



Cherelle Parker hosts property tax, deed workshop

Samaria Bailey Tribune Correspondent | Posted: Saturday, October 31, 2015 12:00 am

State Rep. Cherelle Parker (D-200) hosted “Protecting Your Home: Property Tax and Deed Workshop” at the Finley Recreational Center on Oct. 17.

The workshop included presentations from city departments and local organizations and focused on different topics, including: changing a deed, avoiding deed-related scams, property boundary language, property tax programs and payment plans.

“In the last three years, my office noticed an influx of questions surrounding deeds, property taxes, sheriff sales and liens,” Parker said. “As my staff worked to address the individual concerns, we deemed it necessary to add a workshop that solely focused on this set of topics to our annual calendar. It’s one of our most popular events.”

During the workshop, representatives from the city’s records department, revenue department and Office of Property Assessment and local assistance groups such as Community Legal Services, Northwest Counseling Services, the Legal Clinic for the Disabled and Philadelphia Legal Assistance, shared vital information and discussed specific concerns one on one.

“There is always hope when you need help,” said Pettit, a representative from the revenue department. “Sometimes there are people living in properties and they can’t find the landlords, or their parents are deceased and they can’t afford the property — [but] you can get a payment agreement. You just have to prove you have been living in your property and have equity in your property. You have to prove home ownership. You can come to the city and they will send you to the law department.”

James Aros from the Office of Property Assessment said one way homeowners can save money is through the Homestead Act, which he defined as “a discount every year you own property.” He said as long as the current terms of the Act are in effect, and “as long as you main ownership, if approved you would be entitled to a discount on the property.”

Pamela Harris-Williams, an attorney with Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, one of the city’s collection bureaus, advised residents that the transfer of a property’s deed does not make “delinquent taxes go away. You have to pay it in full if you have the money.” If one cannot afford to pay all the delinquent taxes at once, she said, “you can complete an owner occupied agreement and pay monthly based on your income.”

Several residents said the workshop was helpful.

“A lot of people don’t know where to find this information, that’s why this workshop is important,” said Walter Marlin, a board member of the Finley Advisory Council. “The Homestead Act information was important to me. I found out I could get a reduction in my taxes.” Marlin added that “we need to have it again [because] it simply wasn’t enough time for everyone to ask questions. This information was very important.”

J.F. Bryant of Mt. Airy said she learned lessons on maintaining an updated deed.

“The information I got today is the important thing of updating your deed and also making sure you keep an eye on what’s going on with your property,” she said. “With aging parents going in nursing facilities, people will prey on your property and claim your deed.”



Attorney Pamela Harris-Williams, seated, speaks with a resident at the workshop. — Tribune Photo by Samaria