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Office of Planning and Development

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Town of Tonawanda Files Five State Supreme Court Cases on “Zombie Homes”

The Town of Tonawanda filed 5 separate court actions against financial institutions that are disobeying the State’s new law regarding “Zombie Homes.” The new law that became effective at the start of 2017 requires lending institutions to maintain vacant properties that are the subject of a foreclosure action. In the past, after the foreclosed owners received a notice to vacate, nobody was taking care of these properties. Now, the law requires lending institutions to maintain these properties in accordance with NYS property maintenance codes. Under the new law, the housing lenders are subject to a \$500 fine for each day the property remains in violation.

“The Town has been methodically taking inventory of these vacant homes and preparing the legal action necessary to get these properties cleaned up” said Supervisor Joseph Emminger, “we need to keep these properties maintained to keep values up in our neighborhood.”

Councilman John Bargnesi, Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, said “there are no more excuses to avoiding property maintenance at one of these properties. If you begin the foreclosure process on a homeowner, you have to keep up the property.”

As part of the Town’s Zombie Home Program, any homeowner that falls behind in their mortgage payments are offered free housing counseling services and the ability to have their mortgage terms modified through various state and federal programs. Belmont Housing Resources for WNY have already assisted over 25 homeowners through this program.

Councilman William Conrad said that “it is important that resources are made available to the current homeowners so that we can address the problem up front, rather than waiting for these homes to fall into disrepair over time. The Town’s Abandoned Property Task Force has been providing a forum for our staff to keep on top of the situation.”

If you know of a vacant property in disrepair in the Town of Tonawanda, you may report it to the Building Department at 877-8801.

Website: <http://www.tonawanda.ny.us/>

Equal Housing Lender



Fair Housing Community