

**Jonesboro Land Bank Commission**  
**Agenda for Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
**City Council Chambers, 300 South Church Street, Jonesboro, AR**



## 1. Roll Call

Present: Becky Durham, Jeffrey Herndon, James Hollywood, Corey Mills, Jeremy Moore, Bob Warner, Dennis Zolper, Jessica Thomason, Bill Reznicek, Jonathan Smith

Absent: Brent Martin, Ray Osment

## 2. Finding of a quorum

## 3. Approval of Minutes – August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Mr. James Hollywood made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 14, 2018. Mr. Dennis Zolper supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 4. Old Business

### A. *Bus Tour – Any thoughts on a proposed amount for Land & Improvements?*

Dr. Warner asked if anyone wanted to share their thoughts on last months' bus tour.

Ms. Becky Durham liked the work being done by Habitat for Humanity. The tour was an eye opening experience for the commission.

Mr. Jeffrey Herndon said greater coordination between city departments would be needed in order to address some of the issues.

Dr. Warner asked Mr. Herndon to briefly discuss the projects that are currently underway with Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Herndon said they have a grant that will allow Habitat to build twelve houses over the next five years. Nine of those homes will go on State Street along with a pocket park. Three houses will be built on Belt Street. These homes will go next to the others they developed a few years ago.

## 5. New Business

### A. Staff Report

<b>Account</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Professional Services	\$24,955
Land & Improvements	-
Condemnations & Demolitions	\$20,000
Other Funds	-

*Note: Land & Improvements will be in the budget for 2019.*

Property Inventory – 0

<http://www.jonesboro.org/495/Land-Bank>

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Mr. Bill Reznicek summarized the land bank budget and the budgeting process. Hopefully the budget will be completed and ready to present to council around Thanksgiving. As of right now, staff put \$250,000 in the budget for Land and Improvements. This is still under review and subject to change. The city is still elevating the amount of money needed for Professional Services and Condemnations and Demolitions.

Mr. Jeremy Moore wanted to know why there was only \$20,000 in the Condemnation and Demolition budget. Mr. Smith said that number was placed there to act as a placeholder when they were creating the first budget in 2017. At that time, no one knew what this department would need in the budget. This money was placed in the account to use for removing or clearing any structure on a lot that we acquire. This money is separate from the Demolition money received by Code Enforcement.

Dr. Bob Warner asked if the cost of demolition would be placed as a lien on the property. Ms. Jessica Thomason said a lien would be placed on the property to cover the cost of demolition and clean-up.

Mr. Jeffrey Herndon asked Mr. Reznicek if the budget was based on a fiscal year or a calendar year. Mr. Reznicek said the budget was based on a calendar year.

Mr. Moore wanted to make sure the city council could place additional money in that account just in case it was needed.

**B. Property Acquisition**

*Policies governing the acquisition of properties.*

*2. Properties that are subject to a City lien for code violations, and can be foreclosed on by the City.*

*4. Proposals and request by private developers that identify specific properties for acquisition and redevelopment.*

*6. Properties that are considered vacant and abandoned property.*

*7. Properties that are delinquent on their ad-valorem real property taxes.*

Dr. Warner asked Mr. Smith if he would review the information on the agenda for property acquisitions. Smith presented the commission with 5 property profiles. The first three properties – 120 North Bridge, 129 North Bridge, and 1020 Hope - have outstanding liens for code violations. These properties were placed on the agenda before he met with the city attorney's office last week. After meeting with the city attorney, the plan going forward is to get with Code Enforcement and identify three or four properties with outstanding liens that can be used to learn the foreclosure process. An update on this process will be provided during the meeting in October.

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Smith also provided the commission with a report generated using Springbrook that showed all outstanding balances resulting from work done by Code Enforcement. This document will be used during the lien review process to help staff determine which accounts to potentially send through the foreclosure process.

Dr. Warner stated that Code Enforcement keeps great records in their department. This could be vital to the land banks' ability to foreclose on some of the liens.

Ms. Jessica Thomason said their office is in the process of learning all they can about foreclosing on liens. Some of their staff will be going to Little Rock in the future to work with the attorneys who have foreclosed on liens in the past. The attorneys in Little Rock have really good resources that Jonesboro could use in our foreclosure process. Thomason also stated that there could be some changes in the future to how the city files liens. This process will need to be reviewed to ensure our liens are enforceable.

Ms. Becky Durham asked about the balances on the Springbrook report. Mr. Smith explained the balances on that report are outstanding charges generated from work done by the city. Each property on that list could have additional outstanding liens. We would need to do title work in order to determine if there were other liens attached to these properties.

Mr. Corey Mills asked if the State Land Commissioner auctioned off properties that had delinquent taxes. Mr. Smith explained that process and how it work. Going forward, the city is going to make sure that our liens are certified with the state so they will be part of the minimum opening bid at that auction.

Mr. Herndon asked how confident the city was about the names listed on the Springbrook report. He wanted to know if they were the actual owners of the property. Ms. Thomason said that Code Enforcement would have all of that information in their files – even if the names are not correct on the Springbrook report.

The last two properties in the packet were properties where the owner had some interest in selling their property to the land bank. Mr. Smith wanted to know how the Commission would like to proceed with these request.

Mr. Smith went over 113 North Bridge. This is a lot that is being mowed by the city. The owner recently paid off the outstanding balances but would still consider selling the lot. This property is zoned I-1 Limited Industrial and is only .18 acres.

Mr. Smith also summarized the property on East Washington. This lot does not have a specific address. This property sits beside 1108 East Washington – a property that

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was recently condemned by the city council. The lot is only .10 acres so it may need a replat in order to make it into a buildable lot. The property is currently zoned R-2.

Dr. Warner asked if anyone would make a motion to allow staff to start the review process on these lots. Mr. Jeremy made a motion to review these lots. Mr. Mills supported the motion. The motion was approved.

Dr. Warner asked if anyone would be interested in serving on a subcommittee that could review each property before the request is placed on the land bank agenda. Mr. Jeremy Moore and Mr. Corey Mills volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Mr. Smith said he would send both of them an email at a later point to set up a date and time for everyone to meet.

Mr. Zolper was concerned with the land bank purchasing property all over Jonesboro. He wants the land bank to purchase property within specific focus areas. Mr. Smith said that 113 North Bridge was in one of the land bank's focus areas. It was also close to a couple of other properties with city liens – 129 North Bridge and 120 North Bridge. If we are successful in our foreclosures, this would give us three properties close together on the same street.

Mr. Moore asked if anyone from the city has contacted the owners of the properties with outstanding liens. Mr. Smith said he tried to send out letters to each owner. Some of the letters were returned because there was no longer a house at the address, some owners refused to donate and several never responded.

Mr. Zolper said learning the foreclosure process from the attorneys in Little Rock was probably the right thing to do. The first thing staff needs to do is determine if city liens are enforceable. Arkansas law is specific about how liens are filed.

**C. Scheduled Meetings – Updates will be provided as they become available**

1. City Attorney's Office – *Filing and Enforcing Liens*
2. Mike Downing – *Economic Redevelopment, Corridor Committee Recommendations*
3. Mayor Perrin – *Potential property donations, land acquisitions, Priorities & Policies*
4. Grants & Community Development – *HOME Funds*
5. Code Enforcement and Chief Building Official – *Code Violations and Condemnation/Demolition Process*

Dr. Warner said staff would be meeting over the next few weeks to answer many of the questions pertaining to liens, land acquisitions, grant opportunities, and code enforcement. These meetings will be for informational purposes only.

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Mr. Smith requested they send their questions to his email. He would try to have the answers to those questions at the next meeting.

**D. Public Presentations.**

Dr. Warner felt it was time to start reaching out to the public and informing them about the purpose of the land bank.

Mr. Smith said that he would put together a presentation and send it to the commission and other staff members for their review and approval. Once the presentation is together, staff will start reaching out to various groups in Jonesboro. The commission will be updated as these meetings are scheduled. The commissioners are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Mr. Jeff Herndon wanted to know what would happen to city liens on property that we acquire. Dr. Warner said the city is still working on that. Hopefully this commission will have an answer to that question in the near future.

**6. Public Comments (3 Minutes Per Person)**

**7. Adjournment**

Mr. James Hollywood made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed.