

NEWS HERALD [OPINION](#)

Lake County Land Bank commended for its approach | Editorial

By [EDITORIAL BOARD](#) |

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“It’s a marathon, not a sprint,” is a phrase often used to characterize activities that take a long time to accomplish.

This saying also seems to accurately describe [the Lake County Land Bank’s](#) approach to achieving its goals.

Two recent News-Herald stories updated the status of separate Land Bank projects in eastern Lake County. We were impressed to learn how the Land Bank has achieved admirable results with each of these undertakings.

In Madison Township, the Land Bank [is working](#) to complete a few more steps so it can attempt to sell the site of a former gas station at Hubbard and Chapel roads.

Land Bank Executive Director John Rogers said he hopes to put the property up for sale by the end of summer.

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.

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, officially 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.



Meanwhile, in North Perry Village, a stretch along North Ridge Road in North Perry Village that had been occupied by four dilapidated properties is now looking clean and green, [thanks to the Lake County Land Bank](#).

A project which involved demolishing two houses and two former businesses situated nearly contiguously in the 4500 block of North Ridge was completed earlier this year, Rogers said.

However, the land bank isn't quite ready to market the parcels to potential developers.

"Procedurally, there's a number of steps that have to be taken and have to be met before the properties can be made available for sale," Rogers said.

The properties, which comprise a total of about 4 acres, had consisted of a restaurant, automotive shop and two houses. Those structures were on the north side of North Ridge, just east of Call Road.

Lake County Land Bank purchased the deteriorated buildings in 2019 and 2020.

The land bank's mission is "to help stabilize and/or increase property values, strengthen communities and help to enhance the overall quality of life for Lake County residents," according to the organization's website.

To fulfill those duties, the land bank strives to revitalize abandoned and/or blighted residential or commercial structures, either by acquisition for rehabilitation and/or demolition.

We commend the Lake County Land Bank for demonstrating patience and perseverance as it goes about fulfilling its mission.

Although the land bank often isn't able to complete projects quickly because of various government regulations, we believe that many of its endeavors will yield long-term benefits to communities throughout Lake County.

As we stated earlier, the Land Bank's projects often resemble marathons rather than sprints. And we're glad the organization is willing to go to great lengths in performing its work.