

Jonesboro Land Bank Commission  
Agenda for Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
City Council Chambers, 300 South Church Street, Jonesboro, AR



**1. Roll Call**

Present: Becky Durham, Jeff Herndon, Brent Martin, James Hollywood, Corey Mills, Dr. Bob Warner, Ray Osment, Dennis Zolper, Derrel Smith, Craig Light, Tiffany Calloway, Mike Downing, Bill Reznicek, Bill Campbell, Jessica Thomason

Absent: Jeremy Moore

**2. Finding of a quorum**

**3. Approval of Minutes - July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Mr. James Hollywood approved the minutes. Mr. Ray Osment supported his motion. The minutes were approved.

**4. Old Business**

***A. Revitalization Areas***

- ***ASU/Downtown Corridor (Include North Jonesboro)***
- ***West End Area***
- ***Old Nettleton Area***

Jonathan Smith presented the commissioners with a copy of the Master Land Use Plan. This plan was developed with input from city staff and several citizens who represented various industries and communities throughout Jonesboro. It identifies three areas for future redevelopment: an area between downtown Jonesboro and Arkansas State University, the West End, and the old Nettleton area. Adopted by the city council in early 2018, the Land Use Plan is one of the only plans adopted by the city that guides future development for Jonesboro.

Mr. Ray Osment asked about the boundaries for the Old Nettleton Area. Mr. Smith did not have that information at the meeting but agreed to send that information to Mr. Osment once he was back in the office.

Mr. James Hollywood made a motion to approve the three revitalization areas. Mr. Dennis Zolper supported the motion. The motion was approved.

***B. Bus Tour***

Dr. Warner spoke with the commissioners about the bus tour on August 24<sup>th</sup>. The mayor's office set the tour up for Friday morning from 9:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. He invited each commissioner and asked them to send an email to Mr. Smith so he could reserve their seat. The mayor will also invite the city council.

**5. New Business**

**A. Staff Report**

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

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

**Property Inventory – 0**

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

Mr. Smith went over the staff report. He explained that a staff report would be part of each meeting agenda going forward. This is something Little Rock includes in their agenda to keep the commission and public up-to-date on funds used by the department.

Dr. Warner asked Ms. Tiffny Calloway, Director of Grants and Community Development, to share with the commission about HOME funds and how this money can help the Jonesboro land bank in the future. Ms. Calloway said HOME funds are similar to CDBG funds. The City of Jonesboro currently does not receive HOME funds. She said one of the reasons Little Rock has been successful with their land bank is because they receive HOME funds. It allows them to work with a community development partner and revitalize areas – specifically for low to moderate income residents in Little Rock. HOME funds help nonprofits build homes for low to moderate income individuals. The funds are awarded to CHDO's – Community Housing Development Organizations – by the city. These organizations then use the money to build homes for low to moderate income families. Grants and Community Development is investigating and trying to figure out how to get access to those funds. Getting access to these funds is a process and will not happen overnight.

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Ms. Durham asked if we had to have real estate in the land bank inventory in order to be approved for those funds. Ms. Calloway said owning real estate was not a requirement.

Ms. Calloway said there is already a CHDO in Craighead County – The Crowley’s Ridge Development Council. However, Habitat for Humanity could also apply to be a CHDO as well as all other nonprofits working to make homeownership possible for low to moderate income individuals.

Mr. Bill Reznicek was asked to explain each account listed in the staff report. Professional Services will mainly be used for items such as legal fees. Land and Improvements will be used for purchasing property, paying back taxes, etc. Condemnations and Demolitions will be used to remove structures from properties we acquire. The Other Funds account will be for HOME funds we receive through Grants and Community Development. Mr. Reznicek suggested the commission could also submit a proposed 2019 budget for land acquisition. He asked for them to have those suggestions to staff by mid-September so the information could be reviewed and feedback provided during the October meeting.

Mr. Dennis Zolper asked if the City Attorney’s Office would handle all of the legal needs for the commission. Mr. Reznicek said some work would be handled in-house while others would need to be outsourced. Ms. Thomason said it would depend on the workload. The city only has two attorneys. It will depend on how many foreclosures the commission decides to pursue.

Mr. Jeff Herndon said he figured there would also need to be some environmental work done of some of the properties.

**B. Letter of Interest. *Discussion.***

After reviewing the revitalization areas, Dr. Warner felt it would be better to allow staff to send out letters without commission approval. This will save time for more discussion during the meetings.

Mr. Smith said did not like the idea of placing someone’s property on a public agenda without first trying to speak with the property owner. If the owner is willing to donate or sell the property, staff will place that information on the agenda for the commission to review.

The commission agreed to allow staff to contact property owners without prior approval.

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Mr. Herndon asked if the city owned any properties that could be placed in the land bank inventory. Mr. Smith said he would review city owned properties and make suggestions at the next meeting regarding which ones could potentially be placed in the land bank inventory.

### **C. Community Outreach**

Mr. Smith felt it was time to start reaching out to the community. The policies governing the acquisition of properties will allow the land bank to work with nonprofits, neighborhood associations, governmental entities, private developers, and citizens of Jonesboro. Smith explained the importance of public involvement. Over the next few months he will set up meetings with various civic clubs, nonprofits, neighborhood associations, and developers. He asked if any commissioner had a group they thought the land bank should speak with to call or send him an email.

Mr. Zolper asked if someone kept a list of all of the neighborhood associations in Jonesboro. Dr. Warner said there was not but this commission would work with Grants and Community Development in the future to put one together.

### **6. Public Comments (Limited to 3 minutes per person)**

Mr. Mike Downing spoke briefly to the commission. He was surprised the State of Arkansas does not allow cities to use some of the major incentive programs that are key to redevelopment such as tax increment financing and property tax abatement. He pointed out how little Arkansas uses eminent domain for redevelopment. Mr. Downing also mentioned his appointment to the Downtown/ASU Corridor committee.

Mr. Zolper wanted to know what incentives are available to developers under Arkansas law.

Mr. Ray Osment said that one of the land banks revitalization areas has been identified by the state as an Opportunity Zone. He asked Mr. Downing if the rules and regulations had been issued for those areas. Mr. Downing was not aware of those being released.

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Mr. Osment also pointed out that impact fees could be used to encourage developers to drive investment in areas that need to be redeveloped rather than building a new development somewhere else.

Ms. Tiffny Calloway said the courses they are offering starting this September will have a section that address neighborhood associations. Mr. Osment asked Ms. Calloway what the difference was between a neighborhood association and a POA or Bill of Assurance. Ms. Calloway said a neighborhood association is a volunteer group that organizes and sets their own boundaries. They can apply for nonprofit status and usually have a Board of Directors. There are usually no fees associated with being part of a neighborhood association.

## **7. Adjournment**

Mr. James Hollywood made the motion to adjourn.