



## The Chairman's Corner

by

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### COLUMBIA COUNTY LAND BANK

Back at the end of May, the Columbia County Land Bank Corporation, created through a joint effort by the County Board of Supervisors, the County Housing Task Force and the Columbia Economic Development Corporation, got underway with its first meeting.

Under the New York State Land Bank Program, local tax foreclosing entities can apply to create not-for-profit land bank corporations in their communities to acquire properties that are tax delinquent or foreclosed, vacant and/or abandoned, and help eliminate the harms and liabilities caused by such properties.

As the New York Land Bank Association notes, "Returning these formerly abandoned properties to productive use improves quality of life for surrounding residents and helps to grow the community's local property tax base by encouraging renovation that improves the value of the property the land bank sells, as well as surrounding property values."

Land banks have clearly proven to be a versatile tool for improving communities throughout New York State, and we look forward to experiencing similar success here in Columbia County.

"Land banks are almost as different as the geographies in which they operate," said Chris Brown, Housing Development Coordinator for the Columbia County Economic Development Corporation. "They're most commonly found at the county level. The reason for that is a land bank's service area is tied to a foreclosing governmental unit, so when a property becomes tax foreclosed upon, whatever entity it is that executes that foreclosure is what you'd called the foreclosing governmental unit. Typically, land banks will receive the properties that they rehab/sell off from tax foreclosure rolls."

The City of Hudson, he explained, is not covered by the county Land Bank service area, as it is its own foreclosing governmental unit. In practice, this means that the county land bank will be unable to own property in Hudson, however, land bank funds may be used outside of its service area, when and where deemed appropriate.

Since May, bylaws of the corporation have been adopted, and the board learned that its application for \$100,000 in annual administrative funds, which cannot be used toward the acquisition of properties, had been approved. A separate capital fund is available that the board will apply for in the next few months -- those funds can be used for the full range of land bank activities, including acquisitions, rehabs, and the like. Both pools of funding are available from New York State Homes & Community Renewal.

Serving on the Columbia County Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors are Canaan Town Supervisor Brenda Adams, Real Property Tax Service Agency Director Suzette Booy, County Treasurer PJ Keeler, Stuyvesant Town Supervisor Ron Knott, Stockport Town Supervisor and Chairman of the county Board of Supervisors Matt Murell, County Planning Department Director Patrice Perry, and Assistant County Attorney Christopher Watz.

The Columbia County Land Bank Corporation can be found at <https://columbiaedc.com/about-cedc/columbia-county-land-bank-corporation>

Further information on New York land banks can be found at <https://nylandbanks.org>