

LAND BANK AUTHORITY

AGENDA

Time: Wednesday, March 12th, 2025, 12PM - 1PM

Place: Annex 1st Floor Conference Room, 420 10th St.

Call to Order: Director Robert Scott, 12:10pm

Board Members Present: Steve Anthony, Deidre Tilley, Michelle Williams

Board Members Absent: Carson Cummings, Sherrie Aaron, Tomeika Farley

Community Reinvestment Staff: Aysia Merritt, Robert Scott, Kimberly Mitchell

Tax Commissioner's Office Staff: David Britt, Jennifer Lunsford

Guests: 3

1. Approve Minutes from January 8th and February 12th, 2025

Minutes will not be approved due to lack of quorum.

2. Director's Report

Director Scott shared that one of the Community Reinvestment CDBG projects, the Food Mill Shared Kitchen project, won an award from the GA Cities Municipal Association and an NCDA award.

3. Success Story – Dew Point Farms

Mr. Brad Barnes with Dew Point Farms presented his success story with a property purchased through the Land Bank. Mr. Barnes stated that he acquired the property through the Land Bank in 2019. He also received CDBG funding to demolish the structure on the property. He stated that he and his wife wanted to create a micro-farm. They cleared overgrowth on the land, brought in 16 yards of compost and started growing vegetables. He added that the farm was organic and used no drip irrigation.

In 2022, the Barnes family purchased the adjacent residential lot and expanded the garden. Since the adjacent lot was in the expanded Historic Lakebottom district, they had to get approvals from Historic Columbus. He stated that the second lot now has fruit trees on the front half and vegetables growing in the rear. He stated that his farm produced about 1,000lbs of produce a year. Once fruit trees are mature, he anticipated that they would grow around 2,000lbs of produce per year.

Mr. Barnes shared that they sold their produce at open market for a while. Now, they sell their produce to the Food Mill (wholesale) and it is resold through the Food Mill Mobile Market in low-income neighborhoods. Finally, he expressed gratitude that the Land Bank allowed an agricultural use on the lot. He shared that he and his wife now speak at

various conferences to talk about the benefits of purchasing through the Land Bank, how to do organic farming, and how to use small spaces for farming.

4. Curtis St Update

Ms. Merritt shared that the updated quitclaim deed for Curtis Street has been filed. She stated that once the applicant has secured [a construction loan], he will notify the board. The applicant has agreed to return three months from date he secures additional funding to provide an update to the Land Bank Authority.

5. Acknowledgements from David Britt

Tax Commissioner Britt greeted the Land Bank Authority board and gave an overview of his experience. He stated that he had joined the tax commissioner's office in 2000. From 2009-2020, he stated that he managed the tax delinquent office. He also shared that he participated in reviving the Land Bank in 2012. He stated that it was great to see where the Land Bank was now.

Commissioner Britt shared that his office is working to rebuild their tax delinquent department. However, he stated that there are new demands in addition to collecting taxes from real and personal property. He stated that his office has also been asked to collect on demolition liens. Commissioner Britt shared that the buildout of the tax delinquent department would depend on this budget season. He stated that the Tax Commissioner's office was a friend to the land bank and that the land bank was high on the radar. However, regarding a timeframe to restart its work with the Land Bank, Commissioner Britt stated that he did not have a timeframe. He shared that he would like to do a delinquent tax sale this year. He would also like to get more aggressive in the next calendar year.

Ms. Tilley asked if Commissioner Britt needed the Land Bank Authority board to provide any assistance in terms of the City Council. She asked if there was anything the board could ask staff to do. Commissioner Britt shared that he would appreciate the board's advocacy. Director Scott stated that he was pleased to develop the relationship between the Tax Commissioner's office and the Community Reinvestment Department towards long-term sustainability. Director Scott thanked the Tax Commissioner for reaching out to Community Reinvestment staff and for attending the Land Bank meeting.

6. Final Acknowledgements

Director Scott shared that the department had transitioned to a new attorney to help increase internal efficiencies.

Call to Adjourn, 12:36pm