

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

January 5, 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
Evan Lewis

Dennis Mitchell, Chair
Robert Thompson, Vice-Chair

Terri Williams

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chris Mansfield

Don Mills

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Don Edwards, Uptown Greenville; Todd Hickey, Uptown Greenville; Max Joyner, Councilmember; Kathryn Kennedy, Daily Reflector; Albi McLawhorn, Center City Design Guidelines Committee Member; and Denise Slaughter, Uptown Greenville

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2009:

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Terri Williams to approve the December 1, 2009 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION BY UPTOWN GREENVILLE

Mr. Rees: Two members, Mr. Don Edwards and Mr. Todd Hickey, of the Uptown Greenville Board will speak to the Commission tonight.

Mr. Edwards: Uptown Greenville is a private, nonprofit corporation established to develop plans and implement actions necessary to revitalize and to ensure continued growth of the Uptown Business District of Greenville, NC. Uptown Greenville was established by Mayor Nancy Jenkins and the City Council out of recommendations from a Downtown Steering Committee in 1994. Public investment included staff, policy and capital projects. Private ventures included civic leaders, business risk, volunteers, private investment and funding for public projects. A total of \$350,000.00 was raised by the private sector for a public project for the removal of Evans Street Mall. A total of

4,700 volunteer hours have been contributed. Uptown is valuable to the whole community. The Façade Improvement Grant Program was founded in 1995 as a partnership between Uptown Greenville and the City of Greenville. This program led to the central business district listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The program enables properties within the district to qualify for major federal and state rehabilitation tax credits. The tax base in Uptown Greenville doubled in the past nine years. In 2000, the tax base for Uptown Greenville was \$206,020.00 and in 2009, the tax base was \$1,073,092.00. The tax value of Self Help (former Proctor Hotel) went from \$231,480.00 in 2000 to \$1,905,197 in 2009. Jehu Taff and Chris Woelkers of Taff Office in the Cupola Building said they were pleased to be a part of the Uptown Greenville business community and the Uptown Greenville organization was instrumental in motivating us to pursue the project. Effective 2009, the Cupola Building now bolsters the city with approximately \$10,000 annually in tax revenues. Mr. Taff and Mr. Woelkers believe the Uptown Greenville organization needs the support of our City and Community Leaders to continue with its important work. In 2009, First Street Place Properties has a tax value of \$12,306,729 while in 2000, the tax value was \$354,020. Jeff Githens of Place Properties said that Uptown Greenville was instrumental in helping us build relationships with East Carolina University and Greenville community leaders. There is great potential in the downtown area especially under the stewardship of Uptown Greenville. There is no reason why Greenville cannot become the next great college town. The economic impact on the tax base increase in the Uptown District from 2000 to 2009 is \$36,202,468. The total taxable value in the Uptown Commercial Business District is \$72,226,585. Mr. Todd Hickey, Vice-President of Cancer Services at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, will speak about why Uptown Greenville is requesting funds.

Mr. Hickey: We need to be able to bring health care professionals to the area. We are doing a great job, but we are at a point when it is time to reinvest and reinvent. The Uptown Greenville Board is a good steward of its budget and that dense, urban development yields higher tax dollars per acre. The City governments of Chapel Hill, Goldsboro, Kinston, New Bern, Rocky Mount and Wake Forest give money to downtown revitalization groups. In 2009, over 30 Uptown Greenville events attracted over 40,000 attendees with event attendees spending an estimated \$651,000 at Uptown businesses. Who benefits from the work done by Uptown Greenville: neighborhoods; residents; economic and community development groups; merchants, business owners and managers; property owners; elected and appointed officials; civic organizations; chamber of commerce; preservationists; bankers; schools; media; religious institutions; Greenville Utilities; Pitt County Memorial Hospital; and East Carolina University. Uptown Greenville Contract for Services include business recruitment and retention; uptown beautification; special events, promotions and private support such as Pirate Fest, Freeboot Friday, Uptown Umbrella Market; and guidance for public infrastructure projects. Reaffirm the partnership between the City and Uptown Greenville to improve the economic viability of uptown Greenville for all citizens and businesses. Uptown Greenville's request is for the City to fund Uptown Greenville \$25,000.00 for the 2010

fiscal year. Uptown Greenville will explore the creation of the Municipal Service District and the City matching program for subsequent years.

Mr. Thompson: What will be different if the City grants \$25,000 to Uptown Greenville?

Mr. Hickey: This will be used to invest.

Mr. Edwards: Without funding, Uptown Greenville will have to scale back.

Mr. Thompson: What is going to be different with additional funding?

Mr. Edwards: There will be better events such as Freeboot Friday, beautification, plantings and banners. The Pitt County Historical Society has approached Uptown Greenville for assistance.

Mr. Hickey: The differentiation can be addressed.

Mr. Lewis: What would not happen without the money? Mr. Thompson addressed my question.

Mr. Thompson: A suggestion would be to know what the differentiation would be, so the differentiation can be addressed at the City Council meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION FOR UPTOWN GREENVILLE CONTRACT

Mr. Rees: City Council has requested the Commission's recommendation regarding approval of a contract for services with Uptown Greenville.

Ms. Williams: Under the section about reports, during the first six months, could there be an updated report as to the money spent and info on how the money was spent.

Mr. Mitchell: What direct impact on businesses coming downtown did Uptown Greenville have?

Mr. Rees: Place properties and several restaurants were directly impacted by Uptown Greenville.

Mr. Edwards: Self-Help, Taff Office, Topsy Teapot and Emerge Gallery would be some of the businesses brought in by Uptown Greenville.

Mr. Lewis: What is MSD?

Mr. Rees: MSD is a Municipal Services District that allows for public improvements and promotions.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to endorse the Uptown Greenville contract for \$25,000 to be paid by the City of Greenville. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF CENTER CITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

Mr. Rees: Center City Design Guideline Committee members were Ms. Betsy Daniels, Ms. Inez Fridley, Mr. Albi McLawhorn, Mr. Justin Moore, Ms. Yaprak Savut, Ms. Myriah Shewchuk, and Mr. Tom Wisemiller. The goals of the Committee were to create an economically and culturally vibrant downtown; promote safety; reinforce public nature of downtown; and encourage quality design and building practices. According to the Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan (2006), “Design guidelines can be used to control the quality of future investment and to protect the values of existing properties and buildings.” A draft copy was brought before the Commission in December, so this is the second hearing on the guidelines. The Commission is being asked to adopt the Design Guidelines as an advisory document applicable to all development within the Center City Revitalization area.

Motion was made by Ms. Melissa Hill and seconded by Mr. Evan Lewis to adopt the Design Guidelines as an advisory document applicable to all development within the Center City Revitalization Area. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF DICKINSON AVENUE CORRIDOR GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Jones: The proposed Dickinson Avenue Corridor Grant Program is being presented to the Commission tonight. The program is for up to \$10,000.00 to complete exterior improvements to buildings and grounds within the Dickinson Avenue Corridor Area with a \$2,500.00 direct grant and up to \$7,500.00 matching grant. It is an economic incentive to renovate and construct new facades and common areas, encourage good design and renovation projects, preserve and enhance buildings. Owners or tenants are eligible to apply for Building Blocks grants. There are two (2) grant cycles per year in March and September. Funding for the program comes from current adopted budget with City Council needing to approve future funding. The Redevelopment Commission is authorized by charter to operate the Dickinson Avenue area. The proposed program boundary is from South Memorial Drive to West 14th Street. No comments were received by Commission members on the program. Staff recommends adoption of the Dickinson Avenue Corridor Building Blocks Grant Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to approve the Dickinson Avenue Corridor Grant Program. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF DESIGN CONTRACT FOR COMMUNITY THEATRE

Mr. Rees: There is a contract for architectural services with Calloway, Johnson, Moore and West to complete preliminary design for renovation of existing structure, addition to the rear of the structure and “dry-in” repairs to the existing structure. Architect will conduct tax credit study and will provide marketing materials. The proposed contract amount is \$85,000 lump sum design fee with up to \$5,000 in reimbursable expenses for travel. Funding for the contract will be \$25,000 from the NC Rural center grant and \$65,000 from the Center City bond funds. Additional related project costs between \$1,500 - \$2,500 for scaffolding, lighting, etc. Staff recommends that the Commission awards the contract in an amount not to exceed \$90,000 for Phase I design services for the former State Theatre to Calloway, Johnson, Moore and West.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Terri Williams to approve the contract with Calloway, Johnson, Moore and West for Phase I not to exceed \$90,000. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION APPLICATIONS

Mr. Rees: Awards of \$15,000 - \$30,000 for creating or expanding small business enterprises within Greenville’s Redevelopment areas can be granted to applicants. The Redevelopment Commission may make two awards in the Center City and the West Greenville Redevelopment areas. More than two dozen referrals were made to business counseling partners. A total of five (5) applications were received for the 2009 – 2010 winter grant cycle. Two of the applicants withdrew their applications and will resubmit in the summer of 2010. WiFire withdrew and will redo all financial work with a possible partner for resubmission in July. Mercedes’ Funeral Mansion and Cremation Services’ application was withdrawn, because the location that was chosen was sold. The applicant hopes to find a new location and reapply during the next round. The subcommittee met to review applications and had informal interviews with applicants. Two members of the subcommittee are present tonight, Dennis Mitchell and Terri Williams, and may want to comment.

Mr. Mitchell: Some applications were submitted for review and were not complete applications.

Mr. Rees: It is a competition, so if we need to change the information submitted, we can address this as a Commission. The applications are as follows:

CrossFit with applicant Mr. Torey Mattison in the Center City Revitalization area and seeks \$15,000 to launch a youth oriented fitness center. The business is to be located on East Fifth Street and will employ two full time fitness trainers. The applicant has 13 years of industry experience and will invest an additional \$5,000 to launch the business.

Door Post with applicant Ms. Adrienne Hickey in the Center City Revitalization area and seeks \$15,000 in order to launch a wholesale line of religious themed household items. Grant funds would be used for acquisition of inventory and equipment. Applicant intends to place items in locations such as hospital gift shops and Christian themed stores. Door Post would employ 2 – 4 people in first phase and would outsource to off-shore companies for manufacturing of products.

Remedy Restaurant with applicant Ms. Christina Jones in the West Greenville Redevelopment area and seeks \$15,000 for startup of restaurant. Plans to locate business in a former convenience store located on Watauga Avenue. Restaurant would provide “soul food” menu through the use of buffet style service. Market includes all of Greenville and Pitt County with a focus on West Greenville.

Mr. Rees: The subcommittee recommended CrossFit for approval.

Ms. Williams: The application was complete and the idea was great. The business plan was sound.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to approve CrossFit for \$15,000 for the Business Plan Competition. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Rees: Dennis Mitchell has served his final term as Chairperson of the Redevelopment Commission. Nominations for Chairperson will need to occur.

Mr. Mitchell: I open the floor for nominations for the Chairperson of the Commission. I would like to nominate Robert Thompson.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to close nominations. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to elect Mr. Robert Thompson as Chair of the Redevelopment Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mitchell: I open the floor for nominations for the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

Mr. Lewis: I nominate Ms. Terri Williams.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to close nominations. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to elect Ms. Terri Williams as Vice-Chair of the Redevelopment Commission. 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.

Annual Work Plan

Mr. Rees: The Annual Work Plan will be submitted to the Commission for review and comment. Nathaniel Village is an accomplishment of the Commission's work plan. The ribbon cutting for Nathaniel Village will be on 1/7/2010 at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Thompson said he would like to see the facilities.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Williams: Uptown Greenville is a valuable asset to the City of Greenville. I would like to thank Dennis Mitchell for his work as Chairperson to the Commission.

Mr. Lewis thanked Dennis Mitchell for his service to the Commission as Chairperson.

Mr. Mitchell: I am excited about the opening of Nathaniel Village. I have enjoyed serving as Chairperson to the Commission.

Ms. Hill thanked Dennis Mitchell for being Chairperson and congratulated Terri Williams on being voted in as Vice-Chair to the Commission.

Mr. Thompson thanked the Commission for voting him as the Chairperson and thanked Dennis Mitchell for serving as Chairperson.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

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

