

1 City of New Bern  
2 Redevelopment Commission Meeting  
3 Wednesday, August 14, 2019- 6PM  
4 Development Services Conference Room  
5 303 First Street  
6

7 **Members Present:** Beth Walker, Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Steve  
8 Strickland, Kip Peregoy, Leander “Robbie” Morgan

9 **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel

10 **Members Excused (E)/Absent (A):** Maria Cho, Tabari Wallace

11 **Staff Present:** Mr. Ruggieri Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Amanda Ohlensehlen,  
12 Community and Economic Development Manager; Alice Wilson, GIS Manager; Nadia  
13 Abdulhadi, Planner II

14  
15 **1. Welcome and Call To Order**

16 Chair Tharesa Lee called the meeting to order at 6:01pm and began with a reading of the  
17 Commission’s guiding principles.

18  
19 **2. Approval of Minutes**

20 The minutes of July 24, 2019 Redevelopment Commission meeting were presented for review  
21 and approval. Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley made a motion to approve the minutes.  
22 Commissioner Steve Strickland seconded this motion.

23  
24 **3. Public Comment**

25 Chair Lee opened the floor for public comments. No comments were received.  
26

27 **4. Guest Speaker: Tried by Fire, INC.**

28 Chair Lee moved forward with welcoming Tried by Fire, Inc., located at 524 Roundtree Street.  
29 Presenter Bonita Burney Simmons began by stating that they were blessed with a property and  
30 that Tried by Fire, Inc. is a nonprofit organization who specializes in creating a pathway for  
31 resources for women post-incarceration. Ms. Burney Simmons explained that the nonprofit has  
32 great plans but would like to be a part of what the Redevelopment Commission is doing. Ms.  
33 Burney Simmons told commissioners that she did not have lengthy plans to discuss but wanted  
34 commissioners to know she holds a memorandum of understanding between her nonprofit and

35 Habitat for Humanity. Ms. Burney Simmons explained that Habitat for Humanity mentioned  
36 assisting the nonprofit with what it needs. Ms. Burney Simmons told commissioners that she had  
37 been in contact with a structural engineer who told her that the home is currently in good  
38 structure. Ms. Burney Simmons emphasized that the intention of the nonprofit is to capitalize  
39 upon what is already being offered in the community and not attempt to reinvent the wheel. Ms.  
40 Burney Simmons explained they want to convey to current community partners that they can  
41 continue to provide services and Tried by Fire, Inc. would focus on providing a home.

42 Mr. Matt Obrien, an architect, stepped forward alongside Ms. Burney Simmons to show the plan  
43 they have created for the home. Mr. Obrien asked commissioners if they were familiar with the  
44 property. Mr. Obrien has reviewed the plan and stated that there is enough parking for the  
45 organization. Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, joined in to display a visual of the  
46 organization's lot. After displaying a visual of the lot, Mr. Obrien opened the floor to take any  
47 questions. Commissioner Kip Peregoy asked Ms. Burney Simmons if she once had another  
48 facility on Clark Avenue. Ms. Burney Simmons responded saying yes and that the location was a  
49 home owned by her and her husband. Ms. Burney Simmons explained that initially her neighbors  
50 were on board with the home opening on Clark Avenue, but when it was time for the public  
51 hearing, all the neighbors showed up saying they did not want the home near their residences.  
52 Mr. Obrien stepped in telling commissioners to note that the current location was donated by  
53 Habitat for Humanity and the owner of the home. Commissioner Robbie Morgan asked Ms.  
54 Burney Simmons if her organization would provide residential space for the women they serve.  
55 Ms. Burney Simmons replied yes and stated that an initial group of 6 women would be served.  
56 Mr. Obrien told Commissioner Morgan that the adjacent lot would be used for parking and that  
57 there would be enough parking. Commissioner Morgan asked about the actual time frame for the  
58 program. Ms. Burney Simmons explained they have 30-120 days they can use to serve women in  
59 the program. Ms. Burney Simmons also emphasized making plans to meet with the women prior  
60 to them being released to have an idea of their individual needs. Ms. Burney Simmons stated that  
61 she is working with Craven-Pamlico Reentry Council. Mike emphasized that the organization is  
62 considered, "Residential Transient Housing", according to building code language. The  
63 Commission thanked Ms. Burney Simmons and Mr. Obrien for their presentation.

#### 64 **5. Presentation: Veterans Employment Base Camp Organic Garden**

65 Co-Chair Bullock moved the meeting forward introducing Ms. Lovay Wallace Singleton as the  
66 next presenter. Ms. Singleton conveyed that she currently serves as executive director of  
67 Veterans Employment Base Camp Organic Garden and that they have had a partnership with the  
68 City of New Bern for approximately 6 years.

69 Ms. Singleton said she was at the meeting to discuss the property at 1301 Main Street and  
70 wanting to purchase it. Ms. Singleton told commissioners that she discovered that the City of  
71 New Bern currently owns the property. Ms. Singleton began her presentation by detailing some  
72 of the programs the organization currently offers. She introduced the Ag-Vet program, which is  
73 designed to assist veterans who are interested in going into farming and ranching. Ms. Singleton  
74 expressed her desire to provide veterans with classroom and hands-on activities and plans on

75 training 50-70 veterans. Ms. Singleton told commissioners that she already has active duty  
76 military show up to do hands-on work.

77 Ms. Singleton went on to tell commissioners that she also had youth coming by Stanley White  
78 Recreation Center asking for fruit that was not in season. Ms. Singleton stated that those  
79 moments served as an indicator for a need to educate youth and launch a youth program, which  
80 has been successful.

81 Ms. Singleton displayed a visual of lot and told commissioners that it is adjacent to lots the  
82 organization has already purchased. Ms. Singleton plans to renovate the front of house for  
83 emergency veteran housing and use the rear part of the house to provide training. Ms. Singleton  
84 also mentioned her first goal of installing fencing and security cameras

85 Commission Morgan asked Ms. Singleton how many days a week is she usually on site at the  
86 garden. Ms. Singleton responded by telling him she is usually there from 9am-1pm on Tuesday-  
87 Saturday. Commissioner Morgan began mentioning to Ms. Singleton about signage that would  
88 help better advertise where she is for the community to know. Ms. Singleton responded by  
89 stating that she would love to enhance advertisement but does not have the necessary funding to  
90 do so at this present time. Ms. Singleton thanked the Commission for allowing her to present.

91 Mr. Ruggieri walked up to begin his presentation but made a special note that Ms. Singleton will  
92 not be able to purchase directly from City. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that the City would  
93 have to give the property to the Commission and the Commission could then convey the property  
94 to Ms. Singleton per their conditions.

## 95 **6. Review Draft Redevelopment Plan and Costs**

96 Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services, began his presentation by telling  
97 commissioners they had went through a good chunk of the Draft Redevelopment plan during the  
98 last meeting and opened the floor for any comments or suggestions.

99 Commission Morgan spoke up saying he wanted to backtrack to page 1 of the final draft of the  
100 plan. Commissioner Morgan stated that line 30 of page one said the historic fire started in a  
101 chimney. He noted a change to the historic event, stating that there were two fires that had  
102 started and caused a major fire. Commissioner Morgan and Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel  
103 discussed the history of the fire. Co-Chair Bullock volunteered to research deeper into the  
104 historic event to gather the necessary information regarding the history of the area to make  
105 changes to the introduction of the plan.

106 The Commission moved forward to page 17 of the Draft Redevelopment Plan to discuss  
107 transportation. Mr. Ruggieri noted that he reformatted much of this section and trimmed it down.  
108 Mr. Ruggieri stated that extension of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is still a big part of the redevelopment plan. Mr.  
109 Ruggieri went further to tell the Commission that they did not discuss much about the Pedestrian  
110 Trails, which would be located along the Duffyfield canal. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that  
111 the trail could connect with the hospital trail, which is outside of the redevelopment boundary.  
112 Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that it would not take much to change the boundary, if  
113 necessary. Mr. Ruggieri mentioned that the plan is to create signs or trail markers to create

114 connectivity for the path. Mr. Ruggieri went on to mention the City's partnership with CARTS  
115 and the newly proposed bus shelter project that would also serve persons living within the  
116 redevelopment boundary. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that CARTS has already started their  
117 process in working collaboratively with the City of New Bern to make the bus shelter project  
118 happen. Co-Chair Bullock asked for a timeline for the bus shelter project. Mr. Ruggieri  
119 responded by saying that there is a 6-month public outreach process that first takes place and  
120 CARTS will move forward from that process with suggestions to be approved by the Craven  
121 County Commissioners.

122 Co-Chair Bullock and Alderwoman Bengel asked Mr. Ruggieri about whether or not a  
123 transportation grid had been looked at to assess street viability and see what roads are too narrow  
124 or would be better for different projects according to traffic flow. Mr. Ruggieri responded by  
125 saying that these things have been considered. Commissioner Peregoy gave input by stating that  
126 many roads currently have houses along them that may be proposed for removal. Alderwoman  
127 Bengel asked if the Commission's focus is on Main Street. Mr. Ruggieri responded yes to  
128 Alderwoman Bengel. Commissioner Strickland stated that he agrees that it may not be best to  
129 identify certain specifics as it relates to streets because there would be a need to attach a funding  
130 amount, which would not be best without identified funding sources. Before moving forward to  
131 the next topic of discussion, Mr. Ruggieri emphasized again that the main component of  
132 transportation is the extension of 3<sup>rd</sup> avenue and the work on Main Street. Mr. Ruggieri also  
133 emphasized that he is currently working with the Public Works Department to ensure that city  
134 streets are kept clean.

135 Co-Chair Bullock led the commission back to goal 5 on page 16 of the plan, as it relates to  
136 community health and wellness. Co-Chair Bullock asked commissioners if they felt they should  
137 insert a paragraph of some sort mentioning Stanley White Recreation Center, considering it is a  
138 staple to the community and a place where many community health and wellness programs were  
139 taking place. No answers were immediately given. Instead, Commissioner John Young  
140 redirected commissioners to page 19 and suggested adding language to promote a partnership  
141 with the Department of Public Health, through working with the local Craven County Health  
142 Department to locate existing health programs within the redevelopment area. Commissioner  
143 Young simplified his language by stating that the page should simply state that the  
144 Redevelopment Commission will form a partnership with the Craven County Health Department.  
145 Commissioners went back to Co-Chair Bullock's question about Stanley White Recreation  
146 Center and a conclusion was made stating that more information is needed regarding the decision  
147 of its location. Co-Chair Bullock explained once more that there should be language advocating  
148 for the retention of a community health and wellness site within the redevelopment area. All  
149 commissioners agreed. Commissioners moved forward to deliberate around potential language to  
150 include Stanley White Recreation Center in the Redevelopment Plan.

151 Co-Chair Bullock led commissioners to page 15, policy 2.2.3. Co-Chair Bullock questioned if  
152 language under the policy could be broadened to include Section 8 and income-based housing.  
153 Commissioner Strickland responded to this question by saying income-based housing is  
154 effectively what Section 8 is currently. Chair Lee agreed with this response and told Mr.

155 Ruggieri that it would be good to include the Section 8 rental program and the Section 8  
156 homeownership program. Co-Chair Bullock also explained that mixed-income housing is not  
157 solely Section 8 housing. Commissioner Strickland backed Co-Chair Bullock by simply stating  
158 that he would also like to see some language in the plan that addresses affordable housing. Mr.  
159 Ruggieri determined that the necessary language would be worked in between Objective 2.2 and  
160 Objective 2.3. Co-Chair Bullock also asked Mr. Ruggieri if the Residential Periodic Inspection  
161 Program, mentioned on page 15, includes owner-occupied properties. Mr. Ruggieri responded no  
162 and explained that owner-occupied properties already have their own program for inspection.

163 Co-Chair Bullock redirected the attention of commissioners to line 15 of page 11. Co-Chair  
164 Bullock asked Mr. Ruggieri if he could explain eminent domain. Mr. Ruggieri responded by  
165 saying eminent domain is purchasing property for public purposes. Alderwoman Bengel stated  
166 that it is much more egregious and more-so tells an individual, “You will give me your  
167 property.” Commissioner Young stated that he felt the language was a bit too confrontational and  
168 recommended potential change to the language or adding an addendum to the plan.

169 Commissioner Morgan responded saying that the language would prove to be necessary and that  
170 confrontation can be beneficial in this case because people need to know that the Commission is  
171 serious. Commissioner Morgan also stated that this language around eminent domain applies  
172 more-so to those who have properties in the area but do not live in Duffyfield and refuse to  
173 maintain the property. Commissioner Morgan stated that these owners live out of state and have  
174 renters staying in properties that are not up to a good standard. Commissioner Young explained  
175 that he understood the overall concept of what the plan is conveying; however, he felt that it  
176 would not be best to convey this language to a vulnerable community who already has feelings  
177 of distrust toward the City of New Bern. Commissioner Young stated that his only concern was  
178 to make sure the Commission is effectively building trust with the community. Commissioners  
179 deliberated more around the language of “eminent domain” and what it may convey to the  
180 community. There was no general consensus to change the language.

181 Co-Chair Bullock mentioned that the plan banned mobile homes in the future. Co-Chair Bullock  
182 told commissioners that she feels mobile homes, for some, is a pathway to homeownership and  
183 she would hate to see that opportunity taken away from citizens. Commissioners deliberated  
184 around the topic of mobile homes before concluding that the general consensus was not in  
185 support of Co-Chair Bullock’s belief to potentially change the language of the plan.  
186 Commissioners then began discussing the idea of tiny homes in the Duffyfield community.  
187 Before moving forward, Mr. Ruggieri concluded from commissioners that consensus  
188 surrounding the language regarding mobile homes would remain.

189 The meeting moved forward to discussing a budget and timeline to start the housing plan. Mr.  
190 Ruggieri displayed a visual for commissioners from Commissioner Strickland gave input on  
191 what the timeline looks like and budget details. Commissioner Strickland showed commissioners  
192 how profit would be generated through various projects and identified various break-even points.  
193 Commissioner Strickland told commissioners that over a 14-year period, there would need to be  
194 an investment of 2.53 million dollars. Commission Strickland discussed the different between a  
195 plan for \$500/month rentals versus \$900/month rentals. Based on the rate of \$900,

196 Commissioner Strickland explained how the future would lead to positive revenue and could be  
197 carried out at a rate that is positive revenue of \$380,000 a year.

198 Commissioners concluded noting that Mr. Ruggieri would make the necessary changes to the  
199 plan and that Co-Chair Bullock would work on the history portion of the plan to address the  
200 historic fire of Craven Terrace.

201 **7. New Business**

202 Chair Lee reminded commissioners about the upcoming CARTS public engagement meetings  
203 and told commissioners that information on the dates of the meetings would sent after the  
204 meeting. Commission Morgan gave a thank you to the City of New Bern and the Board of  
205 Alderman for placing stop signs at dangerous intersections in New Bern. Alderwoman Bengel  
206 announced that her children will be opening Broad Street Laundry in approximately two weeks,  
207 and the new business will provide a wash and fold service. Chair Lee closed the meeting by  
208 reminding to commissioners to always tell citizens about the good things that are happening in  
209 New Bern.

210 **8. Adjournment**

211 There being no future business to discuss, Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.

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213 Date approved: 8/28/19

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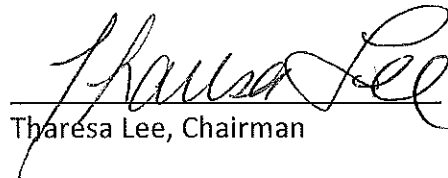
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Attest:

  
D'Ala Fulmore, Recording Secretary

  
Theresa Lee, Chairman