

**City of New Bern**  
**Redevelopment Commission Meeting**  
**November 14, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**Development Services Conference Room**  
**303 First Street**

**Members Present:** Tharesa Lee, Tabari Wallace, Leander “Robbie” Morgan, Kip Peregoy, John Young, Jaimee Bullock, Beth Walker, Maria Cho, Steve Strickland

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Alderman Sabrina Bengel

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Jeff Ruggieri, Development Services Director; Bradleigh Sceviour, Planner II; Matt Montanye, Director of Public Works; and Jordan Hughes, City Engineer

**Others Present:** Jamara Wallace

**Agenda**

**1. Call to Order**

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

**Roll Call**

All members of the commission were present at the meeting.

**2. (and 4.) Approval of Minutes and Chairman Comments**

Commissioner Steve Strickland made a **motion to approve the minutes subject to review by the Development Services Director regarding statements made in line 268.** Discussion clarified the statement related to the relationship between the Craven County Disaster Recovery Alliance and State/FEMA plans set forth regarding Hurricane Recovery planning processes for the City of New Bern. Commissioner Tabari Wallace seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Lee introduced the concept outlined under item number four for setting five guiding principles for the commission so the group could focus on working collaboratively. Chairman Lee started the conversation by identifying the first principle: the need to equally divide the thoughts about the past, present and future. The future is where the group is going and the past is what where the community has come from and must be respected. Commissioner

Wallace brought up an additional principle, to respect other people's opinions. Vice Chairman Jaimee Bullock mentioned another guiding principle to listen to understand, not to talk. Commissioner Beth Walker brought up a third principle, the idea of public perception and promoting a positive perception of the commission. It was further clarified to add the idea to share accurate and consistent information. Director Ruggeri added the importance of being action-oriented. The group is to be action-oriented in efforts and needs to retain focus.

Commissioner Wallace wondered if there would be specific ground rules set for voting on topics and gaining consensus. Can each individual will have to agree to live with each decision based on the larger picture of the goals the commission seeks to accomplish. This clarified principle number three to become listen to build consensus.

These guiding principles will be used for the commission members for meetings, actions and when out in the community.

### **3. Executive Director's Comments**

Mr. Ruggieri opened discussion and skipped to item number five introducing Matt Montanye, Public Works Director for the City of New Bern. Many of the conversations have been regarding street conditions, curb and gutter to outline the status of infrastructure in the Greater Duffyfield area specifically. The city does have a repaving plan and he will further clarify.

### **5. Matt Montanye, Director of Public Works**

Mr. Montanye touched on the basis of what falls under Public Works. He stated that sidewalks, streets and drainage all fall under the department. The City has a plan from an engineer that evaluated and rated every city street five years ago for a Streets Condition Survey. Each street was ranked from zero to one hundred. This is a guide for the paving projects, along with traffic data. There has been \$5 million in street paving over the past 4-5 years. This fiscal year, the departmental budget will be \$2.7million for street paving to be conducted in the spring. The street condition survey provides the guideline for which streets will be chosen. The survey is not posted publicly, as it is lengthy, but details can be shared by street as desired. The Public Works Director can work with the Redevelopment Commission Executive Director to cross reference areas in Duffyfield, before decisions are made regarding projects. Alderman Bengel also mentioned drainage issues in the area and how a plan can be developed to be executed. Mr. Montanye stated that there are some restrictions regrading narrow streets and right-of-way concerns in that specific area regarding streets. Acquisition of properties may be an option to accomplish certain projects may be an option to complement goals and meet setback requirements. For instance, properties along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue were acquired to accomplish a project. Concerns from the commission include narrow one-way streets.



Commissioner Morgan brought up specific concerns about drainage along Green and K Streets during rain events. Mr. Montanye stated that that whole area drains to Mill Street Pond and ultimately through a pipe under the railroad tracks which is assisted by one small pump. The pond was increased in 2010 and two pumps were added, but during major storms with a power outage, the pumps do not run. Options are being researched to add a generator through FEMA mitigation funds. This would help pump water out of the area quicker to get the water across the railroad tracks.

Mr. Montanye reiterated that there are many issues to be considered and researched to find the best solutions. Alderman Bengel stated that a comprehensive plan may be necessary to hire a consultant to do a drainage study. Commissioner Wallace stated that other new neighborhoods have a large scale drainage plans and financing the projects will be possibly challenging, but trying to have action-oriented plans brought forth from the commission. Alderman Bengel asked what the vision would be for what future major thoroughfares may be in the community. That understanding can help guide the planning projects. Mr. Montanye explained that drainage parameters studied by outside engineers can identify possible solutions to identified problems. The plans can help make projects "shovel ready" and more desirable for seeking flood mitigation funds in the future. Commissioner Young asked whether a total redevelopment area drainage study had been completed in the past and is this something that could be considered for the future.

Commissioner Peregoy brought up the idea of whether there is a Duffyfield overlay to outline what restrictions there may be for that area. Outlining the limits of what can be done and what cannot be done may be helpful. Director Ruggieri stated that much of the community does not adhere to current zoning standards. The area is currently non-conforming. There may be an option to set new standards for future development and those parameters will be further discussed in subsequent meetings.

Commissioner Morgan asked the question where everything drains from the Duffyfield area. Mr. Montanye stated that everything ultimately drains to the Jack Smith Creek wetland project. He clarified that the Duffyfield elevation is very low in the four to five foot range. Chairman Lee challenged to have the group and staff to think outside of the box to solve problems.

## **6. Jordan Hughes, City Engineer**

Mr. Ruggieri introduced City Engineer Jordan Hughes to discuss other drainage, water and sewer infrastructure in the Greater Duffyfield area. He stated that many of the concerns of the commission relate to the visible infrastructure concerns in the area and will also tie into the underground aspects that are unseen. Mr. Hughes stated that there is ample capacity to support future growth and development in the area. The water, sewer and electric capacity infrastructure does not limit future redevelopment opportunities in the area. There is enough



capacity for development and he does not foresee any problems in making things happen in the area.

Concerns related to inadequacy of street lights were mentioned which can raise safety issues, especially since the area is walkable for many residents. Mr. Hughes stated that the streetlights have been improved in recent years with LED lighting fixtures. A couple hundred thousand additional dollars were added in the electric department budget to upgrade more fixtures to LED this year. This will aid in transitioning lighting to LED faster, which is a brighter, whiter light.

Flood mitigation and drainage improvements are two different problems. There are issues that happen after a more common rain event, throughout the City, versus major hurricane type events. Examples of other cities that are addressing mitigation issues were brought up by Commissioners, such as New Orleans, Norfolk and Hampton Roads, Virginia, to help develop a comprehensive plan for future planning to improve the physical environment of the Greater Duffyfield area. Thoughts of using lots together as a large area to mitigate and store water. Mr. Hughes said additional research is being conducted after Hurricane Florence, as with past storms, to determine best possible solutions to pump water down. There are issues with storm surge that make possible solutions extremely expensive due to the type of scope and cost of an engineered solution. Staff briefed that a larger-scale drainage study may apply a certain load on an area to determine what could be realistically accomplished, but the improvements may not protect against storms, such as Florence.

In addition, Staff mentioned that the area is an eco-sensitive area as part of the Neuse River Basin, which can impact the type of possible massive improvements that can be accomplished in the area, due to environmental concerns. The commission reiterated that the solutions may not address all the impacts of major storms, such as Floyd, Irene and Florence, but improvements could help address more common rain events. Mr. Hughes stated that the new BMP standards are meant to catch one inch of water in a 24-hour period. The Commission questioned whether the Duffyfield area could accommodate this current stormwater drainage requirement or if there would need to be a new design plan. Commissioner Peregoy introduced the goal of accommodating this type of rain event, as a new development would be required, which could help stimulate and reassure redevelopment of the area. Staff stated that this could be a very attainable goal and include more minor drainage improvements.

## **7. Revive 5 – Jamara Wallace**

Chairman Lee introduced Jamara Wallace, Chairman of the Greater Duffyfield Residents Council and oversees Revive 5 in New Bern. The Revive 5 is a branding campaign for the area. He provided a brief synopsis of the Revive 5 initiative, it arose as part of the Economic Development portion of the Choice Neighborhoods Plan (CNI). If Five Points can return to the more vibrant commercial area it one was, it can spur additional economic redevelopment in



adjacent neighborhoods to raise it of poverty. To get businesses to reinvest, the community needs to better understand their identity, the history and culture, helping spur develop the future. There needs to be a positive perception and a clearer path where the Greater Five Points corridor, as a springboard to spread development throughout the entire CNI area. The branding initiative obtained info from the community, and emblems and taglines were created for the campaign. The Revive 5 campaign seeks to use literature and advertising to promote these goals. The logo design came from research and partnership with other organizations and information obtained from surveys, including resident feedback. Craven Community College helped compile the information and design options, which were vetted before a final selection was chosen. The tagline is "Thrive in the Five." A great deal of time and research was put into the design and re-branding campaign to help stimulate redevelopment and strengthen the perception of the Greater Five Points area.

Commissioner Bullock asked a question to clarify if the Revive 5 initiative is a group or a marketing campaign. The Revive 5 came out of the Economic Development work group committee from the CNI initiative and the Revive 5 initiative is a marketing strategy to sell the 5 points area as a worthy investment area. Further, Commissioner Bullock asked about the largest hurdles for the area. Mr. Wallace sees brownfields issues as a possible problem to seek investment and the possible negative perception in the community for those that may travel through Broad Street, for parking, walking and living there. The commission asked about how to stimulate minority-owned businesses in the area in vacant properties. The area potentially needs to address landlord issues and rents. There is opportunity for investment on the commercial side, for small business entrepreneurs. The commission needs to further understand the challenges, perceptions and programs available to promote this type of investment. In addition, it was questioned whether partnerships exist to connect entrepreneurs with more direct investment opportunities. Mr. Wallace reiterated that there are resources and training opportunities to develop these entrepreneurs. Workforce development training is a positive aspect to help, which will be extended with the Volt Center Training Center in partnership with Craven Community College, as well as, the Catalyst Kitchen, partnership with Swiss Bear and Wash Away Unemployment. Another publicly-owned asset mentioned by Mr. Wallace is the former Days Inn property. Mr. Wallace stated that he believes that the future use should be community driven which he believed may help determine the best type of use for the future. The commission can assist with overcoming burdens and generate interest in the goals that are set. A meeting was suggested with residents of the Greater Five Points area. Mr. Wallace suggested looking at the work committees did during the CNI initiative. Mr. Wallace invited the Commissioners to the Greater Duffyfield Residents Council meetings in the future and will send the meeting schedule to the Redevelopment Commission Executive Director.

## **8. Executive Director Comments**

Director Ruggeri provided a brief summary to the group on the focus of the Commission. The focus is to create the bricks and mortar issues of the plan. Some of the programming issues are a little outside of the preliminary foundation. Staff will address the zoning and infrastructure needs in future meetings. There are some code issues that can be addressed without much complication in the future. He reiterated the closing remarks and important issues from the conclusion of the previous meeting. The most effective way of communicating with the residents is through word-of-mouth and require assistance from the Commissioners. Each idea brought up by commissioners are important and staff will help answer questions, conduct research and drive the development of a plan through the guidance of the Commission. There is a great deal of information that can be provided from the CNI plan to help guide the Redevelopment Plan. The commission requested to have a map of FEMA lots to review, as well as a map of landlord-owned properties. Staff will help identify best practices from other communities that have created redevelopment plans and bring forward to the commission, when possible.

Commissioner Morgan provided a letter to disclose that he and his wife, Patricia, own property in the area at 1031 Sampson Street, as required by the statute.

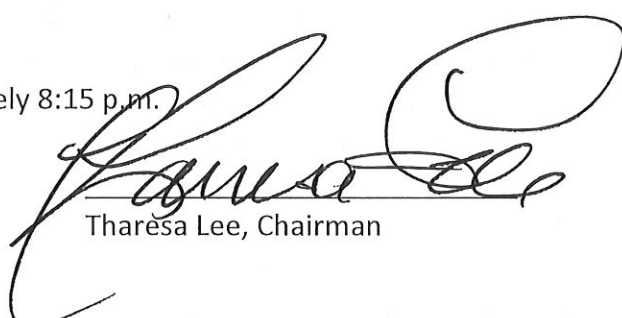
## 9. Adjournment

Chairman Lee told the Commission that the next meeting is November 28, 2018 at 6 p.m. If guests are requested by Commissioners, please submit to the Executive Director, Jeff Ruggeri. The total amount of guest speakers per meeting will be limited, in essence of maximizing time. Commissioner Wallace and Commissioner Bullock will be absent at the next meeting due to other obligations.

The meeting schedule includes December 12, 2018 and then December 26, 2018. Due to the Christmas holiday there was consensus from the Commission members to move the meeting to the December 19, 2018 at 6 p.m.

Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Date approved: 11/27/2018

  
Theresa Lee, Chairman

Attest: 

Amanda Ohlensehlen, Recording Secretary