

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Council of the City of Philadelphia to investigate the recent sale of tax delinquent properties approved for acquisition by the Philadelphia Land Bank for workforce housing, side yards, and community gardens, to assess Land Bank strategies to better support balanced and equitable neighborhood growth, and to explore a moratorium on all lien and sheriff sales of tax delinquent properties.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia (the "City") has thousands of tax delinquent vacant lots and hundreds of vacant tax delinquent structures which threaten the safety and economic viability of our neighborhoods, creating blight and decay; and

WHEREAS, To remedy this problem, the City created the Philadelphia Land Bank (the "Land Bank") in 2013, using special state enabling legislation, to acquire tax delinquent properties through tax sale, clear the title to those properties, consolidate properties owned by multiple public agencies into single ownership to expedite transfers to private owners, and to assist in the assemblage of land for community, nonprofit, and for-profit uses; and

WHEREAS, A review of the City Revenue Department and Office of Property Assessment procedures are needed to examine any inconsistencies in their data and to ensure that their goals are aligned with the Land Banks; and

WHEREAS, The Land Bank is tasked with promoting development, using land in its inventory, that ensures permanent or long-term affordability and socioeconomic diversity within neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, The strategic scope of the Land Bank offers communities an opportunity to focus on the development and uses of land that they would like to see in their neighborhoods, however current practice of taking vacant, tax delinquent properties to tax lien and sheriff sales has jeopardized the Land Bank's ability to perform the functions for which it was created; and

WHEREAS, A moratorium on all tax lien and sheriff sales may be necessary to allow the Land Bank time to assess the tax delinquent inventory, housing plans, market conditions, and strategies to better support balanced and equitable neighborhood growth to avert the gentrification of some neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, A number of properties approved by the Land bank for acquisition for workforce housing, side yards, and community gardens have been recently sold at sheriff sale at the request of the City Revenue Department; and

WHEREAS, Rising housing cost in these neighborhoods and incomes that are much lower than the area median income has the potential to create difficulties for long term residents to remain in neighborhoods they have lived in for many years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council of the City of Philadelphia is hereby authorized to hold hearings to investigate the recent sale of tax delinquent properties

approved for acquisition by the Philadelphia Land Bank for workforce housing, side yards, and community gardens, to assess Land Bank strategies to better support balanced and equitable neighborhood growth, and to explore a moratorium on all lien and sheriff sales of tax delinquent vacant properties.