

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 30, 2019

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Called Meeting on Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 5PM at the Cornelia Community House, 601 Wylie Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor Irby called the meeting to order with the following members present: Commissioners Don Bagwell, Tony Cook, Wesley Dodd, Jr., and Janice Griggs. Also present: City Manager Donald Anderson, Jr., Building Inspector Robert Gutowski, Downtown Development Manager Jessie Owensby, and Janie N. Henderson, Secretary to the City Commission/City Clerk.

City Manager Anderson explained that the purpose of the meeting is to continue the discussion with the property owners of the vacant/blighted properties. Mr. Adam Gazell from GMRDC, came forward to facilitate the meeting.

The following citizens were present: Joe Goss, Doug Fleming, Don Higgins, and Carol Lonergan. Mr. Fleming, Mr. Goss, and Mr. Higgins had received the initial letter that was sent out and were at the March 7th Meeting. Ms. Lonergan was not present at the first meeting because she did not receive a letter.

Mr. Gazell stated that if we were to find seed money, grants, or funds to take care of the dilapidated buildings maybe we could have a private/public partnership and come up with a plan to get things moving. He said we need an investor, someone to get things kicked off. Joe Goss stated he thinks it's too late to do anything. Jessie stated, "I disagree, that it's too late, it's a new culture, how can we work together to make it happen". She said she has people come in to see her and they are interested in leasing or purchasing a property that is ready for business, and when we don't have anything available they go to another community that does have property available. Mr. Higgins stated that he's overwhelmed, but is glad we are all gathered and talking. He said we need to look inward and consider what we can do. He suggested that we do a beautification program and clean up the streets, paint our buildings, add foliage to our streetscape and pick up the trash. City Manager Anderson said we have a cleanup day in the community every year and we can't get anyone to come out and volunteer. Jessie said Don is in her office at least once a week with suggestions and is very involved with the Downtown Development Authority and he has signed a couple of new leases recently.

Mr. Gazelle said that we need to come up with a "brand", a theme to build on. He said we need to repackage our Urban Redevelopment Plan and come back with a suggested strategy in about 6 months.

Commissioner Dodd asked if we need to back off for a while with any action against the individuals that received the letter about their blighted/vacant properties. City Manager Anderson stated that we have some that we are taking to court and we have gone too far to back off now; it has become a safety concern..

Mr. Goss had several complaints about things in the City and stated that the citizens have lost faith in the City. He said little things make big mountains. Jessie asked Mr. Goss where he meets and talks to others and hears the rumors he mentioned, she would like to go and listen to their concerns and provide some answers. Mr. Goss didn't answer.

Mayor Irby thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Dodd made the motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:45 PM; seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 – 0.

Janie N. Henderson, Secretary to the
City Commission

J.C. Irby, Jr., Mayor

