

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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HOUSE BILL 578
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Short Title: Partition Sales/Commrs., Sellers, Buyers.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 16, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CLARIFY NOTICE REQUIRED TO PARTIES WHO MAY BE UNKNOWN OR UNLOCATABLE IN A PARTITION PROCEEDING; TO CODIFY THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF GRANTING OWNERS CREDIT FOR THEIR EXISTING INTEREST IN LAND WHEN BIDDING ON A PARTITION SALE; TO PERMIT A COURT TO ORDER AN INDEPENDENT APPRAISAL IF REQUESTED AND PAID FOR BY A PARTY TO THE PARTITION WHO CHALLENGES THE AMOUNT BID IN A PARTITION SALE; TO REVISE THE STANDARD FOR DETERMINING WHAT CONSTITUTES "SUBSTANTIAL INJURY" WITH REGARDS TO A PETITION FOR A SALE OF THE PROPERTY; AND TO PROVIDE FOR MEDIATION OF PARTITION DISPUTES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 46-6 reads as rewritten:

"§ 46-6. **Unknown or unlocatable parties; summons and summons, notice, and representation.**

(a) If, upon the filing of a petition for partition, it be made to appear to the court by affidavit or otherwise that there are any persons interested in the premises whose names are unknown to and cannot after due diligence be ascertained by the petitioner, the court shall order notices to be given to all such persons by a publication of the petition, or of the substance thereof, with the order of the court thereon, in one or more newspapers to be designated in the order. The notice by publication shall include a description of the property which includes the street address, if any, or other common designation for the property, if any, and may include the legal description of the property.

(b) ~~If Before or~~ after such general notice by publication if any person interested in the premises and entitled to notice fails to appear, the court shall ~~in its discretion~~ appoint some disinterested person to represent the owner of any shares in the property to be divided, the ownership of which is unknown or unlocatable and unrepresented."

SECTION 2. G.S. 46-22 reads as rewritten:

"§ 46-22. **Sale in lieu of partition.**

(a) ~~The Subject to~~ G.S. 46-22.1(b), the court shall order a sale of the property described in the petition, or of any part, only if it finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that an actual partition of the lands cannot be made without substantial injury to any of the interested parties.

(b) ~~"Substantial injury" means the fair market value of each share in an in kind partition would be materially less than the share of each cotenant in the money equivalent that would be~~



1 obtained from the sale of the whole, and if an in-kind division would result in material
2 impairment of the cotenant's rights. In determining "substantial injury" the court shall consider
3 the following:

4 (1) Whether the fair market value of each cotenant's share in an actual division
5 of the property would be materially less than the amount each cotenant
6 would receive from the sale of the whole.

7 (2) Whether a sale or an in-kind division would result in material impairment of
8 any cotenants' rights.

9 (b1) The court, in its discretion, shall consider the remedy of owelty where such remedy
10 can aid in making a partition in-kind occur without substantial injury to the parties.

11 (c) The court shall make specific finding of fact and conclusions of law specifically
12 find the facts supporting an order of sale of the property.

13 (d) The party seeking a sale of the property shall have the burden of proving substantial
14 injury under the provisions of this section."

15 **SECTION 3.** Article 2 of Chapter 46 of the General Statutes is amended by adding
16 a new section to read:

17 **"§ 46-22.1 Mediation.**

18 (a) Persons interested in the premises may agree at anytime to mediation of a partition.
19 A list of mediators certified by the Dispute Resolution Commission may be obtained from the
20 clerk or from the Commission through the Administrative Office of the Courts.

21 (b) When a partition sale is requested, the court or the clerk may order mediation before
22 considering whether to order a sale. The provisions of G.S. 7A-38.1 and G.S. 7A-38.3B shall
23 apply."

24 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 46-28 reads as rewritten:

25 **"§ 46-28. Sale procedure.**

26 (a) The procedure for a partition sale shall be the same as is provided in Article 29A of
27 Chapter 1 of the General Statutes. Statutes, except as provided herein.

28 (b) The commissioners shall certify to the court that at least 20 days prior to sale a copy
29 of the notice of sale was sent by first class mail to the last known address of all petitioners and
30 respondents who previously were served by personal delivery or by registered or certified mail.
31 The commissioners shall also certify to the court that at least ten days prior to any resale
32 pursuant to G.S. 46-28.1(e) a copy of the notice of resale was sent by first class mail to the last
33 known address of all parties to the partition proceeding who have filed a written request with
34 the court that they be given notice of any resale. An affidavit from the commissioners that
35 copies of the notice of sale and resale were mailed to all parties entitled to notice in accordance
36 with this section shall satisfy the certification requirement and shall also be deemed prima facie
37 true. If after hearing it is proven that a party seeking to revoke the order of confirmation of a
38 sale or subsequent resale was mailed notice as required by this section prior to the date of the
39 sale or subsequent resale, then that party shall not prevail under the provisions of
40 G.S. 46-28.1(a)(2)a. and b.

41 (c) Any cotenant who enters the high bid or offer at any sale of one hundred percent
42 (100%) of the undivided interests in any parcel of real property shall receive a credit for the
43 undivided interest the cotenant already owns therein and shall receive a corresponding
44 reduction in the amount of the total purchase price owed after deducting the costs and fees
45 associated with the sale and apportioning the costs and fees associated with the sale in
46 accordance with the orders of the court. The high bid or offer shall be for one hundred percent
47 (100%) of the undivided interests in the parcel of real property sold, and the credit and
48 reduction shall be applied at the time of the closing of the cotenant's purchase of the real
49 property. When jointly making the high bid or offer at the sale, two or more cotenants may
50 receive at the closing an aggregate credit and reduction in the amount of the total purchase
51 price representing the total of such cotenants' undivided interests in the real property. Any

1 credits and reductions allowed by this subsection shall be further adjusted to reflect any
2 court-ordered adjustments to the share(s) of the net sale proceeds of each of the cotenants
3 entering the high bid or offer, including, but not limited to, equitable adjustments to the share(s)
4 of the net sales proceeds due to a court finding of the lack of contribution of one or more
5 cotenants to the payment of expenses of the real property."

6 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 46-28.1 reads as rewritten:

7 **"§ 46-28.1. Petition for revocation of confirmation order.**

8 (a) Notwithstanding G.S. 46-28 or any other provision of law, an order confirming the
9 partition sale of real property shall not become final and effective until 15 days after entered.
10 At any time before the confirmation order becomes final and effective, any party to the
11 partition proceeding or the purchaser may petition the court to revoke its order of confirmation
12 and to order the withdrawal of the purchaser's offer to purchase the property upon the following
13 grounds:

- 14 (1) In the case of a purchaser, a lien remains unsatisfied on the property to be
15 conveyed.
- 16 (2) In the case of any party to the partition proceeding:
 - 17 a. Notice of the partition was not served on the petitioner for revocation
18 as required by Rule 4 of the Rules of Civil Procedure; or
 - 19 b. Notice of the sale was not mailed to the petitioner for revocation as
20 required by G.S. 46-28(b); or
 - 21 c. The amount bid or price offered is inadequate and inequitable and
22 will result in irreparable damage to the owners of the real property.

23 In no event shall the confirmation order become final or effective during the pendency of a
24 petition under this section. No upset bid shall be permitted after the entry of the confirmation
25 order.

26 (b) The party petitioning for revocation shall deliver a copy of the petition to all parties
27 required to be served under Rule 5 of G.S. 1A-1, and the officer or person designated to make
28 such sale in the manner provided for service of process in Rule 4(j) of G.S. 1A-1. The court
29 shall schedule a hearing on the petition within a reasonable time and shall cause a notice of the
30 hearing to be served on the petitioner, the officer or person designated to make such a sale and
31 all parties required to be served under Rule 5 of G.S. 1A-1.

32 (c) In the case of a petition brought under this section by a purchaser claiming the
33 existence of an unsatisfied lien on the property to be conveyed, if the purchaser proves by a
34 preponderance of the evidence that:

- 35 (1) A lien remains unsatisfied on the property to be conveyed; and
- 36 (2) The purchaser has not agreed in writing to assume the lien; and
- 37 (3) The lien will not be satisfied out of the proceeds of the sale; and
- 38 (4) The existence of the lien was not disclosed in the notice of sale of the
39 property, the court may revoke the order confirming the sale, order the
40 withdrawal of the purchaser's offer, and order the return of any money or
41 security to the purchaser tendered pursuant to the offer.

42 The order of the court in revoking an order of confirmation under this section may not be
43 introduced in any other proceeding to establish or deny the existence of a lien.

44 (d) In the case of a petition brought pursuant to this section by a party to the partition
45 proceeding, if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that petitioner has proven a
46 case pursuant to sub-subdivision (a)(2)a., b., or c. of subsection (a)(2), this section, the court
47 may revoke the order confirming the sale, order the withdrawal of the purchaser's offer, and
48 order the return of any money or security to the purchaser tendered pursuant to the offer.

49 (d1) In the case of a petition brought pursuant to sub-subdivision (a)(2)c. of this section,
50 and when an independent appraisal of the property being sold has not been previously entered
51 into evidence in the action, and upon the request of any party, the court may order an

1 independent appraisal prepared by a real estate appraiser currently licensed by the North
2 Carolina Appraisal Board and prepared in accordance with the Uniform Standards of
3 Professional Appraisal Practice. The cost of an independent appraisal shall be borne by one or
4 more of the parties requesting the appraisal in such proportions as they may agree. Before
5 ruling on the petition brought pursuant to sub-subdivision (a)(2)c. of this section, the court may
6 in its discretion require written evidence from the appraiser that the appraiser has been paid in
7 full for the appraisal. If based on the appraisal and all of the evidence presented, the court finds
8 the amount bid or price offered to be inadequate, inequitable, and resulting in irreparable
9 damage to the owners, the court may revoke the order confirming the sale, order the withdrawal
10 of the purchaser's high bid or offer, and order the return to such purchaser of any money or
11 security tendered by the purchaser pursuant to the high bid or offer.

12 (e) If the court revokes its order of confirmation under this section, the court shall order
13 a resale. The procedure for a resale is the same as is provided for an original public sale under
14 Article 29A of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes."

15 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2009, and applies to partition
16 actions filed on or after that date.