

April 3, 2025

Dear City of Wauchula Board of Commissioners,

I am reaching out to provide background information on two upcoming cases regarding compliance issues that have evolved into recommendations of foreclosure. Things have been progressing rapidly over the past two months with respect to both 126 East Townsend Street and 121 West Main Street and we want to be certain that you have all the background information prior to ruling whether the cases should be tabled or moved into the county court system. It is my hope that once you have a chance to review this letter, these properties can be removed from the immanent foreclosure process to allow us time to focus on our continued talks with The Development Group/IDA and a local developer with whom they recommended, as well as continue the ongoing work to bring these properties into compliance. Although I will do my best to be brief, I also want to be sure that you are aware of all the events that have transpired leading up to this point.

My sister (Samantha Brown-Parks, MD) and I (Andy Brown Milheizler, PE) were becoming increasingly concerned about our father's mental decline and planned a joint trip to Wauchula from Atlanta, GA where we both reside to assess the situation and help him get his affairs in order. At this point, our plan was simply to help our father organize his assets and evaluate the progression of his early dementia. When my sister and I arrived, it was clear that our father's mental state was far worse than we had anticipated. We met with his assistant of 7 years, Kristina ( K'tina ) Santos, to review his current rentals, properties, and accounts to get a handle on the full state of his affairs. As we began looking closer, we found excessive ongoing fraudulent activity in multiple bank accounts that has been occurring for several years. Up to this point, we had continually been told by Ms. Santos that although some of his properties had compliance issues, she had them all under control – we had no idea how far from the truth this was or how long these problems had existed. A few days following this, Ms. Santos tragically took her own life, leaving our father completely devastated and further confused and agitated. This also left my sister and I with more questions than answers and a tremendous amount of catching up to do.

The first compliance meeting that we attended was on February 27, 2025, approximately one week after we came down to visit our father and were apprised of the overall situation. We met with the City's compliance department prior to this and realized the degree to which these compliance issues existed. At the end of that case, we were told that if we were able to make significant strides towards compliance with the outstanding items, the properties would not be pushed further into the foreclosure process and we would be able to finish work on the properties and begin the process for lien reductions. This is based on my own notes taken from the meeting, as minutes have not been published online since November 2024 at the time of writing this letter. Regardless, we came out of this meeting with the best of intentions, hired a contractor, and began work on the properties and identification of potential future buyers. We continued the coordination with Raina Bergens to obtain more detailed lists of all issues that need to be addressed on the two properties (as well as others that are heading toward compliance issues) to prevent them from going into foreclosure.

The next compliance meeting was far less productive and I was absolutely taken aback at the Magistrate's ruling recommending foreclosure on both properties discussed above at the previous meeting. As mentioned, my sister and I both reside in Atlanta and connected to the April 27, 2025 City of Wauchula Compliance Meeting via Zoom. I was having technical difficulties and was unable to connect to the audio during the meeting. Our contractor, Jacob Stinton, was set to attend the meeting in person to represent our father and answer any remaining questions. The meeting was published on the City of

Wauchula website as beginning at 10:00AM (I have attached a screenshot of the website to verify this), so our contractor showed up at 9:58AM and was told by the Magistrate that the ruling had already been made and the properties recommended for foreclosure due to unpermitted activities. He told our contractor, rather unkindly, to check the minutes if he wanted more detail. The meeting was begun at 9:30AM, with my father's cases first on the agenda. The meeting was still in session when our contractor arrived (again, at the time published on the website) and I would have expected a concession to revisit the case and ruling, particularly since the incorrect meeting time was posted on the website; however, this grace was not extended. If it had been, he would have been told that all work done to date on the properties did not require a permit, as stated by the building official (also NOT present at this hearing to provide evidence) to our contractor, directly following the compliance meeting on February 27, 2025. Additionally, drawings were already underway for the repair of the crack in the building to submit for permitting. As we only had 28 days from the previous hearing, it was unreasonable to expect that could have been completed in that timeframe. The damaged wood frontage had been removed, façade repairs made, and approved paint colors purchased – all items that were cleared with the building department by our contractor as not needing a permit. As far as the Townsend property, he was told it was all considered repair work and did not require a permit. We have been completely transparent with regard to the situation and our intentions from the beginning, but I do not believe that has been reciprocated.

The procedures of due process have been suspect, at best, on these cases. Information and private family matters have been leaked from phone calls, misinterpreted from public meetings, and splayed in a negative light across the front page of the local newspaper with an extensive, fallacious write up at every turn. We have been unsolicitedly approached by various parties with information that we did not disperse regarding properties that are not even within the City limits, with ridiculous predatory offers of low-ball purchases and leases. People are aware of our father's holdings, including knowledge of bank account balances and other information that is clearly not part of the public record. My father had a home invader immediately following the newspaper story on the first hearing. I cannot imagine this to be a coincidence, and I am appalled by the lack of consideration that our family is receiving at the moment. This has all caused extreme distress to our father, who is already suffering from severe stress and anxiety related to his condition. I would expect our small town to support those in crisis, particularly when it involves one their eldest and most well-known residents. Our father (and mother) were both born and raised in Wauchula, and my sister and I lived there for much of our childhoods. He is most definitely a character, but due to the many extenuating circumstances of this case we do not feel that he is being treated fairly, and the burden of that has fallen on his daughters as he no longer has an employed assistant.

We have done our best to conduct this process in the most honest and transparent way possible and keep everyone apprised of what was occurring at every step. We have focused on dealing with the most critical compliance issues first, which are Townsend and Main Street, but we also have a much larger plan to regarding the sale of the remaining 25+ properties, on top of managing our father's long term care plan. In an effort to assist the City with the reintegration process of these properties, I reached out to Jessica Newman of the Community Development District and Sarah Evers of The Development Group and have discussed the different options and opportunities, particularly for the Main Street Property. They have been helpful in connecting us with a local development company with whom we are currently in negotiations. This is the focus we would like to pursue and are moving forward while also maintaining momentum on addressing the compliance issues with our contractor, Jacob Stinton. We understand the desire of the City of Wauchula to not only fix these properties, but to have them support the parameters of the comprehensive economic growth plan and be a positive asset to the city. I have great hope that

we can move forward with site repairs and investigation into sales, as opposed to contending with additional legal matters.

For a combination of legal, moral, and logistical reasons, it is my earnest believe that the most appropriate path forward is to terminate all current actions toward foreclosure and re-evaluate all accumulated liens and fines on each property, with the understanding that all current work toward compliance will continue. No properties can be sold, by Florida State Statute, unless all properties owned by an individual are free and clear of liens. For this reason, we are completely prevented from downsizing any of our father's assets until these issues are resolved. We have spent as much time on the phone with lawyers, city officials, and politicians as we have with our contractor to address what truly began as relatively minor issues. These compliance issues are façade and appearance related; although they are admittedly unattractive in the community, there have never been unpaid taxes or any threat to public health or safety. The excessive hurricane damage over the past few years has only exacerbated the situation on his properties as well as those owned by others in the county.

Moving forward toward foreclosure in the legal process will benefit no one and only prove to consume money, time, and energy that could be devoted to far more productive activities in reaching the economic and developmental goals of the City of Wauchula and Hardee County. The progress toward full compliance since the February compliance meeting is undeniable and can be clearly documented. Because my sister and I are now involved and have essentially taken over management of our father's properties, I believe that enough evidence exists to demonstrate that the City will most benefit from allowing us to clean up these properties and begin downsizing our father's holdings without additional legal distractions.

We are available to discuss any of the information stated above or answer any additional questions that you may have and can be reached at the numbers below. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Andy Brown Milheizler, PE  
(678) 596-0440

Samantha Brown-Parks, MD  
(404) 355-2524

CC: City of Wauchula, Building Department  
City of Wauchula, Code Compliance Department  
Congressman Scott Franklin (FL-18)