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Meeting the Vacant Property Challenge

The article “Meeting the vacant property challenge” In the latest issue of Planning Magazine brings to light many issues and concerns regarding vacant property. It also explains some solutions to the problem, and suggests some ways local governments, property owners and communities as a whole can prevent struggling with blight.

Throughout the article there were a few terms I was unfamiliar with, particularly in the section titled “Limitations of traditional codes”. The word “abatement” was recurring and used in context as ‘nuisance abatement’ and ‘administrative abatement’. The section explained that a high number of ongoing foreclosures are due to a property not receiving maintenance and upkeep. So when one owner isn't clear (due to the division of payments by a wide range of investors and companies) there is no one that's interested in maintaining the property. I believe that the term probably has something to do with owners overseeing and making sure whatever goes wrong is taken care of, and that administrative abatement is the same on a higher, government level.

Another quite unfamiliar term I came across is ‘VPR ordinance’, or a vacant property registration ordinance. I know an ordinance is a piece of legislation put into action by a local government, but I was confused as to what the vacant property registration consisted of. After reading further to my understanding, VPR's require owners to provide notice of a vacant property and contain many rules and regulations that ease the process of the property becoming

functional and useful in society. The text mentions that VPR's can be divided into two sections. Some that manage all properties that are vacant or have been abandoned regardless of owner, and some manage simply those that have been foreclosed. VPR's in general are an extensive plan set forth by local governments to facilitate the problem and help the community get back on its feet.

Land Banks, was another concept that I found difficult to wrap my mind around.

According to the article "Land banks are local governmental or nonprofit entities that acquire, maintain, and facilitate vacant property". To my understanding land banks collect abandoned and foreclosed properties to take care of them and put them to good use. land banks are able to take these properties because of the The Neighborhood Stabilization Program and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These banks mainly either funded by the government or other means.

I believe that when it comes to situations like vacant property, the government should have a very strong hand at play. It should be the government's right and job to make sure that property owners are up to date with their duties and maintaining it that way. The government should focus on making sure that all vacant property should be accounted for and dealt with. It is impossible for the people of the community alone to do anything about blight if the government does not intervene. The property owner should have certain rights of course, but they should have to speak up and take responsibility for letting their property become a burden on the community.

References

Morley, D. (2015). Meeting the Vacant Property Challenge. *Planning*, 81(8), 54-55.