



Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Statement regarding the Feb. 21, 2017 acquisition of a 3.88 acre-bank-owned property, formerly owned by Robert Oury

There is a lot of misinformation regarding the Forest Preserve District of Kane County's February acquisition of a former bank-owned property, now part of the Freeman Kame Forest Preserve in Gilberts. We would like to set the record straight:

In 2003, Robert Oury sold half of his property to the Forest Preserve District for \$6.9 million. At that time, he signed a Right of First Refusal allowing the District the first opportunity to purchase the remainder of his neighboring property, should it ever go up for sale.

Years later, Oury defaulted on a business loan, for which some of his remaining property was used as collateral. The 3.88-acre property contained a house that was occupied by Oury's son James and his family. Metropolitan Capital Bank foreclosed on this property in March 2014.

Following a series of legal battles, Judgment for Possession was awarded to the bank on Aug. 4, 2016. The Ourys were evicted on behalf of the bank by the Kane County Sheriff on Dec. 2, 2016.

To be clear, the Forest Preserve District was not a part of Oury's bank loan, his subsequent foreclosure or his family's eviction. This was strictly a contract between Robert Oury and Metropolitan Capital Bank/Ravenna LLC and ultimately a court order.

Because the Forest Preserve District had a Right of First Refusal on the property, signed by Robert Oury in 2003, the District was contacted by the bank, to buy the property. Because this piece is a central part of Freeman Kame Forest Preserve, the District chose to exercise its option and invest in the parcel. This is no different than any other buyer, who could have purchased and/or developed the property at this point, had the Forest Preserve District chosen not to acquire it.

On Dec. 8, the bank allowed the home to be inspected by Forest Preserve staff. What the District thought was an asset was instead found to have several conditions rendering it uninhabitable. The furnace had been removed. Garbage and animal feces were present throughout the house. Cabinets and flooring were destroyed, among other issues. As a result, the District agreed to accept the land with the home demolished.

The bank coordinated demolition of the house between Feb. 13-20, 2017. The District closed on the property, Feb. 21, 2017.

The Forest Preserve District only buys land from willing sellers. In this case, the bank was the willing seller. Mr. Oury ceased owning this property in 2014 when it was foreclosed upon, and which was affirmed when Judgment was made for the bank, in August 2016.

We understand that a foreclosure is an extremely difficult and sensitive issue. We'd prefer not to be discussing these sensitive matters at all. However, due to Mr. Oury's efforts to publicly blame the Forest Preserve District for his troubles, we feel we must respond.

Anger at the Forest Preserve District is completely misdirected. The District did nothing to cause Oury's financial situation. The District did not foreclose on his property. The District did not evict anyone. The District simply followed through on the agreement that Mr. Oury himself willingly signed back in 2003. If we hadn't bought the property from the bank, another buyer would have. We chose to protect the property as part of the forest preserve, as was our intent in 2003.

His efforts to discredit the Forest Preserve District continue. The latest of which is a full-page advertisement that accuses the District of bulldozing the Oury home with their belongings still inside, and statements that they were wrongly forced from their home. The ad also attempts to scare the public with outrageous claim that the Forest Preserve will "take more land with the same tactics used to take my family's land." It's wrong, and it's disgusting. The Forest Preserve District did not "take" anyone's land. The bank took Mr. Oury's land, only after he failed to keep his own financial commitments.

It is our sincere hope that Robert Oury will cease blaming the Forest Preserve District for his own issues, and fully accept responsibility for his actions.

It also our hope that Kane County residents will see this for what it is — a carefully timed smear campaign against the District.