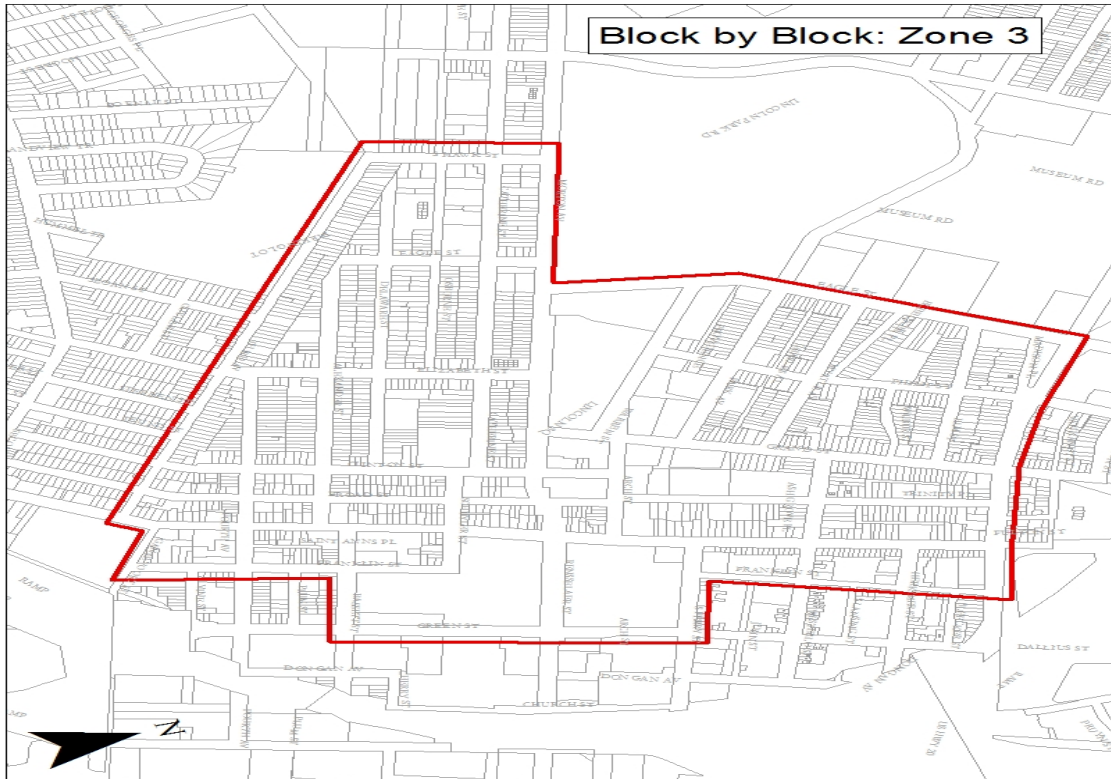


BUILDING A BETTER ALBANY



Zone Three Report

December 2010

Mayor Gerald D. Jennings



Department of Fire, Emergency & Building Services/Division of Building and Codes

- 284 dwelling units did not have current ROPs
- As of September, 12 of the units have been determined to be owner occupied units, therefore ROPs are not required
- 7 of the dwelling units have been determined to be vacant at this time, therefore a ROP is not required until just prior to occupancy
- 207 ROPs have been completed and issued. The additional 174 are actively being inspected
- There are a total of 107 vacant buildings that are subject to the Vacant Building Registry. 70 of those vacant buildings are on the registry. 26 are subject to current court action and 7 are currently under the ownership of the County of Albany
- 55 buildings are no longer subject to the vacant building registration process with 27 being reoccupied and 28 which have been demolished.
- 63 vacant buildings have been inspected for maintenance compliance. Court action is commenced in vacant buildings court for non-compliant property owners.

Law Corporation Counsel

As the Block by Block initiative continues, the Corporation Counsel's Office persists in its efforts to implement ways to deal with violators of the Code of the City of Albany and to encourage



responsible property maintenance. Albany City Court meets every Thursday to process cases that involve violation of the State and Local Building Code. The Law Department also assists in enforcing compliance with the Rental Dwelling Registration and Occupation Permit Ordinance. In addition, this office has been successful in facilitating the transfer of problem properties from those owners who have neglected their buildings to new owners who have the means and plans to reoccupy the buildings.

In conjunction with the Albany City Fire and Police Departments, appearance tickets are being utilized in order to bring violators as quickly as possible to court. Once these parties are in court, efforts are made to check all properties owned by these individuals to ensure that all properties are in compliance.

In Zone Three there have been approximately 45 Building and Codes Cases brought to Court. In addition, 21 ROP related cases have been initiated. Since 2010 in Vacant Building Court, which meets once a month on the 3rd Wednesday, approximately 242 cases have been adjudicated, 85 properties registered and over 30,000 in fines assessed.

A few examples of properties brought to court in the area of Zone Three:

5 Madison Place – 5 Madison Place was severely damaged in a fire and was vacant. The property owner did not properly secure the building and such building was not on the Vacant Building Registry. After being cited and brought to court, the owner was mandated to register the building, properly secure the building, and install a new drainage system. In addition, the City facilitates the transfer of the property to a responsible owner who intends to restore the building in the near future.

222 South Pearl Street – This building has been vacant for an extended period of time, but is considered to be one of Albany's most historical buildings. The property was owned by an individual who did not make any substantial improvements to the building. After a recent



partial collapse of the back portion of the building, the property owner was issued an appearance ticket to appear in court. After numerous discussions, an effort was made to find a responsible owner for the building. The City facilitated the transfer of the property to a contractor with the means and ambition to restore the building.

62 and 68 Morton Avenue – These properties were vacant and the owner made no significant effort to improve them. The owner was cited for failing to maintain the vacant buildings. The properties were transferred to Albany Housing Authority for the reasonable assessed value of the property. The Albany Housing Authority has a project to restore the buildings as part of the Phase Two South End Plan. This plan will restore 43 units of affordable housing in the area of Morton Avenue.

Vacant Building Court also has started to issue arrest warrants for defendants who failed to appear in Court. This has had a far-reaching effect evinced by a number of out-of-area defendants contacting the Law Department, as far away as California.

An example of the effectiveness of the warrant is, 370 Clinton Avenue. This property had been pending in Court since early 2009 and despite numerous phone calls little had been accomplished. After an arrest warrant was issued for the owner of the property, their legal representatives came forward and are now trying to bring the property into compliance with the Vacant Building Register, and are actively seeking a buyer for the property.

Further, the issuance of an arrest warrant for the owner of 51 Second Avenue resulted in a guilty plea to one court of failing to register his property and he has until the middle of October to bring the properties into compliance.

In another case in Vacant Building Court, PLJ Development has informed us that 759 Madison will be registered and that they intend to start construction on a new roof immediately.



Albany Housing Authority

Capital South Plan, “SEGway to the Future” – Completed in June 2007, this community revitalization plan is the culmination of over a year’s worth of consensus-building dialogue, which yielded a vision for a vibrant new South End community. The name is derivative of the Plan’s approach to Stabilize, Energize, and Grow the South End through a variety of housing, economic development, educational, and quality of life initiatives. Primary among those initiatives are dealing with vacant buildings, using the replacement of units from Lincoln Square to stabilize the surrounding neighborhood and make the Lincoln site attractive for reinterpretation and private investment, development of a “town center” at Morton and South Pearl Streets, and coordination and creation of market rate services and amenities that both serve existing residents and attract young professionals and families to live and work in the South End.

South End Revitalization, Phase 1 – In 2006, AHA was awarded 9% low-income housing tax credits from the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal toward the development of 52 affordable rental units. The project consists of two sites: one at 90-104 Morton Avenue formerly barely legal, substandard housing that was completely rehabilitated and reduced from 62 units to 42, and the other on vacant land at the former Jared Holt Wax Factory site at Broad Street and 3rd Avenue that now consists of 10 units of new construction. The siting of the project and the design of the units were conceived collectively with South End stakeholders and used to provide momentum to further revitalization planning. Construction was completed in February 2009. This project received the **New York Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAH) 2009 Project of the Year Award.**



Current Project

South End Revitalization, Phase 2 – The Albany Housing Authority has continued to develop affordable housing as a key component to the implementation of the City of Albany’s Capital South Plan. In May 2010, the Authority closed the construction financing on a project consisting of 43 new and rehabilitated apartments on Morton Avenue and Catherine, Clinton and Broad Street. Included in the project are four vacant and abandoned buildings along Morton Avenue, which were foreclosed and donated by the County of Albany, will be fully rehabilitated. Another 17 new buildings are now being constructed on vacant lots and where derelict structures have been demolished. 30 percent of the all new hires have come from the South End community.

Current Project

CDBG-R Workforce Development Project – The Albany Housing Authority is working with the City of Albany on the rehabilitation of 34 Morton Avenue, a vacant and abandoned mixed-use structure foreclosed and donated by the County of Albany. The project is funded by a CDBG-Recovery grant and is being used to train and place 11 individuals in construction-related jobs.

Creighton Storey Homes – In 2005, the Authority “decoupled” this 1970’s era 128-unit complex from State of New York housing programs in order to fund comprehensive modernization using mixed-finance sources such as 4% tax credits and NYSERDA. Approximately half of the units have been converted to project based Section 8 vouchers to provide an ongoing source operating subsidy. The \$16M renovation was complete in 2007 and will make this affordable housing asset viable for the next 30 years.



Current Project

Ezra Prentice Homes - AHA was successful in obtaining the necessary state legislation, a \$2.5M stimulus award from the US Dept. of HUD and a highly competitive \$4.5M Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP) award that represented the last major hurdles to closing \$26M in financing that is funding the extensive modernization of 176 apartments at Ezra Prentice Homes. The financial structure that has enabled the project to move forward is considered unique in New York State. AHA began construction in January 2010 and completion is expected in mid-2011.

Nutgrove Garden Apartments - In 2003, AHA used \$5 million in HOPE VI funds to acquire a 92 unit, market-rate development known as Nutgrove Garden Apartments. The acquisition was part of the North Albany HOPE VI replacement housing units. 46 units are rented at market-rate rents and 56 units are earmarked for low-income families. In 2010, \$94,000 was used to install new entry doors, refurbish wood balconies and upgrade the landscaping throughout the property in order to maintain its market rate appeal.

South End Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Assistance Program (SHARP) – In 2005 AHA secured \$400,000 from New York State that was used for acquisition and/or rehabilitation assistance for twenty homeowner units in the Albany’s South End neighborhood.

Frederick Douglass Homeownership Program - In 1999, AHA secured over \$600,000 from the NYS Affordable Housing Corporation, city of Albany Trust Fund, Community Preservation Corporation and Albany County for the Frederick Douglass Program. These funds were used to subsidize the \$2 million development cost of nine new homeownership units Albany’s South End.

Current Projects

Modernization – The Authority is continually upgrading its ‘legacy’ properties, those



traditionally known as public housing throughout the city, to increase their safety, livability, and marketability. Work performed in 2010 includes \$262,000 to repair stoops and \$33,000 to replace storage sheds at Steamboat Square Townhouses; \$1,675,000 in fire alarm and sprinkler system upgrades at all Steamboat Square hi-rise buildings as well as mid- and hi-rise housing in city; and \$62,200 in siding replacement at Steamboat Square Historic Rehab.

AHA Headquarters Building, 200 South Pearl Street – In 2002 AHA completed construction of its new headquarters building on vacant land on South Pearl Street. The project has allowed AHA to consolidate its administrative operations from several sites, primarily two vacant high-rise residential buildings, which have since been demolished. The headquarters building was sited between Westerlo and South Ferry Streets, a few blocks south of Albany’s downtown business district, to attract investment into the South End community. To date buildings between AHA and downtown have been rehabilitated and new businesses have opened.

SOUTH END AND GENERAL RECOGNITION

2009 Project of the Year Award, received from the New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAFH) for South End Revitalization 1 (Eagle Court Apartments and Jared Holt Mews)

2009 Elizabeth Griffin Award for Preservation Leadership, received from the Historic Albany Foundation for demonstrating excellence and commitment to preserving Albany’s architectural heritage.



2007 Good Landlord Award, received from the United Tenants of Albany for its cooperative relationships and well-managed public housing.

1999 HARRI Award (Housing Authority Risk Retention Innovation Award), received from Housing Authority Insurance for S.A.F.E. Home, Albany's Fire-Safety Bus. A transit bus donated by CDTA was converted into a mobile demonstration apartment used to simulate everyday fire hazards and teach children prevention and safety techniques in mock living room, kitchen, and bedroom scenarios.

Department of General Services

The Department of General Services is responsible for maintenance of the entire City's infrastructure and facilities. The mission of the agency is ensure all City streetscapes, parks, public facilities and natural resources are maintained and be functional, safe, clean and attractive.

Forestry:

- 280 Trees were trimmed
- 7 Shrubs were trimmed
- 21 Trees were removed
(List of locations attached)

Street light issues:

- A total of 62 street light issues have been reported and repaired by National Grid



Graffiti issues:

- We removed graffiti from 50 locations

Corner lots cleanups & Illegal's:

Lots:

- The following lots have been cleaned up
- Clinton & Alexander NW corner
- S. Pearl and Alexander NW corner
- S. Pearl and Morton Ave. NW corner
- Broad Street & Second Ave NE corner
- Broad Street & Second Ave SW corner
- The Stairs on Delaware Street were cleaned of all litter and debris trees were removed. A retaining wall with drainage was installed. The handrail was repaired.

Illegal Trash:

- There have been 28 illegal trash jobs generating \$4,300.00 in fines and \$3,504.94 in trash bills.

5 Day Notices:

- There has been (68) 5 day notice of violations issued.
27 were cleaned by the owner
- 41 were cleaned by DGS generating \$6,750.00 in fines and \$8,135.21 in lot bills.



Board Ups:

- There has been a total of 16 board ups generating bills for a total of \$7,509.77

In House Paving:

Herkimer Street from Green St. to S. Pearl St.

Westerlo Street from Green St. to S. Pearl St.

Alexander Street from Elisabeth St. to Eagle St.

Alexander Street from Pearl St. to Elisabeth St. (spot repairs)

Potholes:

All the streets were checked in the zone and the potholes filled. The following had a large number filled.

- Delaware St. – Clinton St. to the dead end
- Forth Ave. – Clinton St to Elizabeth St.
- Catherine St. – S. Swan St. to S. Hawk St.

Crack Sealing: the following locations are currently being worked on and will be completed by September 1st

1. 4th Avenue – Green Street to Elizabeth

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2. Teunis Street – 3rd Ave. to 2nd Ave.
 3. Catherine Street – Clinton St. to Hawk
 4. 3rd Ave – S. Hawk to S. Pearl
 5. Franklin Street – Schyler St. to Gansevoort St.
 6. Alexander Street – Pearl to Eagle
 7. Stephen Street – 2nd to 3rd
 8. Schyler Street – Broad St. to Franklin St.
 9. Osborne Street – Hawk to Elizabeth
 10. Green Street – Madison to Rensselaer St.
- (Cont. next Page)

11. Bassett Street – Church St. to Pearl St.
12. Dongan Avenue – to 4th Avenue
13. Park Avenue – Eagle to Grand
14. Arch Street – Pearl to Broad
15. Rensselaer Street – Pearl to Franklin

Sidewalks:

- We've replaced 150 brick pavers on the corner of Madison and Grand Street.
- Cut 6 sidewalk tripping points on Madison Ave between Phillip St. and Grand St.
- Morton Ave. – 40 panels have been replaced
- Madison Place – Replaced brick area between curb & walkway entire street.
- Alexander Street - 85 panels were replaced
- Alexander Street – 60 Feet of curbing was replaced
- Warren Street – 130 panels were replaced
- Benjamin Street – 30 Feet of curbing was replaced
- Benjamin Street – 89 panels were replaced

Tree Wells:

- 2nd Ave tree wells Removed 700 bricks and installed topsoil

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- Tree wells were weed wacked and cleaned at the following streets
 - Fourth Ave
 - Third Ave
 - Broad Street
 - All of South Pearl Street
 - Stephen Street
 - Alexander Street
 - Tennis Street
 - Catherine Street
 - Morton Ave.
 - Clinton Street

Gardening:

- The Yolles Contemplation Garden has been cleanup trimmed

Parks:

- Philip Street Park the fence has been replaced.
- The trees have been trimmed.
- Elizabeth St. Playground equipment was fixed by Recreation

Department of Planning

Planning Board, HRC, BZA, Div. Neighborhood Revitalization, Neighborhood Planning, ACDA

Zone 3 Results:

Artistic board-ups & Rehabilitations - 11 Delaware Street
137 Clinton Street



Zone 3 CDBG-R Activities

34 Morton Avenue Rehabilitation Project

This is an abandoned three story building with two residential units over a commercial storefront. Pursuant to the Capital South Plan, the Albany Housing Authority and its developer partner, Omni Housing Development, LLC. intend to rehabilitate the property using CDBG stimulus funding leveraged with other resources provided by the City, such as lead abatement, weatherization, and training funding. The project will be used as a demonstration project for utilizing residents from the local community by providing skill training and employment to up to 15 individuals.

15-17 Clinton Street Demolition and Site Restoration Project

This project involves a demolition located on the corner of Morton Avenue and Clinton Street, a two-story building owned by the Union Missionary Baptist Church. The site will be restored for community use, most likely as a neighborhood garden.

Neighborhood Revitalization – Habitat for Humanity

11 new homes completed & occupied. One historic property currently under-going rehabilitation.

Demolitions - 42 Morton Avenue

247 Green Street

57 Elizabeth Street

Historic Resources - Howe Library (d. 1928) \$5 mil Renovation



Two Lead Abatement Projects

Court Actions

- 24 properties on Alexander Street, Broad Street, Elizabeth Street, Elm Street, Madison Avenue, and Second Avenue were in City court on issues including vacant building registration and maintenance and code violations. The division of Neighborhood Revitalization participates in this effort.

Other Activities

- From October 2009-South End rehabilitation activities: 6 HAP, 15 HOAP, & 11 Lead applications funded.
- 1 Development permit issued for new construction at Green & 4th Avenue

Albany Police Department

The police department's information technology is a key component in mapping out the initiatives and carrying out strategic objectives of the Block by Block committee. Statistical analysis conducted by the department is integral to providing the committee with up to the minute information on all vital data relative to the committee's objectives.

Crime suppression and quality of life initiatives continued through Zone Two by officers in the department. Officers also assisted the committee in identifying abandoned and vacant buildings.

Objective 1 – Reduce criminal element from target area



- Conduct warrants sweeps of known offenders.
- Increased home visits to Parolees and Probationers. NYS Parole Detail, out every night and with APD 1 night per week / Albany Co. Probation – Night watch program out 5 nights per week with SDU – up from 1 night per week.
- Street Level Narcotics Investigations (internal investigations, crime stoppers tip(s), assist other agencies, patrol drug interdiction).
- Increased foot patrols (SDU, BBB, Patrol Walk and Talk, CSU). Resulting in arrests, FIR's, proactive enforcement, high profile presence, i.e. sky watch).

Objective 2 – Improve quality of life through enforcement

- Enforce GCO's (loud music, open contain, trash, etc).
- Animal control operations (ACO's)
- Traffic and Parking Enforcement (road checks, traffic detail, PSO's, TSA's, patrol).

Objective 3 – Assist other agencies in identifying issues

- IDing and reporting (BBB detail/Det. Haggerty POC w/OCA).
- Refresher training for codes violations (CSO's, SDU, roll call, in-service).

Objective 4 – ID environmental issues that affect quality of life.

- CPTED – Lighting, trees, shrubs, abandoned houses, fencing, exterior security surveys, future development (AHA).



Stats

- 2315 man-hours (not including CSO, investigations, engineering).
- 410 Field Interview Reports (FIR's)
- 77 UTT's.
- 1625 Parking Tickets
- 90 arrests (not including CRU).
- CRU – closed 2 investigations – 16 current.
- Recovered 4 guns.
- 5 GCO's (many referrals).
- Animal control – 76 CFS.

Traffic Engineering

- 10 Calls for signal
- 25 Calls for sign repair or replacement
- 51 Calls for street lights out
- 7 Calls for insufficient illumination due to discolorations of lens
- Sky Watch deployed for 3 weeks in various locations.

Study's & Neighborhood Watch

- Traffic Study (Madison between Eagle & Swan)
- CPTED Study (Park/Madison/Trinity/Eagle)
- Neighborhood Watch Program (Mansion N/A) 30 members – Iding problem properties

Calls for Service

(proactive and reactive)



- 4,057 CFS Dec. 09 – March 2010 vs. 4,795 for the 3 months prior.
- Three month look at Part I crimes in Block by Block Zone 3 shows a dramatic decrease in crime while controlling for seasonality and crime rates outside the Zone.
- Prior to the December 2009 installation of Zone 3 there prior, however after the initiation of the program the Zone saw an 11% decrease. This decrease is more impressive in the light that the City wide totals for Part I Crimes rose 15% during the same time frame.

Calls for service are down and crime is down in Zone 3, since the Block-by-Block initiative has begun.

They have full 8 hour shifts (4 man hours per shift) that walk through and talk with residents – resulting in arrests,

Used Albany Housing Authority as a model in Colonie projects – no longer any hallways – all exterior entrances.

Sky watch – is about presence – wants people to see them.

Zone Three Results:

- Robbery – 11



- Aggravated Assaults – 49
- Burglary – 32
- Larceny – 1117
- MV Thefts – 12 arrests

City of Albany Department of Water & Water Supply

The Albany Water Department inspects, repairs and performs regular maintenance of all 3,300 fire hydrants in the City. Their role in the Block by Block initiative is to locate, inspect and remove all flags on hydrants within each zone, paint and lower all potential trip hazards, repair all catch basin failures and locate and repair sewer and water manhole structures.

Zone Three Results:

Valve Box work

18 Second Ave.- replace valve box cover

Alexander & Elizabeth- dig and replace valve box

Lower C/box

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3 Second Ave.

13 Second Ave.

Third & Teunis (next to hydrant)

43 Third Ave.

53 Third Ave- Check to see if off @ Stop

Replace C/box cap

16 Delaware Street

35 Elizabeth Street

20 Morton Ave.

Catch Basin Work

Second Ave. & Broad Street- Rebuild basin

25 Second Ave – clean basin

31- Storm water catch basin repaired

3- Manhole repairs

1 Water valve box replaced

1- Hydrant repair

6- Main breaks

1-Valve replaced

5 Service leaks repaired



City of Albany Department of Assessment & Taxation

Zone Three Results

38 street changes (AKA) in Zone Three of the Block by Block program. The changes made were to change records of the street address to match what the number was on the house.