

**CITY OF LAKELAND**

**Nuisance Abatement Board  
April 17, 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 – March 20, 2024**

**COMPLAINTS**

**411 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
418 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT**

**Nuisance Abatement Board  
March 20, 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 the 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 January 17, 2024 minutes. John Quirk seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Update – 1920 E Edgewood Ave Unit #2**

This was an unusual landlord/tenant case because there was not a lease between the landlord and tenant. As a result, the landlord had to file an unlawful detainer action to take the legal steps to preclude the tenant from returning to the residence so the owner could start moving forward with the nuisance abatement board recommendations. When a rental property is declared nuisance, it cannot be abated if, after notice of abatement, the landlord begins a process within 30 days to address the issue and completes it within a reasonable time thereafter. The owner, Raymond Duffy, has done this. The property is locked and can be accessed only by the property owner to get work done and complete the rehabilitation in a reasonable amount of time (180 days). Currently, the property owner, property manager, and neighbors are satisfied with the work being done.

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

**COMPLAINT - 612 W Myrtle St.**

The residence is owned by Preston Street Capital LLC. The Lakeland Police Department has made several attempts to stop illegal drug activity and other nuisance problems at the residence, including making arrests and conducting two search warrants over the past four years. No actions have been taken on the part of the owners to deter illegal activities on the property. The residence is frequented by convicted felons with histories of crimes for use, sale, and possession of illegal drugs and other violent crimes. LPD

respectfully requested the Nuisance Abatement Board find the property is a public nuisance and should be closed for a period of one year.

**Motion: Terry Carter motioned to abate the property for 12 months.**

David Carmichael and Alex Landback reminded the board members because this is a landlord/tenant case the board is able to make an order requiring the owner to adopt such procedure to abate any such nuisance. The board may also enter into an order immediately prohibiting the maintenance of that nuisance to include the closure of the property. The board also has the authority to levy a fine.

**Action: Terry Carter motioned to find LPD has proven this property is a nuisance and the board declares the property is a public nuisance under the condition the owner has 30 days to rehab the property; if no action is taken by the owner, the abatement order would be effective for a year. John Quirk seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

**Action: Terry Carter motioned for the board to entertain a request if the property owner wants to explain why the abatement order should be changed. John Quirk seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **COMPLAINT – 821 N Missouri Av**

The residence is owned by Florida Investment Group LLC. They also own the next property listed on the agenda, 814 N New York Ave. The Lakeland Police Department reported the property has been a location of rampant drug use, sales, and the location for persons with extensive criminal histories. The Lake Wire neighborhood always had illegal drug and prostitution activity. LPD has been trying to address these problems with the help of the community. They are on a path to doing that, but these homes keep getting occupied by bad actors. LPD requests the Nuisance Abatement Board find this property a public nuisance and close it for one year.

Representatives of the Florida Investment Group LLC, Anne and Eric Greenhow, were present. As soon as they received the notice of hearings from the City (821 N Missouri Ave and 814 N New York Ave), they got both tenants immediately out of the homes. They were not aware of any issues until they received letters about this and wished LPD officers came to them sooner because they would have addressed the situation immediately. When they lease properties, they do online background checks on their tenants and make periodic visits to the residence. The Greenhows have several LLCs and make an effort to purchase renovated rental properties in this area to help the community.

Officer Hammersla explained that if landlords are not doing their due diligence, tenants will rent the property for drug money. There must be follow up by the owner to know who is actually living in the house.

Alex Gomez is the City of Lakeland Code Enforcement Officer for the Northwest area. After researching the different businesses Anne and Eric Greenhow are attached to via Sunbiz, he ran the business names through the City's IMS system which brought up code enforcement cases ranging from 2014 to present day. Even though Eric Greenhow gets the violation taken care of, it only gets addressed after he has been notified. Proactive does not mean acting afterwards.

The Nuisance Abatement Board want a plan from the Greenhows. The goal is to stop these issues from occurring again. The Lakeland Police Department will not act as the property manager. It is not the number of properties the Greenhows own that is the problem, it is the mismanagement of those properties. Eric Greenhow explained there was a mutual termination of the lease agreement.

Alex Landback explained if the owners are trying to involuntarily remove the tenant from the property, they might have to get an ejectment action or an unlawful detainer. If the tenant, on their own, has sublet the property to unknown individuals then those individuals may not be aware they are not welcome back in the house. To prevent them from returning, an ejectment or unlawful detainer might also need to include any unknown tenants.

Sharon McGriff is a resident of North Lake Wire and lives close to both properties (821 N Missouri Av and 814 N New York Av). If the owners would take the opportunity to ride by their properties at different times of the day and night, they would see the traffic coming back and forth from inside the house. The owners need to ask more questions of the potential tenants. Are they employed? Do they have efficient income?

Anne Greenhow stated that she does ride by the area and sees drug activity, but not on her properties. Eric Greenhow asserted that he also is present in the neighborhood very often, but he is not riding through at 2:00 am.

Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman swore in a new witness, Michael Joseph.

Michael Joseph is the president of the North Lake Wire Homeowners' Association. The community has worked hard to beautify their neighborhood. It is difficult to maintain beautification when they must deal with these nuisance houses. He requested the board please help them board up that house.

James Ring thanked Mr. Joseph and entire North Lake Wire Community for coming to speak. One of the greatest goals of law enforcement is to work with the community to find a solution. Now the Greenhows know the key players of the community and he encourages them to get on a first name basis with everyone in that neighborhood.

**Action: James Ring motioned to declare this property nuisance and give the property owners 30 days to remedy through a lawful eviction. Daniel Price seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Eric Greenhow said they would love to be invited to the HOA meeting and be part of the North Lake Wire community.

Alex Landback clarified for the order the owner will have 30 days to complete the eviction of the tenant to include the ejection of any unknown persons, if necessary. Additionally, failure to remedy the issue will result in a 12-month abatement of the property.

**Motion: James Ring amended his original motion to include a 12-month revocation of the property if the owners fails to remedy the issue within 30 days.**

Eric Greenhow informed the board they will begin a formal eviction process tomorrow. He will keep Alex Landback informed of the process.

**Action: David Stille called for a vote of the amended motion and it passed unanimously.**

David Stille (Chair) left the meeting at 4:03 pm. James Ring (Vice Chair) chaired the remainder of the meeting.

### **COMPLAINT - 814 N New York Ave**

This residence is also owned by Florida Investment Group LLC. A location history for the residence revealed 20 known calls for service to include disturbances, 911 calls, burglaries, stolen vehicle reports, and narcotics complaints/arrests. No actions have been taken on the part of the owner to deter illegal activities on the property. The Lakeland Police Department requests the Nuisance Abatement Board find the property a public nuisance and close the property for one year.

The property owners, Randall and Eric Greenhow, contacted David Carmichael within days of receiving the Notice of Hearing. They proceeded to terminate the lease with the previous tenant and placed a new tenant in the residence.

Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman swore in new witnesses, Cindy Garcia and Cynthia Hems.

Section 8 Program Managers Cindy Garcia and Cynthia Hems elaborated on the Section 8 Program eligibility. The Homeless Coalition does all the intake and then sends a referral to the Section 8 Program. With the information they learned today, they would take the evidence and move forward with the tenant's termination process.

John Quirk explained the Section 8 Program process is the same as any other tenant except the payments come from the Housing Authority. The tenant still has to file an application with the landlord, meet requirements, and the landlord has the ability to reject any application.

Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman swore in new witness, Judith Wiggins.

Judith Wiggins lives next to 814 N. New York Ave. She has contacted the police about drugs on the property. The landlords must take responsibility for who they allow to reside in the home. She has security cameras and sees who goes in and out. She has been in the community for 7 years and has never seen anything like what is going on now. The community is tired of the prostitution and drug dealers.

Commissioner Guy LaLonde came forward representing constituents of North Lake Wire. It is the landlord's ultimate responsibility to ensure they know their tenants. He does not see proper management of these properties. He diligently walks and drives around neighborhoods, attends all meetings, and participates in cleanups. He has seen this neighborhood grow, change, settle, and deteriorate. Commissioner LaLonde does not want to hurt the business owner, but it is important the nuisance abatement board holds people accountable. This is no one else's job but the property manager. He thanked LPD for their due diligence to ensure the safety of the neighborhood.

David Carmichael explained there is not enough grounds yet for this case to be an abatement. The statute requires a certain amount of types of criminal activity to occur within a 6-month window. With the ejection of the previous tenant and subsequent transition of the new tenant, they have fallen short of the 6-month window.

**Action: In an abundance of caution, LPD is not asking for an abatement on the property at this time.**

James Ring does not fault Mr. Greenhow in the placement of the new tenant as he trusted the system to work. In the future, he encourages Mr. Greenhow to do background checks on all tenants regardless of the program referral.

Eric Greenhow explained they will enhance their background checks. He does not want to have drug activity on his property, he wants the Lake Wire community to be nice, and he is open to law enforcement's ideas on improving background checks.

John Quirk appreciates owners and landlords who are willing to work with Section 8. The rules recently changed with Section 8 and felons can still get vouchers so long as they were not involved in a violent crime.

The board discussed: it is evident the owners are unable to properly manage these properties. These investigations occurred over a period of time and effective property management would have caught these issues. The board encouraged the owners to improve background checks and meet with Mr. Joseph and LPD to develop open lines of communication. The owners should also look at editing their leases to show statements like, "If there are people allowed by the tenant to occupy the residence and they are not on lease, the tenant can be evicted for violating the lease."

James Ring said this meeting was a beautiful display of the community coming together. Everyone wants to resolve this problem in a proactive manner. He hopes the Greenhows

will meet with everyone in the neighborhood. The board does not want to take property owners rights away but sometimes it is necessary.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.