

City of New Bern
Redevelopment Commission Meeting
February 10, 2021
303 First Street- Development Services

Members Present: Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Kip Peregoy, Maria Cho, Steve Strickland, Beth Walker, John Young, Julian Tripp

Ex-Officio Members Present: Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Leander Morgan (E), Tabari Wallace (A)

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 6:04 PM.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received. The following citizens attended this meeting:

- Ellen Sheridan of the Historic Preservation Commission
- Gregory Holmes of First Missionary Baptist Church
- Jason Sanderson of Keller Williams Realty
- Mike Williams of Habitat for Humanity

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting were presented. Commissioner Kip Peregoy made a motion to approve the minutes. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Beth Walker.

4. Possible Donation of Structure Located at 602 Gaston Blvd

Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services, presented a visual aid of the property located at 602 Gaston Blvd. Mr. Ruggieri explained that the Redevelopment Commission has been asked to look at the property for possible acquisition. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that the property appears to be in pretty good condition and is a 3-bedroom home. Mr. Ruggieri also stated that looking at the cost for moving the property would be most important. Mr. Ruggieri opened the floor for the Commission to lead a discussion. Chair Lee began by telling commissioners of her previous history of looking at this property some time back for a nonprofit organization. Chair Lee stated that a purchase never occurred. Commissioner Maria Cho simply stated that she felt it was a property worth exploring.

Commissioner Peregoy told the Commission that, due to it being a ranch-style home, lot width would be something to consider and it would also be important to have someone look underneath

the home. Commissioner Peregoy stated that the home needs to be modernized and he had been inside the home. Commissioner Peregoy also stated that the home was worth exploring but advised the Commission to consider the cost-benefit ratio. Commissioner Steve Strickland agreed, stating that lot width would be a concern and knowing what street the home would be pulled down is another important factor to consider. Commissioner Strickland also mentioned knowing what formula may be used to price the cost of moving the home. Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel stated that the distance a home is moved, and the number of poles removed all factor into the cost of moving. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the home would be placed in Focus Area 1. Commissioner Cho asked if the property could serve as transitional housing and Mr. Ruggieri responded yes. Alderwoman Bengel stated that before the property would be demolished, the Board of Aldermen would open it for the public to purchase, if the Commission does not acquire. Mr. Ruggieri stated that he would get a price on moving, along with utility costs and potential costs for rehabilitation. Mr. Ruggieri told the Commission that both Commission and CDBG funds may be used towards the property.

5. Committee Updates

Mr. Ruggieri provided the Neighborhood subcommittee update. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the third neighborhood clean-up occurred in the Walt Bellamy neighborhood and took place on January 9, 2021. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the clean-up went well, and two dumpsters were placed out for the community. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that the junk car program has not generated much engagement, and no one had submitted to use the service. Mr. Ruggieri stated that staff would continue working to generate response and the program will remain active.

Commissioner Cho provided the Health/Wellness subcommittee update. Commissioner Cho stated that the committee had been conducting meetings and focusing on vaccine distribution. Commissioner Cho told commissioners that meetings occurred at First Missionary Baptist Church discussing vaccination with Dr. Holmes and Dr. Fisher. Commissioner Cho also told commissioners that the Health Department is using a liaison system to capture information to give to call centers for vaccinations. Commissioner Cho expressed the importance of ensuring COVID-19 related information is disbursed within the community, especially to those over the age of 65. Lastly, Commissioner Cho told commissioners the hospital is working on having an event at DaySpring Church to vaccinate 200 people over the weekend and the committee will be supporting this initiative and continuing partnerships.

6. Old Business

Amanda Ohlensehlen, Community and Economic Development Manager, gave a report on the Duffyfield Stormwater Project. Mrs. Ohlensehlen stated that the project remains in Phase 1- Construction. Mrs. Ohlensehlen explained the project had experienced delays with railroad permitting and was finally approved. Mrs. Ohlensehlen explained moving parts of the project include increasing the size of the Biddle Street Pond, increasing pumps, and developing larger pipes. Mrs. Ohlensehlen stated that while Phase 1 is being completed, a meeting to finalize the scope of Phase 2 will be occurring soon. Mrs. Ohlensehlen told commissioners that the development of walking trails and natural plantings will be a part of the meeting discussion and a

potential loan opportunity may be given for the project through the Green Project Fund. Mrs. Ohlensehlen stated that a 0% interest loan may be optional and will need to go before Board of Aldermen if used. Mr. Ruggieri told commissioners that the Parks and Recreation Department mentioned being able to possibly find funding for the amenities added as part of the project.

Mrs. Ohlensehlen gave another update, stating that \$100,000 in CDBG funds has been allocated to the Commission for the rehabilitation of a home in the Redevelopment Area. Mrs. Ohlensehlen stated a property has been identified and the environmental review process has commenced. Mrs. Ohlensehlen explained that the review includes an assessment of environmental and historical factors, condition of the property, cost of rehabilitation, and what funds may be used and how the property will be reused. Mrs. Ohlensehlen told commissioners that staff is working with the State Historic Preservation Office and 721 First Avenue is the address of the property.

7. New Business/Closed Session

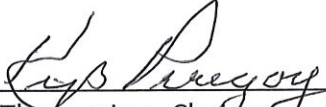
Pursuant to **NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) Closed Sessions**; A motion was made to enter closed session by Commissioner Beth Walker. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Peregoy. The motion passed unanimously (8-0), The Commission entered closed session at 6:50pm.

After returning from closed session, the Commission discussed bringing in a consultant for a strategic planning session. Chair Lee stated it would be nice to have a consultant lead a planning session at least once a year. Together, Commissioners decided to schedule a Special Called Meeting on February 25, 2021 from 2-6pm to be held in the conference room of Development Services.

Mr. Ruggieri told Commissioners that the next neighborhood clean-up would likely occur in the Mechanicsville area of Duffyfield. Mr. Ruggieri stated this clean-up may take a couple months to get on the schedule with Public Works.

This meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

Date approved: 3.10.2021


Theresa Lee, Chairman
VICE

Attest: 

D'Aja Fulmore, Recording Secretary