

City of Newburgh sets property sales record in 2016

By SHANTAL RILEY
sriley@tcnewspapers.com

The City of Newburgh has set a new record in property sales with more than 70 city-owned properties sold in 2016. "We have sold \$800,000 worth of property this year," city Mayor Judy Kennedy announced at City Hall on Thursday. "That is a record."

The sales will help ease the burden on city taxpayers, the mayor said. "This is a huge move forward," Kennedy said.

Sales of city-owned properties have increased over the past couple of years, said city Economic Development Specialist David Kohl. This year's total property sales amount to \$847,434, he said. By comparison, 37 parcels were sold for \$345,100 in 2015; 11 parcels were sold for \$257,501 in 2014 and, in 2013, one parcel was sold for \$100, Kohl said.

Though none of the properties were particularly expensive, the sales had impact, Kohl said. "We've sold properties that have been vacant for a decade," he said, and some that were very distressed.

One example is 28 Courtney Avenue. Located in the Washington Heights section of the city, the attached home was in "horrible" shape when it was purchased this summer, he said. "She's done extreme rehabilitations in Pennsylvania," said Kohl, speaking about the new owner who began work on the property right away.

The building would have faced certain demolition if it had not been purchased, Kohl explained. "These properties are not for everybody," he said. "They demand a lot of work."

Kohl credited the sale to Cher Vick, creator of the Newburgh Restoration blog. The blog, which focuses on the city's revitalization, features pictures

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
DAVID KOHL



The sale of 28 Courtney Ave. is one of 75 sales of city-owned properties in 2016.

and information on properties for sale. It was through the blog that the Courtney Avenue property was made known to its new owner, he noted. "It's the power of social media and people spreading the word," Kohl said. "There has to be that human connection."

The city currently owns approximately 100 vacant buildings, said Kohl. The people buying city properties are from diverse backgrounds, but the vast majority are already living in the Hudson Valley, he said.

Renovated properties in the East End Historic District qualify for the city's Historic Real Property Alteration or Rehabilitation Exemption and some also qualify for the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Office Historic Tax Credit.

The increase in sales of city-owned properties has been a group effort, said Kohl. "I have had tremendous support from all the individuals in the Department of Planning and Development," Kohl wrote in an email to the Mid Hudson Times on Monday.

He also praised the Newburgh Community Land Bank - which acquires and sells distressed properties in the City of Newburgh - and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh for being instrumental in city revitalization and development.

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