

Caddo Commission Approves Affordable Housing Initiatives

Trust Fund Established in Honor of the Late Dr. E. Edward Jones Sr.

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Caddo Parish - During Thursday's (April 20, 2017) Caddo Commission Regular Meeting, Commissioners adopted two proposals to help move adjudicated properties back into commerce and encourage infill development. Caddo Commission President Steven Jackson proposed [Ordinance 5683](#) establishing the Dr. E Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund and [Ordinance 5684](#) establishing the Faith Builder Adjudicated Property Program. Each proposal is consistent with recommendations of the citizen driven 2030 Shreveport-Caddo MasterPlan and also seeks to address issues identified in United Way of Northwest Louisiana's **Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed** "ALICE" report.



The first proposal, Ordinance 5683 seeks to establish the Dr. E. Edward Jones Housing Trust Fund as a special revenue fund at the Parish. Named in honor of the late pastor of Galilee Baptist Church and civil rights leader, the goal of the trust fund will be to assist local non-profits and private developers interested in providing affordable housing; either quality rental stock or first time homeowner program with supporting cost. Elected in fall 2015, Commissioner Jackson never got to develop a working relationship with the late leader, but understands he is a beneficiary of Dr. Jones work as it relates to civil, social, and economic justice. Dr. Jones was the vision behind the 2003 development



known as "Galilee City" in the Lakeside-Allendale area. The development focused on taking blighted and abandoned properties around the Galilee's church and revitalizing it using public and private investments to provide individuals with quality and affordable housing. "I understand we could have easily name a street or bridge in honor of Dr. Jones, but as I thought about the trust fund, Galilee City development came to mind. I wanted our commemoration of him to be something that is functional and focused on that which he dedicated his life's work to." While the proposal does not provide any funding at the moment, an appropriation may be made

during subsequent fiscal years. The legislation also encourages the Parish to seek private and philanthropic partnerships to develop meaningful public-private partnerships. "The current goals were to establish the trust fund, set up the technical

committee, and then talk to potential private investors. This is new so I wanted to educate colleagues and get them comfortable first. Money isn't the sole answer. It is part of the solution but it's not the silver bullet."

The second proposal, Ordinance 5684 seeks to utilize several existing State laws that allow the Parish to directly sell or donate adjudicated/surplus land to developers or nonprofit organizations who demonstrate the experience and financial capacity to execute proper development of property. The program is an addition to the new online adjudicated property process, but provides a direct buy or donation option which can clean the title of outstanding liens and encumbrances.

Jackson points to the United Way of Northwest Louisiana's ALICE report as a leading reason for the two proposals. "When I read the report, it exposes a pretty ugly truth regarding the plight of many individuals we see and interact with every day." According to the report, more than 16,000 renters in Caddo Parish pay more than 30% of their household income for housing and considered housing-cost burdened. United Way released its 2017 report earlier this month showing Northwest Louisiana had trended backwards exceeding the state's 42% and has an ALICE population of 45%.

"The information and data provided can be used as potential solutions to the housing problem identified in the ALICE report. Every individual that works 40 hours a week and sometimes more deserves safe, affordable, and quality housing regardless of their background, income, or zip code" Jackson believes. It's not enough to simply know the problem exist, as a local elected officials, the onus is on us to establish policies and programs that support quality and affordable places for all individuals to live."

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