

Housing & Planning

BOL Meeting Minutes - Final



Committee Chair: Shanae Williams

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Please note: Meetings of the Board of Legislators and its committees are held at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10601, and remotely via the WebEx video conferencing system. Legislators may participate in person or via Webex. Members of the public may attend meetings in person at any of its locations, or view it online on the Westchester County Legislature's website: <https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/> This website also provides links to materials for all matters to be discussed at a given meeting. *With a quorum present, Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 1:07PM.*

Others in Attendance: GUEST: Jean Partridge (remote); BOL: Legislator James Nolan, Legislator Nancy Barr, Legislator Catherine Parker (remote), Lisa Hochman (remote), Charlotte Vinson and Dayana Gómez-Holguín

Present: Legislator Williams, Legislator Imamura, Legislator Williams Johnson and Legislator Woodson-Samuels

Absent: Legislator Smith

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Presentation regarding deed fraud and theft

Guest:

Jean Partridge, Chief Counsel & Managing Member at Benchmark Title Agency, LLC & member of the New York State Land Title Association

Ms. Partridge shared a presentation on deed theft and fraud beginning with the definition, how scammers typically go about this and warning signs to help prevent this from happening. The most common forms of deed theft are forgery, by way of forging signatures, and by fraud, where homeowners are unknowingly lead to signing their home's deed. Common targeted homeowners are vacationers, elderly and missing rent payments, among others. Within the variety of red flags to be aware of, if a seller is very eager to sell a property quickly and if they demand immediate wire transfers. As a measure for protecting the homeowner, Real Property Chapter 50, Article 9 Section 291 states that the Clerk of the County is supposed to send written notice to the homeowner in the event of suspicion of fraud. The TIRSA Owner's Extended Protection Policy (TOEPP) contains protection for post-policy forgery and subsequently allows the title company to do the necessary things to rectify the situation. Often people do not notice they are defrauded from their property until five or more years after the fraudulent transactions have begun. Ms. Partridge also shared additional steps one can take

to prevent deed fraud and a brief overview on pending New York State Senate Bill S 6569 (establishing the crime of deed theft and it being investigated and prosecuted by the Attorney General's office), before concluding her presentation.

As the discussion proceeded, Ms. Partridge added that education is of extreme importance. The New York State Attorney General has a lot of information and resources available to the public. She advised that property owners should check their deed status on a quarterly basis to ensure that everything is intact. Upon questions on what Westchester County can do better to protect consumers, Ms. Partridge advocated that the recent legislation passed in November was helpful, requested support for the pending Senate Bill S6569 and look into New York City's policy as a possible outline for future legislation in the County. Majority Leader Woodson-Samuels added that the members are drafting letters of support for the aforementioned pending Senate Bill.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Woodson-Samuels, seconded by Legislator Williams, the Committee adjourned at 1:58pm.