

City of New Bern
Redevelopment Commission Meeting
November 18, 2020
303 First Street- Development Services

Members Present: Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Tabari Wallace, Kip Peregoy, Maria Cho, Steve Strickland, John Young

Ex-Officio Members Present: Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Leander Morgan (A), Beth Walker (E)

Staff Present: Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Amanda Ohlensehlen, Community and Economic Development Manager; Alice Wilson, GIS Manager; D’Aja Fulmore, Community Development Coordinator

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Tharesa Lee called this meeting to order at 6:04PM.

2. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for 10/28/2020 were approved-Kip; motion-Steve-approved

4. Mike Williams: Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity.

Mike Williams, director of Habitat for Humanity, made a presentation to the Commission on *Redeveloping the Focus Area*. Mr. Williams gave a snapshot of the current challenges in the community, including but not limited to, vacant lots, aging housing stock, dilapidated buildings, high rental rates, and the inability to support low-income residents. Mr. Williams stated that 1,414 of the 1,790 housing units in the Redevelopment Area are currently occupied by renters. Mr. Williams stated that Habitat for Humanity has done much work in the Focus Area, including building 47 owner-occupied homes. Mr. Williams discussed the importance of stable housing in the community and the impact of stable housing providing increased family wealth. Mr. Williams explained that he would like the Redevelopment Commission to partner with Habitat for Humanity to develop a detailed comprehensive housing plan for the Focus Area. Mr. Williams continued to reiterate the importance of increasing homeownership in the Focus Area. Mr. Williams also told commissioners that there are people in Trent Court who will need housing as demolition is expected to take place and stated that these plans should consider the livelihood of these residents for the next 2-5 years. Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley asked what creating transitional housing would look like. Mr. Williams explained that, as properties become available, Habitat for Humanity would work to get the rehab work done and create a plan based

36 on the knowledge of rehabilitation. Mr. Williams explained that Habitat for Humanity has been
37 working with the local organization, Tried by Fire, to prepare transitional housing. Chair Lee
38 discussed the Housing Coalition meetings and having Habitat for Humanity joining those
39 meetings. Mr. Williams explained that he would love to attend the Redevelopment
40 Commission's Housing Subcommittee meetings.

41 **5. Residential Inspection Program**

42 Mr. Ruggieri provided commissioners with a document showing rental properties outside of the
43 floodplain and their conditions. Commissioner Kip Peregoy stated that it would be good to begin
44 a registration program, stating that it would be beneficial and may even cause some landlords to
45 step up and make necessary repairs to properties to ensure code compliance. Alderwoman
46 Sabrina Bengel continued to express concern around families being left homeless due to
47 noncompliance with code and the lack of homes established for relocation. Alderwoman Bengel
48 suggested that beginning a registry would be good, without immediately activating an inspection
49 program. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley agreed that it would be good to work on registration while
50 the Commission also works toward increasing the housing stock. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley
51 asked Commissioner Peregoy if he thought it would be best to continue attempting to find homes
52 to rehabilitate or if it would possibly be better to pursue new construction. Commissioner
53 Peregoy responded that rehabilitation of homes would be more effective, considering potential
54 funding sources. Commissioner Peregoy stated that the Commission would get more out of doing
55 rehabilitation work.

56 Commissioners continued to deliberate around the idea of having a residential inspection
57 program. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley stated that she felt the Housing Subcommittee has done well
58 trying to find properties that can aid the Commission in its efforts to increase housing stock. Co-
59 Chair Bullock-Mosley explained that she had major concerns about the residential inspection
60 program resulting in families ending up homeless because the Commission currently does not
61 have adequate housing supply for displaced families. Commissioner Tabari Wallace and
62 Commissioner Peregoy agreed that there will need to be something in place to address relocation
63 before this program could be effective and beneficial to the community. Chair Lee stated that
64 there are other housing options in the community since the recent development of new housing
65 and there may be renters who will be interested in these new options. Chair Lee stated that, at
66 some point, the Commission has to take charge and begin to address compliance in order to
67 uphold what is in the Redevelopment Plan.

68 Commissioner Kip Peregoy made a motion to instruct staff to create a written Residential
69 Inspection Program to be reviewed and approved by the Commission before being forwarded to
70 the Board of Aldermen. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Steve Strickland.

71 **6. Committee Updates**

72 Commissioner Kip Peregoy opened by stating that the Housing Committee has been out in the
73 community looking at potential homes to acquire for rehab. Mr. Ruggieri explained that the
74 Neighborhood Committee will be working in collaboration with Public Works for the Walt
75 Bellamy clean-up. Commissioner Maria Cho provided the Health/Wellness Committee update.

76 Commissioner Cho explained that the Dr. Johnathan Livingston of North Carolina Central
77 University would like to organize a 5-part monthly lecture series. Commissioner Cho stated that
78 these lectures will be held virtually. Commissioner Cho discussed the importance of building
79 cultural awareness while also improving public health. Commissioner John Young explained
80 how social inequities result in major public health issues in marginalized communities.
81 Commissioner Cho talked about the importance of resolving mental health issues in the
82 community and possibly forming partnerships with Habitat for Humanity for lectures on
83 financial literacy. Commissioner Tabari Wallace asked about more information on what African
84 American history would be taught through these lectures. Commissioner Wallace explained the
85 importance of history being accurately presented. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosely agreed. Alongside
86 lectures, Commissioner Cho also added that some cooking demonstrations will be coming for the
87 community to promote healthy eating and lifestyle changes. Chair Lee explained that the Health
88 Committee is asking for \$4,000 and wants to restructure the program/approach to delivering the
89 lecture series. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley stressed the importance of collaborating with North
90 Carolina Central University to align with the Commission's direction on where they would like
91 to see the series go. Commissioner Peregoy suggested the idea of have a local presenter who has
92 ties to the community the Commission is serving. Commissioner Strickland stated that he would
93 like to see more focus be placed on addressing those living in poverty, not exclusively African
94 Americans. Other commissioners chimed in to explain that most of the community members in
95 the Redevelopment Area are African American. Health committee members discussed having
96 another Zoom meeting soon to continue discussion.

97 **7. New Business**

98 No new business was discussed at this meeting. The next meeting was scheduled to occur on
99 Wednesday, December 9, 2020.

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101 This meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

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103 Date approved: 11-18-2020

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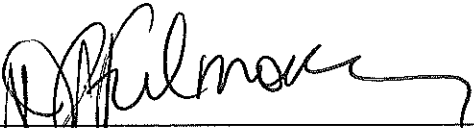
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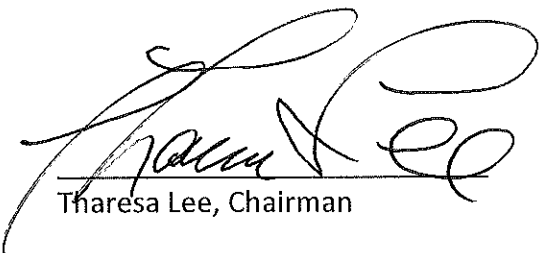
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Attest:  _____
D. A. Fulmore, Recording Secretary


Tharesa Lee, Chairman