



News Release

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Federal Court Dismisses NAACP Lawsuit Against City of LaGrange

LaGrange, Ga. December 7, 2017 – A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit filed in May 2017 by the NAACP and others against the City of LaGrange regarding utility billing practices.

Judge Timothy C. Batten, Sr., ruled the complaint against the City failed to state a claim for which relief could be granted under the Fair Housing Act.

“We always believed the City would prevail in this litigation,” said Mayor Jim Thornton.

“The judge’s ruling affirms that the Mayor and Council can adopt such policies as are necessary to protect the financial stability of the City.”

The lawsuit challenged policies of the City relating to the addition of court fines and fees to utility billing accounts and the requirement of social security numbers for opening utility accounts.

“These policies have been in place for many years,” added Mayor Thornton, “and while it is certainly within the purview of the Mayor and Council to modify those policies as needed, the judge’s ruling affirms that these policies do not violate federal law.”

The City was represented in the case by City Attorney Jeff Todd.

“The complaint alleged disparate impact under the Fair Housing Act, but the Court ruled that the Fair Housing Act does not reach these utility billing policies because the policies do not relate to the ability of plaintiffs to obtain housing.”

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