



MEMORANDUM

(610) 478-6300
FAX: (610) 478-6316

Berks County Planning Commission
Berks County Services Center
633 Court Street, 14th Floor
Reading, PA 19601-4309

TO: Berks County Planning Commission

FROM: Matthew F. McGough, Laura Mursch

RE: **Recommendation of Appropriate Reuse of Blighted Properties – 1953 Fairview Avenue, Mount Penn Borough; 59 W. Bertolet Place, Maiden Creek Township; 803 Fritz Avenue & 711 Grove Avenue, Cumru Township**

DATE: August 3, 2022

As you are aware, the County of Berks created a Blighted Property Review Committee (Committee) to implement the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law and to promote the reuse of blighted properties within the boroughs and townships of Berks County. The Committee is charged (Berks County Ordinance #09-2014) with reviewing and acting upon applications submitted by municipalities for properties believed to be blighted. Pursuant to the Urban Redevelopment Law and County Ordinance #09-2014, the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks requests a recommendation as to the appropriate reuse of the property, and to confirm as to whether or not disposition of each property for residential or related use or commercial or industrial reuse would be in accord with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. County Ordinance #09-2014 defines "Residential and Related Use" as residential property for sale or rent and related uses, including but not limited to, park and recreation areas, neighborhood community service, and neighborhood parking lots.

1953 Fairview Avenue, Mount Penn Borough

After determining the property was vacant, the County Blighted Property Review Committee held a determination hearing and a Certification Hearing for the property, the outcome of which resulted in the Committee issuing a Blight Determination Resolution in March 2022 (#2022-5) certifying the property as blighted. The remedies required in the resolution was for the owner to secure the dwelling and repair broken windows, have the utilities restored to the premises, repair broken light posts and dilapidated conditions on the property and restore it to the requirement of applicable codes, and bring current all delinquent bills and invoices for municipal services. A Second Blight Determination Resolution (#2022-10) was also issued on the property in late May. This resolution notes the property owner was served with notices of blight, the right to appeal and did not elect to do so and has failed to correct or make satisfactory arrangements to address the violations cited and eliminate the blight conditions. This resolution also certifies the premises to the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks for acquisition.

According to tax parcel information and aerial photographs, the property is .04 acres and is an attached middle-of-row residential dwelling. The property is in a residential neighborhood consisting of high density lots with existing sewer and water service. The property is zoned R-5 (Urban Residential). The purpose of the R-5 Zoning District, as stated in the Joint Zoning Ordinance for Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough 2011, is "to maintain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods and allow consistent development of undeveloped parcels of land; to accommodate urban residential development upon lands best-suited for suburban and urban uses; and to efficiently utilize the existing infrastructure and community facilities." The County's Future Land Use Plan designates this property, as well as the neighborhood, as Existing Development. The goal of Existing Developed Areas is to

maintain and revitalize areas with established development through in-fill development and rehabilitation. Housing goals and policies include requiring housing to meet minimum health and safety standards and to encourage the rehabilitation of structurally sound houses and demolition of dilapidated structures. Disposition of the property for residential or related use would be consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. Appropriate reuse of the property would be residential or related use, pursuant to the regulations of the Joint Zoning Ordinance for Lower Alsace Township and Mount Penn Borough of 2011. Any redevelopment should be compatible in scale, density and character to the existing neighborhood and infrastructure capabilities.

59 West Bertolet Place, Maiden creek Township

After determining the property was vacant, the County Blighted Property Review Committee held a determination hearing and a Certification Hearing for the property, the outcome of which resulted in the Committee issuing a Blight Determination Resolution in January 2022 (#2022-1) certifying the property as blighted. The remedies required in the resolution was for the owner to remove trash and debris from the property, including garbage, materials from demolition, and a fallen tree; drain and fill in or secure swimming pool to remove condition of attractive nuisance; remediate or demolish unsafe structures, including steps to ensure structural soundness of buildings, and repairs to exterior, and cut grass and weeds. A Second Blight Determination Resolution (#2022-06) was also issued on the property in late May. This resolution notes the property owner was served with notices of blight, the right to appeal and did not elect to do so and has failed to correct or make satisfactory arrangements to address the violations cited and eliminate the blight conditions. This resolution also certifies the premises to the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks for acquisition.

According to tax parcel information and aerial photographs, the property is 1.6 acres and is a single family detached residential dwelling. The property is in a rural residential area consisting of low density lots. The property is zoned AP (Agricultural Preservation). The purpose of the AP Zoning District, as stated in the Township Zoning Ordinance, is “to protect and promote the continuation of agriculture in areas with primary agricultural lands.” However, single family detached dwellings are a permitted use in the AP district subject to certain provisions of the Township Zoning Ordinance. The County’s Future Land Use Plan designates the property as Existing Development, surrounded by Rural Conservation. The goal of the Existing Development Areas is to maintain and revitalize areas with established development through in-fill development and rehabilitation. Housing goals and policies include requiring existing housing to meet minimum health and safety standards and to encourage the rehabilitation of structurally sound houses and demolition of dilapidated structures. Disposition of the property for residential or related use would be consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. Appropriate reuse of the property would be residential or an agricultural related use pursuant to the regulations of the Maiden creek Township Zoning Ordinance (3-27-2017 #243). Any redevelopment should be compatible in scale, density and character of the existing area and infrastructure capabilities.

711 Grove Avenue, Cumru Township

After determining the property was vacant, the County Blighted Property Review Committee held a determination hearing and a Certification Hearing for the property, the outcome of which resulted in the Committee issuing a Blight Determination Resolution in March 2022 (#2022-3) certifying the property as blighted. The remedies required in the resolution was for the owner to remove trash and debris from the property, restore utilities to the property, repair dilapidated conditions, and bring current all delinquent bills and invoices owed for utilities and municipal services. A Second Blight Determination Resolution (#2022-08) was also issued on the property in late May. This resolution notes the property owner was served with notices of blight, the right to appeal and did not elect to do so and has failed to correct or make satisfactory arrangements to address the violations cited and eliminate the blight conditions. This resolution also certifies the premises to the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks for acquisition.

According to tax parcel information and aerial photographs, the property is 0.19 acres and is a single family detached residential dwelling. The property is in a rural residential area consisting of high density lots with existing sewer and water. The property is zoned HR (High Density Residential). The purpose of the HR Zoning District, as stated in the Township Zoning Ordinance, is “to accommodate suburban and urban density residential development upon lands best-suited for such use, as determined by the accessibility of public water supply and sewage disposal as well as access to arterial and collector roads.” The County’s Future Land Use Plan designates the property as Existing Development. The goal of the Existing Development Areas is to maintain and revitalize areas with established development through in-fill development and rehabilitation. Housing goals and policies include requiring existing housing to meet minimum health and safety standards and to encourage the rehabilitation of structurally sound houses and demolition of dilapidated structures. Disposition of the property for residential or related use would be consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. Appropriate reuse of the property would be residential use pursuant to the regulations of the Cumru Township Zoning Ordinance (12-30-2008 #686 [as amended in 2009, #689]). Any redevelopment should be compatible in scale, density and character of the existing area and infrastructure capabilities.

803 Fritz Avenue, Cumru Township

After determining the property was vacant, the County Blighted Property Review Committee held a determination hearing and a Certification Hearing for the property, the outcome of which resulted in the Committee issuing a Blight Determination Resolution in March 2022 (#2022-2) certifying the property as blighted. The remedies required in the resolution was for the owner to remove trash and debris from the property, restore utilities to the property, repair unsafe egress and dilapidated conditions, and bring current all delinquent bills and invoices owed for utilities and municipal services. A Second Blight Determination Resolution (#2022-07) was also issued on the property in late May. This resolution notes the property owner was served with notices of blight, the right to appeal and did not elect to do so and has failed to correct or make satisfactory arrangements to address the violations cited and eliminate the blight conditions. This resolution also certifies the premises to the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks for acquisition.

According to tax parcel information and aerial photographs, the property is 0.33 acres and is a single family detached residential dwelling. The property was deeded to a new owner, 2 Spuds LLC, in July of 2022. It is located in a residential area consisting of medium to high density lots with existing sewer and water and is zoned HR (High Density Residential) with nearby MR (Medium Density Residential). The purpose of the HR Zoning District, as stated in the Township Zoning Ordinance, is “to accommodate suburban and urban density residential development upon lands best-suited for such use, as determined by the accessibility of public water supply and sewage disposal as well as access to arterial and collector roads.” The County’s Future Land Use Plan designates the property as Existing Development. The goal of the Existing Development Areas is to maintain and revitalize areas with established development through in-fill development and rehabilitation. Housing goals and policies include requiring existing housing to meet minimum health and safety standards and to encourage the rehabilitation of structurally sound houses and demolition of dilapidated structures. Disposition of the property for residential or related use would be consistent with the Berks County Comprehensive Plan. Appropriate reuse of the property would be residential use pursuant to the regulations of the Cumru Township Zoning Ordinance (12-30-2008 #686 [as amended in 2009, #689]). Any redevelopment should be compatible in scale, density and character of the existing area and infrastructure capabilities.