

# Lake County Land Bank preparing to put Madison Township property up for sale

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John Rogers

Anyone who's ever thought seriously about bringing a new business to the site of a former gas station in Madison Township might soon get the chance.

[The Lake County Land Bank](#), which owns the vacant lot at Hubbard and Chapel roads, is working to complete a few more steps before it can offer the land for sale to prospective buyers.

"I would like to see it up on the market formally by the end of this summer, if not sooner," Lake County Land Bank Executive Director John Rogers said during an Aug. 4 interview.

The land bank acquired the closed and dilapidated gas station at 1991 Hubbard Road in February of 2018. In late December of that same year and extending into early January 2019, the building was demolished and its remains hauled away.

At that point, an environmental contractor began conducting regular tests to see if petroleum or other contaminants were present beneath the surface of the former gas station property.

Nine underground wet wells were installed at the site. The tops of the monitoring wells were visible a few inches above the ground and resembled flat white discs, a few feet in diameter, with brown caps in the middle.

Those wells were installed to fulfill an Ohio Environmental Protection Agency requirement to monitor groundwater to ensure that the soil was free of contamination before the property was put up for sale.

“The work in terms of cleaning up the property is done,” Roger said on Aug. 4.

However, the land bank is still securing paperwork from a contractor and subcontractor who were involved in testing and cleaning up the site, so they can be paid for their work.

Those requests for payment must be submitted to the state, since the Land Bank received a \$250,000 [Abandoned Gas Station Cleanup Grant](#) to pay for remediating the property. This grant is offered through the Ohio EPA in conjunction with several other state government offices.

The land bank, formally known as the Lake County Land Reutilization Corp., also was awarded a \$10,000 Community Development Block Grant in 2019 to replace sidewalks and a driveway apron on the western side of the former gas station. But those improvements were delayed until all site cleanup was finished, to avoid having trucks and other heavy equipment driving over new concrete and asphalt.

Rogers said that the new sidewalk and driveway apron must be installed by October to comply with CDBG requirements. The land bank is securing bids for this project, as well as sidewalks that need to be replaced at other Lake County properties owned by the land bank.

“My hope is to get one contractor to do all the sidewalks (as part of a single contract),” Rogers said.

At the Madison Township property, plans call for replacing the existing sidewalk, but simply putting an asphalt overlay on the current driveway apron, Rogers said.

The 0.9-acre former gas station site, located directly east of the Chapeldale Plaza, was regraded after the demolition project, fortified with new soil and topped with grass seed and straw. The blanket of grass that emerged is cut regularly by a contractor.

“I’m having the property appraised by a commercial appraiser before we put it up on the market,” Rogers said.

Madison Township Trustee Max Anderson Jr. said he’s optimistic about a developer purchasing the site for a future business.

“I think it’s going to be great if somebody does grab that (property), and I don’t see why it wouldn’t attract a lot of interest,” he said.

Anderson noted that the vacant lot is located in a high-traffic area of the township that already is bustling with commercial activity.