



Buying or Selling a Home in Painesville, Ohio

Tip Sheet

After the housing market collapse in 2006, many homes are still coming onto the market. This is not only true in Painesville, but communities throughout the United States. This is the result of bank foreclosures and homes that become available through sheriff's sales. While many of these homes seem like a bargain, many are not. For this reason, the City of Painesville's Community Development Department wants to inform potential homebuyers, landlords and realtors about the research they should perform prior to selling or purchasing a home in our community.

Prior to selling or purchasing a home in Painesville, the following should be researched to eliminate any issues you may have before closing or after taking ownership. You, your realtor and/or the title company will need to contact the appropriate service providers to determine if there are any outstanding fees or issues with the property. This includes the following:

- 1) Check for outstanding vacant property registration fees.** If a property is vacant for more than 90 days, past due fees may be owed. It is highly recommended that you inform your real estate agent and title company in writing that outstanding vacant property registration fees may be owed and that they should check with the Painesville Community Development Department prior to closing on the property. If you take possession of a property with fees being owed, the City of Painesville will NOT transfer or turn on water until ALL past due vacant property registration fees have been paid. Please contact the Community Development Department at 440-392-5931 to determine if there are any fees owed. Exemptions may be filed if a property is listed with a registered realtor.
- 2) Determine if the property is non-conforming.** If a property has been vacant for more than one year, the City of Painesville requires that it be brought up to code and conform to the requirements of the zoning district in which it is located. For example, if a duplex in a Single Family Residential (R-1) zoning district is vacant for a year, it would be non-conforming. This would result in the home having to be converted back to a single family residential dwelling. In addition, since all residential properties are required to have a garage under the code, a property vacant for more than one year may have to construct a single car garage. Prior to your purchase or sale, it is important that you determine if the property is non-conforming and what would be required. Please contact the Community Development Department at 440-392-5931 to check the status. The property can be transferred if the new owner is willing to sign an affidavit stating they will bring it into conformance.
- 3) Check for outstanding liens on the property.** Past due liens owed to the City of Painesville should be checked. If money is owed, it would be for grass mowing or disposal



of refuse. The liens are also filed with the Lake County Auditor and placed on the tax bill. However, if they have not been filed prior to the closing, it will show up on your tax bill and will be the responsibility of the new owner to pay them. For this reason, it is important to check with the Community Development Department prior to closing at 440-392-5931.

- 4) **Check with the City of Painesville Utilities Department to determine if there are past due utilities owed (water, sewer, and electric).** They will advise you if past due fees are owed prior to closing on the home. In most cases, your title company will also check and/or hold back funding at closing to pay any past due amounts. As a safeguard, we recommend that the buyer check as well. The Utilities Department can be reached at 440-392-5797.
- 5) **Check with Republic Services to determine if any past due fees are owed for refuse collection and recycling.** The City of Painesville requires that all residential dwellings three (3) units or less have refuse service through Republic Services as of July 1, 2016. If the property is vacant or the prior owners did not pay for refuse service, there may be outstanding bills. Please inform your real estate agent and the title agent in writing that Republic Services Customer Service should be called prior to closing. This will ensure that you do not receive any past due bills for refuse collection. Those inquiring will have to provide the address of the property and the parcel information. Republic Services Customer Service can be contacted by phone at 1-800-968-7789.
- 6) **If the property is in poor condition and improvements are needed, it is highly recommended to contact the Painesville Community Development Department.** If there are existing property maintenance issues or problems that will need corrected, potential buyers should talk with a Housing Inspector. The building official can also determine what permits will be required and the estimated costs. The City of Painesville requires permits for electrical, plumbing, sewer, HVAC and general improvements (decks, siding, etc.) Failure to obtain permits before starting work will result in the permit fees being doubled or tripled and licensed contractors will be reported to the Ohio Board of Building Standards. Please contact the Painesville Community Development Department at 440-392-5931.

If you have any questions and/or require more information, please contact the City of Painesville's Community Development Director, Doug Lewis at 440-392-5802 or at dlewis@painesville.com.