

MINUTES - APPROVED

Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Time: 12:00PM-1:00PM

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

Call to Order: Michelle Williams (Secretary), 12:09pm

Attendance: Deidre Tilley, Carson Cummings, Michelle Williams, Sherrie Aaron

Absent: Steve Anthony, Alston Auten

Staff: Natalie Bouyett, Rob Scott, Kim Mitchell

Members of the Public: 3 – Jeff Johnson, Calvin Brown, Dr. Webb

1. Director's Report

April 1-5 is National Community Development Week. April is CDBG Month. To celebrate, we will have a public hearing on April 2 where the public can learn about the Department's current projects, funding amounts, etc.

Let's Grow STEAM held a YCC Expo, where the staff engaged with 10th graders. The students participated in a poll and identified affordable housing as the greatest need.

The Land Bank will host the Invest in Columbus workshop on April 3rd. Director Scott will go to Council on Tuesday, March 26th to receive a proclamation for National Community Development Week and invites the board to attend. The meeting starts at 5:30pm but the proclamation is first on the agenda.

2. Approve Minutes from February 14, 2024

Motion to approve minutes from February 14, 2024

1st - Sherrie Aaron

2nd – Carson Cummings

3. Marketing Update

Ms. Bouyett shares photo of the marketing table in the Annex Building, and shares that she has Land Bank notebooks. She will buy a Land Bank banner for marketing at external events.

4. Financial Report

The Tax Commissioner gave them a deadline of March 15th to create a list of properties for in rem foreclosure. The Land Bank has received some funding from applicants already. She will not petition foreclosure unless funds are received. Ms. Bouyett reviews the budget that was approved in January. There were no questions from the board.

5. Georgia Heirs Property

Councilor Tucker requested information for the community for heirs property issues. The GA Heirs Property Law Center is willing to come lead a workshop in Columbus. They will also assist participants with estate planning. Each plan will cost about \$500 and they plan to serve around 15 families. The Land Bank will host and be the primary partner. Ms. Bouyett asks for the board to approve the \$5,000 workshop fee to bring the GHPLC staff to the city.

Ms. Tilley states that in the past, the GHPLC provided information but did not offer estate planning services. She asks how the Land Bank will determine the households to be served. Ms. Bouyett says they will be elderly and low income. Director Scott adds that whoever is served must be principally low to moderate income. He adds that the program will aim to keep generational wealth in families, and prevent properties from falling into heirs property issues such that the community suffers (due to blight, low maintenance).

Ms. Williams asks how old is considered “elderly.” Director Scott says 62.

Ms. Bouyett says that this program will help to provide more positive messaging in the communities the Land Bank impacts. Showing that the Land Bank is not just interested in taking properties, but preserving the wealth of families already in the communities we are investing in.

Ms. Tilley asks about the maximum budget if the program receives an overwhelming response. Director Scott says the program budget might increase to \$10,000, but it is a pilot project.

Motion to amend the budget to designate \$5,000 for the GHPLC Workshop

1st - Michelle Williams

2nd – Deidre Tilley

6. Resolution to Extinguish Taxes

7. Update on Contract with NeighborWorks Regarding Future Holding Agreement

Ms. Bouyett shares that the agreement with NeighborWorks was unclear about whether the Land Bank would charge \$500 per agreement or \$500 per property. She states that around 12 properties would be transferred to the Land Bank to hold for tax purposes, but that NeighborWorks would be paying the legal fees and the maintenance fees on these properties.

Ms. Aaron states that the Land Bank should charge \$500 per property. She states that at the last meeting, NWC expressed that they might not want the properties back. Ms. Tilley agrees that the fee should be higher. Mr. Cummings asks if holding 12 properties is a normal agreement. He asks if a subsequent agreement might ask the Land Bank to hold more properties or fewer properties. Ms. Bouyett says NWC only has so many properties on the market right now.

Ms. Tilley states that she would like to keep the fee at \$500 per property. She says they don't want to be a warehouse for properties.

Ms. Aaron asks how many properties were in the previous deal where the Land Bank held properties for NeighborWorks. Ms. Bouyett says she thinks it might be 12. Ms. Williams suggests that we go back and look at previous records to see what was done at that time. Mr. Cummings

states that it makes more sense to do it “per property” rather than using a fixed rate. However, he notes that jumping from \$500 to \$6000 is a large jump and NWC may not be open to it.

Ms. Bouyett notes that the more properties the Land Bank holds, the more that can be developed. NWC wants Land Bank to market their properties as well. Ms. Bouyett expresses concern about not being able to security deed any of those properties, so that the Land Bank could insure purchasers the Land Bank identifies actually carry out the agreed upon work.

Ms. Tilley expresses concern about operating as an agent for NWC properties. Ms. Williams and Ms. Aaron express similar concerns.

Ms. Bouyett shares a previous instance where the Land Bank held property for an external party. In that instance, Albany State agreed to quitclaim it to the Land Bank when a buyer was identified. However, in this case NWC would not be quitclaiming property to the Land Bank.

Director Scott suggests increasing sale price or otherwise negotiating with NWC regarding marketing properties for NWC. He asks the board to create a process that it can replicate in future projects.

Ms. Williams asks why NWC cannot quit claim the properties to the Land Bank and have the Land Bank give them a portion of the proceeds. This would give LBA more control over the process. However, Ms. Bouyett does not want to hold a property because of the liability.

Ms. Aaron and Ms. Williams suggest that the Albany process should be the standard. No further action was taken.

8. Review Property Bids and Proposals

2801 4th Ave

Applicant: Jeffrey Johnson

The property is adjacent to a business owned by the applicant. The applicant states that he would like to acquire the property and fence it in, due to homeless encampments on the property. He states that he might also develop the property at a future time. He is in the hardware business and would like overflow property.

Motion to accept the bid for 2801 4th Ave for \$6,500.

1st - Michelle Williams

2nd - Sherrie Aaron

945 Henry Avenue

1st Applicant: Shondell Varciana

Experienced with re-development.

Mr. Cummings notes that 3-6 months appears to be a quick turn around. Ms. Bouyett notes that the Glenwood property was sold in August and completed in January. Ms. Aaron notes that 3-6 months is valid if you have a team available to do the work.

2nd Applicant: Muskogee Group United Investments, LLC, represented by Mr. Calvin Brown

Ms. Aaron asks if they have begun work on the other lots acquired at the last Land Bank board meeting. Mr. Brown states that he has started cleaning the lot on the 8th Avenue property. He added that the other property has a person living on it.

Motion to approve the offer of Ms. Shondell Varciana for 945 Henry Avenue

1st - Sherrie Aaron

2nd – Carson Cummings

913 Charleston Avenue

953 Illges Road

Applicant: Muskogee Group United Investment, LLC, represented by Mr. Calvin Brown

Mr. Brown states that there is a house on the Charleston Avenue lot, but it is overgrown. A picture displayed at the meeting does not appear to show a structure. He states that if there is no house on the lot, he would not like the property.

Ms. Tilley asks how many bids Mr. Brown acquired at the last Land Bank board meeting. Mr. Brown stated that he acquired two properties for Ms. Pamela Brown, three properties for his brother and one for himself. Ms. Aaron says they need more time to see the quality of his company's work. Ms. Williams asks about the timeline and how this will affect the overall timeline of the development of the other properties.

Mr. Brown asks if his partners can acquire these properties if he cannot acquire them today. Ms. Bouyett states that the partners would need to submit their own applications for the properties by the submission deadline.

5029 11th Avenue

Applicant: Theresa Fleming Daniels

The applicant would like to purchase the property to build a home for herself. The applicant plans to get HELOC on her current home. Applicant says current home is worth \$200K and she plans to pay for the land from her savings. Ms. Aaron notes that she might not qualify for the HELOC. Ms. Tilley asks if we can just sell the lot without requiring a structure. Ms. Bouyett responds that the area will be targeted by NWC in the next few years. She suggests putting a security deed that the applicant build a house in 2 years.

Ms. Aaron says she would feel more comfortable seeing a pre-approval on a HELOC. Mr. Cummings agrees that the pre-approval makes sense.

Motion to approve with Contingencies of pre-approval, proof of funds and contractor's quote.

1st. - Sherrie Aaron

2nd. - Michelle Williams

1512 24th Street

Applicant: Jabari Dodson

The lot was approved for development by Habitat, but they found it too hard to construct on. Ms. Bouyett is trying to get rid of this property and dropped cost to \$1500. The lot is very narrow. Ms. Tilley asks if the owner can just maintain the lot and not be required to build on it.

Motion to accept the bid for 1512 24th Street, with the contingency that the lot must be maintained up to code for 12 months.

1st - Deidre Tilley

2nd – Carson Cummings

9. Announcements

Ms. Bouyett announced a planned trip to Savannah on April 9, 2024 and states that the Land Bank meeting on April 10th may need to be moved. Ms. Bouyett asks the board members to notify her if they are interested in joining the trip.

Call to Adjourn

Sherrie Aaron, 1:08pm