

Swissvale Strategies

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Introduction

Topics of discussion

- Where we were
- What we have done
- How we did it
- What we are working towards
- The cost of blight
- Why you cannot afford to not fight

Borough of Swissvale

- 1.3 square miles
- Population 8983
- At its high point 16000
- Different neighborhoods
- Varying income levels
- Great variation in home prices

Where we were...

We faced the same problems that many other communities have.

- Declining Population
- Absentee Landlords
- Slum Lords
- Vacant / Abandoned Structures
- Foreclosures / Bankruptcies
- Lack of Effective Enforcement
- Tightening Budgets

What we did....

SWOT Analysis

Evaluate and Identify:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Strengths

- Good Housing Stock
- Decent Tax Base
- Proximity to Oakland and Downtown
- Public Transportation
- Paid Fire Personnel to do enforcement activities
- Had many tools already established
- Supportive elected officials

Weaknesses

- Lacked a few tools
- Lacked a comprehensive approach
- Historically Reactive enforcement
- Needed to increase training
- Lacked follow-up with compliance issues
- Irresponsible Landlords operating under the radar
- Fragmented neighborhoods
- Lacked comprehensive plan for code enforcement

Opportunities

- Responsible Investors interested in our area
- Owner/Occupants interested
- Kopp Glass Gateway Development

Because of strengths...there is a great opportunity to grow / revitalize community.

Threats

- Continued decline
- Increase in Slum Lords
- Vacant / Abandoned Structures
- Declining property values
- Reduction / Loss of tax revenue
- Potential loss of responsible residents
- Increase in rental properties
- Rise in crime

Census Analysis

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

	2000	2010
Total Housing Units	5097 (100%)	5072 (100%)
Occupied Housing Units	4679 (91.8%)	4439 (87.5%)
Vacant Housing Units	418 (8.2%)	633 (12.5%)
Owner Occupied	2520 (53.9%)	2222 (50.1%)
Renter Occupied	2159 (46.1%)	2217 (49.9%)

Census Analysis

2010 Census Additional Data

Vacant Housing Units by Type

For Rent	264
Rented, not occupied	7
For Sale Only	85
Sold, not occupied	13
For Seasonal, Recreational Or occasional use	10
ALL OTHER VACANTS	254

Stopping the hemorrhaging

- Where do you start?

What we did.....

- Reviewed and tweaked “Tool Box”
- Reviewed and tweaked fees
- Changed culture – worked smart
- Started Comprehensive & Systematic Enforcement Activities
- Became Proactive
- Multi-faceted approach

- Initiated Vacant Structure Program

Reviewed Tool Box

- Researched all existing ordinances and how they can be applied and used
- Identified new tools needed
- Updated Ordinances
- Local Officials on Board

Our Toolbox

- Occupancy Ordinance
- Tenant Registration
- IPMC / IFC
- Nuisance Ordinances
- Fire Department personnel
- Fire Escrow Ordinance
- Records!!!!!!

Fees schedule

- Fees are to be set as to offset cost of enforcement activities.
- Municipality cannot profit
- Need to balance so as to not stifle activity

- Reviewed Fees
- Increased Slightly

Culture

- Enforcement Activities shall be
 - ◆ Equally applied
 - ◆ Fair but Firm
 - ◆ Reasonable / Flexible
 - ◆ Compliance is our end goal

Proactive vs. Reactive

- Started comprehensive enforcement
 - ◆ Occupancy Permits
 - ◆ Building Permits
 - ◆ Zoning Permits
 - ◆ Dumpster Permits
 - ◆ Established Vacant Structure Database / Enforcement
 - ◆ Data Collection / Analysis

Results

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Occupancy Permits				
Permits issued	277	401	908	661
Violation Notices	N/R	N/R	187	146
Citations Issued	N/R	N/R	114	130
Building Permits				
Permits issued	43	64	133	102
Property Maintenance				
Violation Notices	N/R	N/R	144	136
Citations Issued	N/R	N/R	107	108
FEE REVENUES				
(all activities)	\$27,949	\$21,609	\$89,298	\$91,517

Vacant Structure Program

- Established Program
- Assessment
- Created inventory / Database
- Started enforcement
- Monitored Activity

Assessment

- Street by Street
- Assessment Form used (uniformity)
- Photos Taken
- Database created

Enforcement

- Started street by street with the letter “A”
- Sent Notices
- Citations
- Quarterly review / update progress

Tracking Vacant Structures

SWISSVALE VACANT PROPERTY DATABASE

GENERAL COLOR CODES: WAS VACANT - NOW LAWFULLY OCCUPIED IS VACANT - HAS NEW OWNERS AND IS NOW UNDER RENOVATION/ REHAB VACANT STRUCTURES IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING DEMOLISHED VACANT STRUCTURES THAT HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED VACANT STRUCTURES IDENTIFIED / WORKING ON			OVERALL CONDITION COLOR CODES: GOOD FAIR POOR DANGEROUS			OVERALL NOTES: INITIAL EVALUATION / DATABASE COMPILED IN 2010 PROPERTIES ADDED AS IDENTIFIED LIST INCLUDES RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES					PROPERTY NOTES: TO INCLUDE RELEVANT INFORMATION AS STATUS OF PROPERTY		
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PROPERTY LOCATION			OWNER INFORMATION				Overall Condition	Legal Action?	Back Taxes?	Com Res.	No. of Units	PROPERTY NOTES	
Address	Street		Owner Name	Address	City	State							Zip
7212	Agnes	0178-L-00289	Alonso Hardaway, Jr.	7848 Mt. Carmel Rd.	Verona	PA	15145	dangerous	No	Yes	R	1	ON DEMO LIST - Seeking Funding under CD 2013
7214.5	Agnes	0178-L-00290	Thomas & Edna Keyes	7214 Agnes Street	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	fair	No	No	R	1	DJM spoke to family member, property is occupied, Transferred to kin 2/2012
7214.5	Agnes	0178-L-00291	Thomas & Edna Keyes	7214 Agnes Street	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	fair	No	No	R	1	DJM spoke to family member, property is occupied, Transferred to kin 2/2012
7222	Agnes	0178-L-00298	Franklin Mortgage Asset Trust	25th Fl., 101 Hudson Street	Jersey City	NI	07302	fair	No	No	R	1	Purchased By MVI - Under renovation
7319	Agnes	0178-L-00076	Michael Capozzi	11670 McKee Road	Irwin	PA	15642	fair	No	Yes	R	1	
7321	Agnes	0178-L-00075	George & Elizabeth Babjak	2012 Collingwood Ave	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	poor	No	Yes	R	1	
4	Arthur	0178-L-00344	Paul A. Wargo	4 Arthur Street	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	fair	No	No	R	1	Owner resides here some times- Needs Work
8	Arthur	0178-L-00337	Michael C. Fumara	308 Dunbar Drive	Pittsburgh	PA	15235	dangerous	No	No	R	2	Owner working on property/ secured/ Trying to sell
3616	Aurelius	0177-N-00303	Martha Giraldo	361 Stratford Ave #1	Pittsburgh	PA	15232	good	No	No	R	1	DJM spoke to previous owner, bldg occupied, occ.perm issued for sale 6/2011
2602	Belmar Place	0235-P-00183	Karey Pogonovich	104 Pinoak Lane	Imperial	PA	15136	fair	No	No	R	1	
2608	Belmar Place	235-P-00179	Brett & Terra Luedde	1208 Orchard Glenn Circle	Encinitas	CA	92034	Fair	No	No	R	1	Occupancy issued 7/11- OCCUPIED RENTAL
7002	Blackhawk	0178-E-00021	Harry T & Dolores Pehl	7002 Blackhawk St	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	good	No	No	R	1	Foreclosed on 5/11/ Sold in 6/11 / Occupancy issued, owber occupied on 12/11
2129	Briar Way	0178-L-00308	Mon Valley Initiative	303 E. 8th Avenue	Homestead	PA	15120	dangerous	No	No	R	1	BUILDING DEMOLISHED
2130	Briar Way	0178-L-00310	Mon Valley Initiative	304 E. 8th Avenue	Homestead	PA	15121	dangerous	No	No	R	1	BUILDING DEMOLISHED
2131	Briar Way	0178-L-00309	Mon Valley Initiative	305 E. 8th Avenue	Homestead	PA	15122	dangerous	No	No	R	1	BUILDING DEMOLISHED
2132	Briar Way	0178-L-00311	Mon Valley Initiative	306 E. 8th Avenue	Homestead	PA	15123	dangerous	No	No	R	1	BUILDING DEMOLISHED
2335	Buena Vista	0235-E-00234	Justin Edward Burch (irrevocable trust)	2335 Buena Vista Ave	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	good	No	No	R	1	OCCUPIED
2340	Buena Vista	0235-E-00296	2340 Buena Vista St. LP	7200 Schoyer Ave	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	good	No	No	R	1	Current Occupancy permit as of 10/2010
2340.5	Buena Vista	0235-E-00297	Daniel J. Lynch	2340 1/2 Buena Vista	Pittsburgh	PA	15218	good	Yes	No	R	1	
2342	Buena Vista	0235-E-00298	Timothy J. Morse	42 Sharon Street	Pittsburgh	PA	15210	good	Yes	Yes	R	1	Owner Cited numerous times/ in bankruptcy / property secure
2360	Buena Vista	0235-J-00006	Vincent R. DeLuca, Jr.	101 Garlow Drive	Pittsburgh	PA	15235	fair	No	No	R	1	DJM spoke to owner and property is being sold as-is. Temp permit issued for sale 2/12/2012
7301	Burton	0178-L-00110	Robert & Betty Jo Wilson	2703 Kilpatrick White Rd.	Greensboro	NC	27406	good	No	No	C	10	FOR SALE
													DJM spoke to David, property no longer vacant, owner on occupancy

Vacant Property Program

- Identified viable properties
- Shared this info with responsible landlords, investors and flippers
- Utilized county vacant property program
- Created Interested Party Program
- Prioritized and stepped up demos (also forced private demos)

Successes

Identified Since September 2010

■ Total Vacant Structures	236 (100%)
■ Total Vacant Dwelling Units	301 (100%)
■ Structures lawfully Re-Occupied	55 (23%)
■ Dwellings Lawfully Re-Occupied	96 (32%)
■ Structures Demolished <i>(8 publicly funded / 3 privately)</i>	11 (5%)
■ Structures on Demo List <i>(5 funded this fall)</i>	15 (6%)
■ Watch-List <i>(These are properties recently sold and issued temp permits and/or building permits)</i>	21 (9%)
■ Still Vacant & Working on Solutions	
Vacant Structures	124 (53%)
Vacant Dwelling Units	169 (56%)

Cost of Blight

- 236 Properties identified vacant
- 130 of those current on taxes and fees as of 2011
- 106 delinquent
 - ◆ \$621,731 Borough Property Taxes
 - ◆ 2011 alone
 - ★ \$70,225 in Property Taxes
 - ★ \$62,690 in Garbage Fees

Our bottom line

- We increased costs about \$25,000
- Increased fee and fine revenue about \$75,000
- Estimated increase to tax revenue:
 - ◆ \$18,720 Wage Taxes
 - ◆ \$74,000 Property Taxes
 - ◆ \$_____ Garbage and sewage fees
- Other Benefits

Summary

- Code Enforcement Works
- The cost of blight is much greater than that of fighting it.

Questions

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