

City of New Bern
Redevelopment Commission Meeting
July 14, 2021

303 First Street- Development Services

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

Ex-Officio Members Present: Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Leander Morgan (E)

Staff Present: Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Alice Wilson, GIS Manager

1. Welcome and Call to Order

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

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

3. Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented at this meeting.

4. Presentation of Phase 1 Report by Ujima Developers

Jeff Ruggieri, director of Development Services, reintroduced Dr. Caldwell to the Commission ahead of his presentation. Dr. Caldwell came forth to thank the Commission for having him, stating that he has had many calls of interest related to New Bern and it appears to be a city that a lot of people are connected to. Dr. Caldwell stated that his time in New Bern allowed him to analyze the community from a social impact perspective, stating that New Bern needs investment in the development of people and land. Dr. Caldwell stated that his job would be to assist in changing the neighborhood through partnership with government and the residents. Dr. Caldwell stated that the residents would act as co-designers, allowing them to have a hand in creating the community they want.

Dr. Caldwell discussed opportunity areas he noticed in the community, which included marketing/communication, intergenerational dialogue, and targeted housing programs. Dr. Caldwell stressed the importance bridging the gap between age groups and sharing history amongst these groups. Dr. Caldwell told the Commission that the younger generation tends to take interest in larger cities and other communities that provide the desired housing, jobs, and entertainment. Dr. Caldwell stated that both the younger generation and older generation agree that they would like to see more people coming back to live in the community and both want to create a vibrant community. Dr. Caldwell told the Commission that the need for a targeted housing program would include innovative ways to create equity and diversity. Dr. Caldwell stressed the importance of a talent retention plan that would include housing to compliment that

plan. Additionally, Dr. Caldwell stated that the talent retention plan would require partners being a part of it. Dr. Caldwell referenced the Launch Pad program that will provide rental housing units while also preparing residents for homeownership and providing collaboration with Craven Community College and other partners for trade training. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that he had reviewed the concept of the Launch Pad Program and had questions regarding who would manage the partners and different elements of the program to ensure it runs effectively. Alderwoman Sabrina Bengel asked Dr. Caldwell if he had conversation with Habitat for Humanity as it relates to homeownership programs and talent training. Dr. Caldwell responded, stating that Habitat for Humanity would be considered a partner and he had been in conversation with them.

Chair Lee opened the floor for discussion regarding Dr. Caldwell's presentation. Commissioner Maria Cho asked for details related to coordinating the partners who will be involved with the Launch Pad Program. Co-Chair Peregoy explained that the Commission will not be able to coordinate the program partners and the program will need an executive director. Commissioners continued to deliberate about the management of partners and the amount of work required in effectively implementing the program. Commissioner Steve Strickland stated that it is good to also be mindful of the funding that will be needed.

Co-Chair Peregoy made a motion to accept the Phase 1 report. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion carried unanimously (9-0).

The Commission continued to discuss what Phase 2 would entail with Dr. Caldwell. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that knowing the deliverables is of extreme importance to him. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the housing working group would collaborate with Dr. Caldwell to iron out the deliverables.

5. Request Conveyance of Real Property located at 908 Bloomfield Street:

Chair Tharesa Lee explained that the Board of Alderman wants to donate the property, located at 908 Bloomfield Street, to the Commission. Chair Lee told commissioners that the Commission would first have to make a request for the property. Co-Chair Kip Peregoy asked for a legal review from Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley concerning deed restrictions. Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley explained that there was a previous restriction imposed by the U.S. Marshal that has been removed. Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley explained that there are two pathways that can be taken, stating that the Board of Aldermen can convey the structure without restrictions or convey the structure with a *particular use* condition. Alderwoman Bengel stated that it may be best for the Commission to submit a request that includes what the property may be used for. Alderwoman Bengel stated that it does not have to be super specific, but it may be helpful for the Board since there have been many requests submitted for the property. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the main issue is that the Commission currently does not have a plan for what the structure will be used for. Co-Chair Peregoy asked Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley if the Commission could state that the property would be used as a "potential" health and resource center. Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley stated that she felt that would be fine and the Commission could amend

the resolution if necessary. Together, Commissioners began discussing the language to be drafted as part of the resolution.

Commissioner John Young made a motion to for a resolution to be sent to the Board of Aldermen requesting that the property located at 908 Bloomfield Street be used as a health and/or community resource center after consultation with the community.

The motion unanimously carried by the Commission (9-0).

6. Tiffany Askew, Executive Director of the New Bern Housing Authority

Chair Tharesa Lee gave a brief introduction of Tiffany Askew, the new executive director of the New Bern Housing Authority. Chair Lee stated she worked with Mrs. Askew for some time, and she is originally from Georgia. Chair Lee told the Commission that Mrs. Askew is the right person for the Housing Authority, and she is truly passionate about housing.

Mrs. Askew stood to further introduce herself to the Commission, detailing her experience of working in Georgia and South Carolina. Mrs. Askew thanked the Commission for having her and stressed the importance of providing safe and decent housing for families. Mrs. Askew told the Commission that the Carolina Avenue housing project is nearing completion, stating that the property has a total of 80 units and should be ready by November 1st. Additionally, Mrs. Askew stated that she is looking forward to working on the redevelopment plan for Trent Court and the Commission can expect to receive progress reports from the Housing Authority.

7. Committee Updates

Providing the housing working group update, Mr. Ruggieri stated that the Board of Aldermen approved the Commission's request to receive the property located at 602 Gaston Boulevard and the project should be cleared for use of CDBG funding by the end of July. Mr. Ruggieri explained there had been a small delay with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). Mr. Ruggieri stated that the property will be relocated to 911 Eubanks Street by the end of August. Mr. Ruggieri also stated that the Commission now owns 203 & 207 Jones Street, which will be retained for future development.

Commissioner Maria Cho provided the Health and Wellness working group update, stating that the health assessment dissemination process is being worked on with North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and community partners. Commissioner Cho stated that 6-9 months would be the expected timeframe for collecting the data from the health assessment. Commissioner Cho also told the Commission that meetings were being held to discuss the vision for the potential health center at 908 Bloomfield Street.

8. Old Business

No old business was presented.

9. New Business:

No new business was presented.

Co-Chair Peregoy made a motion to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. The motion unanimously carried (9-0).

This meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Date approved: 8/11/21



Theresa Lee, Chairman

Attest: 

D'Aja Fulmore, Recording Secretary