



**Department of Building Inspections &
Neighborhood Services**

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January 26, 2016

Common Council
Safety and Development Committee
West Allis, WI

RE: Zombie Property Registration

Dear Council Members:

The City of West Allis is facing an issue with vacant and abandoned properties, and in particular ones that have been labeled "Zombie Properties." Zombie Properties are ones in which nobody claims ownership, and nobody maintains the property. A majority of these properties stem from foreclosure actions that are started but never completed or foreclosures where a bank does not want a property. In 2015, The West Allis Common Council passed ordinance [O-2015-0042](#) that requires banks to register a property that is going into, or is in, foreclosure. This was passed in addition to our current [Property Owner Registration Program](#) that has been in effect since 2010.

Earlier in 2015, the City was contacted by a company by the name of Community Champions. They offer a service to manage all of the foreclosed properties in West Allis for us. In October, city staff participated in a conference call and demonstration with one of their representatives. In attendance was Mayor Devine, Rebecca Grill, Scott Post, Jim Jandovitz and me. After the call, we received copies of a model ordinance and contract for services, as well as a list of other municipalities that are using this service to call as references.

If hired, Community Champions would manage all foreclosures in the City and force banks to register them with the City in a timely manner. They would provide the City with a map of all locations and a list of current contact information for each property. This information is valuable for property maintenance enforcement and law enforcement. They can customize their reports and information to what we need. This is all done at no cost to the City. They would take a portion of the property registration fee from each property. Another huge benefit is that all of the chasing and paperwork to track these foreclosures would not be done by current City staff. Some of the drawbacks from partnering with this company is that their information may not flow directly into our current property information systems, and any enforcement actions would fall back onto the City to handle (which we would have to do anyway).

Before the Attorney's Office started any negotiations or started to amend the contractor or model ordinance language, we thought it would be a good idea to get some direction from the Council. If you

feel that this is a viable option that we should explore, we can start to modify the documents they sent to us and bring that back to the Council for approval if we can reach some agreements. More information about this company can be found on their website at www.cchampions.com.

If you have any questions, I am more than willing to answer them or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



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