

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Board for the Condemnation of Insanitary Buildings



Fiscal Year 2017 Performance Oversight Responses to
The Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

Submitted by:
Board for the Condemnation of Insanitary Buildings
February 6, 2017



QUESTIONS FOR PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING

BOARD FOR THE CONDEMNATION OF INSANITARY BUILDINGS

1. Please provide a list of the Board's current members. For each member, please provide the following:

- **The member's name**
- **The Ward, agency or organization the member represents**
- **Who appointed the member**

Name	Year Appointed	Agency Represented
Timothy Denee	2005	Office of Planning (OP)
Amar Singh	2008	Department of General Services (DGS)
Gil Davidson	2013	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)
Vonda Orders	2015	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Vacant	???	Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)
Chair, Vacant	???	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Vacant	???	Department of Public Works (DPW)

- **When the member's term expires**

The law establishing BCIB does not set term lengths or limits. Consequently, the members may continue to serve until the Mayor determines that a new member should be appointed.

- **Attendance record**

Jatinder Khokhar	Total Attending	23	11/9/2016, 9/28/2016, 9/14/2016, 8/24/2016, 7/27/2016, 6/22/2016, 5/11/2016, 5/25/2016, 4/27/2016, 4/13/2016, 5/23/2016, 3/9/2016, 2/24/2016, 2/10/2016, 1/13/2016, 12/9/2015, 10/28/2015, 10/14/2015, 9/23/2015, 9/9/2015, 7/22/2015, 7/8/2015, 6/10/2015	
Gil Davidson	Total Attending	28	1/25/2017, 1/11/2017, 12/14/2016, 11/9/2016, 10/12/2016, 9/28/2016, 8/24/2016, 7/27/2016, 7/13/2016, 6/22/2016, 6/08/2016, 5/25/2016, 4/27/2016, 4/13/2016, 3/23/2016, 3/9/2016, 2/24/2016, 2/10/2016, 1/13/2016, 12/09/2015, 10/28/2015, 10/14/2015, 9/09/2015, 8/26/2015, 7/22/2015, 7/8/2015, 6/10/2015, 5/13/2015	
Tim Dennee	Total Attending	29	1/25/2017, 1/11/2017, 12/14/2016, 11/9/2016, 10/12/2016, 9/14/2016, 8/24/2016, 7/27/2016, 7/13/2016, 6/22/2016, 6/8/2016, 5/11/2016, 5/25/2016, 4/27/2016, 4/13/2016, 3/23/2016, 3/9/2016, 2/24/2016, 2/10/2016, 1/13/2016, 12/9/2015, 10/28/2015, 10/14/2015, 9/23/2015, 9/9/2015, 7/22/2015, 7/8/2015, 6/10/2015, 5/13/2015	
Vonda Orders	Total Attending	9	1/11/2017, 12/14/2016, 9/14/2016, 8/24/2016, 6/8/2016, 5/11/2016, 3/9/2016, 2/10/2016, 1/13/2016	Started 1/13/2016
Amar Singh	Total Attending	21	1/25/2017, 1/11/2017, 11/9/2016, 9/28/2016, 9/14/2016, 8/24/2016, 7/13/2016, 6/22/2016, 6/8/2016, 5/11/2016, 4/27/2016, 4/13/2016, 2/10/2016, 1/13/2016, 10/28/2015, 9/23/2015, 9/9/2015, 8/26/2015, 7/22/2015, 7/8/2015, 6/10/2015,	
Rodney George	Total Attend Meeting	6	6/8/2016, 4/13/2016, 3/23/2016, 1/13/2016, 7/22/2015, 5/13/2015	Ending 7/22/2016.
Sybil Hammond	Total Attend Meeting	5	1/23/2016, 8/26/2015, 7/22/2015, 6/10/2015, 5/13/2015	Ending 1/13/2016

2. Please provide a list of the Board’s meeting dates, times, and locations, whether a quorum was reached, for FY16 and FY17 to date.

All BCIB meetings are held at 10 am at 1100 4th St SW, Washington, DC, 20024, in Room 4302 on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.

3. Did the Board receive funds in FY16? If so, please provide the following:

- **The amount of the funding**
- **The source of the funding**
- **A list of all expenditures**
- **A description of how these funds furthered the Board’s mission**

BCIB does not receive any independent funding. The members are District government staff, and they perform their roles as board members as a part of their employment with the District.

4. Please describe the Board's activities in FY16 and FY17, to date.

In FY16 and FY17 to date, BCIB:

- Issued 23 certificates of condemnation;
- Closed 53 cases; and
- Issued 20 notices to show cause.

5. Please describe the Board's goals in FY17 and the plan/timeline for completion.

The Board intends to review any referred properties as quickly as possible. BCIB works with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to ensure that referred properties are inspected within two weeks of referral.

6. What are the Board's greatest strengths?

BCIB's membership includes representatives from several different District agencies. Consequently, the Board is well equipped to consider the housing code, historic preservation, economic development, and sanitation, among other issues.

7. What challenges does the Board face?

BCIB has faced challenges in locating property owners. Some of the properties referred to BCIB are in probate or are owned by a now-deceased individual and ownership has not been addressed by a court.

8. Is the Board required to post meeting notes or agendas online? Has the Board done so?

Yes. BCIB posts meeting notices here: www.open-dc.gov

9. How does the Board represent and solicit feedback from residents? Please describe:

▪ **The process for soliciting feedback and number of submissions**

Members of the public can submit property referrals to BCIB by telephone or email. Moreover, Board meetings are open to members of the public to attend and offer feedback.

▪ **What has the Board learned from this feedback?**

Neighbors appreciate prompt responses from the Board in inspecting referred properties. Often, those referring properties see abatement of the properties as directly tied to neighborhood quality of life.

▪ **How has the Board changed its practices because of such feedback?**

The Board values feedback from the public. Although the Board has not initiated any recent changes as the result of feedback, it would be open to doing so in the future if a suggestion would improve Board operations without running afoul of the laws governing BCIB.

10. What is being done to promote greater diversity in the composition of the Board's membership?

The Board's composition was established through legislation. The following agencies must designate staff as members:

- DCRA (2 members)
- DMPED
- DPW
- OP (Historic Preservation Office)
- DGS
- DHCD

11. How many open cases does the Board currently have? What is the Board's goal for closing cases in FY17?

BCIB has 63 open cases. In FY16, the Board closed 44 cases while opening up 16 new ones. BCIB hopes to continue closing cases at a healthy rate.

12. What is the Board's schedule to ensure it accomplishes its responsibility of examining the sanitary condition of all buildings in the District?

The Board examines the conditions of all referred buildings. BCIB works with DCRA to ensure that any referred building is inspected within two weeks. After the initial inspection, the Board makes a determination about whether the building qualifies as insanitary and then issues a notice to show cause—if warranted—shortly thereafter.

13. What percent of referrals about insanitary buildings come from other agencies, citizens, or inspectors, respectively?

To date, the Board has not tracked the origin of complaints. Moving forward, the Board will begin tracking that information and will be prepared to share it with the Committee next year.

14. In FY16, how many buildings were determined to be so insanitary that they endangered the health or lives of occupants or residents in the vicinity?

In FY16, the Board recommended that four buildings be razed because they were no longer structurally sound. If a building presents an imminent danger to its residents, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs will close the building rather than wait on BCIB's process to run its course.

15. In FY16, how many building owners were served with Notices to Show Cause why their buildings should not be condemned?

BCIB issued 16 notices in FY16.

16. In FY16, how many Show Cause hearings were held?

BCIB held 16 show cause hearings in FY16.

17. In FY16, how many Orders of Condemnation to owners to correct insanitary conditions were issued?

BCIB issued 21 certificates of condemnation in FY16.

18. In FY16, how many buildings were made safe and sanitary, or alternatively razed and removed, after owners fail to correct conditions? How many and how much in corrective action costs were assessed as special taxes on the property? Were all the special taxes collected? In which wards did these actions take place?

- In FY16, BCIB deemed 35 properties as sanitary and recommended 4 for razing.
- In the absence of its Chair, the Board requires additional time to review its records for information on the number of corrective actions required and any related fees that were assessed.
- The Board would defer to the Office of Tax and Revenue on whether any special taxes were collected.

19. What relocation help is given to current tenants of a building that is condemned?

- **How many tenants needed to relocate from condemned buildings in FY16 and FY17 to date?**

No tenants were forced to relocate as a result of BCIB certificates of condemnation. Often, buildings referred to BCIB are vacant. If a building presents an imminent danger to its tenants, DCRA will close it before the condemnation procedures are complete.

- **Are tenants offered alternative housing?**

The Board cannot offer alternative housing to tenants. If the District closes a building, the Office of the Tenant Advocate will make arrangements for tenants to be provided with accommodations in a hotel.

- **Are tenants given financial help?**

The Board does not have any independent funding. If the tenants are eligible, the Department of Housing and Community Development may provide the tenants with vouchers.

- **Are tenants referred to District government agencies and non-profit organizations that help with emergency housing?**

Tenants have not been relocated as a result of BCIB action. If DCRA closes a building, the agency initiates a building closure protocol that includes notifying other District agencies, including the Office of the Tenant Advocate, which does make arrangements for tenants to be provided with accommodations in a hotel.

- **How much notice do the tenants receive before they are required to relocate?**

If the building presents an imminent danger, tenants are relocated immediately. If the building needs to be closed but does not present an imminent danger, DCRA will provide the tenants with five days' notice.