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Mohawk Valley Land Bank is Encouraged

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Posted on March 3, 2015 in [Community Renewal](#), [Economic Development](#), [Fulton County NY](#), [Gloversville](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Johnstown](#)

Herkimer County has officially encouraged a plan to create a six-county, not-for-profit corporation that would be allowed to acquire and improve derelict properties.

The proposed land bank would have the power to acquire vacant sites, rundown and abandoned properties and tax delinquent parcels. It would also have the power to borrow money to secure the sites and find buyers interested in making the properties productive.

Under a state law enacted in 2011, any tax district with foreclosure powers is eligible to form a not-for-profit land bank with approval from the state's urban development corporation. The idea behind a Mohawk Valley Land Bank is that a regional public authority would have more focus and greater resources to make sure the properties aren't disposed of at far less than they are worth. The authority could also work with buyers to make sure the properties are secured and redeveloped, rather than persisting in dereliction and tax delinquency.

The Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful (KMVB) committee of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District has so far held three informational meetings in Johnstown, Herkimer and Oneonta exploring the creation of a land bank to include Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego and Schoharie counties. A proposed land bank is one of four parts of KMVB's anti-blight campaign, which also encompasses the use of the Keep America Beautiful Community Appearance Index, the Great American Cleanup and Adopt a Spot.

The Herkimer County Legislature passed a resolution Feb. 18 to encourage continued investigation of forming a regional land bank. According to the MVEDD, state legislation allows for 20 land banks in New York, and 11 land banks have already been approved. There are 120 land banks in the nation.

On Tuesday, March 3, the group will hold an informational meeting at SUNY Oneonta's Red Dragon Theater, 108 Ravine Parkway, Oneonta. All meetings begin at 6:30 PM.

"Blight is a problem in communities everywhere, and Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful (KMVB) is doing something about it," said Bob Albrecht, chair of the KMVB Board of Directors.


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Steve Smith, executive director of MVEDD, said, "Municipalities are looking for help in dealing with blight, whether it is rubbish along the streets or abandoned houses. We think our six-county network together with KMVB volunteers can make a difference."

For more information

[Mohawk Valley Economic Development District](#)

[Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful's Facebook page](#)

[New York State Land Banks: Combating Blight and Vacancy in New York Communities – PDF](#)

[Vacant Properties: The True Costs to Communities – PDF](#)

[2011 New York State Land Bank Enabling Legislation – PDF](#)

[Land Bank Guidelines -PDF](#)

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