

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

January 6, 2009
Greenville, NC

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Don Edwards
Melissa Hill
Evan Lewis

Chris Mansfield
Dennis Mitchell, Chair
Robert Thompson, Vice-Chair

Terri Williams

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Sandy Gale Edmundson, Secretary; Jonathan Edwards, Audio; and Carl Rees, Urban Development Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Max R. Joyner, Jr., City Council Liaison; Katherine Kennedy, The Daily Reflector; and Denise Walsh, Uptown Greenville

WELCOME TO CHRIS MANSFIELD: Mr. Mitchell welcomed Mr. Chris Mansfield as the most recently appointed Redevelopment Commission member.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2008: APPROVED

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Evan Lewis to approve the December 2, 2008 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Report from Uptown Greenville on Five Points Plaza Concept

Mr. Rees introduced Ms. Denise Walsh, who is the Executive Director of Uptown Greenville, as the presenter of the Five Points Plaza Concept.

Ms. Walsh: The purpose of the proposed Five Points Plaza is to create an attractive, active and functional multi-purpose space and to create an economic catalyst for the area. The plaza will add reasons for people to come to the Center City. In May 2008, Uptown Greenville requests addition of Five Points Plaza to the Redevelopment Commission's Work Plan. In June 2008, the request was approved and listed as item #13, "Open Air Market Initiative." Additionally, the ECU Interior Design and Merchandising Students studied marketplaces abroad, and Uptown and Greenville Utilities met to establish infrastructure needs during construction. In July and August 2008, Greenville Utilities adds electricity and water before completion of lot construction; and Uptown meets with adjoining property owners. In September through November 2008, public input gathered using three methods. In December 2008, the Humber House and outlying building were made available to Uptown for event storage. The

methods used for gathering input were a public meeting on September 30, 2008 at the Willis Building with 40 people in attendance; a focus group on October 15, 2008 at the Sheppard Memorial Library with 16 people in attendance; and an online survey on October 16, 2008, with 236 completed surveys. The top reasons people visit Uptown Greenville is for the restaurants, special events, shopping and city/government business. The farmers market was the top interest for an activity in the Sixth Street Lot followed by musical performances and outdoor movies. Trees for shade, seating/sitting space and parking were the top three amenities for the proposed space. Data highlights the need for paid staffing for center city activities. The economic benefits of the public space include property values, economic revitalization, tourism benefits, and social benefits. When coming downtown for events such as Freeboot Friday, 93% of those surveyed indicated that they would visit other businesses in the Uptown area. Clearly, increased visitation would have very positive economic returns. Synthesizing the input indicates: a center city public plaza is desired; a plaza would greatly enhance the area; and modest improvements could have great economic and social benefits. Some specific action/support recommendations would be a creation of a design (contracted); begin possible improvements; and facilitate an open air market on the space in 2009.

Mr. Edwards praised Denise Walsh for a good presentation.

Mr. Thompson: The development design of Five Points Plaza should be the next step. There should be open fencing around the Humber House.

Ms. Walsh: A meeting took place with Scott Power of the State Historic Preservation Office, so a relationship is being built. The fence will be repaired, so there is a positive opportunity there. The cost of the fence for the State was a concern to build new fence.

Mr. Mansfield: Design is the next step. Working with the Humber House is moving in the right direction. Sidewalks are necessary to connect the destinations. What is the design cost and who would pay for it?

Mr. Rees: The City of Greenville Redevelopment Commission's infrastructure budget would be used. A rough estimate would be \$25,000.00 - \$40,000.00.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Don Edwards to request staff to develop a Design Proposal. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Amendments to Building Block Grant Guidelines

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Don Edwards to move this agenda item to the next meeting (February) of the Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Review of Draft Annual Report

Mr. Rees said that state law requires that the Redevelopment Commission present an annual report each year, so the report is being submitted for review by Commission members.

Mr. Mitchell: The financial report needs to be accurate.

Mr. Lewis: Telephone numbers and website contact information needs to be added to the report.

Mr. Rees: Staff is asking that the Commission approve the report with requested changes.

Mr. Mansfield: How much does it cost to print the report and how many reports are printed?

Mr. Rees: There is money in the budget appropriated to print this report. Enough reports are printed to handle demand from the citizens of Greenville. Last year we printed over 100 copies and gave out every single copy.

Mr. Thompson: Put Carolina directly beside North and delete the unnecessary spaces.

Ms. Williams: The hyphenated words should be removed as well as the misspelled words

Motion was made by Mr. Evan Lewis and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to approve the 2008 Annual Report of the Redevelopment Commission with the suggested changes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Election of Officers

Motion was made by Mr. Don Edwards and seconded by Mr. Evan Lewis that Mr. Dennis Mitchell remain as Chair of the Redevelopment Commission and that Mr. Robert Thompson remain as Vice-Chair of the Redevelopment Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Report from Secretary

Expenditure Report

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

Update on State Theatre

Mr. Rees: With approval from Carmike Corporation, films may be shown as long as they are being shown by a nonprofit. Historic preservation grants are being looked at with financial assistance for the State Theatre design.

Town Common Master Plan

Mr. Rees: An improvement study of the Town Common and surrounding area needs to be completed. The Recreation and Parks Department is interested in making the Town Common more useable. From mid-February until April, information will be collected to decide if we want to move into the Design Phase.

Comments from Commission Members

Ms. Hill: The City needs to be getting information out to the community, so that sub-prime lenders will not take advantage of the buyers.

Mr. Edwards: I think it was a bold move and a correct move to purchase the Theatre. Preliminary work is being done for funding. Broad based fund raising will occur, so not much taxpayers' money will be spent.

Mr. Thompson: I echo Mr. Edwards's comments and I welcome Chris Mansfield to the Commission.

Mr. Lewis: Welcome Chris to the Commission.

Ms. Williams: I welcome Chris. I believe the City made a positive purchase of the theatre. Ms. Walsh gave a great presentation.

Mr. Mansfield: I believe the Commission has important work and I look forward to it.

Mr. Mitchell: I praise Mr. Mansfield for his community service.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Melissa Hill to adjourn the January 6, 2009 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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