

The logo features a stylized house icon above the text "Monroe County" in a large, bold, serif font. Below "Monroe County" is the text "Vacant and Abandoned Property" in a smaller, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo is the text "Task Force" in a large, bold, serif font, matching the style of "Monroe County".

# Monroe County

Vacant and Abandoned Property

## Task Force

### Year One Progress Report And Major New Project Announcement

Today, Friday, May 5, 2017, the Monroe County Vacant and Abandoned Property Task Force marked an important milestone -- the first anniversary of bringing stakeholders together to work on the problems created by vacant and abandoned properties. To mark the occasion, the task force reflected on its accomplishments and announced new initiatives for the coming year, including a program that will help transfer bank-owned vacant properties to local not-for-profits for rehabilitation and resale.

The task force is comprised of local government representatives, not-for-profit organizations, banks, housing representatives and concerned citizens. The task force has interviewed dozens of people, held multiple public workshops and meets regularly to identify and work on issues related to vacant and abandoned properties.

"I am extraordinarily proud of what the Monroe County Vacant and Abandoned Property Task Force has accomplished to date. We started this effort knowing there were a number of talented professionals working in isolation on the issue of vacant properties here in Monroe County, and their work could be harnessed and amplified if we put everyone around the same table, working together," said Monroe County Clerk Adam Bello, Task Force Co-Chair. "Over the past 12 months, we've successfully collaborated to make enormous progress on an issue that affects every town, village, and city in our community."

"By bringing everyone together, the task force has accomplished a number of goals and has made real progress on this issue," said Rebecca Caico, Task Force Co-Chair and Senior Attorney at Empire Justice Center. "We've helped expand vacant housing rehabilitation programs to interested towns that border the City of Rochester, offered input on the state's new vacant property registration law, and helped secure funding for organizations working on the issue of vacant and abandoned properties."

In addition to reviewing the first year's accomplishments, today's announcement included two new programs for 2017. Most significantly, the Task Force has collaborated with several area financial institutions to link properties in their inventory that are suitable for donation to area not-for-profits for rehabilitation and reuse. Under a partnership with Canandaigua National Bank, M&T Bank, and Wells Fargo, the task force will serve as a clearinghouse for connecting them to area not-for-profit organizations interested in taking title to and rehabilitating properties, making them productive again.

"The task force will be working with these local banks to link vacant bank-owned properties with area not-for-profit organizations, with the goal of getting people back in these homes," said Matthew Flanigan of Flower City Habitat for Humanity, a task force subcommittee chair. "We are grateful for the commitment from our community partners and look forward to working collaboratively with those looking to help alleviate the burden of abandoned homes in our community."

In addition, the Task Force announced its first "Home Fair" to be held on October 21st. The Fair will provide an opportunity to link organizations from within and outside the task force in various fields to the public, including home repair, home buyer programs, foreclosure prevention, and landlord education. The fair will be open to the public and free of charge, and the Task Force hopes to make it an annual event. More details regarding specific vendors will be available later this summer.

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