

Joint City of Sierra Vista/Cochise County Work Session (3/25/2015)

Discussion of strategies for cleaning
up the Fry Townsite Area, including
possible acquisition of parcels

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Introduction

- Joint City & County enforcement/improvement efforts in Fry Townsite have occurred for years
- Past CDBG investments have been effective (sewer, drainage, street and sidewalk improvements)
- Private and non-profit organizations have recently constructed single and multiple-family housing
- Egregious, dilapidated properties still exist despite focused enforcement
- County currently lacks authority to address many property condition issues



Recent County Zoning Enforcement Statistics

7/1/2013 – 6/30/2014

Stop work orders (SWO) – 2

Violation Citations (VC) - 0

Violations (V) 18

7/1/2014 – 3/17/2015

SWO - 2

VC - 40

V - 36



Current Status

- Enforcement efforts were recently intensified with city and county residents asking for more assistance with crime, junked properties and other issues in Fry;
- Sheriff's Office/County P & Z, Highways & Floodplain, Solid Waste and Facilities Departments ramped up:
 - Phase I - Education of residents on outdoor storage violations and unregistered/improperly parked vehicles in the public right-of-way
 - Phase II – Placement of dumpsters to allow residents to dispose of trash and debris causing the citations
 - Phase III – Enforce the removal of tagged vehicles (completed) and check the status of outdoor storage violations



Current Status (cont'd)

- The major problem properties are owned by two entities (the Balmer family and John Williams/relative)
- Multiple enforcement efforts have occurred over the years with no sustained effort by the owners to maintain minimum standards
- Incorporated properties nearest to the County enclave boundary are likely to show similar signs of property distress
- There is now a greater opportunity for the City and County to work together in addressing these problem properties and further improving the Fry Townsite area



ICC Property Maintenance Code

Safety Issues	International Property Maintenance Code	Hazard Abatement Ordinance
Dilapidated Buildings which are unoccupied, unsecured, open and accessible to Fire Hazards	Y (through condemnation and demolition)	Y
Dilapidated Buildings which are unoccupied, unsecured, open and accessible to Injury to the Public	Y (through condemnation and demolition)	Y
Dilapidated Buildings which are unoccupied, unsecured, open and accessible for Illegal Activities	Y (through condemnation and demolition)	Y
Dilapidated Buildings which are unoccupied, unsecured, open and accessible and are an Attractive Nuisance	Y (through condemnation and demolition)	Y
Exterior Sanitation – to include weeds, rodent harborage, accessory structures, fences and walls, motor vehicles, and graffiti	Y	N
Swimming pools, spas, and hot tubs	Y	N
Ventilation (Occupied, interior)	Y	N
Heating (Occupied, interior)	Y	N
Lighting (Occupied, interior and exterior)	Y	N
Fire Safety (Occupied, interior and exterior)	Y	N
Temporary Safeguards (Occupied, interior and exterior)	Y	Y
Emergency Repairs (Occupied, interior and exterior)	Y	N



Potential Opportunities

- City/County staff toured the area several months ago
- Reviewed property conditions and correlated with ownership and tax title status
- Fifteen Balmer and 5 Williams' properties are so tax delinquent they can be deeded to the State and auctioned by the County
- County obtained a judgment lien against the Balmers for property cleanup (lien + interest = \$75,000)
- County obtained a judgment lien against Williams (lien + interest = \$12,000)



Investing in Fry – A Concept

- Auction back tax properties in priority areas (see subsequent slides); acquire by County, City or third party developer and then clean up
- Foreclose on Balmer/Williams liens and acquire properties
- Transfer priority area properties to the City for subsequent transfer to government or non-profit organizations
- Require future reuse for either affordable housing or economic development



Investing in Fry – A Concept (cont'd)

- Use \$87,000 of the \$250,000 recently received from the sale of Cox Communications properties to match County's contribution for the Fry area (\$75,000 + \$12,000 liens)
- County has hazard abatement monies potentially available
- Approach Fry Fire for interest in acquiring run down properties next to their fire house/office in Fry
- As more funds become available, strategically pursue additional back tax properties for further investment and clean-up



Process to acquire properties

- Back tax properties delinquent for five years can be deeded to the State free and clear of all liens and taxes
 - County can auction these off to the highest bidder after establishing a minimum bid
- Foreclosed judgment lien properties will not require cash investment because the County can credit bid at the auction – must be based on fair market value

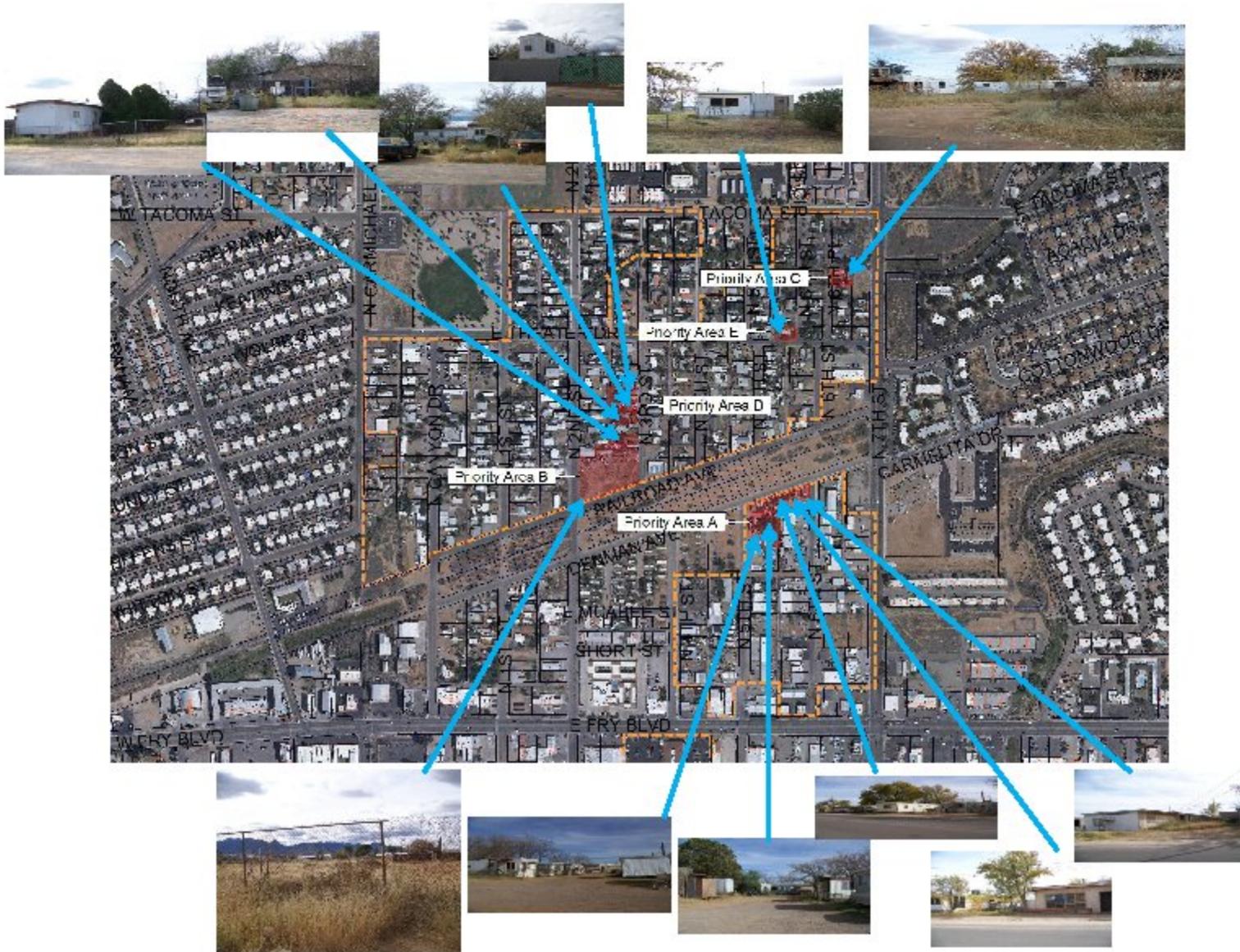


Priority Properties to Focus on

1. Mobile home park on Denman between 5th and 6th Street (owned by the Balmers*)
2. Property on 6th Street with several mobile homes, including one damaged by fire (owned by the Balmers)
3. Dilapidated mobile home at the corner of Theater Drive and Carmichael (owned by John Williams*)

*(Have discussed these issues with both Lane Balmer and John Williams; Mr. Balmer is not interested in working with us; no definitive response from Mr. Williams)





Clean-up Costs*

Area "A": Parcels 10670116 - 10670119 – 106701727 - Clean up Priority 1

Remove 21 Mobile Home Units with Storage Sheds - 4 fixed Structures,
Misc. Lot Debris

Total Cost: \$156,595

Area "B": Parcels 10671202 – 10671211

Metal and Wood Shed – 3 Mobile Homes – scattered Lot Debris

Total Cost: \$69,935

Area "C": Parcel 10671318 – Clean up Priority 2

3 Mobile Homes and Misc. Lot Debris

Total Cost: \$19,820

*(Southwest Hazard Control written estimate dated 3/17/2015; could be significantly reduced with inmate labor)



Clean-up Costs* (cont'd)

Area "D": Parcels 10671213 - 10671214 – 10671215
7 Mobile Homes or Structures, Sheds, Misc. Lot Debris
Total Cost: \$61,585

Area "E": Parcel 10671297A
Mobile Home – Shed – Wood & Misc. Lot Debris
Total Cost: \$17,605

*(Southwest Hazard Control written estimate dated 3/17/2015; could be significantly reduced with inmate labor)



Priority A Area



Priority A Area



Priority A Area



Priority B Area



Priority B Area



Priority C Area



Priority D Area



Priority D Area



Priority D Area



Priority E Area



Recommendations

Board of Supervisors

- Support for deeding back tax parcels in Fry Townsite to the State and auctioning the priority properties
- Support to apply the \$75,000 and \$12,000 judgment liens toward a negotiated or bid purchase of properties in Fry
- Support for pursuing the evaluation of adopting the ICC Property Maintenance Code in Fry Townsite to mirror the City's current/future code
- Continued support for strategic auctioning of back tax properties in Fry as the City, IDA, SHRP, Habitat or other appropriate partners have funds available for further investments



Recommendations (cont'd)

Sierra Vista City Council

- Support to use up to \$87,000 of proceeds from the Cox sale to match the County's investment and apply it to acquisition and cleanup costs
- Mutual City/County support to develop an IGA to facilitate transfer of and investment in acquired properties to the City for further action
- Support to enter into agreements with IDA, Sierra Housing Resource Partners, and/or Habitat for Humanity for investment in the clean-up and reconstruction of acquired properties



Discussion/Direction

