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Hiawatha Commission Hears About Land Bank Concept

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha City Commission has been introduced to a method of returning blighted or delinquent tax properties to productive uses in the community.

Gene Hillyer with the Brown County Healthy Food Coalition discussed with Commissioners this week the concept of developing a land bank to manage properties in the community.

Hillyer says state statute allows governmental entities to develop a land bank, which would be governed by a board of trustees.

Hillyer said board could allow the properties to used for community gardens, new home construction or other uses.

He said the Brown County Healthy Food Coalition initially looked into the concept as a way to make locally grown food available. There are currently two community garden sites in Hiawatha and one at the NEK-CAP office south of Hiawatha.

Hillyer says they are currently in the preliminary stages, and are holding focus groups across the county to gather input.

Wyandotte and Johnson Counties are currently the only two counties in Kansas with land banks.

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