

Gather this Information Before You Find a Buyer

Dear (name),

When that buyer shows up, ready to make an offer, you'll need to have some information at the ready. You don't want to delay things by having to stop and gather paperwork!

Begin with getting the complete legal description of your property - your tax number is not sufficient! Also make note of your tax and insurance payments and any special assessments, homeowner association fees, etc. While you're at it, gather your heating and electrical bills for the last year so you can disclose average costs. Unless you have the information on blueprints, measure the house so you can disclose the square footage.

If you're in a city, there's not much question about water and sewer, but if you're in a rural area or a platted subdivision, you'll need to gather proof that those systems were approved.

Now you need some disclosure forms. You'll need to give your buyers a property condition disclosure - and be sure you fill it out completely! When a buyer reads the disclosure and signs it, he or she is admitting knowledge and acceptance of any defects in the house or property. That means they can't come back and sue, saying "You didn't tell me."

You'll also need (insert names of disclosures, etc. required by law in your state.) As with the property condition disclosure, be completely honest in filling out these forms! **It is for your safety.**

Now is also a good time to get a preliminary title report. Contact a title company and tell them you need to see everything on your title report. You'll pay a fee for this, but it will be well worth it if you see a problem that needs to be handled before you can sell.

I've seen title problems that involved liens sellers didn't know existed, and found un-recorded reconveyances from lenders who were paid off years earlier. These problems can be fixed, but they take time, and your buyers may not be willing to wait. So do it now.

Finally, you need a purchase and sale agreement. This document lists the complete agreement between buyer and seller, and when filled out properly, leaves no room for misunderstandings. Do NOT agree to a sale without a valid purchase and sale agreement, signed by all parties!

(Note to agents... if your rules allow, you can offer copies of forms. Otherwise, you can insert a line telling people where they can buy these forms in your town.)

Call if you need me,

(agent name and contact info)

P.S. State and Federal laws determine how you can market your home - my next message will alert you to some precautions you must take.