

# **STAFF REPORT SPECIAL MEETING**

**AGENDA DATE:** May 29, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Sustainability

**TITLE:**

Vacant and Foreclosed Property Registration Update

**SUMMARY:**

Discussion and direction for the Vacant and Foreclosed Property Registration.

**BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Beginning during the Recession and Foreclosure Crisis of the late 2010s, the City of Lake Worth Beach adopted a requirement that vacant, foreclosed and/or abandoned properties be registered. Many cities across the United States adopted similar requirements. The registration was a means to have documentation of the appropriate parties responsible for these properties. At the time, Vacant Registry (renamed ProChamps) provided the registration service on behalf of the City and shared the fees collected for the registrations.

For many years, the fees were a flat charge, regardless of the type of property or how long it had been registered. Several years ago, before the Covid Pandemic, the City Commission expanded the program to include all vacant, foreclosed and/or abandoned properties whether improved or unimproved. An escalating fee also was adopted that increased the longer the property was required to be registered.

Presently, the annual fee begins at \$200 for the first year and rises \$100 each year thereafter, capping out at \$750 at the 6<sup>th</sup> and subsequent years. The fees can be found on page 37 of 76 of the attached FY 2025 Schedule of Fees & Charges. Also, the registration process is all handled within the Community Sustainability Department, Code Compliance and Business License Divisions. This approach to the registration of these properties has come under some scrutiny with the City Commission requesting that staff look at the program and provide recommendations for updating it. It is estimated that 200 to 250 properties within the City would be affected by any changes made to the current registration requirements.

There are recommendations provided here that address both the fee issue and the registration process issue.

1. With the fees, it is recommended that an annual fee of \$250 be assessed on each vacant, foreclosed and/or abandoned properties, including both improved and unimproved properties.
2. Should a property remain registered under the same owner for five or more years, the fee would be raised by \$100 for a total of \$350 for each year thereafter until it no longer is required to be registered or is sold to a new owner.
3. Provide a 50% reduction on the registration fee for properties requiring registration that are owned by a property owner(s) who also owns property within the City on which they qualify for a homestead exemption.
4. All properties that are registered must be appropriately posted to discourage illegal dumping or other activities occurring on the property.
5. All improved properties must be provided with security lighting and appropriate window clings shall be in place for those properties on a major thoroughfare.

6. All registered properties will be listed on the City's website including responsible party information so that the public will be aware of who is responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and monitoring of the properties to avoid their becoming a public nuisance.

The Commission may take one or more of these suggestions into consideration. Staff will bring back before the Commission any resolution and/or ordinance required to implement the items approved by the Commission.

**MOTION:**

Move to approve/disapprove to items 1 thorough 6 and direct staff to bring back before the Commission the appropriate resolution and/or ordinance to make the changes legally effective.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Fiscal Impact Analysis  
FY 2025 Schedule of Fees & Charges

## FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

<b>Fiscal Years</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>
Inflows/Revenues					
Appropriated (Budgeted)	\$-25,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Program Income	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	0	0	0	0	0
In Kind	0	0	0	0	0
Outflows/Expenditures					
Appropriated (Budgeted)	0	0	0	0	0
Operating	0	0	0	0	0
Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact (If not budgeted)	-\$25,000	0	0	0	0
No. of Addn'l Full-Time Employee Positions	0	0	0	0	0