



HAMILTON COUNTY  
**First  
Suburbs  
Consortium**

# Membership Meeting

September 30, 2014  
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Amberley Village Community Center  
7149 Ridge Road

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## Attending

Chris Anderson  
John Applegate  
Gary Bayes  
Dureka Bonds  
Joseph Brickler  
Mary Jo Byrnes  
Myra Calder  
Bill Doering  
Catherine Feerick  
Steve Feldmann  
Richard Finan  
Gerri Harbison  
Jim Hill  
Gerard Hyland  
Jenny Kilgore  
Bruce Koehler  
Scot Lahrmer  
Judith Lewis  
Craig Margolis

Chris Moran  
Jim O'Reilly  
Florence Parker  
Loretta Rokey  
Lydgia Sartor  
Janet Smith  
John Smith  
Merrie Stillpass  
Nancy Sunnenberg  
Billy Weber  
Barry Strum  
Mary Brickler  
Frank Davis  
Jennifer Eismeier  
Stanley Vonderhaar  
Todd Kinskey  
Steve Johns  
Andy Dobson  
Jay Springer

## RPC/Amberley Welcome

Merrie Stillpass welcomed everyone on behalf of Amberley Village, and gave a description of RPC engagement in current planning issues.

## Planning Partnership Business

Sen. Richard Finan gave a little history of Planning Partnership/FSC relationship, and landbank legislation. He noted that the Planning Partnership is first and foremost is an education opportunity. He welcomed feedback from attendees.

## First Suburbs Consortium Business

Mayor John Smith, Vice-Chair

John made introductions on behalf of First Suburbs and discussed some of the agenda items. He tabled the officer candidate discussion and regional trails alliance vote in order to allow the Executive Committee to discuss them at their next meeting.

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## **Landbank Presentation**

Steve Johns made welcoming remarks and introduced Paula Boggs Muething from the Port Authority

### Tools and Programs of the Hamilton County Landbank

#### Overall Purpose:

- return vacant properties to productive use
- economic development
- blight reduction
- neighborhood revitalization
- strategic parcel assembly
- historic preservation

#### Programs:

- Focus Neighborhood Strategy
- Demolition Grant Management (Moving Ohio Forward grants from state results in 712 condemned properties razed)
- Historic Stabilization
- REACH (Rehab Across Cincinnati and Hamilton County)
- Lot/Yard Program

#### Port Authority can obtain properties by:

- Tax foreclosure (pull properties off auction list)
- Deed in lieu of foreclosure
- forfeited land
- donations
- market purchase (rarely)

#### Factors in selection of focus communities include:

- number of foreclosures
- code violations
- condemnations
- public and private investment

#### Short-Term Focus Communities (county jurisdictions)

- Norwood
- St. Bernard
- Fairfax

#### Long-Term Focus Communities (county jurisdictions)

- Colerain Twp
- Mt. Healthy

Working in these focus communities involves Housing Strategy plans such as the one Community Building Institute wrote for Mt. Healthy. Having a plan clarifies issues and helps focus efforts.

Neighborhood Initiative Program: \$5 million available from Ohio for use in "target areas" (unclear how these areas are delineated and what money is used for—could be a topic for an FSC executive committee meeting)

Historic Stabilization Program works with an advisory board that meets quarterly. They decide how to spend \$250k/year. Much of the work is within Cincinnati because code enforcement administration actively flags distressed historic properties – in other words they know where the problems are before the structure is too far gone. May be an opportunity to develop a similar cooperative arrangement in other jurisdictions

Paula completed her presentation by stating the Port Authority is open to talking with any individual jurisdiction wanting to learn more about their programs and tools—potential for some follow-up workshops with groups of jurisdictions

### **Question and Answer**

Jim O'Reilly:

Question about Pogue's Garage in downtown Cincinnati and how the Port was involved. Paula stated the Landbank not used to purchase the property, but it was transferred through them to clear liens.

Steve Johns:

Comment that there could be better connection between FSC and the Landbank, Paula agreeable, need to know what FSC is up to, what the situation is in our communities. Opportunity for follow-up discussions.

Question about Short-Term vs Long-Term neighborhoods: Paula stated there is not a lot of difference from an operations standpoint – the Port is committed to working in community until private market picks up

In order to purchase a property from the Landbank, you have to be a developer with a proven track record and approval from Port. Information is available on the Port Authority website along with application materials

### **Small Group Discussion**

(flip chart notes)

Need to get word out to small investors/developers how to acquire individual properties from Port Authority.

Port Authority can act as an agent/advocate for communities dealing with complicated real estate dealings (example of this in City of Silverton). FSC could build on this and form a stronger tie with the Port for similar projects.

Lot/Yard Program is an opportunity to use Port's tools to create permanent greenspace—ties into Mill Creek Council of Communities work in green infrastructure and stormwater management.

Lots of programs and funding sources = difficulties keeping it all straight (how do communities know what to ask for help with?)

Small developers face a steep learning curve in working with Landbank

Port Authority has challenges with getting investors interested in properties they want to sell, have “limbo” properties that remain vacant.

Inside Cincinnati, Port works with existing community development councils. Partners in other jurisdictions vary.

### **Other Business**

Merrie Stillpass announced that Mill Creek Council of Communities updating its strategic plan this winter, and to be on the lookout for opportunities to be involved.

Jim O’Reilly made an announcement for group to discuss how post 1968 MSD agreement should work, concern that if we don’t plan for it, outcome will not be good for suburban communities. He circulated a memo outlining his concerns.

### **Adjourn**