

GRIFFIN SPALDING COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY

**406 North Hill Street
Griffin Georgia 30223**

678-603-1986

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Newton Galloway

Patty Beckham

Sharon King

Bruce Ballard

Pansy Copeland

AGENDA

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Historic City Hall

4:00 PM

- A. Determination of Quorum
- B. Approval of minutes – February 10, 2022
- C. Public Comment
- D. LBA Management
 - 1. Report on transfer of files to City Development Office
 - 2. Discussion on Transition Period procedures – contact and notification
 - 3. Report on Sales information/data – analysis of value of properties closed; tax revenues
- E. Financial information
 - 1. Quickbooks reports and bank statements from February 2022; review and approval of disbursements
- F. GIRMA – Insurance Information
- G. Side Lot Program – no changes
- H. Properties – Old Business – no changes
- I. New Business/Pressing Issues
 - 1. 28 Edwards Street – request from Alicia Chambers Lane to donate
 - 2. 212 Kendall Drive – Charles Lovett deed inquiry
 - 3. Hall Road Trash inquiry – Charles Lovett (King)
 - 4. 117 Pecan Point – Harris, closing canceled (Beckham)

been an objective, but with the new IGA, it became a requirement; however, the policy is not really feasible in areas that are all rental. He suggested that the Board and City and County may want to look at the owner occupancy requirement, perhaps considering offering additional incentives for ownership, but allowing properties to be utilized as rental.

Ms. King stated that she was not opposed to that idea. Mr. Ballard also noted that we need contracts that don't need to be monitored. Ms. King replied that we need to make sure that the contractors are vetted and doing what they are supposed to be doing. Mr. Galloway asked what the criteria could be for developers and stated that he does not trust anyone doing development in the county except for the Griffin Housing Authority. Ms. Copeland agreed. He said that the quality of rental properties in Griffin is what is creating most of our problems. He also asked the Board to think about what policy should be in place if the owner-occupancy restriction is lifted.

Ms. Beckham noted that she is in favor of people being able to own properties, that she is not a fan of rental. She believes in the Land Bank and points out that we have gotten a number of properties back on the tax rolls. Mr. Ballard said he thinks the LBA should continue operating.

Ms. Copeland agreed and said that helping slum lords doesn't improve our community. She stated that ownership takes education because first time owners don't know that they have to do things like set money aside for taxes. Not giving them the knowledge they need is setting them up for failure.

Ms. Copeland doesn't think most people know what the Land Bank is and what it does. We need to get out into the community, but we have to be organized and have the necessary structure in place. She stated that she has left every meeting feeling negative, but she wants to help improve our community. Mr. Galloway asked her if she agreed that the problem is a lack of pride and not affluence. Ms. Copeland agreed and said that one owner occupied house generates pride, and the neighbors start wanting to own their houses, too. But she thinks it is time to step outside of the box.

Ms. King referenced the one-year and 5-year plans that she had sent out and stated that everyone knows where she stands. She believes the LBA can help communities and that it isn't done yet.

The question of how dissolution would work was raised. Ms. O'Conner noted that O.C.G.A. §48-4-61 gives us no guidance as to what to do with the properties owned or held by the Land Bank, so we look to the IGA. It calls for property to be distributed pro rata (50/50) between the City and the County, depending on appraised value. This is not a workable method, and she would work to get the IGA amended again to call for a different method of distribution, where the City takes all the properties in the City and the same for the County. It was noted that, whether the Land Bank continues or is dissolved, a new executive director will be needed.

Mr. Galloway stated that he is probably the most frustrated of the 5 board members. He noted some things that he thinks are working reasonably well: the side-lot program is allowing the Land Bank to increase lot sizes; our coordination with the City, County, and Housing Authority for areas of redevelopment has gotten better; we have had some success with the lots given to Square Foot Ministries.

The Land Bank has one real task under statute: conveying tax-free property. This Board originally took on the owner-occupancy restriction which he believes is the key to success. He thinks that the LBA has failed in promoting the restriction and that at least half of the proposals we get have no intention of following it. That leaves the Land Bank having to prosecute, which costs \$5,000-\$10,000 for each case, and only if there are no problems with the case. He asked if the local governments would be willing to put more money into the LBA to pursue these suits, and guessed that the answer is likely 'no.'

Mr. Galloway stated that we are currently dependent on people coming to us and feels that we should be aggressively promoting ownership. If the City and the County publicly encouraged that goal, it would expand our pool of buyers. Currently, there is nothing on either government's website which does that. He said that they also need to zoning regulations and decisions that encourage ownership and noted that there is no opportunity zone or TAD for residential areas.

Mr. Galloway believes that, if the Land Bank is to succeed, it needs joint activity between the two governments to promote owner-occupancy, direction from them as to future redevelopment areas, and the ability to coordinate with the Housing Authority. He believes that the lack of owner occupancy is our greatest deficit to economic development. If we can move in the direction with the support he has outlined, let's move forward. If not, let's dissolve.

D. Adjourn

Mr. Ballard moved to adjourn at 1:35 pm, second by Ms. Beckham. Motion passed 5-0.