

Madison Township trustees approve five homes for demolition



Simon

Husted/SHusted@News-Herald.com

This vacant, foreclosed house at 1492 Hubbard Road in Madison Township is one of five houses slated for demolition this year.

By Simon Husted

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Ruth Hall has lived on Argyle Road in Madison Township for 62 years and for more than a decade, she has watched the home across the street sit vacant and unkempt.

"Nothing has been done with the building," Hall said. "It just sits there as an eyesore."

Hall was pleasantly surprised to learn at Tuesday's township trustee board meeting that her neighboring structure at 1353 Argyle Road, along with four others in the township, are slated for demolition. The homes are coming down with the help of Moving Ohio Forward, a program sponsored by the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

Madison Township trustees approved a resolution Tuesday night to submit a list of five vacant and blighted homes to CT Consultants, the company administrating all of the county's demolition projects in the statewide program.

The other four homes are 1843 Green Road, 1492 Hubbard Road, 1455 Parkview Road and 6766 Warner Road.

One Madison Township home on 1315 Manatee Avenue already has been submitted for demolition because the owner was eager to demolish the blighted house, said Madison Township Zoning Inspector Jerry Klco.

Once the list is handed over, CT Consultants will notify the five property owners, and ask if they object to the demolition and are planning to bring the property up to code. Klco said he hasn't been able to get in touch with those five owners.

"Hopefully, this is the first step in tearing down these unsafe structures," Klco said.

State Rep. John Rogers, D-Mentor-on-the-Lake, is executive director of the Lake County portion of the demolition program. So far, no homes in Lake County have been demolished under the program but six projects are out for bid, he said.

"Vacant homes invite vandalism," Rogers said. "Ideally, we would like to see every home maintained, but when they're not being maintained, they adversely affect the property value of their neighbors."

The Attorney General's Office started the Moving Ohio Forward program in 2012, following a major settlement between the nation's five biggest mortgage servicers and Ohio, as well as the federal government and 48 other state attorneys general.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine dedicated \$75 million of its \$95 million settlement to the fund.

That fund pays for the first \$500,000 of demolitions in Lake County. [The Lake County Land Bank](#) splits the cost for the next \$1 million. The land bank, formally known as Lake County Land Reutilization Corp., plans to pay its portion using county revenue from penalties and interest collected on delinquent property taxes.

The cost of demolition can vary from \$7,000 to more than \$13,000, Rogers said.

"It depends on the age of structure and size of structure," Rogers said. And most importantly, he said, it depends on whether asbestos is found in the building and needs to be removed.

In its application to the Attorney General's Office last year, Lake County identified 84 homes in need of demolition. Rogers said he estimates those demolitions would cost \$800,000, altogether.

That number of demolition projects has changed since then and Rogers has asked local governments to send him an updated list of homes they've inspected for demolition.

Madison Township originally had eight homes slated for demolition in the county application, but two of the property owners have since then promised they would bring the house up to compliance, Klco said.

Among other criteria, a structure must be residentially zoned, is in a blighted condition and must be unoccupied for more than 90 days to be considered for demolition.

The attorney general has given county a deadline of Dec. 31 to finish all demolition projects, but Rogers said as long as Lake County has demolition projects still underway, the state won't likely retract any funding.

"We hope to use all of those funds here in Lake County," Rogers said.