



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-1350, **Version:** 1

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Board of Commissioners - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): District 6

To Appropriate \$20,000 from the District 6 Reserve for Appropriation to support the DeKalb County 2022 Age in Place with Dignity- Property Tax Workshops for Seniors By Seniors.

Information Contact: Commissioner Edward “Ted” Terry

Phone Number: 404-371-4909

PURPOSE:

D6 funding will provide three (3) free virtual property tax workshops to educate, assist in confirming that correct qualifying exemptions have been applied initially or at renewal, and appeals to the Board of Equalizations are completed and filed correctly by the deadline. Additionally, postworkshop legal consultation will be available, if needed, to process documents to meet or negotiate outstanding taxes that must be paid in full on or before December 31st. These workshops are also designed to prepare participants to file correctly in January 2023.

NEED/IMPACT:

There is only a 45-day application or appeal timeline, which begins with the current tax assessment. Many DeKalb County Seniors, “ageing in place” as well as underserved families and heirs are targeted for higher-than-normal tax increases due to neighborhood property sales and revitalization. There is a “tsunami” of tax delinquent homes that have or will soon, flood Magistrate Court with back tax liens and foreclosures. The Court has no option to mitigate and must enforce the law. More Senior citizen and underserved families will be displaced.

Recently two metro-Atlanta women were featured in the local news:

1. An elderly woman found out that her property she resided in was on the block for tax foreclosure sale because she was not aware of, or notified, that she needed to renew her low-income senior homestead exemption that she had for over decade. A local charity drive collected enough money to save her home.
2. Homes/equity is being stolen because of lack of knowing how to protect it from fraud. A home was vacant because of costly repairs to bring to compliance. Someone fraudulently manipulated a deed and sold the home to investors without authorization or the rightful owner’s knowledge. The owner was alerted after a neighbor called to ask why a bulldozer was in the process of demolishing her home. She has been fighting this in court.

To help prevent this, our best interest is to support educating and raising awareness to elderly, disenfranchised, and underserved who could be subject to losing their homes. Grandmama’s House, LLC, currently has a contract with LISC Atlanta, who’s objective is to help close the racial wealth gap in metro-Atlanta, and has been facilitating these important workshops to Fulton County residents in targeted zip codes. These workshops typically have 40+ participants per session.

Since most of the targeted program benefactors do not frequent or have access to social media and emails a data analyst will research zip codes, through the DeKalb Property Parcel database, looking for potential red flag parcels, i.e., blank homestead exemptions and parcels with tax liens. These potential high risk FiFa’s will be solicited through direct targeted

mailings. Workshops on keeping your homes: when, where, how to file for a qualified property tax exemption, complete and file an appeal, protecting your “title” from fraud, the importance of a will, navigating through Probate Court, and heir property protection and legal resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

\$20,000 to facilitate 3 property tax education workshops between April and December 2022 (budget included)

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the requested appropriated funds and authorize the chief executive officer to execute all necessary documents.