

Lynn, MA Anti-foreclosure Ordinance

**Support strong action against foreclosures:
Tuesday, April 9, 7:30 pm at Lynn City Hall**

Why do we need this ordinance?

The foreclosure crisis continues to damage our city. There are foreclosed homes in every part of our city. Lynn has the fourth highest proportion of distressed housing units in the state among comparable "gateway" cities. Of the 30 most distressed census tracts in the entire state, two are in Lynn. Our city's rate of distressed housing is almost *double* the state average.¹

Thousands of Lynn families are in foreclosure now, have already been foreclosed, or are in danger of foreclosure as they struggle to keep up with payments on inflated (and often predatory) mortgages.

The big banks that created this crisis aren't helping solve it. Despite being bailed out, they are still refusing to work with or provide serious relief to most distressed homeowners.² One example: the banks recently admitted illegally foreclosing on hundreds of veterans³, after having downplayed this problem for years.

Foreclosures have a negative impact on entire neighborhoods:

- Property values in surrounding areas decline
- Banks usually evict after foreclosure, leaving properties vacant. They are often vandalized, and many are not well maintained. Thieves break in to steal copper. Pipes burst in the winter. There is a greater risk of fire in vacant buildings (as we saw recently on Sewall Street⁴). All of these things harm the entire community, and leave residents and the city government to deal with the fallout.
- The neighborhood ties that hold communities together are lost if families are forced out of their homes

It's time for us to take action to help our neighbors, and to protect ourselves against further damage. This crisis is either directly or indirectly impacting *all* of us.

What does the ordinance do?

The experiences of other cities and states, as well as homeowners here in Lynn, make it clear that a combination of measures is required. We need a response that is strong enough to really make a difference. This ordinance meets that challenge with three components: mandatory mediation (requiring banks to meet with homeowners face-to-face to attempt to find an alternative to foreclosure); preventing unnecessary vacancies (if there is a foreclosure); and a maintenance and bond requirement (to ensure banks take responsibility for properties they control following foreclosure).

Lynn United for Change - www.LynnUnited.org

¹ Massachusetts Housing Partnership Foreclosure Monitor. 2/20/2013. Tim H. Davis.
http://www.mhp.net/vision/resources.php?page_function=detail&resource_id=535

² "What Foreclosure Relief?" NY Times Editorial Board. 2/25/2013.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/25/opinion/what-mortgage-relief.html>

³ "Banks Find More Wrongful Foreclosures Among Military Members." NY Times, 3/4/2013. Jessica Silver-Greenberg & Ben Protess.
<http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2013/03/03/banks-find-more-wrongful-foreclosures-among-military-members/>

⁴ "Two blazes keep Lynn firefighters busy." The Daily Item. Cyrus Moulton. 3/4/2013.
<http://www.itemlive.com/articles/2013/03/04/news/news01.txt>