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Officials to look at measure on receivership program of debt

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Vallejo city officials are looking to make it easier to rehab and sell abandoned, chronically blighted homes.

A proposed measure headed to the City Council on Tuesday would allow the city to free properties in the city's receivership program of debt that impedes rehabilitation loans, City Attorney Claudia Quintana said.

Last year, the city started a receivership program intended to revitalize neighborhoods affected by vacant, blighted homes. The program allows the city to petition the courts to appoint a third-party "receiver" to temporarily take control of the property to bring it up to code.

So far, Southern California law firm Jones & Mayer has been appointed to act as receiver for four substandard properties: 907 Falcon; 618 Branciforte; 1914 Florida; and 150 Farragut.

Two of those properties are being rehabilitated.

However, the other two — Falcon and Branciforte — may have debt exceeding their value, which would prevent using the properties as collateral to finance improvements, Quintana said.

Part of the debt stems from numerous code-enforcement citations over the years, resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in city-issued liens, said Ryan Griffith, an attorney for the city's Neighborhood Law program.

In both cases, the heavy liens have been deemed "uncollectible" by the county because the property owners are either deceased or financially unable to pay them off, Griffith said.

The proposed ordinance would give the city manager the discretion — on a case-by-case basis — to release all or a portion of the uncollectible liens in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

Releasing the liens wouldn't prevent the city from collecting the debt through other means in the future, Quintana said.

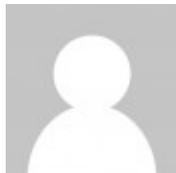
In other scheduled business, the council will consider implementing a \$20 per month parking fee as part of a proposed parking permit system for city-owned lots. If approved, the fee could take effect as soon as May 1, according to Public Works Director David Kleinschmidt.

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