




HOME

BUYER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know to successfully find and purchase your home!



- Realtor / NAR
- Cobb Realtor Board
- Multi-Million Dollar Club
- Agent of the Year

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 KimSmith-Realty.com

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Hi there!



I am excited to help you find the home that's perfect for you and your family. You'll find I am passionate about real estate and I'll bring my enthusiasm to the process. My clients benefit from clear and consistent communication and advanced technology to streamline our home search process. I am a member of the Cobb Association of Realtors and National Association of Realtors.

To get started, I'll set you up on a private home search portal, where you can search for homes matching your specific search parameters based on real-time MLS data. You will receive daily notifications the second a home comes on the market that's your match. You will pick the homes you'd like to see on our buyer's tour. Once you find the perfect home for your family, I'll write and submit a compelling offer to the seller.

Once we are "under contract," I am laser-focused on contract maintenance, as well as nurturing the buyer / seller relationship to make sure we successfully get to the closing table. I look forward to working with you!

Kim



KIM SMITH

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YOUR JOURNEY

I'm here to guide you through it!

Think of this guide as your roadmap, simplifying each turn and crossroad in the journey to buying your dream home. My aim is not just to inform but to inspire confidence as we work together to navigate one of your most exciting life ventures.

Embarking on the path to owning a home is more than just a series of transactions; it's about bringing your personal aspirations to life. The real estate world can be complex, with market fluctuations, legal details, and crucial decision-making moments.

That's exactly why this guide, combined with my expertise, becomes invaluable. I'm here to clear the fog and ensure you are fully equipped to make informed, confident choices. Think of me as your partner in this journey, providing not just guidance, but also the assurance that you are making the right moves at every step.

My commitment is to offer you a comprehensive service that goes beyond the standard, making sure that when you're ready to make that commitment, it's with a sense of excitement and assurance in the value of my partnership.

BUYER AGENCY

First...What is buyer agency? Buyer Agency refers to a legal relationship between a potential homebuyer and a real estate agent. In this relationship, the agent, known as the “Buyer's Agent” represents your interests!

Fiduciary Duties: This means I must act in your best interests, with loyalty, confidentiality, and care. I prioritize your needs and work to ensure that you get the best possible outcome.

Property search and coordination: I not only assist in searching for properties that fit your criteria, but I also schedule and attend viewings, provide insights into the local real estate market, gather all available disclosures, and communicate with the various listing agents throughout the process.

To ensure you are protected by my understanding the latest laws, each year I complete real estate license law and code of ethics continuing education courses.



Karen & Brian | Acworth

"Kim is an example of what a professional listing agent should aspire to be. She was intelligent, diligent, and hardworking. I would say she had expert knowledge of the Acworth, Kennesaw, and Dallas communities. I would recommend her to everyone I know."



Negotiation: Besides negotiating the price, terms, and conditions of the sale, I often strategize and negotiate several other aspects when writing offers for you. These can be crucial in making an offer more appealing to the seller or in ensuring that your interests are well-protected. Here's a rundown of these additional aspects:

Closing Date: I may negotiate the closing date to align with your schedule or financial planning, including coordinating with your lease end, sale of your current home, or availability of funds.

Contingencies: I negotiate crucial contingency clauses, including home inspection, financing, sale of current home, appraisal, and others.

Repairs and Credits: Based on the home inspection, I may negotiate for repairs or credits to be made by the seller.

Inclusions and Exclusions: Negotiating which fixtures or personal property are included or excluded from the sale.

Rent-Back Agreement: If the seller needs more time to vacate, a rent-back agreement can be negotiated.

Closing Costs: In some cases, I negotiate for the seller to pay a portion or all of your closing costs.

Escalation Clauses: In a competitive market, I may add escalation clauses to automatically increase your offer.

Title and Survey: Ensuring clear title and negotiating who pays for title insurance and survey.

Closing Location and Time: Sometimes, I can negotiate the location and time of the closing to make it more convenient for you.

Coordination of the Purchase Process: I coordinate the extensive purchase process, organize inspections, ensure deadlines are met, and act as the liaison with other professionals involved.

EXPERT GUIDANCE

Exclusive Agreement: In return for all of the work that goes into finding a home and securing a purchase contract, you need to feel confident agreeing to work with me exclusively as your Buyer's Agent. The process of selecting an agent needs to be completed before seeing the first home with an agent.

I encourage you to interview agents until you find the one you select. Partnering with me, an agent you're comfortable with and who communicates well, is crucial in your home-buying journey.

Representation: I ensure that your interests are represented.

Access to Resources: I have access to extensive real estate listings, including many "off-market" properties.

Save Time and Stress: I handle the heavy lifting of the home-buying process, saving you time and stress.

Negotiation Power: I have powerful negotiation skills needed to secure a favorable contract.



Kenneth & Eri | Dallas

"If you don't know, now you know! Mrs. Kim is by far the GOAT! Her marketing experience and skills are what sets her apart from all the other realtors. She comes with not just a proven track record in marketing, but her professionalism and dedication to her clients truly makes you feel and know you're in good hands."



CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Handling Paperwork and Managing

Documentation: I manage all the necessary paperwork and documentation to track and adhere to all deadlines stipulated in the contract.

Guidance on Complex Legal Contracts:

I provide detailed guidance on the complexities of legal contracts.

Coordinating Inspections:

I coordinate various types of inspections necessary for your prospective home.

Review of Inspection Findings:

After inspections, I review the findings with you, advising on their significance.



Lavern & Ray | Villa Rica

“My wife and I have worked with various Agents in the past, but I must say without a shadow of doubt, that Kim has been our favorite and best Agent by far! So, we highly recommend Kim to anyone in the market searching for a home or trying to sell their home. She gets the job done! Thank you Kim.”

AGENT DUTIES

In essence, my role as a buyer's agent in coordinating the purchase process is to be your knowledgeable and reliable partner, navigating each step with precision and care to ensure a successful and satisfying home-buying experience.

Managing Contractors: If repairs or improvements are needed, I can help manage interactions with contractors, obtain quotes, and ensure work is completed satisfactorily.

Navigating the Closing Process: I guide you through the entire closing process, which includes finalizing financing, reviewing closing documents, and ensuring all legal and financial obligations are met. I am prepared to tackle any unexpected hurdles.

Final Walk-Through: Before closing, I conduct a final walk-through with you to ensure the property is in the agreed condition and that all terms of the sale are met.

Providing Ongoing Information and Recommendations: Throughout this process, I offer continuous information and advice, as well as insights into market trends, data, and past sales which might influence your decisions.

Providing Ongoing Information and Recommendations: Throughout this process, I offer continuous information and advice on what is customary. This includes sharing insights into market trends, data, and past sales which might influence your decisions.

Support and Advice: I am your advocate from the beginning to the end of the home- buying process. My goal is to make this journey as smooth and successful as possible.

Home Showing Agreement: Due to new regulations, real estate agents are prohibited from showing properties without first entering into a Buyer Agency agreement and establishing compensation. The home showing agreement gives you peace of mind, knowing the terms of our agency. Additionally, it saves you money and valuable time by looking only at homes in which the seller is offering to pay for your buyer's agent compensation.

BUYER'S AGENT COMPENSATION

Often, the buyer's agent gets paid by the seller. Sellers understand buyers face many upfront fees when buying a new home and that lenders won't let buyers finance their agent's compensation. Sellers understand that when they offer the buyer's agent compensation, the number of buyers who can now afford their home skyrockets. Bottom Line: If a buyer is unable to pay for their agent's compensation, then they should only be looking at homes where the seller's ARE offering to do so.

TRADITIONAL MODEL

Seller Agrees To Pay 6% Commission

Listing Agent Pays Half
to Buyer's Agent

Buyer's Agent
Gets Paid



Jeanine | Kennesaw

“Kim did a great job selling our house and buying a new one!! She sold it quickly and took care of many items for us!! She is an outstanding communicator! She handled the negotiations well and was very professional!!! We love our new home!”

UNDERSTANDING DUAL AGENCY

When you're jumping into the home-buying process, it is crucial to grasp the idea of dual agency, and all the implications of forgoing your own representation. You might be tempted to work directly with listing agent. However, opting for dual agency might seem like a cost-saving strategy at first, but it can end up costing you significantly more in the long run.

What is Dual Agency?

Dual agency occurs when a single real estate agent (or the same real estate brokerage) represents both the buyer and the seller in the same transaction.

Why Might It Seem Appealing?

At first glance, dual agency might seem like a way to save on commissions. The thought process is that if one agent is handling both sides, they might be willing to take a lower total commission since they're not splitting it with another agent. Generally speaking, the total commission was already pre negotiated between the listing agent and the seller, so there is no requirement on the listing agent to reduce commissions just because there is no buyer agent involved. They would be entitled to the whole amount and they would be working for both parties.

There is no such thing as an agent's allegiance to both buyer AND seller. Someone will gain favor in negotiations. It is simply impossible for an agent to represent two clients with competing interests.





DUAL AGENCY RISKS

One agent represents both the buyer and seller.

Conflict of Interest: An agent in a dual agency situation must delicately balance the interests of both the seller and the buyer. This can be challenging because the goals of the buyer (to buy at the lowest possible price) and the seller (to sell at the highest possible price) are inherently at odds.

Limited Guidance and Advice: As a dual agent, the level of guidance and advice I can provide is limited. For example, I can't advise you, the buyer, on how low of an offer you should submit, just as I can't advise the seller on how low they should go in their acceptance.

Reduced Advocacy: In a typical buyer-agent relationship, the agent advocates fiercely for the buyer's interests. In dual agency, this advocacy is diluted because the agent must remain neutral, which can lead to less-than-optimal outcomes for both parties.

Confidentiality Concerns: Maintaining confidentiality can be complex in dual agency. Information shared by you as the buyer could inadvertently influence how I deal with the seller, and vice versa, even though I'd be bound to keep both parties' information confidential.

Potential for Misunderstandings: Dual agency can lead to misunderstandings and confusion, as the agent's role is not as clear-cut.

YOUR REPRESENTATION

Having your own representation as a buyer, where your agent is dedicated solely to your interests, offers numerous benefits that might not be immediately apparent but are critical for a successful and satisfying home-buying experience.

BENEFITS

Undivided Loyalty: Your agent's loyalty lies entirely with you without any conflict of interest.

Full Disclosure: With a dedicated buyer's agent, you can expect full disclosure about the properties you are considering. Your agent will share all known information about the property's condition, history, and potential issues, allowing you to make an informed decision.

Expert Negotiation: Your agent will negotiate solely on your behalf, aiming to secure the best terms and price. Their experience in negotiation tactics can result in significant savings and more favorable contract terms for you.



SUPPORT & ADVOCACY



In-Depth Market Knowledge: A dedicated buyer's agent brings extensive knowledge of the local real estate market, including pricing trends, neighborhood insights, which can be invaluable in making a wise investment.

Emotional Support and Objectivity: Buying a home can be emotional. An agent offers a level of objectivity, helping you make decisions that are rational and in your best interest.

Professional Networks: Your agent can connect you with a trusted network of professionals, including inspectors, lawyers, and mortgage brokers, which can streamline the buying process.

Risk Mitigation: You want an agent who knows how to spot red flags and can guide you away from potentially problematic properties.

Emotional Support and Objectivity: Buying a home can be emotional. An agent offers a level of objectivity, helping you make decisions that are rational and in your best interest.

In Summary: A dedicated buyer's agent offers a comprehensive service that goes beyond just finding a property. They provide expertise, support, and advocacy throughout every stage of the home-buying journey, ensuring that your interests are protected.



Rick | Marietta

"Kim was extremely responsive during the entire process. She was always available and quick to respond. I am an investor and have closed on many homes and this was the easiest closing of all. I would recommend Kim to anyone. Plus, she's very kind and sweet."

UTILIZING YOUR AGENT

I will guide you through the process. It's now the time to start visiting homes that make the cut. Once we identify your top picks, I'll make the arrangements with the listing agents for each home we are visiting and gather available information for each one.

I encourage you to take notes and photos as the properties can start to run together if we are viewing multiple homes. Each home will have specific qualities you may or may not like. So I'll be making notes of inclusions or exclusions that we would want to make part of an offer.

Between ring doorbells, cameras, audio/visual surveillance, nanny cams, etc., you never know when your actions, and more importantly your words, might be monitored by a seller.

It's important that you keep negative or positive comments about the property to yourself, until we are away from the property. We will discuss negotiation terms after leaving the home.

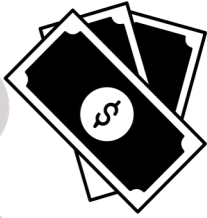
Time is of the essence in real estate. As such, I am very accessible at most all times of day.



Tan | Woodstock

"Highly recommended...everything was smooth and easy. All my concerns were addressed and closing couldn't be any easier... thank you Miss Kim for providing me with your exceptional knowledge and services throughout the process when I was in Alabama. Gratefully appreciated!"

HOME BUYING PROCESS



GET PRE-APPROVED

- Meet with a lender
- Prepare your credit
- Set a budget



MEET WITH YOUR AGENT

- Discuss budget
- Research area neighborhoods
- Set your wants & needs



MAKE AN OFFER

- Research comps in the area
- Work with your realtor to set up the best offer
- Negotiations may occur



FIND YOUR HOME

- Agent finds options that meet most or all of your criteria
- Tour homes
- Adjust criteria if necessary



OFFER SIGNED

- All negotiations are finished
- Both parties have signed contract



INSPECTIONS

- Professional inspects the property
- May discover issues that need to be worked into the purchase agreement
- Negotiate repairs



APPRAISAL

- Professional ensures the property is worth the loan and purchase price that you agreed to pay



TITLE COMMITMENT

- The title company will send you a title insurance policy for the property after closing

DOCUMENTS TO LENDER

- Make sure all requested docs are sent to your lender prior to closing



CLOSING

- Final walk-through
- Sign closing documents
- Receive your keys

GET PRE-QUALIFIED

Maintaining a Strong Credit Score...

It's vital for a lender to assess your financial capacity for a home purchase before starting your search. This assessment helps in setting achievable goals by focusing on homes within your budget, thus streamlining the search. It also helps you account for the total cost of homeownership including mortgage, taxes, insurance, and upkeep. This ensures a lasting investment over time.

I have several lenders' representatives I can highly recommend if you are looking for a pre-qualification letter.

Punctual Payment: Try to avoid late or missed payments. It is crucial for maintaining a good score.

Balanced Credit Utilization: It's advisable to keep your credit card balances below 30% of the limit.

Manage New Credit Accounts: Frequent applications for new credit can temporarily lower your score.

Monitor Credit Reports: Regular checks and correcting any errors can help maintain a healthy score.



Matt | Marietta



"We met Kim at an Open House and immediately knew she would be the agent to help us sell our home and find a new one. The closing was flawless! I would recommend Kim if you want the best real estate experience."

HOME SHOPPING TIPS

I will guide you through the process. It's now time to start visiting homes that you'd like to see. I'll schedule showings with the listing agents for each home we are visiting and gather available information for each one.

Prepare a Checklist: Before visiting homes, make a checklist of your deal breakers and nice-to-haves. This helps you stay focused on what's important to you during the viewings. The more organized you are from the beginning, the easier the process is for you.

Consider the Location: In relation to you and your family's work, schools, public transportation, and shopping.

Visualize Your Life in the Home: Try to imagine your furniture in the space. Consider the flow of the house and your lifestyle.

Be Open-Minded: Keep an open mind about properties. Sometimes a home might not meet all your criteria but could still be a great fit for your family and/or lifestyle. Also, a few renovations may be worth it for getting the right location!



Ally | Kennesaw

"Kim was so kind and patient when it came to helping me buy my first home. She really takes time to get to know you and help you find exactly what you are looking for! I will definitely trust Kim to represent my best interests in future purchases!"

OFFER STRATEGY

Consider Sellers Circumstances: Find out what is important to the seller and be sure to take their desires into account when making your offer.

Flexible Closing Date: Being flexible with the closing date can be attractive to the seller, especially if they need time to move out.

Minimal Contingencies: Fewer contingencies make the process smoother for the seller. However, don't waive essential ones like the home inspection if at all possible.

Shorten Time Periods: Don't feel comfortable waiving a contingency, consider shortening the time frames to give the seller more confidence.

Escalation Clause: In a competitive market, an escalation clause can automatically increase your offer if there are higher bids, up to a maximum amount.

Rent-Back Agreement: If the seller needs time to find a new home, we can offer a rent-back agreement where we close on the home and the sellers pay you rent until they move out.

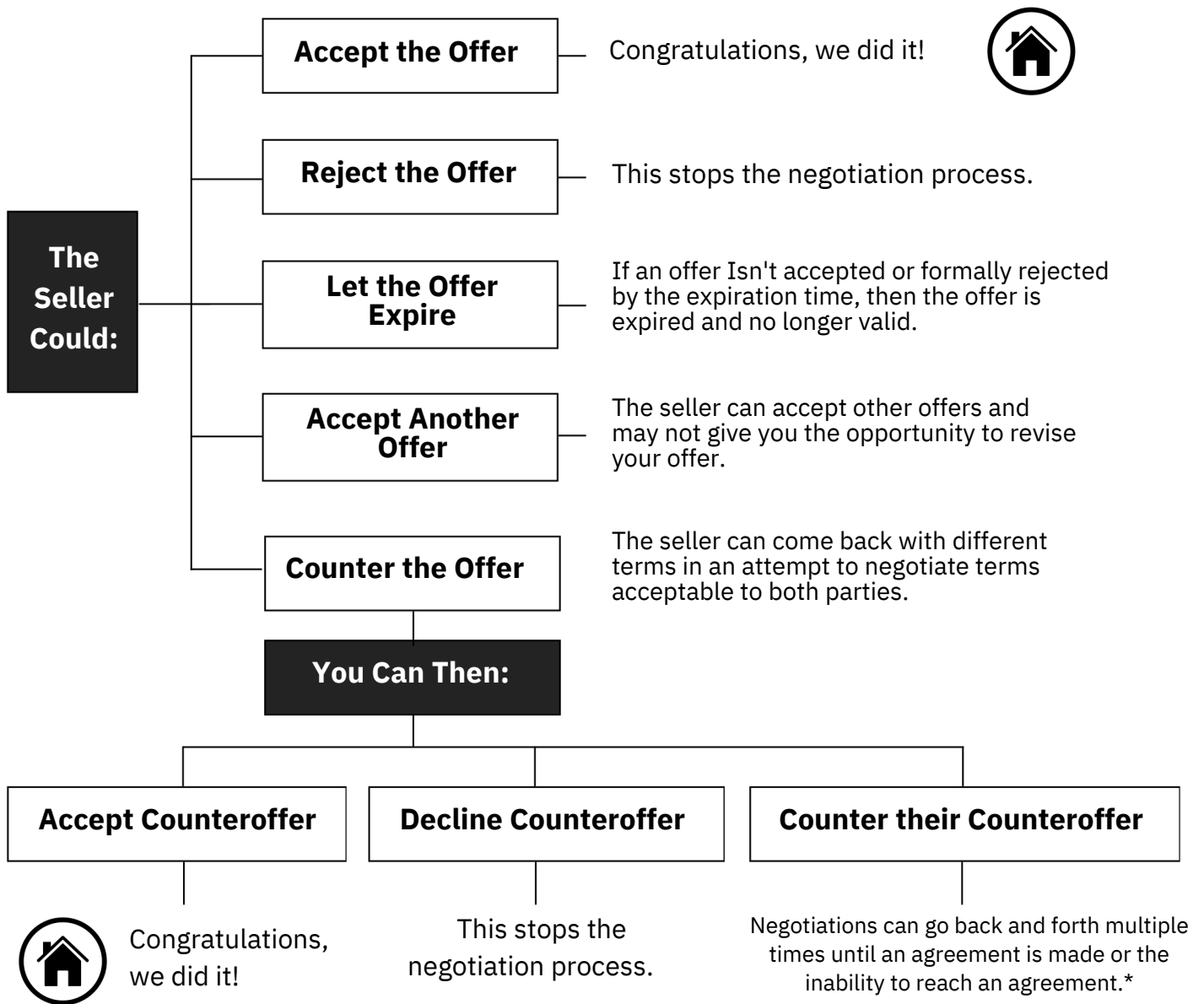
Bottom Line: We'll base the offer based on the prices of similar homes that have recently sold in the area, as well as other available homes competing in similar price points. In addition, we will ensure the offer aligns with your budget and pre-approved mortgage amount.



Angela | Acworth

"Kim was amazing to work with to sell our home and buy our next home. We closed with ease on the same day for both homes! I would recommend Kim to anyone wanting to work with the best real estate professionals in the industry."

OFFER SUBMITTED



*Keep in mind, while in the negotiation process, another offer could come in and the seller could accept a different offer. We will want to keep response times as short as possible to minimize that risk.

OFFER ACCEPTED

Congratulations, you are now in contract and we will begin moving through the contingencies that are outlined in your purchase agreement.

OFFER ACCEPTED

Choosing Inspections: With my guidance, you will need to decide which inspections you will want to have and which are required. Common inspections include general home inspection, pest inspection, sewer inspection, septic, well, and pool.

Providing Recommendations: If you do not have preferred inspectors, I am happy to assist by recommending reputable and reliable inspectors.

Scheduling Inspections: Once the types of inspections are decided, the next step is to schedule them because of contractual deadlines to meet.

Reviewing Inspection Reports: After the inspections are completed, we will receive all reports to ensure that you understand the condition of the property, including any repairs or maintenance issues. It is my job to help you understand the findings, prioritize areas of concern, and put them in the context of the overall decision.

Negotiating Repairs or Credits: Based on the inspection results, you may need to negotiate with the seller for repairs. Another option is to negotiate a credit reflected in a better purchase price or money towards your closing costs.



Jeremy | Acworth



"Kim was great! She was always available and quick to respond. I am an investor and have closed on many homes and this was the easiest closing of all. I would recommend Kim to anyone. Plus, she's very kind and sweet."

COMMON CONTINGENCIES

Inspection 01 *Contingency*

Most contracts have an inspection contingency. This is where the buyer is able to do their due-dilligence on the property with a professional inspection.

Finance 02 *Contingency*

Most contracts are also contingent on the buyer's financing. We don't accept offers unless we have a pre-qualification from the buyer's lender.

Appraisal 03 *Contingency*

The buyer's lender will require an appraisal. This means the buyer's financing is contingent upon the home appraising for the purchase price.

Home Sale 04 *Contingency*

Some contracts are also contingent upon the contract and closing on their current home. This means we can't close until their current home closes.

REPAIRS CREDITS

It is common to find issues during the home inspections. Depending on the specific terms of your purchase agreement, this may result in another round of negotiations with the seller. These negotiations may be in terms of asking the seller to have repairs made or give a credit in lieu of repairs.

Asking Seller to make Repairs Prior To Closing: One of the obvious advantages of a seller making repairs prior to closing is that the work is completed before you take possession.



SOME TIPS

Keep your Poker Face: The listing agent or the seller themselves may be present during the home inspections, so be careful expressing your opinions or intensions.

Remember the Big Picture: The inspection period is the first step of the process. Sellers can often feel their home is being “picked apart” with a laundry list of repair requests they feel are more maintenance issues for the new buyer. This may give the seller the impression that you are being unrealistic in your expectations and “difficult.”

Contrastly, buyers often feel like they are paying top dollar for the property. It is Important to not get caught up in the emotions and lose sight of the end goal. I will help you in managing expectations and moving you through the process successfully.



FINAL STEPS

APPRAISAL

Now that your lender has an actual address, they will begin to move forward with processing your loan. Your lender (if applicable) will arrange for an appraiser to be dispatched to provide an independent estimate of value of the home/ property you are purchasing.

If the appraisal value is found to be at purchase price or higher, your file will continue to move through the underwriting process. If not, we can negotiate the purchase at the appraised value.



TITLE

Confirms Legal Ownership: It ensures that the seller has the legal right to sell the property. It checks the chain of ownership records to ascertain that the seller is the rightful owner.

Reveals Liens or Encumbrances: The search uncovers any existing liens, mortgages, or claims on the property. The title also discloses any easements.

Ensures Clear Title: The ultimate goal of a title search is to ensure that the property has a 'clear title' to transfer.



James | Powder Springs

"Kim was attentive, responsive and available at any time. I would use her all over again if I could and would recommend her to anyone who is looking for a true partner to help sell and purchase a home, not just a realtor. She is more than that."

CLOSING TABLE

As your dedicated buyer's agent, I offer a comprehensive service that goes beyond just finding you a home. I provide expertise, support, and advocacy throughout every stage of your home-buying journey, ensuring that your interests are protected and your experience is as smooth and successful as possible.

My primary goal is to successfully get to the closing table! It takes experience in navigating the nuances of the entire closing experience. I am laser-focused on contract maintenance, as well as nurturing the buyer and seller relationship to make sure we successfully close.

You will receive the preliminary closing statement prior to closing, so you can wire the appropriate funds to the title attorney. Once we are at the closing table, all the work has been completed to ensure that no issues will arise. To make this happen, I am in constant contact with the lender, title attorney, and listing agent in the days leading up to closing day. Closing takes about an hour. We sign all the documents. The lender funds. You get the keys!



LET'S BEGIN

Whether you are a seasoned pro or a first-time home buyer, my aim is not just to inform, but to inspire confidence as we work together navigating one of your most exciting life adventures. Embarking on the path to owning a home is more than just a series of transactions; it's about bringing your personal aspirations to life in a space you chose.

I am here to clear the fog and ensure you are fully equipped to make informed, confident choices. Think of me as your partner in this journey, providing not just guidance, but also assurance that you are making informed moves at every step.

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