City of New Bern

Redevelopment Commission Meeting

May 10, 2023

City Hall- 300 Pollock Street, New Bern, NC

Members Present: Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Kip Peregoy, Tabari Wallace, Steve Strickland, Beth Walker, Julius Parham, Sharon Bryant

Ex-Officio Members Present: Alderman Rick Prill

Members Excused (E)/Absent (A): Leander Morgan (E), Sarah Proctor (E)

Staff Present: Marvin Williams, Assistant City Manager; D'Aja Fulmore, Community Development Coordinator

1. Welcome and Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Chair Tharesa Lee conducted a roll call. Seven commissioners were present. One alderman was present.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chair Lee gave an overview of the meeting agenda. Chair Lee explained that a ten-minute break would be included during the discussion of the executive director's salary.

Co-Chair Peregoy made a motion to approve the agenda. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Tabari Wallace. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

4. Guiding Principles

The Commission collaboratively read the Commission's guiding principles.

5. Public Comment

Local citizen, Ruth Cooper, stood to address the Commission regarding litter in the Duffyfield Community. Ms. Cooper expressed disappointment regarding a recent cleanup effort in Duffyfield, stating that many people were not involved. Ms. Cooper stated that she would like

assistance from the Commission to help increase community involvement. Chair Lee thanked Ms. Cooper and discussed potential ways to improve communication and raise awareness.

6. Consider Adopting a Resolution requesting the Board of Aldermen allocate funds appropriated for the Executive Director's salary to the Redevelopment Commission

Chair Lee stated that this specific agenda item is part of a continuation from a previous meeting. Chair Lee stated that the Commission had questions related to the hiring of a new executive director and answers were received from the City Manager. Chair Lee provided a 10-minute break for the Commission to review answers received from the City Manager.

Upon return from break, Chair Lee opened the floor for discussion of the item.

Commissioner Wallace asked if the funding for the executive director position will be included in the 2024 budget. Assistant City Manager, Marvin Williams, provided feedback stating that nothing can be guaranteed regarding Board decisions for the 2024 year.

Commissioner Beth Walker stated that another person is needed to be a liaison and the position needs to be filled so the Commission will not receive criticism for not getting things done. Commissioner Walker stated that not having the position filled is creating a delay in the Commission accomplishing its goals.

Co-Chair Peregoy stated that he wants to encourage the Board of Aldermen to begin the process of identifying and hiring a new executive director. Co-Chair Peregoy also stated that he does not support the proposed resolution because of its ambiguity.

Commission Julius Parham stated that he would vote against the proposed resolution. Commissioner Parham also stated that he would like to know if the City conducted an exit interview and what problems the previous executive director faced. Commissioner Parham expressed the need to hire a new director. Commissioner Sharon Bryant expressed agreement with Commissioner Parham and stated that the Commission is at a standstill without having a director in place.

Commissioner Steve Strickland stated that he felt it would be appropriate to ask the City about hiring a new executive director and to kindly request that the Board of Aldermen and Commission have more involvement with selection going forward. Commissioner Strickland also proposed the idea of possibly having the new director report directly to the Commission.

Commissioner Wallace stated that he would be curious to know if the Board of Aldermen could make policy changes that would give the Commission more room to be efficient in serving.

Chair Lee expressed agreement with the need to put in a request to hire a new executive director and stated that it would be beneficial to have the Commission more involved and to make sure it is understood what is expected of an executive director prior to hiring.

The Commission received input from the Assistant City Attorney, Jaimee Bullock-Mosely, regarding next steps. The Commission decided to not move forward with adopting the proposed resolution.

Co-Chair Peregoy made a recommendation that the Commission ask Commissioner Strickland if he would be willing to articulate the Commission's sentiments in a draft letter for the Commission to review before forwarding to the Board of Aldermen.

Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosley stated that it might be in the best interest of the Commission to clearly define what more involvement from the Commission would look like prior to forwarding to the City Manager to request the position be filled.

7. Discussion on 203 and 207 Jones Street, which are also proposed parcel Lots A, B, and C on Walt Bellamy Drive

Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the Commission approved the plats at the last meeting. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the Commission has contract proposals on bidding to build the houses. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that a budget has been put together and finances have been secured for the three houses that will be built on the lots. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the homes will be for sale.

There were no additional questions or discussion from the Commission.

8. Discussion on the status of 911 Eubanks Street

Commissioner Beth Walker stated that 911 Eubanks Street is a successful project. Commissioner Walker stated that a change order has been developed in the amount of $8500 and this money is needed to correct items that the City identified during inspection that were outside of the contractor's contract. Commissioner Walker stated that a Certificate of Occupancy cannot be issued until inspection is passed. Commissioner Walker stated that she proposes the Commission approves the change order.

Chair Lee stated that funds to pay for the change order will come from the Commission's general fund and would not come from the Community Development Block Grant.

Commission Parham made a motion to approve the change order. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryant. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

9. Working Group Report

Health and Wellness: Commissioner Tabari Wallace gave an update on the Health and Wellness Center for the Duffyfield community. Commissioner Wallace stated that decisions are being made regarding the interior design of the building. Commissioner Wallace stated that he has an upcoming meeting on Thursday to discuss specifications prior to securing a building contractor.

Commissioner Wallace stated that the plan is to break ground on June 30, 2023. Commissioner Wallace stated that partnerships and collaborations will be continued with the Craven County Health Department, Duke University, North Carolina Central University and more.

Housing: Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the housing group is beginning to work with a certified appraiser to appraise the house at 911 Eubanks Street. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the group is also working to get the house measured as a part of a standard real estate process.

Co-Chair Peregoy also stated that there was a previous issue with a property located along West A Street, regarding the property line. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that legal staff contacted the adjacent property owners to receive feedback regarding the property potentially being demolished. Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosely stated that response from the adjacent property owners expressed no concern about the Commission's efforts to demolish the structure.

Co-Chair Peregoy stated that the housing work group wants to revisit the purchasing policies for potential buyers of Commission-owned properties. Attorney Jaimee Bullock-Mosely stated that changes to this would likely need a resolution from legal staff. Co-Chair Peregoy and the Commission gave a recommendation for legal staff to create a resolution with the proposed changes to be reviewed by the Commission.

Co-Chair Peregoy stated that he reviewed the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan and saw that the City has allocated funds for demolition. Co-Chair Peregoy stated that he is curious to know if some Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds could be used to assist with the Commission's demolition efforts.

Chair Lee stated that contact will be made with City staff for determinations.

Neighborhood: No neighborhood report was given.

9. New Business

Commissioner Wallace stated that he did not know about the recent neighborhood cleanup in Duffyfield. Commissioner Wallace gave suggestions to Ms. Ruth Cooper for flyers to be posted in beauty salons and barbershops to help raise awareness.

10. Closed Session

The Commission did not enter closed session.

11. Adjourn

Commissioner Strickland made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Parham seconded this motion. The motion unanimously carried (7-0).

This meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

Date approved: June 14, 2023

Tharesa Lee, Chairman

Attest: _____
D'Aja Fulmore, Recording Secretary