

BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORT FY 2013

Mission Statement: *the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC) seeks to confront and alleviate the problems distressed properties cause to communities by supporting municipal and regional revitalization efforts and strategically acquiring, improving, assembling and selling distressed, vacant, abandoned and and/or tax-delinquent properties.*

❖ ***Return distressed, vacant, abandoned and/or tax-delinquent property to productive use.***

Acquired two tax-delinquent (and tax-foreclosed) properties using the preferred bid power of the Corporation at the County's In Rem auction 161; a vacant parcel was acquired and a single-family residential structure was acquired. The Corporation is in possession of both and holds clear and absolute title.

A Proceeds Distribution policy adopted by the Board of Directors will address the back-tax sums (i.e. formal bid amount) associated with each property – the sum total of back tax amounts of the properties is approximately \$128,000.

BENLIC also acquired the tax certificates for three (3) parcels in Erie County with the intention to complete a PILOT Judicial Foreclosure auction to return these parcels to productive use.

❖ ***Enhance the quality of life within neighborhoods***

Prior to property acquisition, disposition plans – prepared by the municipality – were received by the Corporation. The disposition plans reflect the goals of the municipality with respect to the various properties and their neighborhoods; the plans are a first step towards enhancing the quality of life.

❖ ***Actualize, stabilize and grow the value of the real property tax base***

Two properties were cleared of the back tax amounts of approximately \$128,000 in 2013. After disposition of a property, a portion of the proceeds will be paid to Erie County. Going forward, the property returns to the tax rolls under new ownership

❖ ***Provide economic growth, encourage economic opportunities***

Education and Outreach is conducted continually throughout Erie County during the course of the year. Each municipality in Erie County receives an annual notification of properties “ripe” for foreclosure which is interpreted as at least three years behind in tax liens. These properties are considered Land Bank candidates. BENLIC conducts training sessions, presentations, and one on one visits to municipal leaders. These sessions are intended to perform participants as to the benefits of Land Bank participation, the economic opportunities the Land Bank offers, and the value of returning vacant, abandoned structures to productive use.

❖ ***Lessen the burden on local government***

BENLIC acquired properties at the In Rem auction took absolute title to the property sold at such auction, “free and discharged of all tax and municipal claims, liens, mortgages, charges and estates of whatsoever kind”. The return to productive use of the single family residential property acquired by BENLIC will reduce police, fire and code enforcement pressures from this formally vacant, abandoned structure.

❖ ***Build Organization Capacity***

A grant for \$2.087 million was awarded the Corporation by the New York State Office of the Attorney General under that office’s Community Revitalization Initiative. A staffing element of the grant award will provide salary and fringe funding for a full-time executive director and a full-time program assistant. Significant in-kind services from Erie County’s Legal Department and the Department of Environment and Planning are provided.

BENLIC also convenes a monthly Land Bank Working Group comprised of regional planners, legal experts and non-profit executives who assist with preparation for Board meetings and offer significant guidance as policies, rules and procedures are developed for the Corporation.