

City of New Bern
Redevelopment Commission Meeting
Wednesday, September 25, 2019- 6PM
Development Services Conference Room
303 First Street

Members Present: Beth Walker, Chair Theresa Lee, Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Steve Strickland, Kip Peregoy, Leander “Robbie” Morgan, Tabari Wallace, Maria Cho

Ex-Officio Members Present: Barbara Best, Jameesha Harris, Sabrina Bengel

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Tabari Wallace (E)

Staff Present: Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Amanda Ohlensehlen, 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 Theresa Lee called the meeting to order at 6:01pm and began with a reading of the Commission’s guiding principles, initiated by Commissioner Maria Cho.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of July 10, 2019 and August 29, 2019 Redevelopment Commission meetings were presented for review and approval. Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Kip Peregoy seconded this motion.

3. Public Comment

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

4. Board Discussion on 10/09/2019 Public Meeting

Chair Theresa Lee told commissioners that the upcoming public meeting would be held at Clinton Chapel AME Zion Church of New Bern at 6pm. Chair Lee stated that the meeting had been put in the newspaper, as required by state statute. Chair Lee also requested that flyers be made by the Development Services staff to be distributed to the community. Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, told commissioners that the public meeting would be held to meet the requirement of hosting a public hearing for the Redevelopment Plan. Commissioners discussed the idea of potentially using a PowerPoint presentation or using poster boards for visual aids. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that he would be out of town for a conference and would not be able to attend the public hearing. Commissioners continued to discuss seating arrangements and the overall flow of the meeting. Chair Lee told commissioners that she and Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock would serve as facilitators and commissioners could join in as needed. Commissioner Robbie Morgan emphasized the need for commissioners to be seated together in a

way to display uniformity and togetherness. Commissioner Morgan explained the importance of creating trust with the community. All commissioners agreed.

Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel told commissioners that she had received questions from citizens asking what happened to the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and the Gateway Renaissance Plan. Alderwoman Bengel explained that she responded to questions by informing citizens that the Redevelopment Plan is a combination of those plans. Alderwoman Bengel emphasized the importance of making sure the public will be informed of that at the public hearing. Chair Lee assured that citizens would receive all the necessary information about the plan's overall development. Mr. Ruggieri also told commissioners that staff would be available to answer any questions as best as they could.

5. New Business

Chair Lee redirected the meeting to Mr. Ruggieri to provide an update on the City's drainage study. Before getting started, Alderwoman Bengel told commissioners that she wanted to share good news about new trash cans coming into the Duffyfield community and how it is going to be beneficial in meeting the goal of keeping the neighborhood clean. Commissioners thanked Alderwoman Bengel for sharing the good news.

Mr. Ruggieri guided commissioners back to looking at the drainage study, which was completed a few weeks back. Mr. Ruggieri explained that engineers looked at the Commission's recommendation on using FEMA lots by digging out these lots and maybe having them serve as a stormwater feature for the community. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that engineers determined that if this were done, it would provide a significant level of stormwater retention. Mr. Ruggieri explained that this is a three-stage project that costs approximately \$2 Million from start to finish. Mr. Ruggieri explained that the basin outlined in the study will take approximately six inches of rain or more in a 24-hour event and keep it out of the community to help with flooding. Mr. Ruggieri highlighted that the next phase would be to get the study to potential funders to get the project going. Commissioner Cho asked Mr. Ruggieri what this may mean for the city of New Bern in the future. Mr. Ruggieri responded by stating that it would be great in mitigating some reoccurring flood issues, with emphasis placed on understanding that it would not totally solve all of the flooding problems but would be great to alleviate part of the problem. As Mr. Ruggieri explained that stormwater will be pumped back out underneath the railroad tracks. Commissioner Kip Peregoy expressed concerns about where the stormwater will be going and what will happen to the rest of Duffyfield that floods. Commissioner Morgan emphasized the need for proper barriers as construction is underway for the project. Commissioner John Young mentioned having this information on hand for the public to see that the Commission has heard the community and is making strides to address important issues. Co-Chair Bullock asked if the current funding plan to support the project could potentially burden taxpayers. Mr. Ruggieri responded by stating that he feels there is a lot of opportunity to get the plan fully funded.

Moving on to the Commission's final talking point of the evening, Co-Chair Bullock provided a recap of the recent city council meeting that included a resolution concerning Stanley White Recreation Center. Co-Chair Bullock explained how the resolution involved council stating that

if possible and feasible, the City would agree to build Stanley White back better in its original location. Co-Chair Bullock guided commissioners to think about what this means for extending 3rd Avenue, as mentioned in the Redevelopment Plan. Commissioner Morgan explained how keeping the extension of 3rd Avenue in the plan will send a message to the community that it is a known fact that Stanley White Recreation Center will not stay in its original location. Commissioners spent time recapping information shared at the previous night's aldermen meeting. Alderwoman Barbara Best stated that she too felt like having the 3rd Avenue extension component in the plan was sending the wrong message to community members and that she recommends it be removed. Alderwoman Jameesha Harris agreed. Co-Chair Bullock redirected everyone to remember that the 3rd Avenue extension is a driving factor for comprehensive economic development. Co-Chair Bullock stated that it is very important for everyone to ask the question: "Are we okay with our plan no longer being an economic development plan?"

Commissioners continued to deliberate over possible feelings toward keeping the 3rd Avenue Extension. Chair Lee led commissioners to vote on leaving the 3rd Avenue component in the plan or removing it. Commissioner Steve Strickland made a motion to keep it in the plan and to attach a caveat to the presentations that the 3rd Avenue extension is not intended to interfere with Stanley White Recreation Center and changes will be made if necessary. Motion carried, without altering the plan, maintaining the 3rd Avenue extension.

Before closing, Co-Chair Bullock briefed the Commission on Swiss Bear receiving funding after Hurricane Florence and possibly transferring \$100,000 from Mastercard to the Redevelopment Commission to assist with addressing plans for housing. Commissioners all agreed that this would be great in offsetting some of the costs outlined in the Redevelopment Plan. Chair Lee told commissioners that everyone would have an assignment for the upcoming public hearing and thanked everyone for attending.

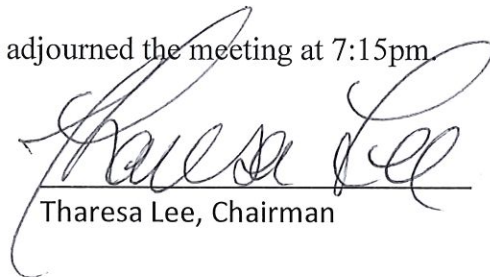
6. Adjournment

There being no future business to discuss, Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm.

Date approved: November 13, 2019

Attest:


D'Aja Fulmore, Recording Secretary


Theresa Lee, Chairman