

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

April 6, 2010
Greenville, NC

The Greenville Redevelopment Commission met on the above date for a meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the City Hall Building located at 200 West Fifth Street.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melissa Hill	Don Mills	Terri Williams, Vice-Chair
Evan Lewis	Dennis Mitchell	
Chris Mansfield	Robert Thompson, Chair	

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Bowers, City Manager; Sandy Gale Edmundson, Secretary; Jonathan Edwards, Audio; Merrill Flood, Director of Community Development; Thom Moton, Assistant City Manager; and Carl Rees, Urban Development Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Max R. Joyner, Jr. City Council Liaison and Kathryn Kennedy, The Daily Reflector

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

The Commission agreed to amend the agenda to add under Report from Secretary two items: Go-Science and an Upcoming Event.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2010

Motion was made by Mr. Chris Mansfield and seconded by Ms. Terri Williams to approve the March 2, 2010 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS UPDATE

Mr. Rees: The mission statement of the Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan is to assure that Greenville, North Carolina is a better place to live, raise a family, and do business, while improving the safety, security, image, and economic vitality of the urban core and the neighborhoods of West Greenville.

Mr. Rees: Homeownership was increased through affordable home construction. Nathaniel Village being built provided diverse residential development in West Greenville. The West Fifth Street Police Substation improved safety and security in West Greenville. The West Greenville neighborhoods are being re-defined through projects such as community gardens, neighborhood building, removal of blight and public art. West Fifth Street Revitalization and the West Fifth Street Gateway project were positive projects. The removal of dilapidated structures through acquisition and clearance and code enforcement helped create pride and remove the stigma. Residential rezoning has occurred to help neighborhoods. A key project was the St. Gabriel's Church and school acquisition that became the Lucille W. Gorham Intergenerational Center with the help of East Carolina University, Pitt Community College, the Little Willie Center and the City of Greenville. The center is a neighborhood building and has community gardens. The civic art gateway design and the civic art wall design are in the works for the West Fifth Street Gateway. Provide economic stimulus by offering \$15,000.00 - \$30,000.00 awards for creating or expanding small business enterprises within Greenville's Redevelopment Areas. In the first 18 months of the program, there have been 67 referrals to business counseling providers, and there have been seven grants to date totaling \$105,000.00 with 4 in West Greenville and 3 in the Center City. Eighty-six percent of fund applications are operated by minority or women owned businesses. The next round of applications will be in July. The West Greenville Building Blocks Grant Program offers up to \$10,000.00 to complete exterior improvements to buildings and grounds within the West Greenville Redevelopment Area with a \$2,500.00 direct grant and a \$7,500.00 matching grant. This grant provides economic incentive to renovate and construct new facades and common areas, encourages good design and renovation projects, preserves and enhances buildings. Twenty-one total grants have been awarded to date with \$67,000.00 granted and a total of \$237,000.000 total improvements. The West Greenville Small Business Incubator Model's mission statement: to create an open, business-first small business incubator that will cultivate entrepreneurship, and promote economic development and community revitalization in West Greenville. There is a need for a West Greenville commercial node.

Mr. Rees: The creation of residential opportunities in the Center City area has occurred through Nathaniel Village and First Street Place. Infrastructure improvements are underway with the construction of the streetscape at Reade and Cotanche Streets, the Comprehensive Wayfinding System, possible new parking infrastructure and the Tenth Street Connector Project. The Town Common Improvements with the pocket park and pedestrian access plans increases amenities, green space and pedestrian walkways. Mixed use development is planned for the Reade Circle area. We have addressed the goal of leveraging attractions through the Five Points Plaza Project, the potential science center site, and the Uptown Historic Theatre.

Mr. Rees: The Redevelopment Plan Project Listing:

Development of Design Guidelines for the Center City developed by volunteers and adopted by the Commission has been completed.

Independent Living Center for senior housing associated with services is ongoing.

Hotel/Alumni Center in the Center City continues to be ongoing.

West Greenville Housing has 17 new homes that have been constructed and 66 homes have received rehab funds. This project is ongoing.

Sadie Saulter School has plans of being renovated with new programs being offered. This project is ongoing.

The Redevelopment of West Fifth Street has had a total of 24 properties purchased. Four new homes have been constructed. There are four blocks of streetscape to be constructed in June. The Intergenerational Center opened in 2006; the Police substation opened in 2008; Nathaniel Village opened in 2009 and a new restaurant will be opened in the spring of 2010. This project is ongoing.

Dickinson Avenue Arts District will have Go-Science, business plan competitions, and building blocks grants to help rehab buildings in the area. This project is ongoing.

14th Avenue Streetscape is behind West Fifth Street and Dickinson Avenue. This project is in the future.

Reade, Pitt and Greene Streetscapes have portions of Reade Street improvements completed with Pitt and Greene Streets being a lower priority. This project is partially completed and will be in the future.

Albemarle Avenue Area Improvements continues planning for additional housing, park and business opportunities. Project is ongoing.

University Housing in the Uptown Area with First Street Place opening in 2009 have other projects on the drawing board. Project is ongoing.

City Parking Deck will be constructed based on need and is a future project.

Development of a Science Center will be on Dickinson Avenue. Project is ongoing.

Development of a Performing Arts Center is part of the University's long range plans and will look to Uptown Theater in the short term and is a future project.

The County Building Expansion has reviewed public/private partnership models but no plans for expansion on at this time.

Much work remains for the Commission.

Mr. Rees: No action required at this time. Periodic updates will be provided via quarterly progress reports.

Mr. Thompson: Are there any questions or comments?

Mr. Mitchell: I am concerned about the amount of affordable housing that has been built in the West Greenville area.

Mr. Rees: Seventeen houses have been built in the West Greenville area.

Mr. Mitchell: Does the money come back to the City of Greenville when loans for the affordable houses are granted?

Mr. Flood: The money is returned back to the bond fund as part of the revitalization.

Mr. Mitchell: I would like to see the numerical breakdown that shows that crime has decreased in the area since the police substation was built in West Greenville. How many more houses need to be torn down by Code Enforcement?

Mr. Rees: I will check on that.

Mr. Mitchell: Listing of status as to whether they will be torn down or rehabbed. A new school could kick off revitalization in the area.

Mr. Mansfield: Helpful update as to where we are and give the Commission an opportunity to toss around ideas. City owned property could be offered to developer for a neighborhood commercial development.

Ms. Hill: Small business incubator is properties being looked at that are already owned by the City.

Mr. Rees: An existing building would decrease the cost. Minority Business Roundtable could push the project.

Mr. Mills: What is the projected end date for the revitalization plan to be completed?

Mr. Rees: Twenty years is the projected end date.

Mr. Thompson: This was a good presentation. Brainstorming needs to take place in a different arena.

REVIEW OF 2010 – 2011 WORK PLAN ITEMS

Mr. Rees: The 2010 – 2011 Work Plan items are as follows:

West Fifth Streetscape Phase II Design from Cadillac Street to Memorial Drive will use funds from the Building Block Grants Program for Phase II.

Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures could have the potential use of Center City bond funds and tax increment funds for activities including land acquisition, clearance and infrastructure.

Evans Street Gateway Design is the next priority of Center City streetscaping.

Small Business Plan Competition will use West Greenville and Center City bond funds for capitalization of grant program.

West Fifth Street Gateway Construction Project is expected to be completed in September 2010.

Comprehensive Wayfinding Project Construction should be finished in September 2010.

Five Points Plaza Construction is slated to be complete by early winter of 2011.

West Greenville Commercial Center needs a site properly located, then land acquisition and the search for a private sector development partner can commence.

Center City Micro Improvement Projects can be coordinated with the effort of the Uptown Greenville organization which is under contract to advise the City on such matters.

Residential and Mixed Use Project Development has a latent demand within the Uptown Commercial District according to a market study.

West Greenville Business Incubator would support the creation and development of small, creative businesses in diverse industries by providing office space/amenities and technical assistance to fledgling companies and entrepreneurs.

Civic Art Initiative to incorporate civic art into the public realm. The Commission has contracted with the Pitt County Arts Council to assist with the development of a Public Art Master Plan and the Arts Council in turn is seeking grant funding from the State Arts Council that will be used to advance the process.

Revitalization Area Marketing Program aims to provide media services, property investors, business interests, and the public with timely revitalization events and stories as well as relevant statistics and background information.

Town Common Area Improvement Study calls for improvement of the open space in the Town Common to leverage other adjacent residential and commercial projects. The Commission along with the Recreation and Parks Department has completed a public visioning process that has culminated in a list of public priorities for programming and improvements to the Town Common.

Establishment of a Science Center would provide an important entertainment and cultural resource and would also serve to draw in numerous visitors to the Center City.

State Theatre Restoration Project through a partnership with Magnolia Arts Center and the Commission will develop a plan that will lead to design for improvements to the theatre along with required fundraising to complete the renovation.

Promotion of Ecotourism Activities is an action item associated with the goals of the City Council for 2010 – 2011 fiscal year includes an effort to tie into a regional ecotourism initiative being promoted by various organizations for the eastern region of the state.

Mr. Rees: The Commission is up two from last year's fifteen items. Staff recommends only review and comment required at this time. Full work plan draft and budget will be presented at the May meeting for consideration by the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO BUSINESS PLAN GRANT

Mr. Rees: Issues identified by the Redevelopment Commission.

Some business plans seem to be poorly prepared with lack of details and financial information missing or incomplete.

Some applicants appear to be inexperienced or unprepared to enter business.

Many applicants are underfunded or do not appear to have a financial stake in business.

Mr. Rees: The proposed changes are as follows.

Section 5.1 – Encourage applicant attendance at small business seminars.

Section 5.5 – Initial review and comment by Redevelopment Commission’s subcommittee.

Section 6.1 – Grant timeline.

Section 7.2 Scoring criteria related to applicant experience and attendance at business seminars.

Application – Information regarding attendance at business seminars.

Business Counselors – More detailed information regarding owner investment and closer review of financial sections of business plan.

Develop performance indicator as to if they are performing to a standard.

Mr. Rees: Staff recommends that the Redevelopment Commission may approve changes as recommended by Staff or may consider additional revisions to the grant guidelines. Are there any questions?

Mr. Thompson: Is social security number necessary?

Mr. Rees: Yes, the City’s Finance Department needs that information for financial tracking.

Mr. Lewis: Include as a prompt in the instructions as to what the sources of funding will be for this project from the person proposing the project.

Mr. Rees: The suggested change will be made.

Mr. Mansfield: How much money does the Commission have to fund these business plan competitions?

Mr. Rees: The City has \$30,000.00.

Mr. Mansfield: The City might need to up the money to go for larger competition and larger development to get something catalytic and improve infrastructure.

Mr. Thompson: Is action needed?

Mr. Rees: Yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Terri Williams to approve the changes. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF DISPOSITION OF REAL PROPERTY

Mr. Rees: Gold Post Restaurant Proposal owned by Arthur Wallace. The property was purchased in November 2007 by the Commission. The building on the lot will be demolished, because there are no users. The initial appraised land value was \$12,600.00. The updated appraisal by F. Bruce Sauter and Associates, Inc. reflected land value of \$14,250.00. The sale of land to private party must be through negotiated offer, upset bid process. Staff recommends that the Redevelopment Commission initiate the sale of Tax Parcel #09523 as authorized by NCGS 160A-269 by the method of negotiated offer, advertisement and upset bid.

Motion was made by Mr. Dennis Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to initiate sale. Motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON WEST FIFTH STREET GATEWAY PROJECT

Mr. Rees: The project timeline is to advertise for bids in April. In May, hold a special meeting to approve bid and contract amount. This meeting will only have one agenda item. The special meeting in May will speed up the project. In June, begin construction and in September, end construction. At the Eppes Alumni meeting on July 4, 2010, Staff hopes to have partial work completed to celebrate with the alumni.

UPDATE ON FIVE POINTS PLAZA PROJECT

Mr. Rees: The project timeline is as noted. In June, final plan review will occur. In August, advertisement for bids will be published. In September, the Redevelopment Commission approves low bid and contract amount for work. On November 8, 2010, construction will start. In April 2011, end construction. Staff recommends that the Commission approve a contract amendment with Susan Hatchell Landscape Architecture in the amount of \$2,650.50 for coordination and design work related to small shed (\$1,890.50) and wayfinding kiosk (\$760.00).

Motion was made by Mr. Dennis Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Evan Lewis to approve the contract amendment for \$2,650.50. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT FROM SECRETARY

Financial Report

Mr. Flood: The expenditure reports for West Greenville and the Center City have been submitted for review by the Commission.

Third Quarter Report

The third quarter report is ready for next week's submission to City Council but requires no action by the Commission.

Go-Science

Mr. Flood: City Council recommended approval and the money will come from the Center City bond fund. At the Commission's May meeting there will be further action to be taken with Go-Science.

Upcoming Event

Mr. Flood: This week is Community Development Block Grant Week. On Wednesday, May 7, 2010, there will be a mobile tour for elected officials and City Commission members. Please plan to go on the tour.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Thompson: Please accept the Commission's condolences for the Rees Family's recent loss.

Mr. Thompson: On April 23, 2010, there will be an Uptown Greenville meeting to discuss a Municipal Services District.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Mr. Dennis Mitchell to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Rees, Urban Development Planner
The City of Greenville Community Development Department