

1 **City of New Bern**

2 **Redevelopment Commission Special Called Meeting**

3 **April 28, 2021**

4 **303 First Street- Development Services**

5 **Members Present:** Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Kip Peregoy, Maria Cho, Steve Strickland,
6 Beth Walker, Tabari Wallace, John Young, Julian Tripp, Leander Morgan

7 **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel, Alderwoman Barbara Best,
8 Alderwoman Jameesha Harris

9 **Members Excused (E)/Absent (A):**

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

13 **1. Welcome and Call to Order**

14 Chair Tharesa Lee called this meeting to order at 6:00PM.

15 **2. Public Comment**

16 The following public comments were received:

17 *Pastor Holmes* of New Bern, NC stated, “We were disturbed by emails we got today. We have
18 been here for two years. I don’t try to fight old battles and dig old ditches. This committee has
19 worked faithfully. The sole mission in Duffyfield has been to increase homeownership. I’m
20 looking forward to working with Caldwell and continue this partnership.”

21 *Mike Williams* of Habitat for Humanity stated, “I am here to thank the Redevelopment
22 Commission for the cleanup and cookout we are doing. I am thankful for the partnership and feel
23 it is a step in the direction I have been trying to get us to take. I am looking forward to working
24 with Dr. Caldwell. I want to thank Jeff for setting up a call with him and I am hoping the
25 visioning of the design of First Avenue is done with the partners of the community.”

26
27 **3. Authorize Chair to Sign Consulting Agreement with Ujima Developers**

28 Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, told the Commission that a motion must be
29 made approving a resolution that authorizes the Chair to sign the consulting agreement with
30 Ujima Developers. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the contract begins the process of the Commission
31 determining the redevelopment process for First Avenue, which is a two-part process. Mr.
32 Ruggieri stated that Dr. Caldwell will be in New Bern on Friday and Saturday to get an overall
33 feel of the community and to talk with different citizens. Mr. Ruggieri explained that he will be
34 escorted by Commissioner Robbie Morgan. Mr. Ruggieri stated that part one of this process

35 includes tube testing the program on the ground, meeting with leaders and determining what new
36 housing units will look like.

37 Commissioner Steve Strickland stated that he had been involved on calls with Dr. Caldwell.
38 Commissioner Strickland explained that he was skeptical at first but is now more certain of the
39 direction the project is going. Commissioner Strickland stated that if the Commission leverages
40 funding, within a year, the Commission could use money to borrow and have 10-12 homes on
41 the docket for rehabilitation. Commissioner Strickland told commissioners, "If you want to do
42 something different and outside of the box, I encourage you to support this. This will be
43 different." Commissioner Strickland stated that Dr. Caldwell has the ability to connect the
44 Commission with funding, and for a \$5,000 investment, it would be foolish not to pursue this
45 collaborative effort."

46 Commissioner Strickland made a motion to approve a resolution authorizing the Chair to Sign
47 the consulting agreement with Ujima Developers.

48 This motion was seconded by Commissioner Robbie Morgan.

49 Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel paused the motion to state that she was impressed with Dr.
50 Caldwell but still had questions on the process. Alderwoman Bengel asked if the \$5000 payment
51 was being used for him come down this week and begin Phase 1 of the process. Mr. Ruggieri
52 responded yes. Alderwoman Bengel stated that she was concerned that he was not going to meet
53 with the Commission and other partners and Dr. Caldwell's itinerary did not show a Commission
54 meeting. Alderwoman Bengel later expressed support of moving forward with the motion.

55 Alderwoman Jameesha Harris stated that she met Dr. Caldwell at a conference and felt he would
56 be a great resource for New Bern. Alderwoman Harris stated that the community is the only
57 thing that matters, and she is excited to know the Commission was moving forward with this
58 partnership.

59 The motion carried unanimously.

60 **4. Authorize Chair to Execute Offer to Purchase Contract for Properties Located at**
61 **203 and 207 Jones Street**

62 Mr. Ruggieri stated that the offer for 203 and 207 Jones Street had been looked at in the past and
63 the Commission is the highest bidder. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the only thing left to do is execute
64 the contract and let the attorney handle the rest. Commissioner John Young stated that he would
65 like to inquire about whether the contracts are good and cover what the Commission needs.

66 Attorney Jaimee Bullock responded yes. Alderwoman Bengel asked if when the Commission
67 purchases a property in a hurry like this if the Board of Aldermen needs to appropriate a certain
68 amount of money before this happens. Alderwoman Bengel also stated that she received a call
69 from an angry citizen saying that the City of New Bern was bidding against them. Alderwoman
70 Bengel explained that she told the citizen he was wrong because she was unaware. Co-Chair Kip
71 Peregoy stated that the initial concept was that the Housing Committee could submit offer with a
72 30-day period for due diligence to give the Commission the chance to walk away from any offer.
73 Co-Chair Peregoy explained that gives the Commission time to bring details back to full board

74 for approval. Commissioner Morgan asked if the Commission is interested in the housing or the
75 properties. Co-Chair Peregoy responded, stating that there is one house and an additional, large
76 vacant lot that could create 4 lots. Co-Chair Peregoy explained that the house has serious
77 problems, including termite damage and leaning floors. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the
78 Commission is looking at the value of controlling and enhancing Walt Bellamy Drive to create
79 nice streetscape throughout the community.

80 Commissioner John Young made a motion approving the resolution, authorizing the Chair to
81 execute offer to purchase contract for properties located at 203 and 207 Jones Street.

82 This motion was seconded by Kip Peregoy. The motion carried.

83 **5. Authorize Chair to sign Consulting Agreement with All 4 Success LLC to conduct**
84 **community health assessment and engagement.**

85 Commissioner Cho began by asking the Commission if there were any questions related to the
86 agenda item. Commissioner Cho explained that All 4 Success LLC is the nonprofit organization
87 the team from North Carolina Central University (NCCU) works for. Commissioner Cho stated
88 that NCCU will be present on Saturday for the community resource fair. Commissioner Cho
89 stated that the health assessment will be placed online to run after May 1st, 2021, with a goal of
90 collecting 50-300 survey responses. Commissioner Strickland questioned how this relates to the
91 lecture series and Commissioner Cho told the Commission they are separate things.

92 Commissioner Cho stated that the health assessment is for community engagement and the
93 lecture series was a virtual way of doing engagement that should be expected to be done in the
94 future. Commissioner Young expressed excitement for the health assessment, stating that it will
95 be beneficial as the Commission works with Dr. Caldwell. Commissioner Strickland inquired
96 about the data gathered from the Choice Neighborhoods Plan and its value. Commissioner
97 Young explained that this health assessment will be an upgrade to that plan, as data today will
98 address current health needs.

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100 This meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

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102 Date approved: 6/17/2021

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Tharesa Lee, Chairman

Attest: 
Daja Fulmore, Recording Secretary