

February 20, 2014

The Lawrenceville Corporation wishes to join the growing number of community organizations, neighborhood stakeholders, and residents throughout Pittsburgh in fully supporting the Land Bank legislation currently being considered by Pittsburgh City Council. An efficient, transparent, neighborhood-focused Land Bank, which this legislation can create, will be a **vast and necessary** improvement over our current system.

Land Banks have shown their worth in cities and counties across the US and the Lawrenceville Corporation is excited about the potential a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Land Bank has to spur **community-supported reinvestment** in Lawrenceville and the entire City. A Land Bank can be a very promising and powerful tool for unlocking the latent potential of blighted properties throughout our City. However, Lawrenceville Corporation recognizes that a Land Bank is a long-term operation and cannot be a panacea for all of the challenges our neighborhoods face.

Many aspects of the proposed Land Bank draw from national best practices such as an independent board of directors, dedicated staff, and a robust self-financing mechanism. The LC is incredibly pleased to see, and fully supports, the inclusion all of these attributes in the current legislation. These aspects and many others will allow the Land Bank to operate at a scale that is **currently impossible**, which will be an enormous benefit to the residents of all 90 neighborhoods of the City of Pittsburgh.

We understand, and support, the idea that this legislation **should not** prescribe Policies and Procedures for the operation of the Land Bank. In that case we risk winding up in 20 or 30 years exactly where we are now; with antiquated laws written for a City that no longer exists. However, the process for community and resident stakeholder input during the formation of, and prior to the adoption of, the Land Bank's Policies and Procedures should be codified.

While the proposed legislation has many strengths, Lawrenceville Corporation is confident that thoughtful amendments can be added to this legislation that guarantee community input in the formation of the Land Bank's Policies and Procedures, and that those Policies and Procedures will give communities a significant voice in the Land Bank's operation, adhere to established community plans, and offer the highest level of protection to homeowners and tenants.