

Jonesboro Land Bank Commission Minutes
Tuesday, February 13, 2023
City Council Chambers, 300 South Church Street, Jonesboro, AR

1. Roll Call

Present: 7 – Derek Bowman, Daisy Freeman, Jay McLeod, Corey Mills, Gabe Roberts, Amanda Eaton & Dr. Bob Warner

Absent: 2 - Dennis Zolper, & Drew Waddell

2. Finding of a quorum

Affirmed there was a quorum.

3. Approval of Minutes

A. December 12, 2024

A motion was made by Jay McLeod to approve the minutes. Amanda Eaton seconded. The motion PASSED unanimously.

4. Old Business

A. Prospective Properties for Parks

- 700 S. Patrick

Monica Percy, staff, stated the owner of 700 S. Patrick are standing firm on their original price of \$65,000 plus closing costs. She stated the Land Bank had initially offered the owner \$20,000 in August of 2023, the owner then asked for \$65,000. The Land Bank made its final counteroffer in November of 2023. In January of 2024, the owner's attorney confirmed they would not accept anything under \$65,000 plus closing costs.

A member of the commission asked if the City has an appraisal for the site, Percy confirmed, that the appraised value was at \$31,000.

Roger McKinney, Parks Department, explained the historical and cultural significance of this site. He stated the house on site belonged to the principal of the Booker T. Washington School. If the city was able to purchase the site then there would be a possibility of transforming it into an African-American Culture Center. The current center that currently exists in the E. Boone Watson Center has run out of room and needs a place it can expand, this site would be a perfect option. McKinney confirmed the owner is ready to move forward with the property, whether that be selling to the City or another entity.

Brandon Shrader, Parks Department, spoke on the importance of this site's location. 700 S. Patrick is located just across the street from the existing E. Boone Watson Community Center. Acquiring this property would allow the Parks Department to beautify the area with green space and maybe a small park-like area. He stated this would give us a chance to make the area

more inviting, especially with the park right next to it. Shrader stated they are unsure of the cost to revitalize the area, this project is still in the early planning stage.

Tony Thomas, Administration, explained there are a number of opportunities for funding for a project like this. The City's Grant Department has been seeking out grant opportunities, however, this is in the early stages as well. The property is not on the historic register but that is something that can be explored further when the time comes.

McKinney stated the property is multiple lots. The house sits on a couple of lots and the remaining lots are open space. He also mentioned Arkansas State University is interested in partnering with the City on this project.

Several commission members expressed concern that the cost of rehabbing the house may be costly, therefore the purchase price should be viewed as the cost for vacant lots.

Tony Thomas stated the Land Bank is not responsible for the renovation of the structure nor for locating funding. If the renovation is determined to be too costly then the property would go to the Land Bank for redevelopment. We do see this as a viable purchase by the Land Bank.

Dr. Warner, Chair, stated the original appraisal price does not take into account the cultural significance or the location of the existing city park.

Corey Mills, commissioner, stated it seems like now we just need to decide whether or not to pay the \$65,000. If the site isn't utilized as a museum then the land can potentially go to the Park Department as a historic site or as a beautification project.

A motion was made by Derek Bowman to make the recommendation to the City Council. Corey Mills seconded. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Dr. Warner asked if the existing structure is not renovated by the City then the property will go to the Land Bank? They would go into our inventory, correct?

Tony Thomas affirmed the property would return to the Land Bank for use if the structure was not developed by the Park Department.

5. New Business

A. Bridge Property

Pearcy stated the appraisal is in progress for 107 Bridge. This property is currently owned by the City, the appraisal will provide the commission with an idea of an amount to offer the property owner of 106 Bridge.

No action was needed for this item.

B. 217 S. Bridge

Pearcy stated the owner of 217 S. Bridge is open to selling the property to the Land Bank. He requested that, if interested, the Commission throw an offer on the table and we can go from there. The owner is not in a rush to sell so we have a little time to consider if we are interested in the property. Pearcy also stated this lot is located south of the other properties the Land Bank currently has on Bridge. 217 S. Bridge is on the other side of the bridge, so this property is not adjacent to the others we have. However, the zoning is still R-2 and it is located in the industrial arts district.

Gabe Roberts, Vice Chair, recommended tabling this item until the appraisal for 107 Bridge comes back. He stated this would give us a better idea of what to offer the property owner.

A motion was made by Derek Bowman to table this item. Amanda Eaton seconded. The motion PASSED unanimously.

C. 1100 S Culberhouse

Dr. Warner stated he had been in contact with the property owner of 1100 S. Culberhouse and they would be willing to sell a portion of the property and donate a portion. He stressed the importance of the location of this property. This site sits adjacent to the CWL Park, this would give the City a chance to expand the park or provide some other type of amenity to the community.

Pearcy stated the site is located in the R-2 zoning district and also falls within the neighborhood transitional district.

Amanda Eaton, commissioner, stated it would be a good idea to get an appraisal for this property and to see if the current owner would be willing to split the cost of appraisal.

Dr. Warner confirmed this was a good idea and he would be in contact with the owner to see what they thought.

No action was needed for this item.

D. 507 Woodrow

Pearcy stated a donation application for this property has been received and the appraisal is in progress. This item will be on the agenda again once the appraisal is completed.

No action was needed for this item.

E. 2024 Land Bank Projects/Goals

This item will be revisited at the next meeting.

6. Public Comments (3 minutes per person)

There were none.

7. Staff Comments

8. Adjournment