

City of New Bern

Redevelopment Commission Meeting

Wednesday, July 10, 2019- 6PM

Development Services Conference Room

303 First Street

Members Present: Beth Walker, Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Kip Perego, Maria Cho

Ex-Officio Members Present: Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Leander "Robbie" Morgan Jr (E), John Young (E), Tabari Wallace (E)

Staff Present: Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Amanda Ohlenschlen, Community and Economic Development Manager; D'Aja Fulmore, Community Development Coordinator; Alice Wilson, GIS Manager; Nadia Abdulhadi, Planner II

1. Welcome and Call To Order

Chair Tharesa Lee called the meeting to order at 6:01pm and began with a reading of the Commission's guiding principles, initiated by Commissioner Tabari Wallace.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 12, 2019 Redevelopment Commission meeting were presented for review and approval. Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley mentioned slides from a PowerPoint presentation that were not included in the minutes. Commissioner Kip Perego and Commissioner Maria Cho also mentioned grammatical errors that needed correcting. Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, assured that corrections would be made. Commissioner Perego made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cho seconded the motion.

3. Public Comment

Chair Lee opened the floor for public comments. No comments were received.

4. Commission Debrief and Responses to 6/26 Public Meeting

Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, placed a video of the Community Listening Session on display for commissioners. Chair Tharesa Lee thanked commissioners for a job well done at the listening session. Chair Lee told commissioners that there was much positive feedback about the commissioners serving as facilitators at the meeting. Chair Lee told commissioners she wanted to hear from commissioners about some of the comments received at their individual table.

Commissioner Beth Walker began by stating that her table heavily focused on neighborhood preservation and wanting to maintain the integrity of their community. Commissioner Walker stated that concerns regarding single family housing and social programs for children were priority at her table. Commissioner Walker stated that she concluded that many members at her tables felt threatened and held feelings that people would leave the community and not return. Commissioner Peregoy asked Commissioner Walker if the community's fear of change is specifically directed toward the Redevelopment Commission or if it is just a general fear of losing the neighborhood. Commissioner Walker responded, stating that it is a general fear of losing what people call home.

Commissioner Maria Cho shared her experience with commissioners. Commissioner Cho stated that she began with four community members at her table, which eventually decreased by two. Commissioner Cho stated that she believes the ladies felt the meeting was too long. Of the two community members who stayed, Commissioner Cho stated that Stanley White Recreation Center was a major part of their conversation. Commissioner Cho explained that her table felt that the lives of children are being significantly impacted without the recreation center and no mentoring is currently happening in its absence. Commissioner Cho also mentioned a citizen's concern about poverty, stating that one citizen expressed the need for more economic development in the black community to improve the quality of life.

Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley told commissioners that gentrification was a huge concern at her table. Co-Chair Bullock stated that the negative consequences of gentrification were a highlight of the conversation, with emphasis placed on the Five Points area. Co-Chair Bullock told commissioners that community members stated that the Five Points area is progressing, but the people living near those areas do not feel like they are included in the progress. Co-Chair Bullock expressed that the main concern of those community members is being driven out of their homes.

Chair Theresa Lee gave input about concerns community regarding the elderly. Not going into much detail, Chair Lee told commissioners that many members had concerns regarding the treatment of the elderly and their living conditions also. Chair Lee took comments from City staff regarding their experiences at the event. Alice Wilson, GIS Manager of Development Services, responded to Chair Lee mentioning that she received a lot of comments regarding New Bern's housing stock and how the community would like to see improvements. Amanda Ohlensehlen, community and economic development manager, gave input concerning residents really wanting to be heard and the importance of guiding residents to resources that can assist them, if there is a problem that the Redevelopment Commission may not be able to fix or a question that the Commission cannot answer.

Commissioner Walker thanked Chair Lee for having commissioners stand up to introduce themselves to everyone at the meeting. Commissioner Walker stated that she felt it was very welcoming to the community and sent a message of inclusivity. Commissioner Peregoy questioned why there was community concerns around tearing down dilapidated homes. Mr. Ruggieri responded by explaining that community members feel some of the shotgun homes

should be preserved and rehabilitated instead of torn down. Chair Lee made a point for commissioners, stating, "We must remember: when housing leaves, businesses leave."

Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel gave input about the listening session by first thanking Chair Lee and mentioning the positive energy in the room on the night of the session. Alderwoman Bengel emphasized the importance of knowledge being shared with the community. Alderwoman Bengel asked commissioners what they feel would be the best way to make sure the public is informed with resources and happenings in the area. Commissioners did not provide a specific answer to Alderwoman Bengel's question. Instead, commissioners agreed to move forward thinking of the best way to pass along necessary information to keep the community involved. Commissioners took time to speak with Alderwoman Bengel concerning Stanley White Recreation Center.

After discussing potential plans for the Redevelopment Commission, commissioners explained how the uncertainty of what will happen with the center affects the community and Commission. Alderwoman Bengel explained that she is only one part of the board and options are currently being sorted out to make the best decision for the community. As commissioners discussed more regarding the future of Duffyfield, Co-Chair Bullock provided insight about community members feeling as though their communities do not receive the same benefits as other communities. Co-Chair Bullock discussed issues with elevation and lowering in Duffyfield and how communities have expressed feelings of unfair treatment. Co-Chair Bullock explained to commissioners that it is important to be prepared for some hard questions as the Commission moves forward in its attempt to draft the redevelopment plan.

5. Staff Presentation and Commission Discussion on Proposed Transportation Improvements in RDA

This agenda item was moved to be discussed at a later meeting.

6. Preliminary Cost Estimates and Funding Alternatives for Plan Implementation

Chair Lee shifted commissioners' attention to Mr. Ruggieri for a presentation on preliminary cost estimates for implementation of the redevelopment plan. Mr. Ruggieri began by mentioning the extension of 3rd Avenue and told commissioners that costs are approximately \$350,000. Mr. Ruggieri also mentioned five miles of sidewalks costing approximately \$150,000 and striping on Main Street costing approximately \$15,000. Mr. Ruggieri reminded commissioners of the historical trail markers that would be used to tell the story of Duffyfield and concluded with an approximate total of \$700,000 expected to be used for transportation improvements.

Regarding housing, Mr. Ruggieri discussed building off of Broad Street as part of the housing plan. Mr. Ruggieri showed homes in the area that are currently dilapidated, closely around the Craven Terrace area. Mr. Ruggieri explained the process of having to tear down some homes and make way for new construction, with costs expected to be \$2 Million. After discussing elevation and other factors, Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that the total cost for the housing plan is approximately \$4 Million. Mr. Ruggieri emphasized for commissioners to remember that money would be coming back in through the commission's intended rental program and other potential programs.

Mr. Ruggieri opened the floor for any comments and explained that projects can be scaled back or modified, but he wanted to give an accurate snapshot of what the Commission would be looking toward with expected costs. Alderwoman Bengel told commissioners it would be a great idea to look at the City of Greenville and the City of Wilmington to potentially see how they have done similar projects and how revenue can be generated. Alderwoman Bengel mentioned having the director of Wilmington's Housing Authority visit the City of New Bern to talk about their strategies toward redevelopment. Chair Lee and Alice Wilson, GIS Manager, encouraged commissioners not to be intimidated by the costs or discouraged. Chair Lee expressed that the costs associated with the plan had been expected for a while.

7. New Business

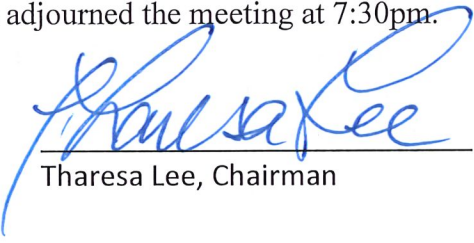
Chair Lee asked commissioners if there was any new business to share. Commissioner Cho announced that she attended the City Market Stakeholders meeting and told commissioners that the meeting was very informative and highlighted new things happening at the VOLT Center. Commissioners Cho recommended commissioners get involved with the meetings to know about the training opportunities being provided at the center.

Co-Chair Bullock announced the LET'S COPE event would be held at West Recreation Center on Saturday, July 13 from 2-5pm. Co-Chair Bullock explained that the event will teach children about coping skills and raise mental health awareness. Co-Chair Bullock encouraged attendance to the event.

8. Adjournment

There being no future business to discuss, Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

Date approved: 9-25-19


Theresa Lee, Chairman

Attest: 
Amanda Ohlensehlen, Recording Secretary