

# EXHIBIT "C"

## **Chapter 210 ABANDONED AND VACANT PROPERTIES**

### **ARTICLE I Abandoned Property List**

- § 210-1. Abandoned property criteria.**
- § 210-2. Establishment of abandoned property list.**
- § 210-3. Interested parties may request additions to the abandoned property list.**
- § 210-4. Removal of property from abandoned property list.**
- § 210-5. Sale of restricted tax liens.**
- § 210-6. Special tax sale and criteria for bidders.**
- § 210-7. Expedited action to foreclose right of redemption.**
- § 210-8. Abandoned property status during expedited foreclosure.**
- § 210-9. Summary action for control and possession of abandoned property.**
- § 210-10. Township rehabilitation or designation of qualified rehabilitation entity.**
- § 210-11. Petition for reinstatement of control and possession by owner.**
- § 210-12. Procedure for Township to place liens, obtain title and sell property.**

### **ARTICLE II Maintenance of Vacant Properties**

- § 210-13. Definitions.**
- § 210-14. Registration requirements.**
- § 210-15. Access to vacant properties.**
- § 210-16. Responsible owner or agent.**
- § 210-17. Fees.**
- § 210-18. Requirements of owners and/or operators of vacant properties.**
- § 210-19. Requirements of creditors of vacant or abandoned properties.**
- § 210-20. Violations and penalties.**

### **ARTICLE III Defaulted Mortgage Properties; Registration and Maintenance**

- § 210-21. Public nuisance declared.**
- § 210-22. Applicability.**
- § 210-23. Definitions.**
- § 210-24. Establishment of a registry.**

- § 210-25. **Registration of defaulted mortgage real property.**
- § 210-26. **Maintenance requirements.**
- § 210-27. **Security requirements.**
- § 210-28. **Inspections for violations.**
- § 210-29. **Additional authority.**
- § 210-30. **Opposing, obstructing Enforcement Officer; penalty.**
- § 210-31. **Immunity of Enforcement Officer.**
- § 210-32. **Enforcement and penalties.**

**[HISTORY: Adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Winslow 11-25-14 as Ord. No. O-2014-27. Amendments noted where applicable.]**

## **ARTICLE I** Abandoned Property List

### **§ 210-1. Abandoned property criteria.**

- A. Except as provided in N.J.S.A. 55:19-83, any property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six (6) months and which meets any one of the following criteria may be deemed to be abandoned property upon a determination by the Code Enforcement Officer, or such other public officer designated or appointed by the Township Administrator pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.5, that:
  - (1) The property is in need of rehabilitation in the reasonable judgment of the Code Enforcement Officer, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.5, and no rehabilitation has taken place during that same six-month period.
  - (2) Construction was initiated on the property and was discontinued prior to completion, leaving the building unsuitable for occupancy, and no construction has taken place for at least six (6) months.
  - (3) At least one installment of property tax remains unpaid and delinquent on that property as of the date of a determination.
  - (4) The property has been determined to be a nuisance by the Code Enforcement Officer, for one or more of the following reasons.
    - (a) The property has been found to be unfit for human habitation, occupancy or use pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3.
    - (b) The condition and vacancy of the property materially increases the risk of fire to the property and adjacent properties.
    - (c) The property is subject to unauthorized entry leading to potential health and safety hazards; the owner has failed to take reasonable and necessary measures to secure the property; or the municipality has secured the property in order to prevent such hazards after the owner has failed to do so.
    - (d) The presence of vermin or the accumulation of debris, uncut vegetation or physical deterioration of the structure or grounds have created potential health and safety hazards and the owner has failed to take reasonable and necessary measures to remove the hazards.

- (e) The dilapidated appearance or other condition of the property materially affects the welfare, including the economic welfare, of the residents of the area in close proximity to the property, and the owner has failed to take reasonable and necessary measures to remedy the conditions.
- B. A property which contains both residential and nonresidential space may be considered abandoned pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et seq., so long as two-thirds (2/3) or more of the total net square footage of the building was previously legally occupied as residential space and none of the residential space has been legally occupied for at least six (6) months at the time of the determination of abandonment by the Code Enforcement Officer.

## **§ 210-2. Establishment of abandoned property list.**

- A. The Code Enforcement Officer shall identify abandoned property within the Township of Winslow for the purpose of establishing an abandoned property list. The abandoned property list shall include, for each abandoned property identified, the tax block and lot number, the name of the owner of record, if known, street address of the lot and the date added to the list. The Code Enforcement Officer may add properties to the abandoned property list at anytime, and may delete properties at anytime when he or she finds that the property no longer meets the definition of an abandoned property.
- B. An abandoned property shall not be included on the abandoned property list if rehabilitation is being performed in a timely manner, as evidenced by building permits issued and diligent pursuit of rehabilitation work authorized by those permits. A property on which an entity other than the Township of Winslow has purchased or taken assignment from the Township of a tax sale certificate which has been placed on the abandoned property list may be removed if the owner of the certificate pays all municipal taxes and liens due on the property within thirty (30) days after the property is placed on the list; provided, however, that if the owner of the certificate fails to initiate foreclosure proceedings within six (6) months after the property was first placed on the list, the property shall be restored to the abandoned property list in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 55:19-103.
- C. The Code Enforcement Officer shall establish the abandoned property list, after which a notice of violation will be sent, certified mail, return receipt requested, and by regular mail, to the owner of record and any stakeholder. The notice of violation shall identify the property determined to be abandoned, setting forth the owner of record and any stakeholder, if known, the tax lot and block number, street address and the date the property was added to the list. The Code Enforcement Officer in consultation with the Tax Collector, shall also send out a notice by regular mail to any mortgagee, servicing organization, or property tax processing organization that receives a duplicate copy of the tax bill pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-64(d). When the owner of record is not known for a particular property and cannot be ascertained by the exercise of reasonable diligence by the Tax Collector, notice shall not be mailed but instead shall be posted on the property in the manner as provided in N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.7. The mailed notice shall indicate the factual basis for the finding of the Code Enforcement Officer, that the property is abandoned as that term is defined herein and in N.J.S.A. 55:19-54, and shall specify the information relied upon in making such finding. In all cases, a copy of the mailed or posted notice shall also be filed by the Code Enforcement Officer in the Office of the Camden County Clerk. This filing shall have the same force and effect as a formal notice under N.J.S.A. 2A:15-6. The notice shall be captioned with the name of the Township of Winslow as "plaintiff" and the name of the property owner as "defendant," as though an action had been commenced by the Township against the owner.
- D. An owner or lienholder may challenge the inclusion of his property on the abandoned property list by appealing that determination to the Township Administrator within thirty (30) days of the owner's receipt of the certified notice or forty (40) days from the date upon which the notice was sent. An owner whose identity was not known to the Code Enforcement Officer, shall have forty (40) days from the date upon which notice was posted, whichever is later, to challenge the inclusion of a property on the abandoned property list. For good cause shown, the Township Administrator may accept a late filing of an appeal. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a request for an appeal of the findings contained in the notice, a hearing shall be scheduled for redetermination of the matter. Any property included on the list shall be presumed to be abandoned property

unless the owner, through the submission of an affidavit or certification asserting that the property is not an abandoned property, can demonstrate that the property was erroneously included on the list. The affidavit or certification shall be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as, but not limited to, photographs, repair invoices, bills and construction contracts. The sole ground for appeal shall be that the property in question is not abandoned property as that term is defined herein and in N.J.S.A. 55:19-54. The Township Administrator shall decide any timely filed appeal within ten (10) days of the hearing on the appeal and shall promptly, by certified mail, return receipt requested, and by regular mail, notify the property owner of the decision and the reasons therefor.

- E. The property owner may challenge an adverse determination of an appeal, in accordance with the New Jersey Court Rules, a summary trial proceeding in the Superior Court, Camden County. Such action shall be instituted within twenty (20) days of the date of the notice of decision. The sole ground for appeal and new hearing before the Superior Court shall be that the property in question is not an abandoned property as that term is defined in N.J.S.A. 55:19-54. The failure to institute an action of appeal on a timely basis shall constitute a jurisdictional bar to challenging the adverse determination, except that, for good cause shown, the court may extend the deadline for instituting the action.
- F. The Township shall promptly remove any property from the abandoned property list that has been determined by the Township Administrator or on appeal not to be abandoned and may, in its discretion, remove properties from said list whenever he deems such removal appropriate under the circumstances.
- G. The abandoned property list shall become effective, and the Township of Winslow shall have the right to pursue any legal remedy with respect to properties on the list, at any time after at least one property has been placed on the list and following the expiration of the period for appeal with respect to that first property or upon the denial of an appeal brought by the property owner of that first property.

### **§ 210-3. Interested parties may request additions to the abandoned property list.**

- A. Any interested party may submit a written request to the Township asserting that any property within the Township of Winslow should be included on the abandoned property list. The written request must specify the street address and block and lot number of the property to be included and the grounds for its inclusion. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of any such request, the Township shall provide a written response to the party, either indicating that the property will be added to the list or, if not, the reasons for not adding the property. For the purposes of this section, the term "interested parties" shall include any resident of the Township of Winslow, any owner or operator of a business within the Township of Winslow or any organization representing the interests of residents, business owners or otherwise engaged in furthering the revitalization and improvement of the neighborhood in which the property is located.
- B. Any interested party may participate in a redetermination hearing regarding the inclusion of a property on the abandoned property list. Upon written request by any interested party, the Township Administrator shall provide that party with at least twenty (20) days' notice of any such hearing. The party shall provide the Township with notice at least ten (10) days before the hearing of its intention to participate and the nature of the testimony or other information that it proposes to submit at the hearing.

### **§ 210-4. Removal of property from abandoned property list.**

- A. An owner may request removal of their property from the abandoned property list prior to sale of the tax sale certificate by paying all taxes and Township liens due, including interest and penalties, and:
  - (1) By posting cash or a bond equal to the cost of remediating all conditions because of which the property has been determined to be abandoned pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-55 and by posting cash or a bond to cover the cost of any environmental cleanup required on the property, evidenced by a certification by a licensed engineer retained by the owner and reviewed and approved by the Township stating that the cash or bond adequately covers the cost of the cleanup; or

- (2) By demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Township that the conditions rendering the property abandoned have been remediated in full; provided, however, that where the Administrator finds that the owner is actively engaged in remediating the conditions because of which the property was determined to be abandoned, as evidenced by significant rehabilitation activity on the property, may be granted an extension of time of not more than one hundred twenty (120) days for the owner to complete all work, during which time no further proceedings will be taken against the owner or the property.
- B. If the owner has posted cash or a bond in order to have a property removed from the abandoned property list and the conditions because of which the property was determined to be abandoned have not been fully remediated within one (1) year of the date of posting the cash or bond, or, in the case of a property which requires a remediation of any known, suspected or threatened release of contaminants, if the owner has failed to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection or an administrative consent order, as the case may be, or if an agreement or order is in effect but the owner has failed to perform the remediation in conformance with the agreement or order, then the cash or bond shall be forfeited to the Township, which shall use the cash or bond and any interest which has accrued thereon for the purpose of demolishing or rehabilitating the property or performing the environmental remediation. Any funds remaining after the property has been demolished, rehabilitated or cleaned up shall be returned to the owner.

### **§ 210-5. Sale of restricted tax liens.**

- A. Notwithstanding the provisions of N.J.S.A. 54:5-19, or the provisions of any other law to the contrary, if a property is included on the abandoned property list and the property taxes or other Township liens due on the property are delinquent for six (6) or more quarters as of the date of expiration of the right to appeal the property's inclusion on the list or, if an appeal has been filed, as of the date that all opportunities for appeal of inclusion on the list have been exhausted, then the tax lien on the property may be sold in accordance with the procedures of the Tax Sale Law, N.J.S.A. 54:5-1 et seq., on or after the 90th day following the expiration of that time of appeal or final determination on an appeal.
- B. The Township of Winslow may, at its option, require that the sale of the tax sale certificate or any subsequent assignment or transfer of a tax sale certificate held by the Township be subject to the express condition that the purchaser or assignee shall be obliged to perform and conclude any rehabilitation or repairs necessary to remove the property from the abandoned property list pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-55 and to post a bond in favor of the Township to guarantee the rehabilitation or repair of the property. The Township Committee may waive a requirement to post a bond imposed by the Township for any purchaser, assignee or transferee of a tax sale certificate that provides documentation acceptable to the Township Committee that the purchaser, assignee or transferee is a qualified rehabilitation entity as defined in N.J.S.A. 55:19-80. The cost of rehabilitation and repairs and the cost of the bond shall be added to the amount required to be paid by the owner for redemption of the property. The purchaser, assignee or transferee of the tax sale certificate who is required to rehabilitate and repair the property shall be required to file the appropriate affidavits with the Tax Collector, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-62, representing the amounts of monies expended periodically toward the rehabilitation or repair of the property. A purchaser, assignee or transferee shall be entitled to interest on the amounts expended, as set forth in the affidavits, at the delinquent rate of interest for delinquencies in excess of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.) in effect for the time period when the amounts were expended, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-67. The tax sale certificate purchaser, assignee or transferee, with the authority of the Township of Winslow, shall be permitted to enter in and upon the property for the purposes of appraising the costs of rehabilitation and repair and to perform all other acts required to guarantee the completion of the rehabilitation or repair of the property. No rehabilitation or repair work shall be commenced, however, until proof of adequate liability insurance and an indemnification agreement, holding the Township of Winslow harmless, has been filed with the Township Clerk.
- C. If the Township of Winslow acquires the tax sale certificate for a property on the abandoned property list, then, upon ten (10) days' written notice to the property owner and any mortgagee as of the date of the filing of the notice pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-55, the Township shall be permitted to enter upon the property and remediate any conditions that caused the property to be included on the abandoned property list. No remediation shall

be commenced, however, if within that ten-day period the owner or mortgagee shall have notified the Township in writing that the owner or mortgagee has elected to perform the remediation itself. When the owner or mortgagee elects to perform the remediation itself, it shall be required to post bond in favor of the Township of Winslow in order to ensure performance. The amount and conditions of the bond shall be determined by the Township Committee.

- D. The cost of remediation incurred by the Township of Winslow, as so certified by the entity incurring the cost upon completion of the remediation, shall constitute a lien upon the property first in time and right to any other lien, whether the other lien was filed prior to or after the filing of any lien by the Township, except for Township taxes, liens and assessments and any lien imposed pursuant to the Spill Compensation and Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 et seq., together with any interest thereon. The certification of cost shall be filed and recorded as a lien by the entity incurring the cost with the Camden County Clerk.
- E. The clearance, development, redevelopment, or repair of property being maintained as an abandoned property pursuant to this chapter shall be considered a public purpose and public use, for which the power of eminent domain may be lawfully exercised.

### **§ 210-6. Special tax sale and criteria for bidders.**

- A. The Township of Winslow may hold special tax sales with respect to those properties eligible for tax sale pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-19 which are also on the abandoned property list.
- B. The Township Administrator shall establish criteria for eligibility to bid on properties at the sale, which may include, but need not be limited to:
  - (1) Documentation of the bidder's ability to rehabilitate or otherwise reuse the property consistent with Township plans and regulations; commitments by the bidder to rehabilitate or otherwise reuse the property, consistent with Township plans and regulations;
  - (2) Commitments by the bidder to take action to foreclose on the tax lien by a date certain; and
  - (3) Such other criteria, as may be determined, if necessary to ensure that the properties to be sold will be rehabilitated or otherwise reused in a manner consistent with the public interest.
- C. Establish minimum bid requirements for a special tax sale that are less than the full amount of the taxes, interest and penalties due, to help ensure that the properties will be rehabilitated or otherwise utilized in a manner consistent with the public interest.
- D. The ability to combine properties in said special tax sale into bid packages, and require that bidders place a single bid on each package, rejecting any and all bids on individual properties that are submitted.
- E. The Township may sell properties subject to the provision that if the purchaser fails to carry out any commitment that has been set forth as a condition of sale, or misrepresents any material qualification that has been established as a condition of eligibility to bid pursuant thereto, then the properties and any interest thereto acquired by the purchaser shall revert to the Township, and any amount paid by the purchaser at the special tax sale shall be forfeit to the Township.
- F. In the event there are two (2) or more qualified bidders for any property or bid package in a special tax sale, the Township may designate the unsuccessful qualified bidder whose bid was closest to the successful bid, as an eligible purchaser. In the event that the selected purchaser of that property or bid package fails to meet any of the conditions of sale established by the Township pursuant to this section and their interest in the property or properties reverts to the Township, the Township may subsequently designate the entity previously designated as an eligible purchaser as the winning bidder for the property or properties, and assign the tax sale certificates to that entity on the basis of that entity's bid at the special tax sale, subject to the terms and conditions of the special tax sale.

- G. The Township of Winslow shall provide notice of a special tax sale pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-26. The notice shall include any special terms of sale established by the Township pursuant to this section. Nothing shall prohibit the Township from holding a special tax sale on the same day as a standard or accelerated tax sale.

### **§ 210-7. Expedited action to foreclose right of redemption.**

- A. When a person or entity other than the Township of Winslow acquires a tax sale certificate for a property on the abandoned property list at tax sale, the purchaser may institute an action to foreclose the right of redemption at any time after the expiration of just six (6) months following the date of the sale of the tax sale certificate.
- B. When the Township of Winslow is the purchaser at tax sale of any property on the abandoned property list pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-34, an action to foreclose the right of redemption may be instituted in accordance with the provisions of subsection b. of N.J.S.A. 54:5-77.
- C. After the foreclosure action is instituted, the right to redeem shall exist and continue to exist until barred by the judgment of the Superior Court; provided, however, that no redemption shall be permitted except where the owner:
- (1) Posts cash or a bond equal to the cost of remediating the conditions because of which the property was determined to be abandoned pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-56, as determined by the Court; or
  - (2) Demonstrates to the Court that the conditions because of which the property was determined to be abandoned have been remedied in full.

### **§ 210-8. Abandoned property status during expedited foreclosure.**

- A. If an entity other than the Township of Winslow has purchased or taken assignment from the Township of a tax sale certificate on a property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six (6) months, that property shall not be added to the abandoned property list under the following limited circumstances:
- (1) The owner of the certificate continued to pay all Township taxes and liens on the property in the tax year when due; and
  - (2) The owner of the certificate takes action to initiate foreclosure proceedings within six (6) months after the property is eligible for foreclosure pursuant to either subsection a. or subsection b. of N.J.S.A. 54:5-86, as appropriate, and diligently pursues foreclosure proceedings in a timely fashion thereafter.
- B. A property used on a seasonal basis shall be deemed abandoned only if it meets any two (2) of the additional criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 55:19-81.
- C. A determination that a property is abandoned property under the provisions of this chapter and N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et seq., shall not constitute a finding that the use of the property has been abandoned for purposes of municipal zoning or land use regulation.
- D. Upon the request of a purchaser or assignee of a tax sale certificate seeking to bar the right of redemption on an abandoned property pursuant to subsection b. of N.J.S.A. 54:5-86, the Tax Collector shall, in a timely fashion, provide the requester with a certification that the property fulfills the definition of an "abandoned property" according to the criteria established in N.J.S.A. 55:19-81 and N.J.S.A. 55:19-82.

### **§ 210-9. Summary action for control and possession of abandoned property.**

- A. A summary action or other action to transfer possession and control of abandoned property in need of rehabilitation to the Township of Winslow may be brought by the Township in the Superior Court, Camden County. If the Court shall find that the property is abandoned, and that the owner or party in interest has failed



to submit and initiate a rehabilitation plan, then the Court may authorize the Township to take possession and control of the property and to develop its own rehabilitation plan for the property.

- B. Where the Township has been granted possession and control, the Township may commence and maintain further proceedings for the conservation, protection or disposal of the property, or any part thereof, that are required to rehabilitate the property, recoup the cost and expenses of rehabilitation, and for the sale of the property; provided, however, that the Court shall not direct the sale of the property if the owner applies to the Court for reinstatement of control and possession of the property as permitted by N.J.S.A. 55:19-92.
- C. Failure by the owner, mortgage holder or lienholder to submit a plan for rehabilitation to the Township, obtain appropriate construction permits or, in the alternative, submit formal applications for funding the cost of rehabilitation to local, State or Federal agencies providing such funding, within the initial six-month period, shall be deemed clear evidence that the owner has failed to take any action to further the rehabilitation of the property.
- D. An owner may defend against a complaint filed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-84 by submitting a plan for the rehabilitation and reuse of the property which is the subject of the complaint and by posting a bond equal to one hundred twenty-five percent (125%) of the amount determined by the Township to be the projected cost of rehabilitation.
- E. Any plan submitted by an owner to defend against a complaint shall be submitted within sixty (60) days after the complaint has been filed, unless the Court provides the owner with an extension of time for good cause shown. A plan submitted by an owner pursuant to this section shall include, but not be limited to:
  - (1) A detailed financial feasibility analysis, including documentation of the economic feasibility of the proposed reuse, including operating budgets or resale prices, or both, as appropriate;
  - (2) A budget for the rehabilitation of the property, including sources and uses of funds, based on the terms and conditions of realistically available financing, including grants and loans;
  - (3) A timetable for the completion of rehabilitation and reuse of the property, including milestones for performance of major steps leading to and encompassing the rehabilitation and reuse of the property; and
  - (4) Documentation of the qualifications of the individuals and firms that will be engaged to carry out the planning, design, financial packaging, construction, and marketing or rental of the property.
- F. Where the Court approves the rehabilitation plan of the owner or other party in interest, then it may appoint the Township Committee to act as monitor of compliance and progress. If the owner fails to carry out any step in the approved plan, then the Township may apply to the Court to have the posted bond forfeited, to transfer possession of the building to the Township to complete the rehabilitation plan, and to grant authorization to use the bond proceeds for the rehabilitation. The owner or other party in interest shall provide bimonthly reports to the Township on its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and reuse of the property.
- G. If an owner is unsuccessful in defending against a complaint filed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-84, the mortgage holder or lienholder may seek to be designated in possession of the property by submitting a plan and posting a bond meeting the same conditions as set forth in N.J.S.A. 55:19-87. Their plan must be submitted within sixty (60) days following the Court's rejection of the owner's plan, unless the Court provides the mortgage holder or lienholder with an extension of time for good cause shown. If the Court approves any such mortgage holder or lienholder's plan, it shall designate that party to be in possession of the property for purposes of ensuring its rehabilitation.
- H. The mortgage holder or lienholder, as the case may be, shall provide bimonthly reports to the Court and the Township on its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and reuse of the property. If the mortgage holder or lienholder fails to carry out any material step in the approved plan, then the Township Solicitor shall notify the Court, which may order the posted bond forfeit, grant the Township possession of the property, and authorize the Township to use the proceeds of the bond for rehabilitation of the property.
- I. Any sums incurred or advanced for the purpose of rehabilitating the property by a mortgage holder or lienholder granted possession of a property, including Court costs and reasonable attorney's fees, may be

added to the unpaid balance due to that mortgage holder or lienholder, with interest calculated at the same rate set forth in the note or security agreement, or, in the case of a tax lienholder, at the statutory interest rate for subsequent liens.

- J. If no mortgage holder or lienholder meets the conditions of N.J.S.A. 55:19-88, then the Township may submit a plan to the Court which conforms with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 55:19-87. Such plan shall designate whether the Township or a qualified rehabilitation entity shall undertake the rehabilitation plan in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 55:19-90.

#### **§ 210-10. Township rehabilitation or designation of qualified rehabilitation entity.**

- A. The Township Committee may designate a qualified rehabilitation entity for the purpose of exercising the Township's rights, where that designation will further the rehabilitation and reuse of the property consistent with Township plans and objectives.
- B. Regardless of whether the Township exercises its rights directly or the Township Committee designates a qualified rehabilitation entity pursuant to this section, the Township shall maintain, safeguard, and maintain insurance on the property while in possession of such property. Notwithstanding the Township's possession of the property, the owner of the property shall not be relieved of any civil or criminal liability or any duty imposed by reason of acts or omissions of the owner.
- C. The Court may approve the borrowing of funds by the Township to rehabilitate the property and may grant a lien or security interests with priority over all other liens or mortgages other than municipal liens. Prior to granting this lien priority, the Court must find as follows:
  - (1) The Township sought to obtain the necessary financing from the senior lienholder, which declined to provide such financing on reasonable terms;
  - (2) The Township sought to obtain a voluntary subordination from the senior lienholder, which refused to provide such subordination; and
  - (3) Lien priority is necessary in order to induce another lender to provide financing on reasonable terms. No lien authorized by the Court shall take effect unless recorded with the Clerk of Camden County.
- D. Where the Township has designated a qualified rehabilitation entity to act on its behalf, the qualified rehabilitation entity shall provide bimonthly reports to the Township on its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and reuse of the property. The Township or qualified rehabilitation entity, as the case may be, shall provide such reports to the Court as the Court determines to be necessary. If the Court finds that the Township or its designee have failed to take diligent action toward rehabilitation of the property within one year from the grant of possession, then the Court may request that the Township designate another qualified rehabilitation entity to exercise its rights, or if the Township fails to do so, may terminate the order of possession and return possession and control of the property to its owner.
- E. The Township of Winslow shall file a notice of completion with the Court, and shall also serve a copy on the owner and any mortgage holder or lienholder, at such time as the Township has determined that no more than six (6) months remain to the anticipated date on which rehabilitation will be complete. This notice shall include an affidavit of the Township Administrator, attesting that the rehabilitation is anticipated to be completed within six (6) months, and a statement setting forth the actions as it plans to undertake consistent with the plan.

#### **§ 210-11. Petition for reinstatement of control and possession by owner.**

- A. An owner may petition for reinstatement of the owner's control and possession of the property at any time after one (1) year from the Court's removal of possession, but no later than thirty (30) days after the Township of Winslow has filed a notice of completion with the Court or, in the event the notice of completion is filed within

less than one (1) year of the grant of possession, within thirty (30) days after the Township has filed said notice.

- B. The Court may allow additional time for good cause if that additional time does not materially delay completion of the rehabilitation, place undue hardship on the Township or affect any of the terms or conditions under which the Township has applied for or received financing for the rehabilitation of the property.
- C. If the owner fails to petition for the reinstatement of control and possession of the property within thirty (30) days after the Township has filed a notice of completion or, in any event, within two (2) years after the initial grant of possession, or if the owner fails to meet any conditions that may be set by the Court in granting a reinstatement petition, the Court may grant the Township title or authorize the Township to sell the property, subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 55:19-96.

### **§ 210-12. Procedure for Township to place liens, obtain title and sell property.**

- A. The Township Committee, with the approval of the Court, may place a lien on the property to cover any costs of the Township in connection with any proceeding under N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et seq., incurred prior to the grant by the Court of an order of possession, which may include costs incurred to stabilize or secure the property to ensure that it can be rehabilitated in a cost-effective manner. Any such lien shall be considered a Township lien for the purposes of N.J.S.A. 54:5-9, with the rights and status of a Township lien pursuant thereto.
- B. Where the Township seeks to gain title to the property, it shall purchase the property for fair market value on such terms as the Court shall approve and may place the proceeds of sale in escrow with the Court.
- C. The Court may authorize the Township of Winslow to sell the building free and clear of liens, claims and encumbrances, in which event all such liens, claims and encumbrances shall be transferred to the proceeds of sale with the same priority as existed prior to resale in accordance with the provisions of this section, except that municipal liens shall be paid at settlement. The proceeds of the purchase of the property shall be distributed as set forth in N.J.S.A. 55:19-97.
- D. Upon approval by the Court, the Township shall sell the property on such terms and at such price as the Court shall approve and may place the proceeds of sale in escrow with the Court. The Court shall order a distribution of the proceeds of sale after paying Court costs in the order of priority set forth in N.J.S.A. 55:19-97.
- E. With the exception of the holding of special tax sales pursuant to N.J.S.A. 55:19-101, the remedies available under N.J.S.A. 55:19-78, et seq. shall be available to the Township with respect to any abandoned property, whether or not the Township has established an abandoned property list and whether or not the property at issue has been included on any such list.

## **ARTICLE II Maintenance of Vacant Properties**

### **§ 210-13. Definitions.**

As used in this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**OPERATOR** — Any person, persons or entity who is not the owner, who has charge, care and control of a premises or part thereof, with or without the knowledge, consent or authority of the owner. "Operator" shall also include a creditor, as defined in P.L. 2014, c. 5, that has served a notice of intention to foreclose on a mortgage on a residential property pursuant to P.L. 19101, c. 244, and that property has become vacant after the filing of this intention to foreclose.

**OWNER** — Shall include the title holder, any agent of the title holder having authority to act with respect to a vacant property, any foreclosing entity subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 46:10B-51 (P.L. 2008, c. 127, § 17, as amended by P.L. 2009, c. 296), or any other entity determined by the Township of Winslow to have authority to act with respect to the property.

VACANT PROPERTY — Any building used or to be used as a residence which is not legally occupied or at which substantially all lawful construction operations or residential occupancy has ceased and which is in such condition that it cannot legally be reoccupied without repair or rehabilitation, including but not limited to any property meeting the definition of abandoned property in N.J.S.A. 55:19-80 or § 210-1 above; provided, however, that any property where all building systems are in working order, where the building and grounds are maintained in good order, or where the building is in habitable condition, and where the building is being actively marketed by its owner for sale or rental, shall not be deemed a vacant property for purposes of this Article.

#### **§ 210-14. Registration requirements.**

The owner and/or operator of any vacant property, as defined herein, shall, within thirty (30) calendar days after the building becomes vacant property or within thirty (30) calendar days after assuming ownership of the vacant property, whichever is later, or within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notice by the municipality, file a registration statement for such vacant property with the Township Clerk on forms provided by the Township for such purposes. Failure to receive notice by the Township shall not constitute grounds for failure to register the property.

- A. Each property having a separate block and lot number as designated in official records of the municipality shall be registered separately.
- B. The registration statement shall include the name, street address, telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable) of a person twenty-one (21) years or older, designated by the owner and/or operator or owner and/or operators as the authorized agent for receiving notices of code violations and for receiving process in any court proceeding or administrative enforcement proceeding on behalf of such owners and/or operators in connection with the enforcement of any applicable code, and the name, street address, telephone number and e-mail address (if applicable) of the firm and the actual name(s) of the firm's individual principal(s) responsible for maintaining the property. The individual or representative of the firm responsible for maintaining the property shall be available by telephone or in person on a twenty-four-hour-per-day, seven-day-per-week basis. The two (2) entities may be the same or different persons. Both entities shown on the statement must maintain offices in the State of New Jersey or reside within the State of New Jersey.
- C. The registration shall remain valid for one (1) year from the date of registration, except for the initial registration time, which shall be prorated through December 31. The owner and/or operator shall be required to renew the registration annually as long as the building remains a vacant property and shall pay a registration or renewal fee in the amount prescribed in § 210-17 of this Article, for each vacant property registered.
- D. The annual renewal shall be completed by January 1 each year. The initial registration fee shall be prorated for registration statements received less than ten (10) months prior to that date.
- E. The owner and/or operator shall notify the Township Clerk within thirty (30) calendar days of any change in the registration information by filing an amended registration statement on a form provided by the Township Clerk for such purpose.
- F. The registration statement shall be deemed prima facie proof of the statements therein contained in any administrative enforcement proceeding or court proceeding instituted by the Township against the owners and/or operators of the building.

#### **§ 210-15. Access to vacant properties.**

The owner and/or operator of any vacant property registered under this Article shall provide access to the Township to conduct exterior and interior inspections of the building to determine compliance with municipal codes, upon reasonable notice to the property owner and/or operator or the designated agent.

Such inspections shall be carried out on weekdays during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or such other time as may be mutually agreed upon between the owner and/or operator and the Township.

#### **§ 210-16. Responsible owner or agent.**

- A. An owner who meets the requirements of this Article with respect to the location of his or her residence or workplace in the State of New Jersey may designate him or herself as agent or as the individual responsible for maintaining the property.
- B. By designating an authorized agent under the provisions of this section, the owner consents to receive any and all notices of code violations concerning the registered vacant property and all process in any court proceeding or administrative enforcement proceeding brought to enforce code provisions concerning the registered building by service of the notice or process on the authorized agent. Any owner who has designated an authorized agent under the provisions of this section shall be deemed to consent to the continuation of the agent's designation for the purposes of this section until the owner notifies the Township in writing of a change of authorized agent or until the owner files a new annual registration statement.
- C. Any owner who fails to register vacant property under the provisions of this Article shall further be deemed to consent to receive by posting on the building, in plain view, and by service of notice at the last known address of the owner of the property on record within the Township of Winslow by regular and certified mail, any and all notices of code violations and all process in an administrative proceeding brought to enforce code provisions concerning the building.

#### **§ 210-17. Fees.**

- A. The initial registration fee for each building shall be \$500.
- B. The fee for the first renewal is \$1,500.
- C. The fee for a second renewal is \$3,000.
- D. The fee for any subsequent renewal beyond the second renewal is \$5,000.

#### **§ 210-18. Requirements of owners and/or operators of vacant properties.**

The owner and/or operator of any building that has become vacant property, and any person maintaining or operating or collecting rent for any such building that has become vacant, shall, within thirty (30) days thereof:

- A. Enclose and secure the building against unauthorized entry as provided in the applicable provisions of the Township Code or as set forth in the rules and regulations supplementing those codes; and
- B. Post a sign affixed to the building indicating the name, address and telephone number of the owner and/or operator, the owner and/or operator's authorized agent for the purpose of service of process (if designated pursuant to § 210-16 above), and the person responsible for the day-to-day supervision and management of the building, if such person is different from the owner and/or operator holding title or authorized agent. The sign shall be of a size and placed in such a location so as to be legible from the nearest public street or sidewalk, whichever is nearer, but shall be no smaller than eight (8) inches by ten (10) inches; and
- C. Secure the building from unauthorized entry and maintain the sign until the building is again legally occupied or demolished or until repair or rehabilitation of the building is complete; and
- D. Ensure that the exterior grounds of the structure, including yards, fences, sidewalks, walkways, rights-of-way, alleys, retaining walls, attached or unattached accessory structures and driveways, are well maintained and free from trash, debris, loose litter and grass and weed growth; and

- E. Continue to maintain the structure in a secure and closed condition, keep the grounds in a clean and well-maintained condition, and ensure that the sign is visible and intact until the building is again occupied or is demolished or until repaid and/or rehabilitation of the building is complete.
- F. If the owner of a residential property vacates or abandons any property on which a foreclosure proceeding has been initiated, or if a residential property becomes vacant at any point subsequent to the operator's filing the summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a mortgage against the subject property, but prior to vesting of title in the operator or any other third party, and the property is found to be a nuisance and/or in violation of any of the provisions of this Article, the Code Enforcement Officer shall notify the operator, which shall have the responsibility to abate the nuisance and/or correct the violation in the same manner and to the same extent as the title owner of the property, to such standard or specification as may be required by state law or this Article. The Township shall include a description of the conditions that gave rise to the violation with the notice of violation, and shall provide a period of not less than thirty (30) days from the operator's receipt of the notice for the operator to remedy the violation. If the operator fails to remedy the violation within that time period, the Township may impose penalties allowed for such violations pursuant to § 210-20 of this Article.

### **§ 210-19. Requirements of creditors of vacant or abandoned properties.**

- A. A creditor, as defined in P.L.2014, c.5, who files a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose, shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, security, and upkeep of the exterior of the vacant and abandoned residential property subject to the foreclosure, and if located out-of-State, shall be responsible for appointing an in-State representative or agent to act for the foreclosing creditor.
- B. The Code Enforcement Officer, or any other local official designated by the governing body for administration of any property maintenance or public nuisance code, may issue a notice to the creditor filing the summons and complaint in an action to foreclose, if the public officer or other authorized municipal official determines that the creditor has violated any provision of this chapter by failing to provide for the care, maintenance, security, and upkeep of the exterior of the vacant and abandoned residential property subject to the foreclosure.
  - (1) Such notice shall include a description of the conditions that gave rise to the violation with the notice of violation and shall provide a period of not less than thirty (30) days from the creditor's receipt of the notice for the creditor to remedy the violation, or within ten (10) days of receipt of the notice if the violation presents an imminent threat to public health and safety.
  - (2) A creditor subject to this section who is found to be in violation of this section by the Winslow Township Municipal Court, or by any other court of competent jurisdiction, of the requirement to correct a care, maintenance, security, or upkeep violation cited in a notice issued pursuant to the ordinance shall be subject to a fine of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.) for each day of the violation. Any fines imposed pursuant to this paragraph shall commence thirty-one (31) days following receipt of the notice, except if the violation presents an imminent risk to public health and safety, in which case any fines shall commence eleven (11) days following receipt of the notice.
- C. Any creditor whose principal place of business is located outside of the State of New Jersey who has served a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a residential property, shall provide to the Township Clerk the full name and contact information of its in-State representative or agent, within the 10-day period as required by N.J.S.A. 46:10B-51, which contains the full name and contact information of an in-State representative or agent who shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, security, and upkeep of the exterior of the property if it becomes vacant and/or abandoned.
  - (1) Any out-of-State creditor subject to the provisions of this section who is found by the Winslow Township Municipal Court, or by any other court of competent jurisdiction, in violation of the requirement of this section to appoint an in-State representative or agent pursuant to this Chapter shall be subject to a fine of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.) for each day of the violation.

- (2) Any fines imposed on a creditor for the failure to appoint an in-State representative or agent shall commence on the day after the 10-day period as required by N.J.S.A 46:10B-51 et seq. for providing notice to the Township Clerk that a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a mortgage has been served.
- D. The issuance of a notice pursuant to this section shall constitute proof that the property is "vacant and abandoned" for the purposes of P.L.2012, c.70 (C.2A:50-73).

### **§ 210-20. Violations and penalties.**

- A. Except as otherwise provided in Section 210-19 above, any owner, operator or occupant who or which shall violate any of the provisions of this Article shall, upon conviction in the Winslow Township Municipal Court or any such other court having jurisdiction, be sentenced to a penalty not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding thirty (30) days, or both. Each day that a violation occurs shall be deemed a separate offense and subject to the penalty provisions of this chapter.
- B. For purposes of this Article, failure to file a registration statement within thirty (30) calendar days after a building becomes vacant property or within thirty (30) calendar days after assuming ownership of a vacant property, whichever is later, or within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notice by the municipality, and failure to provide correct information on the registration statement, or failure to comply with the provisions of such provisions contained herein shall be deemed to be violations of this Article.

## **ARTICLE III Defaulted Mortgage Properties; Registration and Maintenance [Adopted 12-20-16 by Ord. No. O-2016-026]**

### **§ 210-21. Public nuisance declared.**

All registrable property is hereby declared to be a public nuisance, the abatement of which pursuant to the police power is hereby declared to be necessary for the health, welfare and safety of the residents of the Township of Winslow.

### **§ 210-22. Applicability.**

The requirements of this Article shall be considered cumulative to and not superseding or subordinate to any other law or provision regarding the registration of vacant, deteriorated and/or abandoned property, it being the express intent of the Township that the requirements of this Article shall be a further remedy available to the Township in addition to any other applicable laws relating to same.

### **§ 210-23. Definitions.**

As used in this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated notwithstanding any meaning to the contrary elsewhere in this Chapter:

**ACCESSIBLE PROPERTY and/or ACCESSIBLE STRUCTURE** – A property that is accessible through a compromised/breached gate, fence, wall, etc., or a structure that is unsecured and/or breached in such a way as to allow access to the interior space by unauthorized persons.

**APPLICABLE LAWS** – The Code of the Township of Winslow, as it may be amended from time to time, and any and all ordinances and/or resolutions adopted by the Township which govern property maintenance



and are not codified therein, together with all other laws, rules and regulations of the County of Camden and/or State of New Jersey applicable to construction, maintenance and/or use of real property, including but not limited to State and/or County Construction, Building and Fire Codes.

**ARM'S-LENGTH TRANSACTION** – The sale of real property to an independent third-party purchaser, who is unrelated to the transferor, for fair market value as determined by an independent appraiser not hired or retained by the transferor.

**DEFAULT** – The event, action and/or inaction, and the continuing situation arising therefrom, where a mortgagor, owner and/or borrower has not complied with any one or more terms of the mortgage encumbering the mortgagor's property as said property is identified in the mortgage, has not paid current all real property taxes and/or applicable municipal charges, or has otherwise failed to comply with the provisions of a loan or other agreement wherein the borrower has used the borrower's real property as collateral therefor. For the purpose of this definition, the term "mortgage" shall also mean and/or refer to the promissory note executed with the mortgage and/or such other valid written evidence of the debt as recognized by law.

**DETERIORATED PROPERTY** – Property located within the Township of Winslow upon which is found any one or more of the following conditions:

- A. Properties that have broken or severely damaged windows, doors, walls or roofs which create hazardous conditions and/or encourage trespassing; or
- B. Properties whose maintenance is not in conformance with the maintenance of other neighboring properties; or
- C. Properties cited under the property maintenance provisions of the Winslow Township Code and/or as a public nuisance pursuant to applicable laws; or
- D. Properties that endanger the public's health, safety, or welfare because the properties or improvements thereon are so dilapidated, deteriorated and/or so violative of basic property maintenance requirements that they violate minimum health and safety standards.

**ENFORCING OFFICER** – Any Police Officer, Construction Code Official, Zoning Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer, Fire Inspector or Building Inspector or other person authorized by the Township and/or the State of New Jersey to enforce the applicable laws.

**EVIDENCE OF VACANCY** – As used in this Article, "Evidence of vacancy" shall mean any condition that on its own, or combined with other conditions present, would lead a reasonable person to believe that a property is vacant, including but not limited to overgrown and/or dead vegetation; past due utility notices and/or disconnected utilities; accumulation of trash junk or debris; abandoned vehicles, auto parts or automotive materials; the absence of furnishings and/or personal items consistent with habitation or occupancy; the presence of an unsanitary, stagnant swimming pool; the accumulation of newspapers, circulars, flyers and/or mail; statements by neighbors, passers-by, delivery agents or government agents as to suspected vacancy; or the presence of boards over doors, windows or other openings in violation of applicable laws.

**FORECLOSURE** – The legal process by which a mortgagee or other creditor terminates a property owner's ownership of and/or equitable right of redemption in real property in order to obtain legal and equitable title to the real property which was pledged as security for a debt. This definition shall include, but is not limited to, public notice of default, recording of a lis pendens, filing of a foreclosure complaint in the Superior Court of New Jersey, delivery and recording of a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure, sale of the real property to the foreclosing mortgagee or creditor, entry of a judgment of foreclosure and/or all other processes, activities and actions, by whatever name, associated with the foreclosure process. For purposes of this Article, the foreclosure process shall not be deemed concluded until the property that is obtained by the mortgagee, creditor and/or their designee by deed or judgment of foreclosure or any other means is sold to a non-related bona fide third-party purchaser in an arm's-length transaction.



**LOCAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY** – A property management company located within twenty (20) driving miles of any municipal border of the Township or a non-local property manager approved by the Township Administrator upon the Administrator's review and consideration of reasonably reliable credentials.

**MORTGAGEE** – The creditor identified in the mortgage documents as the lender and/or financing institution which lent money to a property owner thereunder and encumbered the property owner's real property as collateral therefor, including but not limited to any trustees, mortgage service companies, and/or any agent, servant, or employee thereof, and/or any successor in interest or assignee of the said mortgagee's rights, interests or obligations under the mortgage agreement, which assignment and/or transfer was made, in part, for the purpose of substituting one mortgagee for another.

**OWNER** – Any person, firm, corporation or other legal entity who, individually or jointly with one or more others, holds the legal or beneficial title to any real property located within the Township.

**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY** – A property manager, property maintenance company or similar entity responsible for the maintenance and security of registrable property and who has the authority to make decisions concerning maintenance of said property and/or the abatement of nuisance conditions at the property, including without limitation the authority to make expenditures in connection therewith.

**REAL PROPERTY** – Any improved residential land located within the Township limits, together with the buildings, fixtures, equipment and leasehold improvements thereon and/or affixed thereto, or any part or portion thereof, which is identified by a property parcel and/or tax identification numbering system. For purposes of this chapter, all developed lots are considered improved land.

**REGISTRABLE PROPERTY** – Any and all real property located within the Township, whether vacant or occupied, that satisfies any one or more of the following criteria: (i) is encumbered by a mortgage in default, (ii) is subject to an ongoing foreclosure action by a mortgagee or other creditor, (iii) is subject to an application for a judgment of foreclosure by a mortgagee or other creditor, (iv) is pending and/or scheduled for tax sale for unpaid property taxes and/or other municipal charges, (v) has been the subject of a foreclosure sale where the title was transferred to the beneficiary of a mortgagee or other creditor involved in the foreclosure and/or (vi) was transferred under a deed in lieu of foreclosure to the mortgagee or other foreclosing creditor. The designation of a "defaulted mortgage/foreclosure property" as "registrable" shall remain in place until such time as the property is sold to an unrelated bona fide third-party purchaser in an arm's-length transaction or the foreclosure action has been dismissed and any default on the mortgage and/or delinquencies in unpaid property taxes or other municipal charges has been cured.

**RENTAL PROPERTY** – A property that contains a single-family rental dwelling unit or multi-family rental dwelling units for use by residential tenants, including but not limited to mobile homes, mobile home spaces, town homes, condominium unit(s) and/or apartments. A rental dwelling unit includes property that is provided to an individual or entity for residential purposes upon payment of rent or any other consideration in lieu of rent, regardless of the nature of the relationship between lessor and lessee.

**SEMI-ANNUAL REGISTRATION** – The six (6) month period of registration commencing from the date of the first action that required registration, as determined by the Township and/or its designee, and including every subsequent six (6) month registration period thereafter. The date of the initial registration may be different than the date of the first action that required registration.

**TRANSFEREE** – The person, mortgagee, trustee and/or entity to which legal title of real property is transferred as a result of a judgment of foreclosure, sheriff's sale after foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure, non-arm's-length sale or transfer and/or any other type of non-arm's-length transaction.

**UNAUTHORIZED PERSON** – Any person who does not have the permission of the property owner and/or property management company, as the case may be, to use, reside in, live in or otherwise occupy, on a temporary or permanent basis, any real property.

**VACANT** – As used in this Article, the term "vacant" shall mean any parcel of land situated within the Township that contains any building or structure that is not lawfully occupied or inhabited by human beings,

as evidenced by the conditions set forth in the definition of "Evidence of vacancy" above, and/or which is occupied by an unauthorized person. A property also shall be deemed vacant if it is occupied without a valid, unexpired certificate of occupancy or other written authorization for occupancy as may be required by applicable laws.

#### **§ 210-24. Establishment of a registry.**

The Township Administrator, or his/her designee, shall have authority and be responsible to establish a registry cataloging each registrable property within the Township which registry shall contain the information required by this Article, except where the Township, by resolution, has authorized a third-party vendor to be responsible for same. As used herein, the person or entity responsible for the registration and cataloging of registrable property shall be referred to as the "Registrar."

#### **§ 210-25. Registration of defaulted mortgage real property.**

- A. Any mortgagee who holds a mortgage on real property located within the Township shall perform an inspection of the property to determine vacancy or occupancy immediately upon default by the mortgagor. The mortgagee shall, within ten (10) days of the inspection, register the property with the Registrar on designated forms or in such other manner as directed, and shall indicate thereon whether the property is vacant or occupied. A separate registration is required for each property, whether it is found to be vacant or occupied.
- B. Registration pursuant to this section shall contain the name, direct mailing address, a direct contact name, including the direct-dial telephone number and direct e-mail address thereof, and a valid telephone number and email address for the mortgagee and the mortgagee's servicer, if any, as well as the name and twenty-four (24) hour contact telephone/cellular phone number of the local property management company responsible for the property.
- C. Mortgagees who have existing registrable property on the effective date of this ordinance have thirty (30) calendar days from the effective date hereof to register the property as required herein and to indicate whether the property is vacant or occupied. A separate registration is required for each property, whether it is vacant or occupied.
- D. If the mortgage on a registrable property is sold or transferred, other than via an arm's-length transaction, the new mortgagee and/or transferee shall be subject to all of the requirements of this Article and, within five (5) business days of such sale or transfer, the new mortgagee shall register the property as required herein.
- E. If a mortgagee who obtains title to a registrable property as a result of a foreclosure process subsequently sells or transfers the property, other than via an arm's-length transaction, the said transferee shall be subject to all the requirements of this Article and, within five (5) business days of the transfer, the transferee shall register the property as required herein.
- F. As long as the property constitutes a registrable property as defined herein it shall be the responsibility of the registered mortgagee, independently or by and through a local property management company, to inspect the property monthly. If an inspection shows a change in the property's occupancy status the mortgagee shall, within ten (10) days of that inspection, update the occupancy status of the property with the registrar.
- G. Every property registration required by this Article shall be accompanied by a non-refundable semi-annual registration fee in the amount established annually by resolution adopted by the Governing Body. Notwithstanding anything else herein to the contrary, every semi-annual registration shall terminate upon the sale or other transfer of a registrable property such that the purchaser and/or transferee thereof, other than an unrelated third-party purchaser in an arm's-length transaction, shall pay a new semi-annual registration fee at the time of the new purchaser/transferee's registration of the registrable property as

otherwise required in this Article. Any previous unpaid semi-annual registration fees are the responsibility of the new mortgagee or transferee and are due and payable with the initial registration filed by same.

- H. All registration fees must be paid directly by and/or from the mortgagee, transferee or other non-arm's-length purchaser of a registrable property and cannot be paid by a third-party on behalf thereof without the express written consent of the Township.
- I. Properties subject to this Article shall remain subject hereto, including without limitation the semi-annual registration requirement, inspection, security and maintenance standards of this Article, for as long as the property meets the definition of a registrable property.
- J. Until the mortgage or lien on a property registered under this Article is satisfied or legally discharged, the mortgagee's intent to no longer pursue foreclosure as evidenced by any action in further thereof, including without limitation the filing of a dismissal of lis pendens, entry of a court order vacating a final judgment of foreclosure and/or the dismissal or withdrawal of pending foreclosure proceedings, whether voluntary or otherwise, shall not exempt any mortgagee from the obligation to comply with all of the requirements of this Article for any period of time during which a property meets the definition of a registrable property.
- K. Any person or legal entity that has registered a property under this section must report any change of information contained in the registration within ten (10) days of the date such change occurs.
- L. Failure of the mortgagee to properly register a registrable property, or to fail to modify the registration as required herein to reflect a change of circumstances, shall be deemed a violation of this Article and the mortgagee shall be subject to enforcement hereunder, including any monetary penalties set forth in Section 210-32 of this chapter.
- M. Pursuant to any administrative or judicial finding and/or determination that any property is in violation of this Article, the Township may take any and all necessary action to ensure compliance with the applicable laws and may place a lien on the property for the cost of any work performed to bring the property into compliance with all applicable laws.

## **§ 210-26. Maintenance requirements.**

Each and every property registered pursuant to the requirements of this Article shall be maintained by the mortgagee to the following standards and/or conditions:

- A. The property shall be kept free of weeds, overgrown brush, dead vegetation, trash, junk, debris, building materials, any accumulation of newspaper circulars, flyers, notices (except those required by federal, state or local laws and/or court orders), discarded personal items, including but not limited to furniture, clothing and large or small appliances, printed material or any other items that give the appearance that the property is vacant.
- B. The property shall be maintained free of graffiti or similar markings which shall be removed or painted over with an exterior grade paint that matches the color of the exterior of the structure.
- C. The front, side, and rear yards of the property, including landscaping, shall be maintained in accordance with all applicable laws.
- D. The mortgagee shall perform yard maintenance, including but not limited to, proper and appropriate maintenance of grass, ground coverings, bushes, shrubs, hedges or similar plantings so as to prevent overgrowth thereof, including removal of all such trimmings, together with maintenance of decorative rock or bark, artificial turf/sod and/or such other items of hardscape designed specifically for residential installation. Any overgrowth of weeds, grass, ground coverings, bushes, shrubs, hedges, and/or similar plantings and/or any accumulation of gravel, broken concrete, asphalt or similar material shall not be considered proper yard maintenance as required hereunder.
- E. The mortgagee shall perform standard and/or routine year-round maintenance including, but not limited to, maintaining, repairing and winterizing existing irrigation systems, pools and spas. Pools and spas shall be

maintained so the water remains free and clear of pollutants and debris and complies with all applicable Department of Health regulations and any other applicable laws.

- F. The mortgagee shall further comply with any property maintenance requirements set forth in all other applicable laws.

### **§ 210-27. Security requirements.**

All registrable properties shall be maintained in a secure manner so as not to be accessible to unauthorized persons, in accordance with the following minimum standards:

- A. A “secure manner” shall include, but not be limited to, the closure and locking of windows, doors, gates and other openings of such size that may allow any unauthorized person to access the interior of the property or structure. Broken windows, doors, gates and other openings of such size that may allow any unauthorized person to access the interior of the property or structure must be repaired. Broken windows shall be secured by re-glazing of the window.
- B. If a property is registrable, and the property has become vacant or deteriorated, a local property manager shall be designated by the mortgagee or owner to perform the work necessary to bring the property into compliance with all applicable laws, and the property manager must perform regular inspections to verify continued compliance with the requirements of this Article and any other applicable codes.

### **§ 210-28. Inspections for violations.**

Compliance with the registration, maintenance and security requirements of this Article does not relieve any person, legal entity or agent thereof from any other obligations set forth in any applicable laws which may apply to the property and/or govern the use thereof.

### **§ 210-29. Additional authority.**

- A. Regardless of whether a registrable property has been properly registered as required in this Article, if the Enforcing Officer has reason to believe that a registrable property is posing a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare, the Enforcing Officer may temporarily secure the property at the expense of the mortgagee or owner, and/or may issue such Notices of Violation and/or summonses as may be necessary to ensure the conditions of the property are addressed as soon as possible.
- B. In addition to any other powers, the Enforcing Officer may implement additional maintenance and/or security measures, including but not limited to securing any and all doors, windows or other openings, employment of an on-site security guard and/or other similar measures as may be reasonably required to help prevent further decline of the property.
- C. If the Enforcing Officer finds that the condition of a registrable property is posing a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare, then the Township, upon notice to the mortgagee and/or owner, may abate the violations and charge the costs of such abatement to the mortgagee and/or owner.
- D. If the mortgagee or owner does not reimburse the Township for the cost of temporarily securing the property and/or the costs associated with any abatement undertaken by the Township as permitted herein, within thirty (30) days of the date the Township sent the mortgagee or owner the invoice therefor, then the Township may assess a lien against the property in the manner provided by applicable laws for such costs, along with the Township's administrative costs associated with same. In addition to filing a lien, the Township can pursue reimbursement from the mortgagee or owner and/or seek and enforce such other penalties as may be contemplated herein.

### **§ 210-30. Opposing, obstructing Enforcement Officer; penalty.**

Whoever opposes, obstructs or resists any Enforcing Officer in the discharge of his/her duties as provided in this Article shall be punishable as provided by the applicable laws which action shall be cognizable in the municipal court of the Township or such other court of competent jurisdiction as may be applicable.

### **§ 210-31. Immunity of Enforcement Officer.**

Every Enforcing Officer and such other persons authorized by the Township to implement and/or enforce the provisions of this Article shall be immune from prosecution, whether civil or criminal, for his/her reasonable, good faith entry upon real property while in the discharge of the duties imposed by this Article.

### **§ 210-32. Enforcement and penalties.**

#### **A. Violations.**

It shall be a violation of this Article and shall be unlawful for any mortgagee and/or owner to:

- (1) Fail to register a registrable property;
- (2) Fail to properly maintain and/or secure any registrable property in accordance with the requirements of this Article; or
- (3) Maintain any registrable property in a manner which results in a violation of any other applicable laws.

#### **B. Enforcement.**

The requirements of this Article may be enforced as follows:

- (1) By an action for injunctive relief, civil penalties, or both, through a court of competent jurisdiction;
- (2) By revocation or temporary suspension of necessary permits and/or certificates of occupancy and/or licenses related to occupancy and/or use of real property;
- (3) By the nuisance abatement process and/or property maintenance enforcement process established in the Code of the Township of Winslow;
- (4) By issuance of a citation or Notice of Violation in accordance with any applicable laws; and
- (5) By any other process as may be permitted by law or in equity.

#### **C. All such remedies cognizable in and/or subject to the jurisdiction of the Winslow Township Municipal Court shall be subject to a fine of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000.) for each offense.**

#### **D. Separate offenses. Each violation of this Article shall constitute a separate offense for each day that such violation continues or recurs. Each condition which exists in violation of this Article is a separate violation.**

#### **E. Use of one enforcement process or theory shall not preclude the Township from seeking the same, different, or additional relief through other enforcement methods provided for herein at any time in the present or future.**

#### **F. Persons responsible for violations. The, owner, mortgagee, trustee or servicer as those terms are defined in this Article, and their duly authorized officers, employees or agents employed in connection therewith who have assisted in the commission of a violation or failed to perform such actions as are required herein, shall be liable for and/or subject to being found guilty of such violation.**

## Chapter 210 ABANDONED AND VACANT PROPERTIES

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