



Inspections & Code Update – August 29, 2023

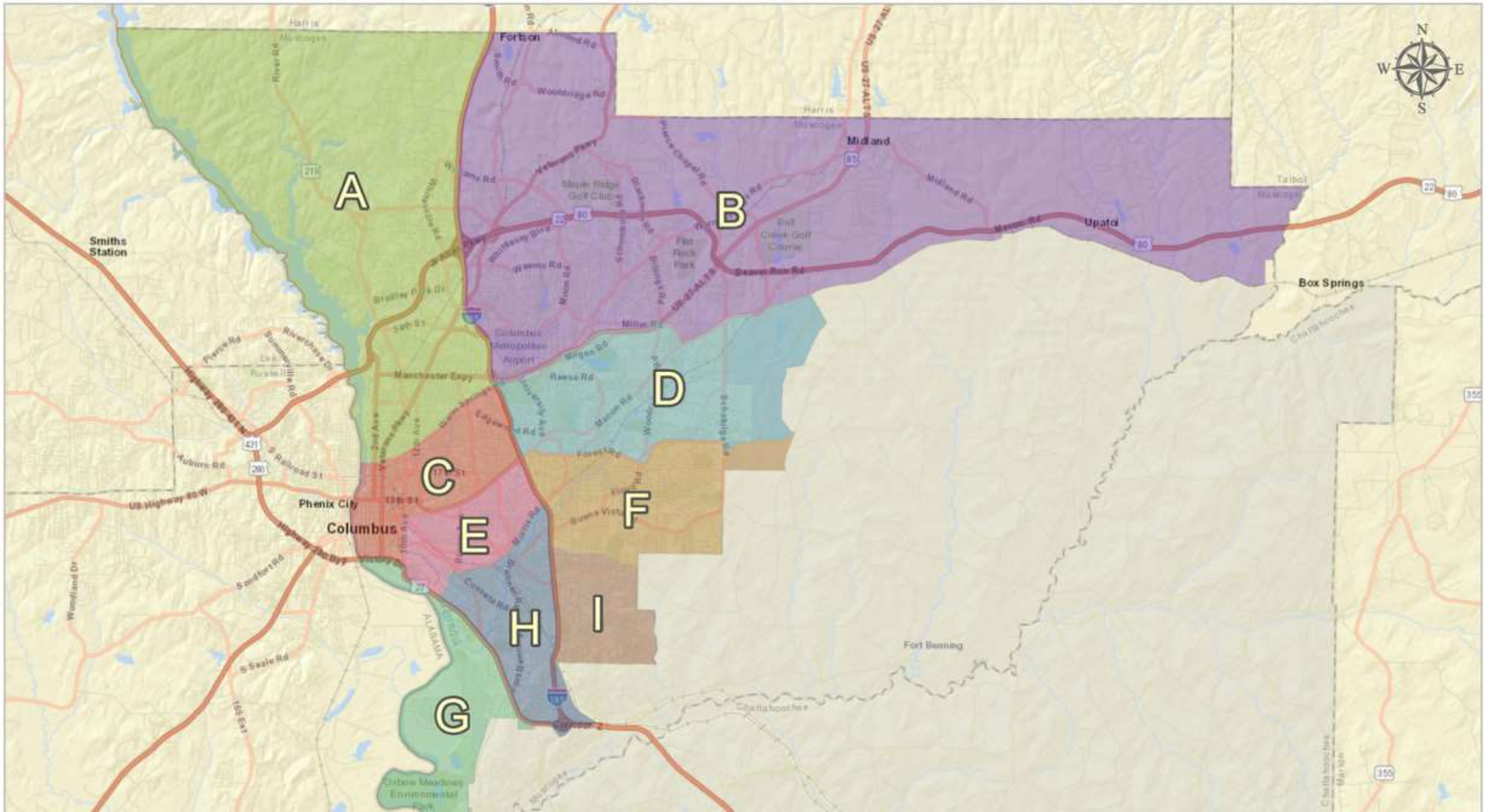
Inspection and Code Department

- Responsible for the enforcement of the Georgia State Building Code along with the City's Development Ordinance, Nuisance Ordinances, and miscellaneous ordinances.
- Responsible for project management of City building projects.
- Total of 30 employees
- Comprised of two divisions
 - Building Permitting and Inspection
 - Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Division

- Code Enforcement Division consists of:
 - Code Enforcement Manager
 - Code Enforcement Technician
 - 9 Code Enforcement Officers
- During FY23, Code Enforcement had 3 vacancies occur at the same time. Code Enforcement has been fully staffed since 7/24/2023.

Code Enforcement Districts



Code Enforcement Responsibilities

- Private Property Code Violations
 - Weeds
 - Solid Waste
 - Junk Vehicles
 - Property Maintenance Code
 - Involuntary Demolition
- Business License Enforcement
 - Non-Renewals
 - Excise Taxes
 - Short Term Vacation Rentals

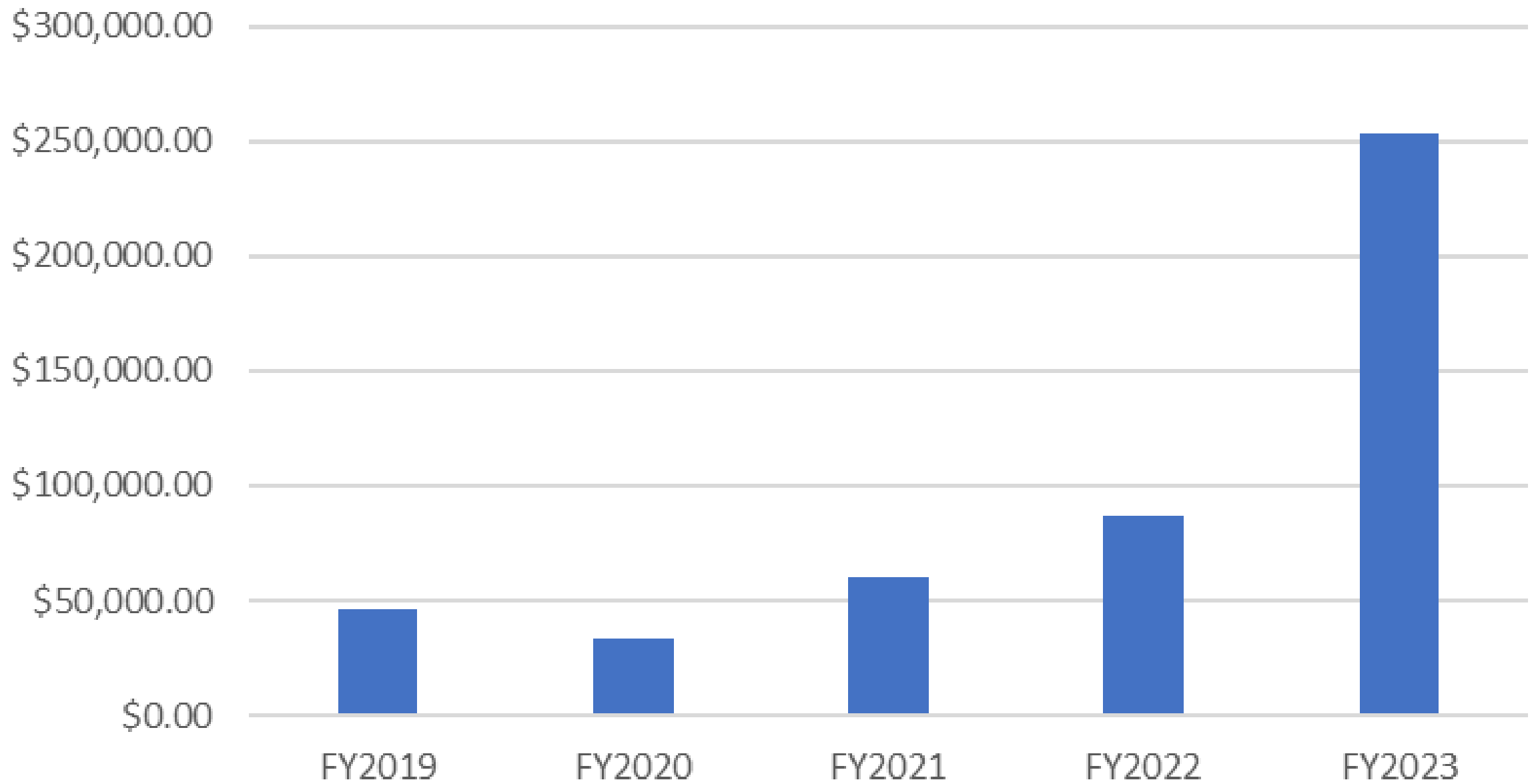
Code Enforcement Responsibilities

- Right of Way Issues
 - Illegal Signs on the ROW
 - Vehicles Obstructing the ROW
 - Commercial Vehicles parked on the ROW
- Landlord/Tenant Issues
 - Enforce the Property Maintenance Code
- Zoning Ordinance Violations

Code Enforcement FY2023 Numbers

- Investigated and Closed 4,525 Code Cases
 - 4,280 (94.6%) of cases closed within 90 days
 - Average case duration was 24.7 days
- Conducted 9,623 inspections
- Removed 67 properties from the Demolition List
- Abated 226 properties for weeds and solid waste violations.
- Towed 67 vehicles off of private property

FY2019 - FY2023 Lot Clearing Expenditures



Receiving Complaints

- Complaints are received many ways:
 - 311 (Q-Alert System)
 - Phone Calls
 - Letters
 - Emails
 - Quality Control Team (75 – 100 weekly)
 - Patrol
- Initial inspections are typically scheduled within 3 business days of complaint.

Ordinances

- Weed violations and the process to abate them are governed by sections 13-113 through 13-115.
- Solid Waste, Junk Vehicle, and Stockpiling Violations and the process to abate them are governed by section 13-167.7

Ordinances

- Property Maintenance issues including landlord/tenant cases are governed by section 8-41 through 8-50.1
- Demolition Cases are governed by section 8-81.1 through 8-90.

Case Procedures - Occupied Property

- During initial inspection warning is delivered to occupant or posted on the property.
- Following expiration of warning period, a follow up inspection is conducted. If no action is taken by occupant, Officer will attempt to issue a citation.
 - If occupant is not available for citation, certified mail will be sent to the occupant as well as the property owner if different.

Case Procedures - Occupied Property

- Following expiration of warning period in letter, Code Enforcement will present evidence to the Recorder's Court in order to obtain a court order to abate the nuisance.
- If the order is granted, contractor will be hired to abate the nuisance.
- Often law enforcement is present during abatement to assist with the process.

Case Procedures - Vacant Property

- Letter is sent to owner's address in the tax records via Certified Mail.
- After warning period expires and no action taken by owner, property is placed on list to contract out abatement of nuisance.
 - If owner lives in Muscogee County, Officer will visit owner's property and attempt to cite owner.
- For weeds/solid waste issues, letter must be sent once every 3 years. Additional violations within the 3-year period can be automatically abated.

Case Procedures – Property Maintenance

- Inspection is completed and a list of violations mailed, or hand delivered to the owner.
- For landlord/tenant cases, landlords are provided reasonable time to fix issue or provide alternate accommodations.
 - For example, on cases with non-functioning Air Conditioning, landlords typically given 24-48 hours to correct.
 - If landlord fails to correct, citation will be issued.

Case Procedures – Property Maintenance

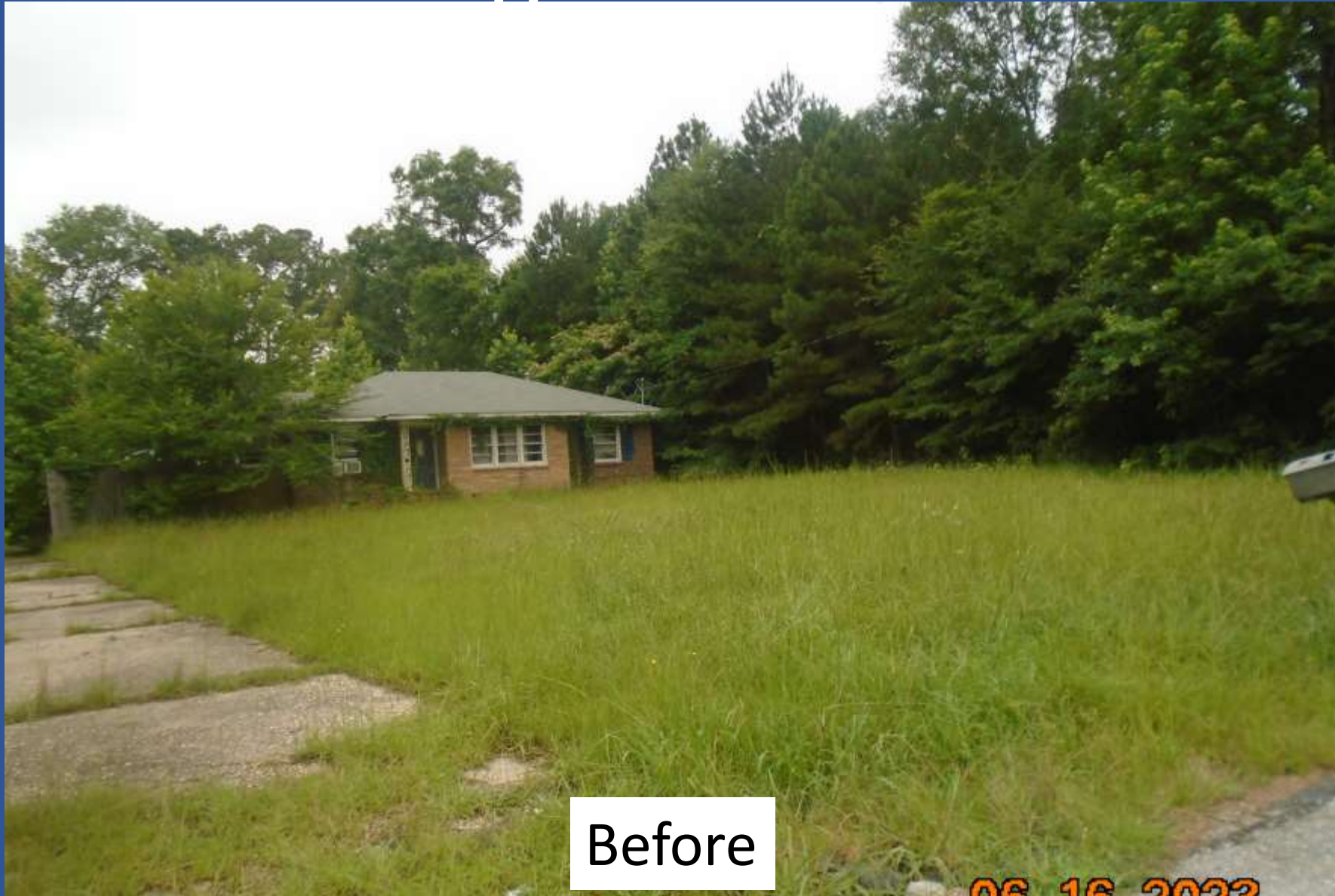
- For other property maintenance cases, owner given reasonable amount of time to correct issues.
- For minor issues, such as rotten fascia board, Code Enforcement continues to track condition of property and works with owner to resolve.
- Code Enforcement does not issue citations for minor property maintenance violations.

Demolition Case Procedures



Typical Complaint Examples

Overgrown Weeds



Before

Overgrown Weeds



After

07 28 2023

Solid Waste



Before

Solid Waste



After

Stockpiling



Before

Stockpiling



After

Stockpiling



Current Photo; Property was cleaned in June 2023

Junk Vehicles



Before

08 02 2023

Junk Vehicles



After

Property Maintenance



03 08 2023

Demolition



Before

Demolition



After

Code Enforcement Challenges

- Repeat Offenders
 - Multiple homeowner occupied properties have \$10,000+ in liens.
- Out-of-Town Owners
 - Response rate from out-of-town owners, especially LLCs, is very low
- United States Postal Service
 - Mail is lost in transit or not delivered at a higher rate than in the past.

Building Permitting and Inspection Division

- Permitting and Inspection Division consists of:
 - Chief Inspector
 - 2 Plans Examiners
 - 3 Permit Technicians
 - 9 Trade Inspectors
- Permitting and Inspection currently has one vacant position, a plumbing/mechanical inspector.

Permitting and Inspection Responsibilities

- Enforcement of the Georgia State Building Codes including Plumbing, Electrical, Gas, and Mechanical codes.
 - Includes review of plans and field inspections to ensure work complies with the Code.
- Administer the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- Enforce the City's Development Ordinance including provisions on historic properties, signage, and zoning.

Permitting and Inspection FY2023 Numbers

- Issued 6,085 permits
- Issued 1,310 Certificate of Occupancies
- Completed 10,788 inspections
- Total Valuation of permitted work \$378,136,247
- Total Revenue \$1,964,236

Permitting and Inspection Future Goal

- Implement online portal to make obtaining permits and requesting inspections easier for customers
 - Plan is to start roll-out with trade permits and inspection requests
 - Certificate of Occupancies, Residential Building Permits, and Commercial Building Permits to follow
 - To be able to review plans digitally, digital plan review tables will be requested for FY2025.

Project Management

- Current Projects
 - City Hall
 - Judicial Center
 - Muscogee County Sheriff's Office Administration Building
 - Pool Replacements
 - Fire Station #5 Replacement
 - Muscogee County Jail Schematic Design
- When construction of Judicial Center starts, recommendation is to hire multiple temporary full-time employees for daily management and oversight of the projects.

Questions?