



Vacant Properties- A Community Priority

When MHC helped launch the Louisville Vacant Property Campaign (LVPC) over three years ago, vacant properties were not such a hot topic in Louisville Metro. However, as the problem keeps growing and we keep meeting, the topic has caught many people's attention.

The month of April has several events which relate to vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties. LVPC is partnering with Network Center for Community Change (formerly Making Connections Network), California Collaborative, Legal Aid Society and Kentucky Equal Justice Center on Tuesday April 12, 5:30-7:30 PM, at New Directions Housing Corporation, 1000 East Liberty Street, to host *Property Tax Lien Sales: Their Impact on Homeowners and Neighborhoods*. This public forum, featuring Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator Tony Lindauer, will discuss the impact of Kentucky's statute requiring local governments to sell outstanding tax liens to private investors. The forum will examine the expansive social costs of tax lien foreclosures on our city, including the link between the tax liens sales and the dramatic rise in vacant and abandoned properties. Janet Dakan is the generous sponsor of this event.

Additionally, on Monday April 25, 5:30-7:30 PM, MHC will participate in the next meeting of Neighborhood Roundtable, hosted by New Directions Housing Corporation, 1000 East Liberty Street. This meeting, *No Vacancy: Best Practices and Wildest Dreams for Vacant and Abandoned Properties*, will concentrate on neighborhood initiatives in turning eyesores into opportunities. Pam Vetter will discuss the Franklin Elementary School project in Clifton, Sue Fridenstine will discuss the development of the privately owned Lucille Grant Park in Phoenix Hill and Doug Magee will discuss what skills neighborhood organizations need in order to handle a project such as these. Various neighborhood activists will give brief "wildest dream" approaches regarding vacant properties. Some of the ideas will have been tried, some not. If you have an idea you would like to present, contact Doug Magee at 584-6858 or doug@metropolitanhousing.org.

This forum at the Neighborhood Roundtable is the beginning of a series of four neighborhood-oriented topics to be presented over the next several months. The other topics, presented by neighborhood activists from throughout Metro Louisville, include public art, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and community gardens/urban agriculture. For more information, contact Lydia Comer at LydiaC@ndhc.org.

The April 25 forum is a lead-up to the Louisville Vacant, Abandoned, & Underutilized Property Summit, sponsored by MHC, Louisville Metro Codes & Regulations, Mayor Fischer's Office, Tony Lindauer (PVA), and Councilmembers Judith Green (1), Barbara

Shanklin (2), Mary Woolridge (3), Cheri Bryant Hamilton (5), David James (6), Tom Owen (8), Tina Ward-Pugh (9), Rick Blackwell (12), Vicki Welsh (13), Bob Henderson (14), Marianne Butler (15), Glen Stuckel (17), Madonna Flood (24), and David Yates (25). This free Summit will be held Thursday April 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 pm at Memorial Auditorium at the corner of 4th and Kentucky. There will be presentations on topics such as the local Land Bank Authority, foreclosures, maintenance, and preventive actions. There also will be a time for questions, suggestions regarding processes and possible solutions, including but not limited to side yards, community gardens, rehabbed housing units, green spaces, and holding properties for future uses.

The second half of the day mostly will involve how to attract developers, both for-and non-profit, to work on this growing problem. There will be discussion about processes needed at Louisville Metro, incentives needed to attract developers and others into distressed neighborhoods, and what strategies are needed to change these properties in conjunction with the neighborhood in which they are found.

This Summit has been a goal of LVPC in order to discuss the problem, its causes and potential solutions, both short- and long-term, with decision- and policy-makers at Louisville Metro. MHC encourages all to attend and bring ideas for prevention of and solutions to vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties. This is a great opportunity to speak out when the policy- and decision-makers are there to listen and, hopefully, implement new strategies for addressing vacant properties with the assistance of neighborhood organizations. There will be a continental breakfast and a light lunch available. For more information, contact either Doug Magee at MHC or Shonda Barlow with Codes and Regulations at 574-1347. Register for the conference at <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/jpl>.

Beyond these particular events, you are invited to join the Louisville Vacant Property Campaign for its monthly meetings, usually held at Presbyterian Community Center, 701 South Hancock Street on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:30 pm. Due to the April 12 meeting and the May 19 MHC Annual Dinner featuring Dan Kildee, President of the Center for Community Progress and nationally-recognized expert on vacant properties and land banks, LVPC will not meet at its regular time until June 21. If you would like to be added to the LVPC email distribution list, contact Doug at doug@metropolitanhousing.org.

"I Lift My Lamp"

Louisville Becomes More International

We have read the reports from the 2010 census which tell us that Louisville is becoming even more diverse. "The latest count shows that a rising numbers of blacks, Hispanics and Asians in Louisville has offset a drop in the number of white residents", according to the Courier-Journal article on March 17, 2011.

Yet, there are many barriers faced by people coming from other countries- including housing barriers- and this was explored in a panel discussion hosted by the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission (HRC) that was recorded for TV and will broadcast in April- Fair Housing Month. This program was aired on Metro TV the first week of April; will be broadcast on CN2 (Insight Channel 98) on April 14 (5:30-6:30 p.m.), April 16 (2:30-3:30 p.m.) and April 21 (5:30-6:30 p.m.); and should be scheduled for broadcast on KET. The panelists were Nick Valenzuela of the HRC, Natasha Watson of HUD's Fair Housing office, Darko Mihaylovich of Catholic Charities, Jeana Dunlap of Louisville Metro Department of Housing and Cathy Hinko of MHC. Carolyn Miller-Cooper of the HRC was the moderator.

The profile of internationals in Louisville is becoming more pronounced and the Fair Housing Coalition is including a specific discussion of housing issues for people with disabilities who are resettling in the US in our upcoming **2011 Fair Housing Month Forum- Housing Issues Faced by People with Disabilities** which will take place on Thursday, April 14 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the main branch of the public library, 301 York Street, Louisville in the Centennial Room. The forum also includes speakers on housing issues of disabled veterans, housing issues of those with physical disabilities and of those with mental health disabilities.

The opening speaker will be Gerry Gordon-Brown, Director of the KY Office on Vocational Rehabilitation Client Assistance Program. Lee Ann Thomas and Keith Hosey of the Center for Accessible Living will discuss issues faced by those with physical disabilities. Perspectives on housing for those with mental health disabilities will be provided by Kathy Dobbins, Executive Director of Wellspring. Todd Dedas of the Veterans Administration will address the housing challenges seen by veterans with disabilities. The unique issues faced by immigrants with disabilities will be discussed by Darko Mihaylovich from Catholic Charities.

After each speaker makes a brief presentation, Art Crosby, Executive Director of the Lexington Fair Housing Council, will facilitate a panel discussion with the speakers that will further address these issues and the fair housing rights of those with disabilities. Cass Irvin, author and disability rights advocate, will be the closing speaker.

MHC wishes to thank Fifth Third Bank and Janet Dakan, the sponsors of the 2011 Fair Housing Month Forum.

Dare to Care Joins MHC at our March 29 Brown Bag Forum on *The State of Fair Housing*

On March 29 MHC hosted a brown bag lunch forum for over 30 people, where we presented and discussed the findings of our newest paper, *The State of Fair Housing in Louisville: Impediments & Improvements*. *The State of Fair Housing* examines where people protected by Fair Housing laws live and explores the barriers, many of which are inherited, that lie at the heart of true fair housing choice. A focus of the discussion was the impact our zoning regulations, which exclude multi-family housing from 75% of Jefferson County, have on fair housing choice for people protected by fair housing laws.

This forum also gave us the opportunity to work with a partner agency and gain a better understanding of need in greater Louisville. Stan Siegwald of Dare to Care Food Bank presented stark local data from Feeding America's new nationwide study *Map the Meal Gap*. This data highlighted the growing food insecurity in greater Louisville counties- as defined by the gap in meals people can access and those that they need- as well as the food budget shortfall for individuals at risk of hunger. Our lack of affordable housing greatly contributes to this meal gap, as households often have to choose between paying for food and housing costs.

Mr. Siegwald informed us that the annual "meal gap" in greater Louisville is **30,900,000 meals missed per year**. He also informed us that 41% of those households missing meals in our region earn over 185% of the federal poverty level, and thus are not eligible for many programs that provide food assistance. This meal gap demonstrates the changing face of need in our community and the growing economic challenges faced by working families. Thanks to Stan for sharing this important data

MHC would also like to thank the sponsors of *The State of Fair Housing*- Louisville Metro government, through the Department of Housing and through a special grant from Ninth District Councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh, and the Network Center for Community Change (the Making Connections Network).

Help for Homeless Veterans

Call the VA Homeless Veteran Hotline
1-877-4AID VET

Schedule of Events

April 12 - Fair Housing Coalition Meeting. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m

April 12- MHC Education & Advocacy Committee Meeting, New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty, 3:30 - 4:00 p.m.

April 12 – Forum on Property Tax Lien Sales. Join MHC, the Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign, Making Connections, the KY Equal Justice Center, Legal Aid, and the California Collaborative for a public forum featuring a panel discussion on tax lien sales and their impacts. The panel will include Tony Lindauer, Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator. Sponsored by Janet Dakan. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

April 14- MHC Fair Housing Month Forum. This year, the Forum will feature presentations and a panel discussion about the fair housing issues facing people with disabilities. Sponsored by Fifth Third Bank and Janet Dakan. Louisville Free Public Library Main Branch, 301 York Street, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

April 21. Non-profit Housing Alliance Meeting. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

April 25- No Vacancy: Best Practices and Wildest Dreams for Vacant and Abandoned Properties. Neighborhood Roundtable, hosted by New Directions Housing Corporation. This meeting will concentrate on neighborhood initiatives in turning eyesores into opportunities. Features presentations about neighborhood -led projects by Pam Vetter of Clifton and Sue Fridenstine of Phoenix Hill. Doug Magee will discuss what skills neighborhood organizations need in order to manage projects. Neighborhood activists will also give brief "wildest dream" approaches regarding vacant properties. To present an idea at the meeting, contact Doug Magee at 584-6858 or doug@metropolitanhousing.org. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty, 5:30- 7:30 p.m.

April 28- Louisville Vacant, Abandoned, and Under Utilized Property Summit. Presentations on topics such as the local Landbank Authority, foreclosures, maintenance, and preventive actions. There also will be a time for questions, suggestions regarding processes and possible solutions to our vacant property problem. Sponsored by Louisville Metro Government and MHC. To register or for more information, go to <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/ipl> or call 574-1347. Memorial Auditorium, 970 S. 4th Street, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

May 19- MHC Annual Meeting. Features vacant property and land bank expert Dan Kildee as Keynote speaker. For more information, contact Curtis Stauffer at 584-6858 or curtisstauffer@metropolitanhousing.org. Hyatt Regency Louisville, reception and registration, 5:00 p.m., dinner and program, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

April 12- La Caliente Radio (105.7 FM/620 AM) Fair Housing Discussion. A Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission National Fair Housing Month event. For more information, call 776-1240 or email info@lacialienteradio.com. 2001 West Broadway, Suite 13, 1:30- 2:00 p.m.

April 23- ACLU of KY and Muhammad Ali Institute for Peace & Justice Youth Rights Conference. An opportunity for high school students from across the Commonwealth to learn more about civil liberties. To register or for more information, contact Kate Miller at 581-9746 or kate@aclu-ky.org. U. of Louisville, 9:30a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

April 26- Free Fair Housing Training. Sponsored by the Lexington Fair Housing Council, Kentucky Housing Corporation and the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission. The training will focus on basic fair housing law and will also include a brief diversity session. To register or for more information, go to <http://lexingtonfairhousing.com/loureg.htm>, call (859) 971-8067, or email crosbylfhc@hotmail.com. Holiday Inn Hurstbourne I-64 East, 1325 S. Hurstbourne Pkwy., 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

April 25- Free Public Library Job Shop- Keys to Successful Interviewing. Natasha Cummings from the Making Connections Network will speak about some important keys to successful interviewing. Louisville Free Public Library Main Branch, 301 York Street, 2:00 p.m.

April 26 - Wellspring 13th Annual Derby Preview Party Dinner and Auction. For more information and to make reservations, contact Traci Hall at 635-1570 or Traci.Hall@wellspringky.org. Churchill Downs on Millionaires Row, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

May 10-14. Fifth Third eBus comes to Louisville. The eBus is a mobile classroom that provides free access to comprehensive financial services information and free homeownership and credit counseling programs. For locations and more information, contact Adam Hall at 368-3357 or Adam.Hall@53.com.

June 11- NDHC Southern Indiana Repair
June 18- NDHC Metro Louisville Repair Affair. New Directions' Repair Affair mobilizes community-wide resources and volunteers to support the home repair needs of elderly and disabled homeowners of low income in Louisville and Southern Indiana. Homeowners who need assistance, call 719-7143. To volunteer, call 719-7130 or email pams@ndhc.org.

2011 MHC ANNUAL MEETING - *Saving for Our Future*

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2011

LOUISVILLE HYATT DOWNTOWN

SOCIAL HOUR: 5:00PM PROGRAM & DINNER: 6:00PM

The 22nd MHC Annual meeting features **keynote speaker Dan Kildee**, a nationally-recognized expert on **vacant property** and **land banks**. Mr. Kildee is Co-Founder & President of the Center for Community Progress. Prior to founding the Center, Kildee served as Genesee County (Michigan) Treasurer from 1997-2009 and was President of the Genesee Institute, a research and training institute focused on smart growth, urban land reform, and land banking. Dan has also served on the Executive Committee of the National Vacant Properties Campaign.

There are **7,268 vacant properties in Louisville Metro** as of January 1, 2011. This shows the great scope of our community's vacant property problem and the threat it poses to our neighborhoods. Attend MHC's Annual Meeting and learn from a vacant property expert how Louisville can better address our vacant property crisis. We can work together to save for our future by turning vacant properties into assets – not liabilities.

Tickets: \$55 (before May 13), **\$60** (after May 13).

Table Sponsorships: \$500 (for 8 seats)

Reserve your ticket or table now! Consider sponsoring tickets for low-income attendees.

All proceeds support MHC, the united voice for safe, fair, and affordable housing in Greater Louisville.

Thanks to Fifth Third Bank, PNC Bank, Janet Dakan, Louisville Metro Housing Authority, River City Housing, and Volunteers of America for sponsoring the 2011 Annual Meeting.

Please consider becoming a sponsor.

Event Sponsorships and ads in the 2011 Annual Meeting Program are still available!

Call 584-6858 or email curtisstauffer@metropolitanhousing.org for tickets or more information.



Metropolitan
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Coalition

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