home
- Issuance of an RFP (requiring ZBA approval)
- Transfer of ownership to the State

The State has expressed interest and is currently evaluating the opportunity internally. Board sentiment indicated that **state ownership may provide the strongest long-term community support**.

Key Considerations:

- Partial ownership constraints by Preservation Delaware
 - Potential access limitations related to the driveway
 - Landscaping contract secured for summer/fall maintenance
 - Bond Bill funds will be used for upkeep; **no Land Bank-raised funds will be allocated**
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Annual Report

The upcoming report will expand beyond standard metrics to include **community-centered narratives**, highlighting:

- Contractors and small businesses
 - Homeowners and community impact stories
 - Featured projects including Elbert Palmer, “Be Ready for Jesus CDC,” Participation from Mayor John Carney and Michelle Harlee
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Website Updates

Recent updates have improved:

- Overall design and usability
- Navigation and accessibility

Staff is actively uploading **property images** to enhance transparency and engagement.

New Business

Grants & Funding

- **Federal Earmark (FY2026):** \$500,000
- **Bond Bill Allocation:** \$5 million total

- \$2.070 million allocated to the Land Bank (available May 1)
 - Remaining \$2.93 million pending clarification for broader project use
 - **2027 Bond Bill Request:** \$1.5 million submitted
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Mayor's Housing Budget Initiative

Bob Weir introduced discussion points from the Mayor's budget meeting.

Key Components:

- Income-based eligibility and sliding-scale assistance
- Defined affordability periods
- Public-private development partnerships (City will not directly build homes)
- Subsidies available; development fees subject to caps

Development Strategy:

- Utilize existing Land Bank-controlled lots
- Activate vacant and mixed-use sites
- Leverage public and private investment

Equity & Inclusion:

- Active recruitment of minority and small contractors
- Pre-development support (tools, design, engineering, infrastructure assistance)
- Capacity-building focus for long-term participation

Additional Notes:

- Existing projects may apply for funding (subject to need-based review)
 - Funding is **non-recurring**
 - RFPs will be issued as a priority initiative
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Budget Hearing Preparation

Key reporting areas will include:

- Acquisition and disposition timelines
- Rental vs. homeownership rehabilitation data
- Historical funding breakdown

Elliott Larkin emphasized the importance of expanding beyond single-family housing to meet affordability goals.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

- Budget remains in strong standing
- Payroll aligned with projections
- Professional services and audit expenses pending

Financial Position:

- Total funds: **\$6.7 million**
 - Restricted: \$5.6 million
 - Unrestricted: \$1.1 million
- Only unrestricted allocation: **\$500,000 from the City**

Governance Committee

- Upcoming meeting to review **Side Lot Program revisions**

Technical Advisory Board

- Bud Freel reported zero attendance at the most recent meeting

Operations Report

Inventory Overview

- **36 structures** currently held
- **5 properties** actively listed for sale
- Increased strategic focus on acquisitions

Recent Activity:

- Acquired 3 properties (Clifford Brown Walk , Spruce Street, Read Street)
- Disposed of 10–12 properties from prior meeting; all are under development or sold

Mission remains: Stabilization and revitalization of neighborhoods

Hilltop Development Report

Phase 1:

- 44 structures + 2 lots
- 24 properties rehabbed and sold
- 9 under construction
- 4 investor flips underway
- 1 listed
- 5 held (plus Land Bank office)

Phase 2:

- 2 properties rehabbed and sold
- 1 under construction (Land Bank)
- 3 investor flips underway
- 1 listed
- 1 held

Elbert Palmer Project

- Demolition **98% complete**
- Third working group meeting successfully held
- Design concepts presented

Next Steps:

- Issue RFP for construction, development, engineering, and sales (target: end of May)
- Establish review committee and scoring criteria
- Secure ZBA variance within the next month

Project Goals:

- Target home price: ~\$240,000 (potentially reduced with subsidy)
- Collaboration with Neighborhood House housing counseling program

Public Comment

- Ebony Broadway attended as an observer (homeowner; completed cash purchase and renovation)

- David Ross introduced guest Vicky Gaines from Neighborhood Planning District
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Executive Session

- Motion to enter Executive Session at **1:10 PM**
 - Approved unanimously
 - Motion to exit Executive Session
 - Motion: Cassandra Marshall
 - Second: Bob Weir
 - Approved unanimously
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Action Items

- **Disposition Approval:**
Property at **800 Lombard Street** approved for disposition to Subcool
 - Motion: Van Hampton
 - Second: Bob Weir
 - Approved unanimously
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Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was called by Rick Gessner.
The meeting was adjourned at **1:32 PM**.