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Local organizations propose plan to fix up abandoned homes



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By RACHEL MURPHY

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HERKIMER, N.Y. (WKTV)--Deteriorating neighborhoods throughout throughout Central New York could soon receive a much needed transformation.

Two local committees are exploring the possibility of a six county land bank to help towns and villages deal with neighborhood decay. Representatives with the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District and Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful said they want to improve neighborhoods throughout Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego and Schoharie Counties during an informational meeting at Herkimer Community College Tuesday night.

It's all apart of an initiative by the New York State Land Bank Act that combats the problem of vacant and abandoned properties. The act works with communities to eliminate the harms and liabilities caused by these types of properties. The property could be used to recreate affordable housing, or help stabilize property values in that area.

"Properties that are delinquent in taxes then get set up for sale and someone who has never been to the communities has no ties,.. then comes looks at says 'Oh my God this place is a mess, I can't make any money off of this,' and they walk away," said Chairperson of Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful Robert Albrecht. "Or maybe they rented for a while, but didn't make any repairs, the codes officers comes in and the next thing you know there's a sign on the door and everybody walks away. That building can stand there for 35 years just like that. So this is an alternative to that process."

The plan is still in the beginning stages. Representatives say the meeting will be used to gauge how community members and local leaders feel about the idea.

There are more meetings scheduled in other counties throughout month.

Officials say if people are willing to help with the land banks, the project can move forward. They say they will know for sure if it can move forward by October.

No word yet on when the project would begin, or the cost.

For more information on this issue email info@mvedd.org.

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