



Office of the Kent County Treasurer  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Judge Rules in Favor of County, Treasurer, & Land Bank Suit Supported by Kent County Taxpayers Alliance Dismissed**

**GRAND RAPIDS** - The Hon. George Buth determined the county acted legally in the purchase and transfer of tax foreclosed properties, clearing the way for the Kent County Land Bank Authority (KCLBA) to move forward with economic development of these sites. The lawsuit, filed against Kent County, the Kent County Treasurer's Office and the KCLBA, was dismissed Thursday morning. The suit was filed by a group of eleven realtors and property management groups. The Plaintiffs' arguments were legally defective and the group had no standing to bring the suit, according to Judge Buth's decision.

Earlier this year, the Kent County Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of 44 tax-foreclosed properties, which were transferred to the KCLBA. These properties were foreclosed after their previous owners failed to pay taxes owed to Kent County. Michigan law is clear that municipalities have the right to purchase such properties. The KCLBA works with developers and non-profit agencies to repair or re-develop blighted properties and re-sell them, thus increasing property values.

Judge Buth rejected the Plaintiffs' arguments that State law does not allow transfer of tax foreclosed properties to the County and the KCLBA. The Judge also rejected Plaintiffs' argument that County policy forbids the transfer of tax foreclosed properties to the Land Bank. "I'm gratified that Judge Buth dismissed the case," says Kenneth Parrish, Kent County Treasurer. "I am confident that the process spelled out in state law was correctly followed, and the judge agrees."

Representatives from the County are pleased that Judge Buth has upheld its efforts to innovatively deal with countywide concerns of blight and economic redevelopment. "I firmly believe that despite this lawsuit, the Kent County Land Bank Authority and the real estate investors of this community can successfully and peacefully co-exist," Parrish added. "There is still plenty of work to be done to strengthen real estate values in Kent County. Both parties have a meaningful role to play. I look forward to the opportunity to work together to find a way."

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