

OPERATION GREEN WAVE: Progress in West Birmingham

I hope you have heard about our recently launched Operation Green Wave. Birmingham Department of Public Works is making great strides in cleaning up and improving the overall aesthetic of communities and neighborhoods in the western quadrant of our city. We are utilizing all our city equipment, manpower, and resources to cut vacant lots, clear right of ways and remove brush and trash. In addition, code enforcement officials and environmental police are following behind to tag and remove inoperable vehicles.

All city departments are working in conjunction with this effort. Equipment Management is on standby to repair equipment quickly, Municipal Court is holding Community Courts to support code enforcement and the Community Development Department is diligently working with the Land Bank Authority to transfer ownership of abandoned and tax delinquent properties to citizens that will properly care for them. In addition, the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits (PEP) will continue to tear down vacant houses at an unprecedented rate.

William A. Bell, Sr.

While we are investing all our resources towards this clean up, I'd like to encourage you – the citizen – to take pride in your city and ownership of your community and neighborhood. When you see these crews out diligently working to clean a lot or clear a right of way, be sure to stop and thank them for their hard work. If you see trash when you're walking your child to school, stop and pick it up. If you notice a lot seems neglected, check in with our Department of Community Development. Report hazards by calling our 311 Citizens Assistance line.

Your City is certainly working for you, but the initiative starts on the streets. Be active in your neighborhood association, even run for an officer position. Good neighbors make a great city and we're hoping Operation Green Wave is a catalyst for improving our neighborhoods and making them safe and comfortable communities for families to live, play and thrive for years to come.



From September 12th to 29th, crews cut & cleared:

- ➔ 1,974 Blocks
- ➔ 440 Alleys
- ➔ 1,500 Lots
- ➔ 124 Ditches
- ➔ and removed 19 vehicles

Better Neighborhoods & Blight Removal: We're (Land)Banking on it

You may have heard about Land Banking lately and strides the Land Banking Authority Board, in conjunction with Mayor William A. Bell, Sr., is taking in order to reduce the number of blighted lots in the City's neighborhoods. **What exactly is land banking and how does it work?**

If a piece of property is overgrown, uninhabited, neglected, has an abandoned house, derelict structure, or is tax delinquent, it is bringing down the overall aesthetic of the neighborhood and, most importantly, the property values of the homes that are inhabited by residents that still live in that community. As such, in many cases, helpful and concerned neighbors have been taking care of these types of lots for years, and the land bank authority, if finding lots like these to be 5 years tax delinquent, could potentially help that neighbor that has been maintaining that lot obtain ownership of it.

How does this happen? Sometimes, out of town landowners are sitting on a property to wait on the value to increase and neglect to care for it in the meantime. In other cases, a property owner has passed away without a will or deed, and family members or beneficiaries do not know who the property is supposed to be passed on to and thus in this way, the lots become tax delinquent over time.

Then what happens? Once a property has been tax delinquent for five years or more, it is eligible to be obtained by the Landbank Authority. It will be listed on this website: <https://public-blba.epropertyplus.com/landmgmtpub/app/base/landing>

If a property adjacent to your property is listed on this site, you can request online that the land be absorbed into your property. Clear future use must be explained in the application. You, the citizen, can obtain this lot, where it will essentially become an extension of your yard/property and you'll be responsible for maintaining it, just as you're currently caring for your home now. The Land Bank Authority Board then reviews your application to make sure the intended use of the property is beneficial to the neighborhood and the City. Once a citizen is approved to obtain the land, the Land Bank authority administrator goes through the process of clearing the title, back taxes and liens through a court process and it is deeded to the new owner.

For landowners over 65 or those who are handicapped, there are programs available that could alleviate additional property taxes once the land is absorbed into their own property.

What's the status so far? The Land Bank Authority has received over 1000 applications from citizens seeking to acquire properties. Court hearings to begin this process began in August 2016.

What else is the City doing? The Office of Community Development is testing a process called "Community Courts", where judges are setting up shop in neighborhood libraries and other communal spaces to give citizens who have had violations filed against their property a chance to fix the issue before they are fined. This is an effort to decrease code violations and blight, as well as neglect in Birmingham neighborhoods.

Also, the City has set up programs for education on wills and trusts so that fewer of these properties fall into tax delinquency and are obtained by the Authority.

www.legalservicesalabama.org

Information on these programs can be found here:

www.birminghamal.gov/community-development/

For additional help or information, please call Community Development at 205-254-2309 or visit their office on the 10th Floor of City Hall.

Mayor William A. Bell, Sr. wants you to...

SUPPORT BIRMINGHAM

Civil Rights National Park Now!



Go to

SupportBirmingham.org

Sign the Petition Today!



BIRMINGHAM FORWARD

— MAYOR WILLIAM A. BELL, SR. —

Birmingham Bios: Getting to know our Department Directors

Peggy Polk

Director of
Human Resources



How long have you been with the City? Since August 2003

What other positions have you held? Personnel Analyst II (handled city-wide training) & Quality Enhancement Employee Development Division Manager (employee relations and employee training)

Hometown: Birmingham

Family & Pets: Married with one daughter, who resides in Pinson

My last meal would be: Lasagna

Favorite sports team: New Orleans Saints

On the weekends I like to: read

My favorite thing about my job is: the people

Favorite restaurant in Birmingham: Café Dupont

Favorite Birmingham activity: going to the movies

Sri Karra

Director of
Information Management
Systems (IMS)



How long have you been with the City? 2 years

What other positions have you held? none

Hometown: Hyderabad, India

Family & Pets: Married to wife, Sumithra Karra, with two children: daughter, Sowmya Karra (18) attending Emory University and son, Siddharth Karra (13) - 8th grade

My last meal would be: Eggplant curry with rice (I'm a vegetarian)

Favorite sports team: Auburn Tigers

On the weekends I like to: listen to classical music and watch movies

My favorite thing about my job is: getting to know different aspects of City government and enabling efficiencies to help us work better together

Favorite restaurant in Birmingham: P.F. Chang's

Favorite Birmingham activity: Alabama Theater

Salvation Army Invests in North Birmingham

Several weeks ago, the Salvation Army broke ground on their new, expanded development in North Birmingham, just off Finley Avenue. This exciting development encompasses the former Lewis School property – which is already under construction – as well as the former Slossfield Library and Slossfield Community Center. The Salvation Army is excited about their footprint on North Birmingham and hopes other businesses and community resources follow suit.

