



Orange Housing Authority  
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### **City Officials Work Together to Tackle Orange's Vacant and Abandoned Issues**

**Orange, New Jersey** – *As citizens, what can we do*, was the question at hand during a community meeting hosted by Councilwoman Adrienne Wooten at Orange Public Library on April 12, 2017. The City of Orange and the Orange Housing Authority (OHA) is actively addressing the issue of what to do with abandoned and vacant properties that result from situations ranging from fires to foreclosures.

The initiative is expected to expedite the foreclosure and redevelopment process for vacant and abandoned properties. The ultimate goal is to return them to sustainable housing or remove them to eliminate blight and make way for new uses of the land. We also encourage qualified local residents and tradesmen to join the move to revitalize the neighborhoods

“There are serious housing issues in Orange that the Housing Authority and its Development Corporation attack every day,” said Executive Director Dr. Walter McNeil. “We have studied 404 properties in the East Ward that are part of the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan and have learned that 33% of these properties were vacant and abandoned or underutilized.”

Councilwoman Adrienne Wooten said, “We have to evaluate, target and tackle vacant and abandoned issues and begin stabilizing and preserving underused properties.” She continues, “I am often asked what the City can do, what can residents do? Our workshops and Think Tank meetings have answered these questions and more. From reporting and clean up to acquisition by qualifying for Mayor Warren’s initiative to have local people involved in restoration, residents are becoming part of the solution.” Councilwoman Wooten concluded, “The time is now for everyone to get involved to move Orange forward.”

Out of 387 properties that the OHA is responsible for, 69 units are vacant, abandoned or in bad shape. In just a few short years, the Housing Authority has made impressive progress. To date, the Housing Authority has invested over \$50M with the constructions of Dr. Walter G. Alexander Village, Phases I, II and III as well as the Oakwood Avenue Development.

“I just want to have the vacant and abandoned issue addressed. These properties are having an impact on the value in the East Ward. When you talk about an extremely high percentage of abandonment rates of only a 12 block radius, the concern for underutilized properties become critical,” said McNeil. He continues, “It is the future of city development and if we do not deal with the issue of vacant and abandoned properties, the issues are going to deal with us.”

With the highly anticipated Phase IV of Dr. Walter G. Alexander Village, the OHA promises to work endlessly to redevelop blighted properties and redevelop.

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