

CITY OF LAKELAND

**Nuisance Abatement Board
March 20, 2024**

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER – 3 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Terry Carter, Dawn Chapman, Daniel Price, John Quirk III, James Ring, David Stille, and Alonzo Thompson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 17, 2024

UPDATE

1920 E Edgewood Ave Unit #2

COMPLAINTS

814 N New York Av

821 N Missouri Av

612 W Myrtle St

MISCELLANEOUS

CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT

**Nuisance Abatement Board
January 17, 2024**

The Nuisance Abatement Board met in the City Commission Chambers. Members Terry Carter, Dawn Chapman, Daniel Price, John Quirk III, James Ring, David Stille, and Alonzo Thompson were present. Assistant City Attorney Alex Landback, Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman, General Counsel for Lakeland Police Department David Carmichael, and City Staff were present.

Call to Order – 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman called the roll.

Approval of Minutes

Action: Terry Carter moved to approve the October 18, 2023 minutes. Dawn Chapman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Action: Terry Carter moved to appoint David Stille as the Chair for 2024. Daniel Price seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Action: Terry Carter moved to approve James Ring as the Vice-Chair for 2024. Daniel Price seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

COMPLAINTS - 1920 East Edgewood Ave Unit #2

Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman swore in all witnesses testifying in the hearing.

Officer Macson McGuirk reviewed the complaint. A three-pronged approach was used involving the landlord, a neighbor, and LPD Officers. Attempts have been made to stop illegal drug activity and nuisance problems to include police interaction and setting up surveillance systems. The resident, Lorraine Duffy, refuses to stop allowing people involved in illegal narcotics from coming to her home. Many of the transients who frequent the residence have a significant criminal background. There have been seven confirmed overdoses at the apartment. The resident has been caught actively providing Narcan to users to temporarily counteract the effects of opioids in the body to prevent an overdose. Neighbors have complained of feeling unsafe.

The Board asked if Lorraine Duffy has ever been arrested for this? Florida Statute precludes law enforcement from arresting anyone involved in the response of an

overdose. The victim and the person who called 911 (Lorraine Duffy) are both protected. Previously, she has been arrested for theft but nothing specific to drugs. LPD has arrested individuals who admitted to drug use in that apartment. Even though Ms. Duffy is not physically selling illegal narcotics herself, she has intentionally allowed the apartment to be used for illegal drug activity.

LPD was able to file a complaint affidavit for the operation of dwelling for the purpose of illegal narcotics. This is a felony and those charges have been filed with the State Attorney's Office, awaiting a warrant. They have not been in contact with Ms. Duffy since. She left the apartment on December 27, 2023.

Mike Melito has been the property manager at Lake Bentley Shores for the past seven years. He has seen occasional glimpses of nuisance activity at the residence, but it has significantly increased recently. Mr. Melito was appalled at what he saw after installing surveillance cameras. They found needles and bags of drugs and witnessed drug interactions in the parking lot. Transients' traffic has slowed since Ms. Duffy left on December 27, 2023. However, there are still transients who are unaware she is not there and continue to stop by.

The Board discussed:

- Where did Ms. Duffy go on December 27, 2023? No one is sure.
- What is in the apartment now? In the last few days, the apartment has undergone renovation.
- If she was not selling drugs, what was her income in order to continue living there? LPD officers only know she was unemployed.
- Thanked Mr. Melito for being a partner with the Lakeland Police Department to address this issue.

Jess Dimambro is the owner of 1920 East Edgewood Dr, Apartment M1. He bought the condo as an investment to establish himself in Lakeland. During his first night, he compared the noises he heard upstairs to a pack of hyenas. He was unable to sleep for the first 3 months. He went to the HOA and asked permission to install security cameras. He started with a Ring doorbell at his front door and saw packages were stolen. There are eight cameras around his condo, and they have accounted for 125 different faces of transients. He also has 1,400 pictures of drug activity going through this unit. It has affected his sense of safety and his health (he has developed ulcers and now takes medication). Mr. Dimambro has also been approached by Lorraine Duffy multiple times as she made allegations of her being raped in order to have access to his security cameras.

The Board discussed:

- Appreciation for Mr. Dimambro speaking. Lakeland is a wonderful community to live in and the Nuisance Abatement Board is part of the process to ensure Lakeland remains a great place to live.
- Who owns the unit? LR IRL Corporation which is solely owned by Mr. Duffy. The tenant occupying the unit is Mr. Duffy's ex-wife, Lorraine Duffy.

Raymond Duffy is the owner of LR IRL Corporation which owns the property at East Edgewood Drive. It is a 25-year-old corporation currently active in the State of Delaware. The resident of the property is his ex-wife. She is the mother of his three children and has a known drug addiction. Mr. Duffy's goal was to keep her off the streets and provide a roof over her head. He had no formal lease agreement with her; just that pay the HOA and maintenance fees and utilities. Over the past 18 years, she has been put through rehab many times.

The Board discussed:

- Mr. Duffy's first notification of nuisance abatement came from his ex-wife after she was served her Notice of Hearing by LPD officers. He did not have prior contact with the HOA or Mike Melito.
- After renovations, he has no interest in renting the unit out again. He will sell it as soon as possible.
- Even though Lorraine Duffy voluntarily vacated the property, she would still have a claim to move back into the residence since she has lived there for 30 years.
- The power and light have been disconnected at the unit. The final bill was paid, and she is not receiving any more mail.

David Carmichael explained they typically lock the property down for 12 months, but that does not seem appropriate when the owner of the property wants to actively help. There is a pattern of behavior from Lorraine Duffy that we cannot account for. He recommends locking the property down long enough for Mr. Duffy to get an eviction done.

Mr. Duffy has filed a trespass warning authorization with the City of Lakeland this week, giving LPD authority to trespass anyone on the property other than Mr. Duffy and his workers. The community has gone through enough. He requests the opportunity to fix it up, get it back on the market, and sold.

Officer McGuirk stated the trespass warning authorization is specific to the confines of the physical apartment. Mr. Duffy has received his paperwork and he has not filed an eviction knowing what he was coming into today. LPD recommends complete abatement for a 6-month period, providing access only to owner, so LPD has authority to arrest anyone coming onto property to include Lorraine Duffey. If all of Mr. Duffy's renovated work is completed ahead of schedule, the NAB order can be removed sooner.

Member James Ring made a motion to abate the property for 6 months, providing specific access only to the owner to make repairs in preparation of selling the property. If repairs are complete prior to 6-month period, the owner can request the Board remove the abatement to sell the property. This is contingent upon the owner pursuing the process to removing any tenants from the property. Member Dawn Chapman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.