



CHARLESTON LAND REUSE AGENCY

Initial Action Plan July 2020

Introduction

The Charleston Land Reuse Agency was created August 19, 2019. It held its first meeting on November 5, 2019. The purpose of the Charleston Land Reuse Agency (CLRA) is to promote the productive use of property by identifying available properties suitable for public space, conservation, housing, and commercial use; and pursuing the acquisition, management, inventory, and disposition of those properties.

The Charleston Land Reuse Agency is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors. The current members of the Board of Directors include:

Officers

Chair – Kevin Baker, City Attorney
Vice Chair – Marylin McKeown, Citizen Member
Secretary – Will Laird, City Council
Treasurer – Jonathan Storage, City Manager

Members

Amy Shuler Goodwin, Mayor
Ben Adams, City Council
Chris Campbell, Citizen Member

Ex-Officio Members

Tony Harmon, Building Commission
Larry Malone, MOECD Director
Dan Vriendt, Planning Department Director

Vision Statement

The vision of the Charleston Land Reuse Agency is to empower people to come together to create prosperity by restoring and sustaining communities and contributing to efforts to revitalize neighborhoods, thereby enhancing the quality of life for residents of the City of Charleston.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Charleston Land Reuse Agency is to return unwanted, abandoned, or distressed properties to productive use by strategically acquiring properties, supporting community goals, driving collaboration with housing developers, community groups, financiers and nonprofit entities, acting as a catalyst for preservation of neighborhoods, and bridging the efforts of City Departments in order to stabilize and enhance neighborhood viability and help ensure a more robust and safe housing environment.

Critical Issues and Questions

The Charleston Land Reuse Agency has several unique abilities and strong leadership as well as having acquired assets in the form of land donations. As a new organization it faces a variety of critical issues and questions. How to decide what property to accept; funding; what partnerships to cultivate; staffing; how to successfully address “bad actors”; how to maintain sustainability; how best to get input from the community and developers?

Core Values

To carry out its mission, the CLRA believes and is dedicated to ...

- *Impactful/Effectiveness*
- *Collaboration/Partnership*
- *Sustainability/Growth/Responsibility*
- *Transparency/Honesty/Engagement*
- *Creativity/Innovation*
- *Community*

One Year Goals

By July 2021, the CLRA has the following goals:

Internal (Funding, Staffing, Policies & Procedures)

- Create a plan that will allow the CLRA to hire staff starting July 1, 2021, by either legislative change to create a funding mechanism, identifying and obtaining grant funds, or getting into the City budget.
- Finalize policy to help guide the CLRA Board on accepting or rejecting properties. (Criteria could include creating green space, infill housing or other purposes serving community needs.)
- Finalize policy to ensure consistent stakeholder input is received on all properties before putting a property out to a developer. (Could include onsite chalk board, soliciting input

Adopted July 14, 2020

by mail and/or social media from nearby property owners, holding listening and brainstorming sessions, etc.)

- Build out CLRA website to show our policies, procedures, and properties. If possible, begin adding general public information on the county and state processes for tax sales and title searches and responses to frequently asked questions for dealing with distressed and abandoned properties.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Work with City agencies to implement systems which provide the LRA and citizens with useful, real-time property information through the Tolemi platform, including GIS maps and individual property data (ownership, liens, contact info, vacancy status, code violations, demolition status, building permits, demolition status, zoning regs)
- Develop PR strategy to promote the LRA and set expectations for constructive public engagement.
- Create a developer's roundtable or other mechanism to build relationships and set the foundation for strategic collaborations with for-profit and non-profit developers, financiers and community groups, and other government entities.

Project Pipeline

- Evaluate the November 2020 tax sale and attempt to acquire properties in a strategic way.
- Continue to follow up on property from the 2019 tax sale and state no-bid property that the CLRA has already begun pursuing.
- Obtain public input, put out an RFP, and begin a new project at the 937 Central Avenue location.
- Continue to acquire parcels near the 1502 Washington Street West and 2nd Avenue properties, while opening up dialog with the neighbors regarding what each of those projects could be in future years.
- Reach out to adjacent property owners who are good stewards to promote side lot expansions.

Advocacy

- Work with the Abandoned Properties Coalition to formulate a legislative agenda for the 2021 session and work to get the bills introduced and passed.
- Research national best practices to identify local ordinances that could help advance the LRA's mission and advocate for their passage.