

**City of New Bern
Redevelopment Commission Meeting
March 27, 2019 – 6:00 P.M.
Developmental Services Conference Room
303 First Street**

1
2 **Members Present:** Chair Tharesa Lee, Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Kip Peregoy, Steve
3 Strickland, John Young

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5 **Members Absent:** Tabari Wallace, Leander “Robbie” Morgan Jr., Maria Cho, Beth Walker

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7 **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Alderman Sabrina Bengel, Alderman Barbara J. Best

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9 **Staff Present:** Jeff Ruggieri, Director of Development Services; Bradleigh Sceviour, Land and
10 Community Administrator; Nadia Abdulhadi, Planner II; D’Aja Fulmore, Community
11 Development Coordinator; Alice Wilson, GIS

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13 **Others Present:** Mrs. Judith Nelson, Jennifer Campbell, Recording Secretary

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16 **1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

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18 Chair Tharesa Lee called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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20 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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22 The minutes of the March 13, 2019 Redevelopment Commission were presented for review and
23 approval. Commissioner Kip Peregoy noted that in the discussion about Choice Neighborhoods
24 Initiative it was incorrectly stated that this laid out a plan for Craven Terrace when it should have
25 stated Trent Court. (Line 87). **Commissioner Kip Peregoy moved to approve the minutes as**
26 **amended. Co-Chair Jaimee Bullock-Mosley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

27
28 Before continuing to public comment, the Commission recited the Redevelopment Commission
29 Principles.

30
31 **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

32
33 At this time Alderman Barbara Best introduced herself and then opened the floor to her constituent
34 from Ward 6, Mrs. Judith Nelson, Mrs. Nelson introduced herself and explained why she desired
35 to come before the Commission.

36
37 Chair Lee gave the Commission a moment to read over the previous meeting minutes to familiar
38 themselves with the topic that will be presented and discussed during this public comment period.
39 Mrs. Nelson began by stating that her home has flooded three times in eight years and she no
40 longer wishes to live in the area. Some of the options she gave herself were to request to have her
41 home lifted, accept a buy-out, or have her home relocated. She decided that lifting was not a

42 favorable option since there would still be water under her home if it flooded in the area again.
43 She also decided that the buy-out was not an option because of the limited amount of homes for
44 sale currently. Her final option, to have the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
45 assist with relocating her home, was the most favorable. She received a list of available city owned
46 lots and then inquired about a property near her mother's home that is outside the floodplain. The
47 vacant lot is located at 1507 Washington Street, New Bern. Her hope is to purchase the property,
48 so that if FEMA offers to assist in home relocation, she will have a location for the home that is
49 outside of the floodplain.

50
51 Commissioner Steve Strickland asked if Mrs. Nelson's consideration to move was contingent on
52 FEMA helping her move, or would she be interested in purchasing the property regardless. Mrs.
53 Nelson responded by stating that she would like the option of moving her home to a location that
54 is not in a flood area. Commissioner Strickland followed with the hypothetical question that if she
55 was granted the right to purchase the property tomorrow, would she move on buying it or would
56 she wait. She stated that she would move forward with buying it so that she would have it available,
57 in case FEMA approves the relocation.

58
59 Co-Chair Bullock asked if Mrs. Nelson's home will fit on the vacant lot? Mrs. Nelson believes her
60 home would fit on it by the dimensions of the home verses the dimensions of the lot. Commissioner
61 Peregoy asked about the condition of Mrs. Nelson's house after being flooded three (3) times. Mrs.
62 Nelson explained that after a city inspector came to her home, he stated that the damage is about
63 30% being that the water rose to her windows during the hurricane.

64
65 Commissioner Strickland asked Mrs. Nelson if this issue was something she needed to act on now
66 or with assurances from the Redevelopment Commission that she would be notified, she could
67 wait until the time when the property was ready to sale. Mrs. Nelson desired to act now so that she
68 knew she could move her house if given the chance, and to be assured that the land will not become
69 unavailable. Commissioner Strickland said that the smoothest option for Mrs. Nelson may be to
70 wait a few months for the Commission to implement a plan so as not to place the Board of
71 Alderman and the Redevelopment Commission in a position of having to make a decision that
72 could create a precedent that could undermine the plan being developed. Mrs. Nelson said she was
73 willing to wait to see what the City is going to do as long as they do not sell it to someone else.
74 Commissioner Strickland explained that the property is currently not for sale, and it is under the
75 per-view of the Commission to sale this property unless the Board of Alderman take a special
76 action to sell it.

77
78 Alderman Sabrina Bengel suggested that Mrs. Nelson to begin negotiations with FEMA in regard
79 to moving her home and once she finalizes this, the Commission may be in a position to work with
80 her. Commissioner Peregoy said it is important that whatever is done on that lot complies with the
81 vision and the plan being created.

82
83 Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley asked if there were any additional information about her circumstances
84 that Mrs. Nelson would like the Commission to know. She was not able to respond. In response
85 to Commissioner Peregoy's question, Mrs. Nelson stated that her home had been inspected, but
86 she has been unable to obtain a quote.

87

88 Commissioner John Young asked if FEMA would actually move the home or do they provide
89 funds to have the house moved. Mrs. Nelson stated that she knew of one home that was moved off
90 her street after Hurricane Irene. Chair Lee explained that FEMA provides the funds, and if the City
91 has a mitigation plan, they can move the home, or the individual can use a private moving
92 company. Chair Lee then asked if Ms. Nelson had already applied to FEMA. Mrs. Nelson said she
93 had applied under several options including buy-out, lifting her home, and moving her home.

94
95 The Commission then reviewed the GIS floodplain map to investigate the area of Washington
96 Street where the vacant lot is located. Alderman Best shared her concern that the vacant lot could
97 be sold to someone else, and desired assurance from the Commission that this will not happen.
98 Chair Lee appreciated and understood what Alderman Best requested and stated that the
99 Commission was not in a position yet to make those assurances until they look into some other
100 things and raise other questions. She also stated that she may ask Alderman Best and Mrs. Nelson
101 to join the Commission meeting again once they have more details in place. Alderman Best stated
102 that once she gets some feedback and confirmation from Attorney Scott Davis, she will ask the
103 Commission for assurance that the vacant property will not be sold to someone other than Mrs.
104 Nelson. She could ask the Board of Alderman to unfreeze the parcel and allow Mrs. Nelson's
105 purchase the property, but she would prefer to have Mrs. Nelson work with the Redevelopment
106 Commission.

107
108 Alderman Best asked that once the Commission had finalized the plan, would it be possible to
109 have the parcel donated to Mrs. Nelson. Staff Member Jeff Ruggieri stated that the Commission is
110 not able to donate land, with the exception of non-profits. He went on to explain that she could
111 petition to purchase the property, which would require the Commission to solicit three appraisals
112 and offer the property through the upset bid process. Chair Lee thanked Mrs. Nelson for attending
113 the meeting and advised that they will contact her if they have further questions. This ended the
114 public comment section.

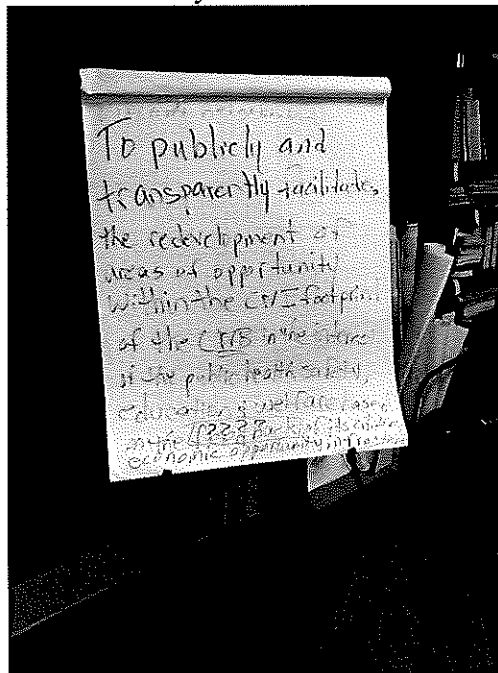
115 116 **4. MISSION STATEMENT EXERCISE**

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118 The Redevelopment Commission transitioned to a brainstorming session to draft a mission
119 statement. Chair Lee started by explaining the context of a mission statement and gave examples
120 of other communities' statements. She then asked for verbiage that they desired to use within the
121 mission statement. Some of the verbiage suggested by the Commission were "bridge",
122 "transparency", "efficiency", "educated", and "inclusive with the community." There was an
123 unfavorable opinion of using the word blighted and thought "areas of opportunity" could be used
124 instead. Another suggestion made was to use Choice Neighborhood in place of Redevelopment
125 Area.

126
127 Conversation continued around the creation of the mission statement and other suggestions were
128 included. The draft that was completed and sent to staff states:

129
130 "To publicly and transparently facilitate the redevelopment of areas of opportunity within the
131 Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) footprint of the City of New Bern, in the interest of the
132 public health, safety, education and welfare based on the feedback of its citizens, by focusing on
133 economic development and infrastructure."

134
135 The Commission members were satisfied with this draft and felt confident that the mission
136 statement could be modified and finalized by staff.



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139 **5. REVIEW OF POLICY LANGUAGE**
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141 Mr. Jeff Ruggieri presented policy language that will be implemented in the new Redevelopment
142 Plan. He began with nuisance abatement enforcement and stated that currently it was reactive.
143 During previous meetings, the Commission discussed the need for enforcement to become
144 proactive instead of reactive, so the policy language has been changed to reflect this.

145
146 The next item he discussed was in regard to properties with old growth. He spoke to a couple of
147 arborists to seek out what is best for these properties and the established trees on the properties.
148 He then included the policies in the plan. It is preferred to keep trees that exceed two-caliper in
149 width for every 5,000 square feet of land area. Multi-stem trees should not be kept due to damage
150 they sustain during large storms. Commissioner Peregoy thought it would benefit the community
151 landscape to keep certain types of multi-stemmed trees.

152
153 A discussion then proceeded regarding the strength of the verbiage within the policies.
154 Commissioner Young suggested that the wording of the policies should be stronger in order to
155 make sure the policies were enforceable. He suggested that the language be changed to “you shall
156 enforce minimum usage standards in the redevelopment area.” Mr. Ruggieri referenced other
157 documents that included loose language, and explained that this document included similar
158 language. Commissioner Young suggested the wording “the City Code Enforcement officer shall
159 enforce minimum nuisance standards.” The words “within the Redevelopment Area” were added
160 to this, and all agreed that this wording was sufficient.

161

162 Mr. Ruggieri reviewed what had been discussed thus far and Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley requested
163 to know what two-caliper meant. Mr. Ruggieri stated that it would be a tree that is two inches
164 wide. Commissioner Perego explained that it was technically the diameter of the tree and the
165 measurement method is identified as Diameter at Breast Height or DBH. He went on to explain
166 that when a tree is measured at 4.5 feet tall the diameter of the tree must measure two inches in
167 order to remain. Commissioner Strickland asked if the intent of the policy is to officially start once
168 the Commission approves it or will it be included as part of the greater plan. Mr. Ruggieri stated that
169 it would go into effect after it is approved. Commissioner Strickland questioned if the policy would
170 have teeth prior to the approval of a plan by the Board of Alderman. Mr. Ruggieri said that some
171 would apply and some would not.

172
173 Commissioner Perego referenced a previous conversation where it was stated that this policy
174 must be accompanied by the budget, because if there is no man power to implement the new
175 proactive policy, then the Commission is just putting words on paper. Commissioner Young
176 suggested an added recommendation that funds be included in the budget to support the policy.

177
178 Commissioner Young asked if it were possible to legally cut off a piece of the city and enforce the
179 creation of a Residential Periodic Inspection Program. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the only way to
180 create this program is to cut off a piece of the city.

181
182 Next, Mr. Ruggieri gave an overview of the Permit and Registration Program for Residential
183 Rental Property, and stated that the Commission decided to focus on the properties with crime
184 and disorder issues. He invited Staff Member Alice Wilson to explain the new GIS platform that
185 will help identify these properties. Mrs. Wilson explained that she is working with a crime analyst
186 at the local police department. The department pulled the crime and disorder information of the
187 CNI area for the last five years and gave them to Mrs. Wilson. She was able to map this information
188 and going forward she will receive a monthly update. Her plan is to create a dashboard with this
189 information and create a map of the CNI area, and identify where high crime areas may be in
190 relation to possible rental properties. Commissioner Strickland asked if this would be a perpetually
191 updated, or would it be created with as a record of one year back. Mr. Ruggieri stated that this was
192 created by local government and staff will work on it. He gave one example where other locations
193 had ranked crimes on a scale of one thru five based on severity. Commissioner asked what the
194 timeline for this would be since statistics will be constantly changing. Mr. Ruggieri stated it would
195 be up to the Commission to create the language in regard to a set timeframe.

196
197 Regarding vacant property registration, the Commission must create the program guidelines. He
198 stated that the process should be fairly easy and gave examples being used in other areas, If the
199 property is going to be vacant longer than a month, it should be registered. This will keep the
200 Commission, code enforcement staff, and law enforcement informed of properties. There will be
201 a reasonable fee charged and \$35 was suggested. Commissioner Strickland asked if liens created
202 by building registrations, and associated penalties automatically go to the bottom of the list. Mr.
203 Ruggieri confirmed this was the case and that this was an existing procedure.

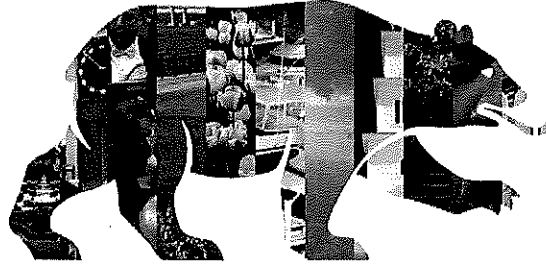
DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

- A. Nuisance Abatement
1. Increase Nuisance Abatement Code Enforcement Efforts
 - a. Instruct City Code Enforcement Officer to be proactive in enforcing minimum nuisance standards in the Redevelopment Area.
 - b. End city policy of not enforcing nuisance standards for weedy and overgrown lots for properties that appear to have "old growth" or have not been previously cleared.
 - i. Recommend keeping up to two (2) trees on site that exceed 2" caliper width per 5,000 square feet of land area. Preserved trees must be at least 15 feet apart.
 - ii. Hide stem trees shall not be preserved.
- B. Minimum Housing and Non-Residential Structures
1. Instruct code enforcement staff to be proactive in enforcing minimum building code standards for both residential and non-residential structures.
 2. Create Residential Property Periodic Inspection Program
 - a. Create a program for the periodic inspection of residential structures.
 - i. Hold a property noticed public hearing about the proposed periodic inspections plan.
 - ii. Develop a plan to address the ability of low-income residential property owners to comply with minimum housing code standards.
 3. Create Permit and Registration program for residential rental property
 - a. Identify properties with crime and disorder problems.
 - i. Create ordinance language for Board of Alderman approval that establishes process for determining the top 10% of properties with crime and disorder problems.
 - ii. Registrations shall include: owners address, owner's name, and property manager's 24-hour contact information if appropriate.
 - iii. Establish fee for registration not to exceed \$500 for any 12 month period.
- C. Vacant Property Registration Program
1. Establish Vacant Property Registration Program within the Redevelopment Area Boundary.
 - a. The program shall require vacant buildings or properties to be registered with local government.
 - b. The program shall direct city inspectors to:
 - i. Periodically examine the exterior of registered properties.
 - ii. Conduct interior inspections when violations are observable from the outside of the property.
 - c. The program shall assess a reasonable fee on registered properties to cover costs of inspections and administration.

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6. REVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY

Staff Member Brad Sceviour began his presentation regarding street systems. He stated that a lot of the challenges posed by the Commission were more associated with a mindset and an attitude for accommodation. He stated that in consideration of the objectives, he is attempting to accommodate every single mode of transit. He felt he needed to have an attitude of hostility toward a specific mode of transit, and chose cars for this particular exercise.



City of New Bern

Redevelopment Commission Transit
3/27/19

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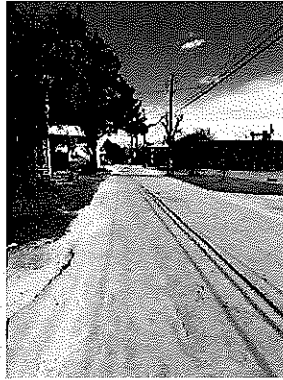
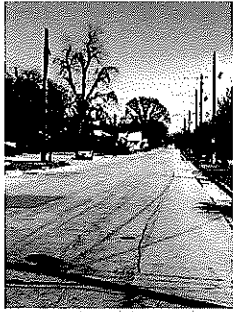
Transportation

- Objectives
 - Promote health and safety
 - Promote more efficient traffic movement
 - Upgrade infrastructure
 - Allow multi-modal transit options reflective of area needs and realities
 - Beautification

217



Existing Conditions



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220 He identified the street classifications and explanations for each classification. He included three
221 maps with the circulator streets in pink, the local streets in yellow, and the minor streets in green.



Street Classifications

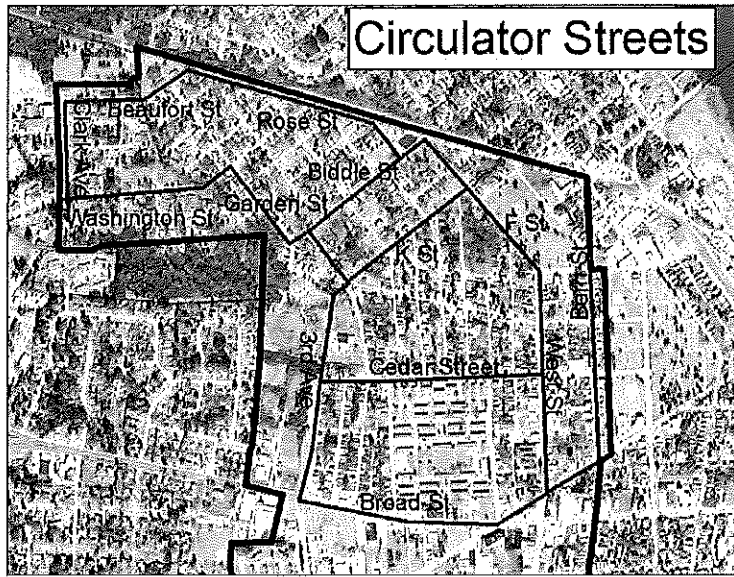
Circulator Streets are wide. They have two lanes for traffic as well as sidewalks along at least one side. These streets facilitate motor vehicle traffic.

Local streets are one way. They have pedestrian infrastructure and amenities. Sidewalks in every case and protected bike lanes where possible.

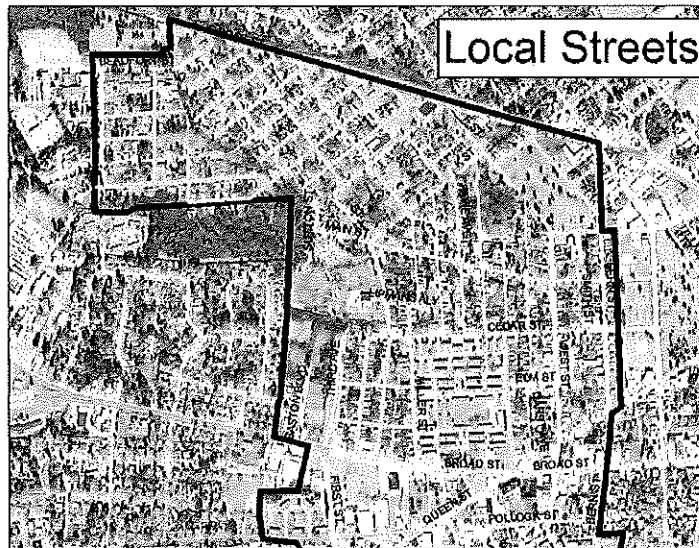
Minor streets are one way streets that don't or can't be widened and so traffic calming efforts will be put in place to discourage non-resident motor vehicle traffic.

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 224 He stated that the streets included in this map were streets that have two lane access or have the
 225 space to incorporate a second lane. He also included the potential extensions of 3rd Avenue and
 226 Middle Street that were both discussed.



227
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 229 He went on to explain that the reason Main Street is missing from the circulator map is because it
 230 is more of a local street. He went on to say that the purpose of local streets is for local citizens to
 231 move about comfortably, and so that when people are walking around, they no longer have to feel
 232 like they are constantly negotiating vehicle traffic. He stated that these streets could be split in half
 233 and have a section designated as pedestrian space. He reminded the Commission that 50% of the
 234 population does not have a vehicle.



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237

238 He explained that minor streets should be very hostile to vehicles. They could have pedestrian
239 markings or raised pavement to make it clear that those who do not live on a minor street should
240 not be driving on the street. He gave an example of raised crosswalks that could deter non-
241 residents from using these roads.

Raised Crosswalks

All streets will be retrofitted with high visibility raised crosswalks. (Duffyfield & Walt Bellamy Area)



242

Main Street

- Main Street will become a one way street. It will technically become a "local" street classification. There will be a sidewalk and as space permits further down the road there will be a protected bike lane as well.
- Potential to use cobblestone at intersections and/or for crosswalks along main street.

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244

245 He stated Main Street is a challenge because it's naturally a commercial center so one would think
246 it would be a two-way street; however, there is not adequate space to accommodate it. So it will
247 be identified as a local street where there could be potential pedestrian amenities or parking
248 depending on location. There would definitely need to be raised crosswalks in certain locations.

249


250 Commissioner Perego reminded everyone that it was determined at a previous meeting the Main
251 Street would no longer be considered a commercial street. Mr. Sceviour stated that Main Street is
252 still zoned as commercial and there are existing store fronts, which could be changed, but would
253 not change the reality of the way the community functions. Commissioner Perego agreed that it
254 is classified as a local street, but would hesitate to get wrapped up with reclassifying it as a
255 commercial street, since he thinks commercial business does not exist there currently.

256

257 It was noted that most of the minor streets feed into Main Street. Commissioner Young asked if
258 there was any significance in that all the minor streets are in one area. Mr. Sceviour stated that it
259 was the way the community developed over time. Commissioner Young followed by asking if this
260 was the heart of the community, and if the streets developed out of that. Mr. Sceviour was unsure
261 of the history, but referenced the map and showed a tradition layout. He stated that the minor
262 streets were more organically development over time.

Streets outside of Duffyfield

- Outside of the Greater Duffyfield area the street system is largely functional and should continue to follow the existing guidelines found in the City Ordinances.

263 
264 Alderman Best asked where the point of entrance would be for Main Street. Mr. Sceviour stated
265 that the concept would be to enter from the west and move east. He referenced previous
266 conversations where the Commission discussed taking 3rd Avenue and running it through the
267 property where the Stanley White Center currently is and connecting it up to Main Street, closing
268 off two other streets, and creating a four-way intersection. Alderman Best asked how the proposed
269 roadway would affect Stanley White Center as it sits now. Mr. Sceviour stated that the concept is
270 to relocate Stanley White Center to a location that is yet to be determined within the community.
271

272 Mr. Sceviour ended by stating that the idea is to have four street classifications and largely leave
273 everything south of Broad Street untouched with the exception of crosswalk improvements. The
274 street networks south of Broad Street are largely functional no need to place an emphasis on
275 altering those aside from the street realignment that are discussed in the CNI program.
276

277 Mr. Ruggieri stated that he spoke to several engineers and all have said that it would be nearly
278 impossible to go to curb and gutter. He feels the recommendation that he will make to the
279 Commission is to tie the City's paving plan with the CNI boundary, so there will be some type of
280 viability or feasibility analysis when the plan hits the boundary. He also included that there is a lot
281 of draining and back-fill issues. Commissioner Peregoy inserted that this conversation began with
282 storm water issues, and suggested that this issue will never be resolved, but there may be ways to
283 improve it. Mr. Ruggieri mentioned a study that estimated \$40,000 for a 5,000 square foot area.
284 To move forward, the City would need to hire an engineer to identify what plot of land would look
285 like.
286

287 Alderman Best asked if the USDA grant currently being sought would help solve some of the
288 problems. Mr. Ruggieri stated it would require a very detailed drainage study that may be beyond
289 the scope of the USDA. Chair Lee agreed that something will need to be done because flood waters
290 also damage streets and can drive away business. Mr. Ruggieri stated that the lots that are currently
291 being built are not in the floodplain, but this could change in June when the new floodplain is
292 adopted. When looking at the map 80-90% of the area is in the floodplain so the option is to build
293 back and build up so residents know when water comes in their possession will be dry. Co-Chair
294 Bullock-Mosley stated it needed to be sustainable development. Commissioner Peregoy stated,
295 and the Commission agreed, that they will never solve a Hurricane Florence issue, but need to be
296 able to assure residents that even if it rains three days their feet will stay dry and have the
297 confidence to look those residents in eye and say they will have the same plan and protection as
298 those in other neighborhoods of the city, including Carolina Colors.

299
300 Commissioner Best asked if the city owned lots were outside of the current flood zone or in the
301 one hundred year or five hundred year flood plain. Mr. Ruggieri stated that most of the parcels are
302 in the one hundred year floodplain. Alderman Best thought that the Commission was only
303 developing parcels that were not in the flood zones. Mr. Ruggieri stated that he has high regard for
304 the parcels outside of the flood zone, but the City did not own many of them. He continued by
305 saying that the Commission will be resilient by meeting the rules and raising the homes.

306 307 **7. NEW BUSINESS**

308
309 Chair Lee stated that she is continuing to work on a report for the Board of Alderman.
310 Commissioner Peregoy requested an update from the meeting last Friday at Ebenezer Presbyterian
311 Church. Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley stated that she, Commissioner Leander Morgan Jr, and
312 Commissioner Tabari Wallace were in attendance, as well as the mayor, members of the Board of
313 Aldermen, and the City Manager. Citizens had the opportunity to pose questions and receive
314 answers. There was a very robust conversation around the extent of damage to the Stanley White
315 Center and the regulations that are being applied to the center in contrast to buildings in other
316 locations. The partners for this meeting included the NAACP and The Phoenix House. There was
317 an inquiry about if there would be minutes of this meeting, but Co-Chair Bullock-Mosley was
318 unsure.

319
320 Mr. Ruggieri stated that at the next meeting he will provide an update on the storm water issue,
321 and that the Commission will begin looking at Land Use. He included that parts of the discussion
322 will be identifying lots that are within the floodplain and those that are not, and what the
323 Commission will want to do with them. He also stated that lots within the Commission's vision
324 will need to be labeled as blighted. If there are properties that require acquisition, the Commission
325 will need to identify them now. Commissioner Strickland requested a listing of potential properties
326 before the next meeting. Mr. Ruggieri was happy to make the list available, and advised that the
327 possibility of acquiring certain properties in the future can be included in the Land Use Plan. The
328 next meeting will be April 10, 2019. Commissioner Peregoy stated that he will be unable to attend
329 the next meeting.

330 331 **8. ADJOURN**

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333 With no further items to discuss Chair Lee adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

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Date Approved: 4/10/19

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Attest: Jennifer Campbell
Jennifer Campbell, Recording Secretary

Theresa Lee
Theresa Lee, Chair