

**AN ORDINANCE OF  
THE BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE, NEW JERSEY**

**ORDINANCE NO. 20-07**

**AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “ABANDONED PROPERTIES”**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Woodcliff Lake (“Borough”) has determined that the following shall constitute Abandoned Properties in the Borough.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, as follows:

Article 1. Abandoned Property Rehabilitation Act.

Sec. 233-1. Definitions.

Abandoned Property – Any property that is determined to be abandoned pursuant to P.L. 2003, C. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al)

Public Officer – A person designated or appointed by the municipal Governing Body pursuant to Section 3 of P.L. 1942, C. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.5).

Article II: Registration Requirements.

Sec. 233-2.

Effective August 1, 2017, the owner of any vacant property as defined herein shall, within 30 calendar days after the building becomes vacant property or within 30 calendar days after assuming ownership of the vacant property, whichever is later; or within 10 calendar days of receipt of notice by the municipality, file a registration statement for such vacant property with the Property Maintenance Inspector on forms provided by the Borough for such purposes. Failure to receive notice by the municipality shall not constitute grounds for failing 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 email address (if applicable) of a person 21 years or older, designated by the owner or owners as the authorized agent for receiving notices of code violations and for receiving process in any court proceeding or administrative enforcement proceedings on behalf of such owner or owners in a connection with the enforcement of any applicable code; and the name, street address, telephone number and email (if applicable) of the firm and the actual name(s) of the firms 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 24 hour per day, seven-day per week basis. The two

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 year from the date of registration except for the initial registration which shall be pro-rated through December 31. The owner shall be required to renew the registration annually as long as the building remains a vacant and/or abandoned property and shall pay a registration or renewal fee for each vacant property registered.
- D. The annual renewal shall be completed by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The initial registration fee shall be pro-rated for registration statements received less than 10 months prior to that date.
- E. The owner shall notify the Property Maintenance Inspector within 30 calendar days of any change in the registration information by filing an amended registration statement on a form provided by the Property Maintenance Inspector 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 Borough against the owner or owners of the building.

Article III. Access to Vacant Properties.

Sec. 233-3.

The owner of any vacant property registered under this Article shall provide access to the Borough to conduct exterior and interior inspections of the building to determine compliance with municipal codes, upon reasonable notice to the property owner or the designated agent. Such inspections shall be carried out on weekdays during the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or such other time as may be mutually agreed upon between the owner and the Borough.

Article IV. Responsible Owner or Agent.

Sec. 233-4.

- 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 Borough in writing of a change of authorized agent or until the owner files a new annual registration statement.

- C. Any owner who files to register vacant/abandoned 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 Borough 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.

Article V. Fee Schedule.

Sec. 233-5.

The initial registration fee for each building shall be five hundred (\$500.00) dollars. The fee for the first renewal is one thousand five hundred (\$1,500.00) dollars, and the fee for the second renewal is three thousand (\$3,000.00) dollars. The fee for any subsequent renewal beyond the second renewal is five thousand (\$5,000.00) dollars.

Vacant Property Registration Fee Schedule

Initial Registration	\$ 500.00
First Renewal	\$1,500.00
Second Renewal	\$3,000.00
Subsequent Renewal	\$5,000.00

Sec. 233-6. Inventory of Abandoned Property.

Inventory of abandoned property; list to be maintained; publication in official newspaper; notice to owner of record; challenge by owner (from N.J.S.A. 55:19-55): The Borough of Woodcliff Lake may direct the public officer to identify abandoned property for the purpose of establishing an abandoned property list through the Borough, or within those parts of the Borough as the Governing Body may designate. Each item of abandoned property so identified shall include the tax block and lot number, the name of the owner of record, if known, and the street address of the lot.

- A. The public officer shall establish and maintain a list of abandoned property, to be known as the “abandoned property list.” The Borough of Woodcliff Lake may add properties to the abandoned property list at any time and may delete properties at any time when the public officer finds that the property no longer meets the definition of an abandoned property. An interested party may request that a property be included on the abandoned property list following that procedure set forth in Section 31 of L. 2003, C. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-105).
- 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 Borough has purchased or taken assignment from the Borough of a tax sale certificate which has been placed on the abandoned property list may be removed in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of P.L. 2003, C. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:L19-103).

- C. The public officer shall establish the abandoned property list or any additions thereto by publication in the official newspaper of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake which publication shall constitute public notice and, within 10 days after publication, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, and by regular mail to the owner of record of every property included on the list. The published and mailed notices shall identify property determined to be abandoned, setting forth the owner of record, if known, the tax lot and block number and street address. The public 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 subsection d. of N.J.S.A. 54:4-64. 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 Section 5 of P.L. 1942, C. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.7). The mailed notice shall indicate the factual basis for the public officer's finding that the property is abandoned property as that term is defined in Section 35 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-54) and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, specifying 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 public officer in the office of the county clerk or register of deeds and mortgages, as the case may be, of the county wherein the property is situated. This filing shall have the same force and effect as a notice of list pendens under N.J.S.A. 2A:15-6. The notice shall be indexed by the name of the property owner as defendant and the name of the Borough as plaintiff, as though an action had been commenced by the Borough against the owner.
- D. An owner or lienholder may challenge the inclusion of his property on the abandoned property list determined pursuant to Subsection B of this section by appealing that determination to the public officer within 30 days of the owner's receipt of the certified notice or 40 days from the date upon which the notice was sent. An owner whose identity was not known to the public officer shall have 40 days from the date upon which notice was published or posted, whichever is later, to challenge the inclusion of a property on the abandoned property list. For good cause shown, the public officer shall accept a late filing of an appeal. Within 30 days of receipt of a request of an appeal of the findings contained in the notice pursuant to Subsection D of this section, the public officer shall schedule a hearing 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 by the property owner averring that the property is not abandoned and stating the reasons for such averment, 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, and 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 in Section 35 of P.O. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-54). The public officer shall decide any timely filed appeal within 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 with the public officer pursuant to Subsection E of this section, by instituting, in accordance with the New Jersey Court Rules, a summary proceeding in the Superior Court, Law Division, sitting in the county in which the property is located, which action shall be tried de novo. Such action shall be instituted within 20 days of the date of the notice of decision mailed by the public officer pursuant to Subsection E of this section. The sole ground for appeal shall be that the property in question is not abandoned property as that term is defined in Section 35 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:190-54). 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 public officer shall promptly remove any property from the abandoned property list that has been determined not to be abandoned on appeal.
- G. The abandoned property list shall become effective, and the Borough shall have the right to pursue any legal remedy with respect to properties on the abandoned property list at such time as any one property has been placed on the list in accordance with the provisions of this section, upon the expiration of the period for appeal with respect to that property or upon the denial of an appeal bought by the property owner.

#### Section 233-7. Sale of Tax Lien.

Sale of tax lien on abandoned property; remediation costs (from N.J.S.A. 55:19-56):

- A. Notwithstanding 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 Municipal liens due on the property are delinquent six or more quarters as of the date of expiration of the right to appeal 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 in the "Tax Sale Law", N.J.S.A. 54:5-1 et seq., on or after the 90<sup>th</sup> day following the expiration of that time of appeal or final determination on an appeal, as appropriate. The Borough of Woodcliff Lake 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 Municipality 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 Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A.

55:19-55) and to post a bond in favor of the Borough to guarantee the rehabilitation or repair of the property. The public officer may waive a requirement to post a bond imposed by the Borough of Woodcliff Lake for any purchaser, assignee or transferee of a tax sale certificate that provides documentation acceptable to the public officer that the purchaser, assignee or transferee is a qualified rehabilitation entity as defined in Section 3 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-0). 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 \$1500 pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-67 of the Borough in effect for the time period when the amounts were expended. The tax sale certificate purchaser, assignee or transferee, under the auspices and with the authority of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, 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 Borough of Woodcliff Lake harmless is filed with the public officer. If the tax sale certificate is not purchased at the initial auction of the tax sale certificate and the Borough purchases the certificate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-34, then the Borough of Woodcliff Lake is authorized and empowered to convey and transfer to the authority or any of its subsidiaries, without receiving compensation therefor, all of its right, title and interest in that certificate; however, any portion of the amount paid to the Tax Collector to redeem the tax sale certificate that represents tax or other municipal lien delinquencies and subsequent municipal liens, including interest, shall be returned by the Tax Collector to the Borough of Woodcliff Lake.

B. Remediation.

(1) If the Borough of Woodcliff Lake or the authority or its subsidiaries acquires the tax sale certificate for a property on the abandoned property list, then, upon 10 days written notice to the property owner and any mortgagee as of the date of the filing of the lis pendens notice under subsection d. of Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55), that entity 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 Borough of Woodcliff Lake of authority or its subsidiary, as appropriate, 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 Borough of Woodcliff Lake or authority or its subsidiaries, as appropriate, in order to ensure performance. The amount and conditions of the bond shall be determined by the public officer.

(2) The cost of remediation incurred by the Borough or the authority or its subsidiaries pursuant to this subsection, 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 Borough of Woodcliff Lake or the authority, except for municipal taxes, liens and assessments and any lien imposed pursuant to the "Spill Compensation and Control Act" P.L. 1976, c. 141 (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 county clerk or register of deeds and mortgages, as appropriate, in the county in which the property is located.

C. Failure to Remediate.

(1) Failure of an owner or lienholder to remove a property from the abandoned property list within the period of time for appeal of inclusion of the property on the list pursuant to Subsection e. of Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55) shall be prima facie evidence of the intent of the owner to continue to maintain the property as abandoned property.

(2) The clearance, development, redevelopment or repair of property being maintained as an abandoned property pursuant to Subsection C(1) of this section shall be a public purpose and public use for which the power of eminent domain may be exercised.

Section 233-8. Removal from List.

A. An owner may remove a property from the list of abandoned properties prior to sale of the tax sale certificate by paying all taxes and municipal 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 Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55) and posting cash or 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 public officer stating that the cash or bond adequately covers the cost of the cleanup; or
- (2) By demonstrating to the satisfaction of the public officer that the conditions rendering the property abandoned have been remediated in full; provided, however, that where the public officer finds that the owner is actively engaged in remediating the conditions because of which the property was determined to be abandoned pursuant to Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55), as evidenced by significant rehabilitation activity on the property, the public officer may grant an extension of time of not more than 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 as determined to be abandoned have not been fully remediated within one 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 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 Borough 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.

#### Section 233-9. Action to Foreclose Right of Redemption.

- A. When a person other than the Borough of Woodcliff Lake or the authority or its subsidiaries acquired 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 six months following the date of the seal of the tax sale certificate.
- B. When the Borough of Woodcliff Lake is the purchaser at tax sale of any property on the abandoned property list pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:5-34, or when the authority or any of its subsidiaries acquires the tax sale certificate pursuant to subsection a of Section 37 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 54:5-104.34), 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 redemptions 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 Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (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 pursuant to Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-56) have been remedied in full.



#### Section 233-10. Final Judgment.

Entry of final judgment barring right of redemption; grounds for reopening judgment (form N.J.S.A. 55:19-59). Once a final judgment barring the right of redemption with respect to a property on the list of abandoned properties has been recorded, no court shall reopen such judgment at any time except on the grounds of lack of jurisdiction or fraud in the conduct of the action; in any such proceeding, the provisions of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-20 et al) shall be construed liberally in favor of the purchaser, assignee or transferee of the tax sale certificate.

#### Article VII. Rehabilitation of Abandoned Properties.

##### Section 233-11. Legislative Findings and Declarations.

- A. Abandoned properties create a wide range of problems for the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, fostering criminal activity, creating public health problems and otherwise diminishing the quality of life for residents and business operators in those areas.
- B. Abandoned properties diminish the property values of neighboring properties and have a negative effect on the quality of life of adjacent property owners, increasing the risk of property damage through arson and vandalism and discouraging neighborhood stability and revitalization.
- C. For these reasons, abandoned properties are presumptively considered to be nuisances, in view of their negative effects on nearby properties and the residents or users of those properties.
- D. The continued presence of abandoned properties in the Borough of Woodcliff Lake acts as a significant barrier to the Borough's continued progressive development and revitalization.
- E. The responsibility of a property owner to maintain a property in sound condition and prevent it from becoming a nuisance to others extends to properties which are not in use and "demolition by neglect", leading to the deterioration and loss of the property, or failure by an owner to comply with legitimate orders to demolish, stabilize or otherwise repair his or her property creates a presumption that the owner has abandoned the property.

##### Section 233-12. Definitions.

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

Department – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

Lienholder of Mortgage Holder – Any person or entity holding a note, mortgage or other interest secured by the building or any part thereof.

Owner – The holder or holders of title to an abandoned property.

Property – Any building or structure and the land appurtenant thereof.

Public Officer – The person designated by the Borough of Woodcliff Lake pursuant to Section 3 of P.L. 1942, c. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.5), or any officer of the borough of Woodcliff Lake qualified to carry out the responsibilities set forth in P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) and designated by the Mayor and Council of the Woodcliff Lake.

Qualified Rehabilitation Entity – An entity organized or authorized to do business under the New Jersey statutes, which shall have as one of its purposes the construction or rehabilitation of residential or nonresidential buildings, the provision of affordable housing the restoration of abandoned property, the revitalization and improvement of urban neighborhoods, or similar purpose, and which shall be well qualified by virtue of its staff, professional consultants, financial resources, and prior activities set forth in P.L. 2003, c. 10 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) to carry out the rehabilitation of vacant buildings in urban areas.

#### Section 233-13. Abandoned Property; Criteria.

- A. Except as provided in Section 6 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-83), any property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six months and which meets any one of the following additional criteria may be deemed to be abandoned property upon a determination by the public officer that:
- (1) the property is in need of rehabilitation in the reasonable judgment of the public officer and no rehabilitation has taken place during that 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 months as of the date of a determination by the public officer pursuant to this section;
  - (3) at least one installment of property tax remains unpaid and delinquent on that property in accordance with Chapter 4 of Title 54 of the Revised Statutes as of the date of a determination by the public officer pursuant to this section; or
  - (4) the property has been determined to be a nuisance by the public officer in accordance with Section 5 of P.O. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-82).
- B. A property which contains both residential and nonresidential space may be considered abandoned pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55: 119-78 et al.) so long as 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 months at the time of the determination of abandonment by the public officer and the property meets the criteria of either Subsection A(1) or A(4) of this section.

#### Section 233-14. Nuisance Property; Criteria.

- A. A property may be determined to be a nuisance if:
- (1) the property has been found to be unfit for human habitation, occupancy or use pursuant to Section 1 of P.L. 1942, c. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3);

(2) the condition and vacancy of the property materially increases the risk of fire to the property and adjacent properties;

(3) 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 Borough of Woodcliff Lake has secured the property in order to prevent such hazards after the owner has failed to do so;

(4) 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; or

(5) the dilapidated appearance or other condition of the property materially affects the welfare, including the economic welfare, of the resident 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 public officer who determines a property to be nuisance pursuant to Subsections A92) through A(5) of this section shall follow the notification procedures set forth in P.L. 1942, c. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3 et seq.)

Section 233-15. Property Deemed Not Abandoned; Criteria; Certification of Abandonment Provided Upon Request.

1. If an entity other than the Borough of Woodcliff Lake has purchased or taken assignment from the Borough of a tax sale certificate on a property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six months, that property shall not be placed on the abandoned property list pursuant to Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A.55:19-55) if: (1)the owner of the certificate has continued to pay all Borough 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 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.
2. A property which is used on a seasonal basis shall be deemed to be abandoned only if the property meets any two of the additional criteria set forth in Section 4 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-81).
3. A determination that a property is abandoned property under the provisions of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) shall not constitute a finding that the use of the property has been abandoned for purposes of municipal zoning or land use regulation.
4. 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 public officer or the Tax Collector shall, in a timely fashion, provide the requester with a certification that the property fulfills the definition of abandoned according to the criteria set forth in Section 4 and 5 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-81 and N.J.S.A. 55:19-82)

Section 233-16. Transfer of Possession and Control of Abandoned Property.

- A. A summary action or otherwise to transfer possession and control of abandoned property in need of rehabilitation to the Borough of Woodcliff Lake may be brought by the Borough in the Superior Court in the county in which the property is situated. If the court shall find that the property is abandoned pursuant to Section 4 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-81) and the owner or party in interest has failed to submit and initiate a rehabilitation plan, then the court may authorize the Borough to take possession and control of the property and develop a rehabilitation plan.
- B. The Borough of Woodcliff Lake granted possession and control may commence and maintain those further proceedings for the conservation, protection or disposal of the property or any part thereof that are required to rehabilitate the property, necessary to 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 of the property as provided in Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 20 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92).
- C. Failure by the owner, mortgage holder or lienholder to submit plans for rehabilitation to the Borough, obtain appropriate construction permits for rehabilitation or, in the alternative, submit formal applications for funding the cost of rehabilitation to local, state or federal agencies providing such funding within that six month period shall be deemed prima facie evidence that the owner has failed to take any action to further the rehabilitation of the property.

Section 233-17. Filing of Complaint; Required Information.

A complaint filed pursuant to Section 7 of P.O. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-84) shall include:

- A. Documentation that the property is on the municipal abandoned property list or a certification by the public officer that the property is abandoned; and
- B. A statement by an individual holding appropriate professional qualifications that there are sound reasons that the building should be rehabilitated rather than demolished based upon the physical, aesthetic or historical character of the building or the relationship of the building to other buildings and lands within its immediate vicinity.

Section 233-18. Filing of Complaint; Notice Requirements; Entry to Secure, Stabilize Repair or Inspect the Property.

- A. Within ten days of filing a complaint pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.), the plaintiff shall file a notice of lis pendens with the county recording officer of the county within which the building is located.
- B. At least thirty (30) days before filing the complaint, the Borough shall serve a notice of intention to take possession of an abandoned building. The notice shall inform the owner and interested parties that the property has not been legally occupied for six months and of those criteria that led to a determination of abandonment pursuant to Section 4 of P.L. 2003, c. 210- (N.J.S.A. 55:19-81).

- (1) the notice shall provide that unless the owner or a party in interest prepares and submits a rehabilitation plan to the appropriate Borough officials, the Borough will seek to gain possession of the building to rehabilitate the property and the associate cost shall be a lien against the property, which may be satisfied by the sale of the property, unless the owner applies to the court for reinstatement of control of the property as provided in Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92).
- (2) after the complaint is filed, the complaint shall be served on the parties in interest in accordance with the New Jersey Rules of Court.
- C. After serving the notice of intent pursuant to Subsection B of this section, the Borough or its designee may enter upon that property after written notice to the owner by certified mail, return receipt requested, in order to secure, stabilize or repair the property, or in order to inspect the property for purposes of preparing the plan to be submitted to the court pursuant to Section 12 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-89).

Section 233-19. Property Owner, Defense Against Complaint; Requirements.

- A. Any owner may defend against a complaint filed pursuant to Section 7 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (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 125% of the amount determined by the public officer or the court to be the projected cost of rehabilitation. Any plan submitted by an owner to defend against a complaint shall be submitted within 60 days after the complaint has been filed, unless the court provides the owner with an extension of time for good cause shown.
- B. 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.
- C. Court Approval.

(1) the court shall approve any plan that, in the judgment of the court, is realistic and likely to result in the expeditious rehabilitation and reuse of the property which is the subject of the complaint.

(2) if the court approves the owner's plan, then it may appoint the public officer to act as monitor of the owner's compliance. If the owner fails to carry out any step in the approved plan, then the Borough may apply to the court to have the owner's bond forfeited, possession of the building transferred to the Borough to complete the rehabilitation plan and authorization to use the bond proceeds for rehabilitation of the property.

(3) the owner shall provide quarterly reports to the Borough on its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and reuse of the property. The owner shall provide those reports to the court on its activities that the court determines are necessary.

- C. The court may reject a plan and bond if it finds that the plan does not represent a realistic and expeditious means of ensuring the rehabilitation of the property or that the owner or his representatives or agents or both, lack the qualifications, background or other criteria necessary to ensure that the plan will be carried out successfully.

Section 233-20. Owner Unsuccessful in Defending Against Complaint; Mortgage or Lienholders to be Designate in Possession of Property.

- A. If an owner is unsuccessful in defending against a complaint filed pursuant to Section 7 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (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 Section 10 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-87). The plan shall be submitted within 60 days after the court has rejected 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's or lienholder's plan it shall designate that party to be in possession of the property for purposes of ensuring its rehabilitation and reuse and may appoint the public officer to act as monitor of the party's compliance.

(1) the mortgage holder or lienholder, as the case may be, shall provide quarterly reports to the court and the borough on its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and the reuse of the property.

(2) if the mortgage holder or lienholder fails to carry out any material step in the approved plan, then the public officer shall notify the court, which may order the bond forfeit, grant the Borough possession of the property and authorize the Borough to use the proceeds of the bond for rehabilitation of the property.

- B. Any sums incurred or advanced for the purpose of rehabilitating the property by a mortgage holder or lienholder granted possession of a property pursuant to

Subsection A of this section, including court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees, may be added to the unpaid balance due 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.

Section 233-21 Borough of Woodcliff Lake to be Designated in Possession of Property; Submission of Plan to Court.

- A. If no mortgage holder or lienholder meets the conditions of Section 11 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-088), then the Borough shall submit a plan to the court which conforms with the provisions of subsection b. of Section 10 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-87). The plan shall designate the entity which shall implement the plan, which may be the Borough or that entity designated in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-90).
- B. The court shall grant the Borough possession of the property if it finds that:
  - (1) the proposed rehabilitation and reuse of the property is appropriate and beneficial;
  - (2) the Borough is qualified to undertake the rehabilitation and reuse of the property; and
  - (3) the plan submitted by the Borough represents a realistic and timely plan for the rehabilitation and reuse of the property.
- C. The Borough shall take all steps necessary and appropriate to further the rehabilitation and reuse of the property consistent with the plan submitted to the court. In making its findings pursuant to this section, the court may consult with qualified parties, including the Department of Community Affairs, and, upon request by a party in interest, may hold a hearing on the plan.
- D. Where either a redevelopment plan pursuant to P.L. 1992, c.79 (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.) or a neighborhood revitalization plan pursuant to P.L. 2001, c. 415 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-490 et seq.) has been adopted or approved by the Department of Community Affairs, as appropriate, encompassing the property which is the subject of a complaint, the court shall make a further finding that the proposed rehabilitation and reuse of the property are not inconsistent with any provision of either plan.

Section 233-22. Borough Exercise of Rights to Further Rehabilitation and Reuse of Property; Designation of Qualified Rehabilitation Entity.

- A. The Borough may exercise its rights under P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-778 et al.) directly, or may designate a qualified rehabilitation entity to act as its designee for the purpose of exercising the Borough's rights where that designation will further the rehabilitation and reuse of the property consistent with the Borough's plans and objectives. This designation shall be made by resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake. The

governing body or Mayor, as the case may be, may delegate this authority to the public officer.

- B. Regardless of whether the Borough exercises its rights directly or designates a qualified rehabilitation entity pursuant to this section, while in possession of a property pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.), the Borough shall maintain, safeguard and maintain insurance on the property. Notwithstanding the Borough's possession of the property nothing in P. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) shall be deemed to relieve the owner of the property of any civil or criminal liability or any duty imposed by reasons of acts or omissions of the owner.

#### Section 233-23. Borough deemed Possessor of Property; Borrowing of Funds; Reporting and Filing Requirements.

- A. If the Borough has been granted possession of a property pursuant to Section 12 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-89), that Borough shall be deemed to have an ownership interest in the property for the purpose of filing plans with public agencies and boards, seeking and obtaining construction permits and other approvals, and submitting applications for financing or other assistance to public or private entities.
  - (1) for the purposes of any state program of grants or loans including but not limited to programs of the Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, possession of a property under this section shall be considered legal control of the property.
  - (2) notwithstanding the granting of possession to the Borough nothing in P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) shall be deemed to relieve the owner of the property of any obligation the owner or any other person may have for the payment of taxes or other municipal liens and charges, or mortgages or liens to any party, whether those taxes, charges or liens are incurred before or after the granting of possession.
  - (3) the granting of possession shall not suspend any obligation the owner may have as of the date of the granting of possession for payment of any operating or maintenance expense associated with the property, whether or not billed at the time of the granting of possession.
- B. The court may approve the borrowing of funds by the Borough 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 shall find that: (1)the Borough sought to obtain the necessary financing from the senior lienholder, which declined to provide such financing on reasonable terms; (2)the Borough 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 in the office of the clerk of the county in which the property is located. For the purposes of this section, the cost of rehabilitation shall include



reasonable non-construction costs such as architectural fees or construction permit fees customarily included in the financing of the rehabilitation of residential property.

- C. Where the Borough has been granted possession by the court in the names of the Borough, the Borough of Woodcliff Lake may seek the approval of the court to assign its rights to another entity, which approval shall be granted by the court when it finds that: (1) the entity to which the Borough's rights will be assigned is a qualified rehabilitation entity; and (2) the assignment will further the purposes of this section.
- D. Where the Borough has designated a qualified rehabilitation entity to act on its behalf, the qualified rehabilitation entity shall provide quarterly reports to the Borough of its activities and progress toward rehabilitation and reuse of the property. The Borough 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 Borough 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 the Borough to designate another qualified rehabilitation entity to exercise its rights, or if the Borough fails to do so, may terminate the order of possession and return the property to its owner.
- E. The Borough 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 borough has determined that no more than six months remain to the anticipated date on which rehabilitation will be complete. This notice shall include an affidavit of the public officer attesting that rehabilitation can realistically be anticipated to be complete within that time period and a statement setting forth such actions as it plans to undertake to ensure that reuse of the property takes place consistent with the plan.

#### Section 233-24. 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 year from the grant of possession, but no later than 30 days after the Borough has filed a notice of completion with the court or, in the event the notice of completion is filed within less than one year of the grant of possession, within 30 days after the borough has filed 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 borough, or affect any of the terms or conditions under which the Borough has applied for or received financing for the rehabilitation of the property.

#### Section 233-25. Contents of Petition; Filing and Payment Requirements.

- A. Any petition for reinstatement of the owner's control and possession of the property filed pursuant to Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92) shall:
  - a. Include a plan for completion of the rehabilitation and reuse of the property consistent with the plan previously approved by the court;

b. Provide legally binding assurances that the owners will comply with all conditions of any grant or loan secured by the Borough to repay those grants or loans in full, at the discretion of the maker of the loan or grant and

c. Be accompanied by payment equal to the sum of:

(1) all Borough liens outstanding on the property;

(2) all costs incurred by the Borough in bringing action with respect to the property;

(3) any costs incurred by the Borough not covered by grants or loans to be assumed or repaid pursuant to this section; and

(4) any costs remaining to complete rehabilitation and reuse of the property, as determined by the public officer, which payment shall be placed in escrow with the Clerk of the Court pending disposition of the petition.

#### Section 233-26. Obligations of Owner prior to Grant of Petition.

A. Prior to the granting of a petition on the part of the owner by the court pursuant to Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92), the owner may be required to post a bond or other security in an amount determined by the court, after consultant with the public officer, as likely to ensure that the owner will continue to maintain the property in sound condition. That bond or other security shall be made available to the Borough to make any repair on the property in the event of a code violation which is not corrected in timely fashion by the owner. The bond or other security may be forfeit in full in the event that the owner fails to comply with any requirement imposed as a condition of the reinstatement petition filed pursuant to Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92).

B. The owner may seek approval of the court to be relieved of this requirement after five years, which shall be granted if the court finds that the owner has maintained the property in good repair during that period, that no material violations affecting the health and safety of the tenants have occurred during that period, and that the owner has remedied other violations in a timely and expeditious fashion.

#### Section 233-27. Failure of Owner to Petition for Reinstatement of Control and Possession of Property; Granting of Title to the City; Authority to Sell.

If the owner fails to petition for the reinstatement of control and possession of the property within 30 days after the entity in possession has filed a notice of completion or in any event within two years after the intimal grant of possession, or if the owner fails to meet any conditions that may be set by the court in granting a reinstatement petition filed pursuant to Section 15 of P.L. 2003, c. 219 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-92), upon petition from the entity in possession, the court may grant the Borough title or authorize the Borough to sell the property, subject to the provisions of Section 19 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-96)

Section 233-28. Procedure of Borough seeking to gain title to Property; Authorization to Sell; Proceeds.

- A. Whether the Borough 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.
  - (1) The court may authorize the Borough 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.
  - (2) The proceeds of the purchase of the property shall be distributed as set forth in Section 20 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-97).
- B. The Borough may seek approval of the court to sell the property to a third party when the court finds that such conveyance will further the effective and timely rehabilitation and reuse of the property.
- C. Upon approval by the court, the Borough 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 Section 20 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-97).

Section 233-29. Distribution of Proceeds.

The proceeds paid pursuant to subsection c of Section 19 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-96) shall be distributed in the following order of priority:

- A. the costs and expenses of sale;
- B. other governmental liens.
- C. repayment of principal and interest on any borrowing or indebtedness incurred by the Borough and granted priority lien status pursuant to subsection a of Section 21 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-98).
- D. a reasonable development fee to the Borough consistent with the standards for development fees established for rehabilitation programs by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs or the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.
- E. other valid liens and security interests, in accordance with their priority; and
- F. the owner.

Section 233-30. Public Officer; Authority to Place Lien on Property; Remedies.

- A. The public officer, with the approval of the court, may place a lien on the property to cover any costs of the Borough in connection with a proceeding under P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) incurred prior to the grant by the court of any order of possession under P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.), 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 Borough lien for the purpose of N.J.S.A. 54:5-9 with the rights and status of a Borough lien pursuant thereto.

- B. With the exception of the holding of special tax sales pursuant to Section 24 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-101), the remedies available under P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et a.) shall be available to the Borough with respect to any abandoned property, whether or not the Borough has established an abandoned property list as provided in Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55) and whether or not the property has been included on any such list.

#### Section 233-31. Court's denial of Rights and Remedies to Lienholders and Mortgage Holders.

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.), a court may in its discretion deny a lienholder or mortgage holder any or all rights or remedies afforded lienholders and mortgage holders under P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) if the court finds that the owner of a property subject to any of the provisions of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-78 et al.) owns or controls more than a fifty percent interest in, or effective control of, the lienholder or mortgage holder or that her familial or business relationship between the lienholder or mortgage holder and the owner precludes a separate interest on the part of the lienholder or mortgage holder.

#### Section 233-32. Recourse of City Against Individuals or Corporations.

With respect to any lien placed against any real property pursuant to the provisions of Section 1 or Section 3 of P.L. 1942, c. 112 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3) or N.J.S.A. 40:28-2.5) or Section 1 of P.L. 1989, c. 91 (N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3) or any receiver's lien pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 295 (N.J.S.A. 2A:42-114 et al.), the Borough shall have recourse with respect to the lien against any asset of the owner of the property, if an individual, against any asset of any partner, if a partnership; and against any asset of any owner of a ten percent interest or greater, if the owner is any other business organization or entity recognized pursuant to law.

#### Section 233-33. Properties Eligible for Tax Sales; Borough Requirements of Municipalities; Notice.

The Borough of Woodcliff Lake may hold special tax sales with respect to those properties eligible for tax sales pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-19 which are also on an abandoned property list established by the Borough pursuant to Section 36 of P.L. 1996,, c. 62(N.J.S.A. 55:19-55). If the Borough elects to hold a special tax sale, it shall conduct that sale subject to the following provisions:

- A. The Borough shall establish criteria for eligibility to bid on properties at the sale, which may include, but shall not be limited to: documentation of the bidder's ability to rehabilitate or otherwise reuse the property consistent with Borough plans and regulations; commitments by the bidder to rehabilitate or otherwise reuse the property consistent with Borough plans and regulations; commitments by the bidder to take action to foreclose on the tax lien by a date certain; and

such other criteria as the Borough may determine are necessary to ensure that the properties to be sold will be rehabilitated or otherwise reused in a manner consistent with the public interest;

- B. The Borough may establish minimum bid requirements for a special tax sale that may be less than the full amount of the taxes, interest and penalties due, the amount of such minimum bid to be at the sole discretion of the Borough in order to ensure that the properties to be sold will be rehabilitated or otherwise reused in a manner consistent with the public interest;
- C. The Borough may combine properties into bid packages and require that bidders place a single bid on each package, and reject any and all bids on individual properties that have been included in bid packages;
- D. The Borough may sell properties subject to provisions that if the purchaser fails to carry out any commitment that has been set forth as a condition of sale pursuant to Subsection A of this section 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 Borough and any amount paid by the purchase to the Borough at the special tax sale shall be forfeit to the Borough;
- E. In the event there are two or more qualified bidders for any property or bid package in a special tax sale, the Borough may designate the unsuccessful but qualified bidder whose bid was closest to the successful bid as an eligible purchaser;
- F. In the event that the purchaser of that property or bid package fails to meet any of the conditions of sale established by the Borough pursuant to this section, and their interest in the property or properties reverts to the Borough, the borough 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 Borough 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 Borough pursuant to Subsection B, C or D of this section. Nothing shall prohibit the Borough from holding a special tax sale on the same day as a standard or accelerated tax sale.

#### Section 233-34. Eminent Domain Proceedings; Establishment of Fair Market Value.

With respect to any eminent domain proceeding carried out under Section 37 of P.L.1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-56), the fair market value of the property shall be established on the basis of an analysis which determines independently:

- A. the cost to rehabilitate and reuse the property for such purpose as is appropriate under existing planning and zoning regulations governing its reuse or to demolish the existing property and construct new building on the site, including

all costs ancillary to rehabilitation such as, but not limited to marketing and legal costs;

- B. the realistic market value of the reused property after rehabilitation or new construction, taking into account the market conditions particular to the neighborhood or subarea of the Borough in which the property is located; and
- C. the extent to which the cost exceeds or does not exceed the market value after rehabilitation or demolition and new construction, and the extent to which any "as is" value of the property prior to rehabilitation can be added to the cost of rehabilitation or demolition and new construction without the resulting combined cost exceeding the market value as separately determined. If the appraisal finds that the cost of rehabilitation or demolition and new construction, as appropriate, exceeds the realistic market value after rehabilitation or demolition and new construction, there shall be a rebuttable presumption in all proceedings under this subsection that the fair market value of the abandoned property is zero, and that no compensation is due the owner.

#### Section 233-35. Removal of Property from Abandoned Property List.

If a property, which an entity other than the Borough has purchased or taken assignment from the Borough of a tax sale certificate, is placed on the abandoned property list, the property shall be removed from the list if the owner of the certificate pays all Borough taxes and liens due on the property within 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 months after the property was first placed on the list, the property shall be restored to the abandoned property list.

#### Section 233-36. Request for Property to be Placed on Abandoned Property List.

- A. Any interested party may submit in writing a request to the public officer that a property be included on the abandoned property list prepared pursuant to Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55), specifying the street address and block and lot number of the property to be included and the grounds for its inclusion. Within 30 days of receipt of any such request, the public officer shall provide written response to the party, either indicating that the property will be added to the list of abandoned properties or, if not, the reasons for not adding the property to the list. For the purposes of this section, "interested party" shall include any resident of the Borough, any owner or operator of a business within the Borough, or any organization representing the interests of residents or engaged in furthering the revitalization and improvements of the neighborhood in which the property is located.
- B. Any interested party may participate in any redetermination hearing held by the public officer pursuant to subsection e. of Section 36 of P.L. 1996, c. 62 (N.J.S.A. 55:19-55). Upon written request by any interested party, the public officer shall provide the party with at least 20 days' notice of any such hearing. The party shall provide the public officer with notice at least 10 days before the hearing of

its intention to participate and the nature of the testimony or other information that is proposes to submit at the hearing.

#### Section 233-37. Maintenance of properties in foreclosure.

Responsible Agent – The creditor filing the 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 and if located out of state, shall be responsible for appointing an in-state representative or agent to act for the foreclosing creditor.

Authorized Public Officer – A public officer appointed pursuant to P.L. 1942, c. 112 (C.40:48-2.3 et seq.) or any other local official responsible for administration of any property maintenance of public nuisance code to 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 the ordinance by failing to provide for the care, maintenance, security and upkeep of the exterior of the property. Such notice shall require the person or entity to correct the violation within 30 days of receipt of the notice, or within 10 days of receipt of the notice if the violation presents an imminent threat to public health and safety. The issuance of a notice shall constitute proof that a property is “vacant and abandoned” for the purposes of P.L. 2012, c.70 (C.2A:50-73).

Out of State Creditor – An out of state creditor shall be required to include the full name and contact information of the in state representative or agent in the notice required to be provided.

Creditor Notice Requirement –(1) A creditor serving a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a mortgage on residential property in the state shall, within 10 days of serving the summons and complaint, notify the Municipal Clerk of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake that a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a mortgage has been filed against the subject property the notice shall contain the name and contact information for the representative of the creditor who is responsible for receiving complaints of property maintenance and code violations may contain information about more than one property, and shall be provided by mail or electronic communications, at the discretion of the municipal clerk. In the event the creditor that has served a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a residential property is located out of state, the notice shall also contain 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 abandoned. The municipal clerk shall forward a copy of the notice to the public officer or shall otherwise provide it to any other local official responsible for administration of any property maintenance or public nuisance code. In the event the property being foreclosed on is an affordable unit pursuant to the “Fair Housing Act” then the creditor shall identify that the property is subject to the “Fair Housing Act.” The notice shall also include the street address, lot and block number of the property and the full name and contact information of an individual located within the State who is authorized to accept service on behalf of the creditor.

The notice shall be provided to the municipal clerk within ten (10) days of service of a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a mortgage against the subject property.

(2) Any creditor that has initiated a foreclosure proceeding on any residential property which is pending in Superior Court shall provide to the Municipal Clerk of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, a listing of all residential properties in the municipality for which the creditor has foreclosure actions pending by street address and lot and block number. The Municipal Clerk shall forward a copy of the notice to the public officer, or shall otherwise provide it to any other local official responsible for administration of any property maintenance or public nuisance code.

Notification by Authorized Municipal Official – 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 creditor’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 creditor or any other third party, and the exterior of the property is found to be a nuisance or in violation of any applicable State or local code, the local public officer, municipal clerk or other authorized municipal official shall notify the creditor or the representative or agent of an out-of-State creditor as applicable, which shall have the responsibility to abate the nuisance 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 municipal ordinance. The municipality 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 30 days from the creditor’s receipt of the notice for the creditor to remedy the violation. If the creditor fails to remedy the violation within that time period, the municipality may impose penalties allowed for the violation of municipal ordinance pursuant to R.S.40:49-5.

Violation – If the municipality expends public funds in order to abate a nuisance or correct a violation on a residential property in situations in which the creditor was given notice pursuant to the provisions of Notification by Authorized Municipal Official, but failed to abate the nuisance or correct the violation as directed, the municipality shall have the same recourse against the creditor as it would have against the title owner of the property, including but not limited to the recourse provided under section 23 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (C.55:19-100).

Severability All provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If for any reason, any provision of this Ordinance is held to be invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Ordinance shall not be affected.

Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon final approval and publication, pursuant to law, and upon completion of all outstanding cases.