

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

January 8, 2008
Greenville, NC

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Minnie Anderson, Chair
Don Edwards, Vice-Chair

Britt Laughinghouse
Dennis Mitchell

Robert Thompson
Terri Williams

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melissa Hill

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Bowers, City Manager; Sandy Gale Edmundson, Secretary; Merrill Flood, Director of Community Development; Carl Rees, Urban Development Planner; and Tom Wisemiller, Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: John Bosio, Hillier Architecture; Jim Ensor, Pitt Community College; Max R. Joyner, Jr., City Council Member; and Glen Swantack, Hillier Architecture

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 4, 2007: APPROVED

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Britt Laughinghouse to approve the December 4, 2007 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

CENTER CITY WAYFINDING SYSTEM PRESENTATION

Mr. Rees: The center city wayfinding system is designed to direct vehicles and pedestrians to and from key destinations throughout the City of Greenville. The scope of the project extends from the corporate limits of Greenville to the historic center city and includes key destination such as Uptown Greenville, the historic neighborhoods of East and West Greenville, the Medical District and East Carolina University. At the October meeting, Mr. John Bosio and Mr. Glen Swantack of RMJM Hillier Architecture gave their initial center city wayfinding system presentation to the Commission. Suggestions were made about what should be done to improve upon the initial presentation. Over the last two days stakeholders meetings have taken place and after tonight's meeting, the design should be in the final stages. At tonight's meeting, Mr. John Bosio of Hillier Architecture will give an updated presentation.

The Redevelopment Commission received a visual presentation on the design development of a system of wayfinding signage from Mr. Bosio and Mr. Glenn Swantack of RMJM Hillier Architecture. The sign design is basically the same except for the posts. Blue and green were colors selected from the Greenville seal. The colors were adjusted to meet the Department of Transportation (DOT) traffic criteria, so there has to be 70% contrast. The brick and stone sign with ornamental metal application for the G-icon has been discussed. The draft proposal is to have:

12 district directional signs, 6 district directional (high speed) signs, 6 district ID signs, 10 destination directional signs, 5 destination directional (high speed) signs, 7 parking directional signs, 28 parking trailblazer signs and 14 parking arrival (ground) signs in Phase 1 – Uptown District;

14 pedestrian kiosk signs (uptown), 25 pedestrian directional signs (uptown), 8 pedestrian map signs (uptown), and 6 district ID banner signs (uptown) in Phase 2 – Uptown District; and

4 primary gateways signs, 5 secondary gateways signs, 9 district directional signs, 6 district directional signs (high speed), 6 district ID signs, 15 destination ID signs, 30 destination directional signs, 15 destination directional signs (high speed), 16 departure interstate trailblazers signs; and 10 hospital trailblazer signs in Phase 3 – Citywide.

Mr. Mitchell: Will the kiosk signs illuminate light?

Mr. Swantack: Yes.

Ms. Anderson: I noticed that some of the signs may have too much information to read when driving by in the car.

Mr. Swantack: The signs you are talking about are pedestrian signs or parking signs and are not meant as a directional sign.

Mr. Thompson: What kind of reactions have you gotten from others you have shared with?

Mr. Bosio: I think we have done a pretty good job of taking all of the positive comments from the previous options and eliminating the negative comments. The result of the design is a lot of input from a lot of different people.

Mr. Thompson: Thinking about the various cities I have visited, I think that this would be a distinctive and positive contribution of which Greenville would be displaying itself to visitors.

Mr. Edwards: I think the work is outstanding and I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Thompson. Have you been through the district identification process as to what is considered Uptown? Is that still a fluid process? When it comes to what is on the signage to the process say you have a sign that says the Museum of Art and then someone thinks it should say the Greenville Museum of Art as opposed to something else. Where are we in the changes?

Mr. Bosio: As to the district question, I think we are already there. Nothing is final. I think the Uptown and the Medical District is set and also West Greenville as a district and then the other larger entities would be East Carolina University and the Visitors Center. As far as identifying the exact terminology on each sign, that is an ongoing process that we are going through.

The Commission thanked Mr. Bosio and Mr. Swantack for their presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no public comment.

DISCUSSION OF 2004 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND EXPENDITURES

Mr. Flood: As discussed in the December 4, 2007 meeting of the Redevelopment Commission, the proposed expenditure line items for the West Greenville Bonds need to be adjusted as a result of greater than anticipated expenses realized in the areas of land acquisition, construction and preliminary estimates for the first phase of streetscape improvements. During the December 4, 2007 meeting, staff indicated that information would be provided on needed adjustments.

Mr. Flood: A major portion of the expenditures in the West Greenville Bond account has been for land acquisition. Sixty-four properties have been purchased using funds from this account by a combination of actions by the Redevelopment Commission, Affordable Housing Loan Committee and City Council. These purchases have included the purchase of the Intergenerational Center property and grounds and the purchase of 60 homes (all in the revitalization area) as authorized by the Affordable Housing Loan Committee and City Council respectively. Of the total number of acquisitions, the Redevelopment Commission has authorized the purchase of properties (a store at 1401 West Fifth Street, the nightclub at 814 West Fifth Street, and properties in Bonner's Lane). In total, \$2,054,503.00 has been expended for land acquisition. The reallocation of funds proposed by staff would allow previously authorized acquisitions and projects to move forward. Staff proposes to re-distribute \$1,084,135.00 of bond funds to continue projects by moving funds to cover existing and anticipated expenses as follows.

Funds to be redistributed in:

Program Income Housing Rehabilitation	\$509,135.00
Reduction	\$125,000.00
Relocation Reduction	\$200,000.00
Development Financing Reduction	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
Total equals	\$1,084,135.00

Funding Areas to receive re-allocated funds:

Construction	\$304,500.00
Acquisition	\$529,635.00
Infrastructure	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
Total equals	\$1,084,135.00

Funds that will be available for projects of the Redevelopment Commission will be as follows:

Acquisition	\$ 292,581.00
Infrastructure	\$1,198,946.00
Business relocation	\$ 181,679.00
Development financing	\$ 300,000.00
Construction	\$ 53,941.00
Demolition	\$ 250,000.00

The re-distribution of funds will be finalized by City Council by budget ordinance amendment which may be considered in February of 2008.

CONSIDERATION OF BUSINESS COUNSELING FIRMS

Mr. Rees: A total of three letters were received in response to the Small Business Plan Competition. One letter was received from Carolyn Wilburn of the N.C. Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at East Carolina University; one letter was received from Mr. J. L. Young, a friend of entrepreneurship; and one letter was received from Carlton Gay of the Executive Center for Economic and Educational Development, Incorporated. Mr. Jim Ensor of Pitt Community College has attended tonight's meeting to express the college's interest in being a part of the process. Guidance from the Commission is being requested. Staff feels that a presentation from those interested would be a good idea where items would need to be addressed such as the extent of activity to provide best advice to people in competition.

The Commission agreed that presentations should be made regarding the Small Business Plan Competition.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Dennis Mitchell to request presentations from those interested parties to the Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Rees: In January, the Commission elects a Chair and Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Britt Laughinghouse to nominate Mr. Dennis Mitchell as Chairman of the Redevelopment Commission.

There were no more nominations.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Britt Laughinghouse and seconded by Mr. Dennis Mitchell to nominate Mr. Robert Thompson as Vice-Chairman of the Redevelopment Commission.

There were no more nominations.

Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT FROM SECRETARY

Expenditure Report

Mr. Flood distributed the Expenditure Reports for West Greenville and the Center City.

2007-08 2nd Quarter Report

Mr. Rees distributed the 2007-2008 2nd Quarter Report to the Redevelopment Commission.

2007 – 2008 Annual Program of Work 2nd Quarter Report

1. Business Retention Program

One of the key goals outlined in the Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan is to promote and expand employment within the revitalization areas. A strong small business retention and expansion program should be a key component of any plan aimed at increasing employment given that data suggests between 65% to 80% of all new jobs are created by existing, rather than relocating businesses (IEDC 2006). The retention of existing businesses is also a key economic development goal for

Greenville's City Council as outlined in their Annual Goals Statement for the 2007 – 2008 fiscal year. Given the importance of business retention and expansion activities, the Redevelopment Commission will devise and implement a plan that will seek to utilize the resources of the Commission to foster an environment that is conducive to business retention and expansion within the revitalization areas.

UPDATE: As a first step, staff working on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission are seeking to strengthen the existing partnership with Uptown Greenville. One staff member, Carl Rees, was recently appointed to serve on the Uptown Greenville board of directors. Such a relationship will pay dividends as the staff and consequently the Redevelopment Commission will have a better understanding of the needs of the center city business community. Staff is currently working to develop a tiered plan that would lead to the implementation of a full business retention program should staffing and funding be made available in the future. A key component of that plan will be the completion of an existing business survey, which will seek to identify, classify and demographically categorize existing businesses within the Center City – West Greenville revitalization areas. Funding to complete such a survey will be requested in the 2007 – 08 City of Greenville budget.

2. Center City Design Standards

As specified in the Revitalization Plan, City staff has been leading a group of design professionals and other interested citizens in a process to develop and recommend a set of guidelines to address the design quality of public and private development projects within a defined section of the center city. To date, the group has developed a draft version of the guidelines and has held multiple public meetings, including an open house, a stakeholder workshop, and a Focus Group meeting.

The new design standards will compliment existing architectural styles, while serving to address the form, scale and visual character of preservation, renovation and new construction projects. It is hoped that such design standards will help to make the center city area a safe, accessible and inviting place to live, work and recreate.

UPDATE: Through the hard work of a volunteer group led by several local design professionals, a final draft of the design guidelines is near completion. It is expected that this draft will be finalized by the end of January, with opportunities for public comment prior to the spring. Necessary revisions will be made to the document based on those comments, with adoption of the document scheduled for later in the year.

3. Sadie Saulter School Area Revitalization

This project will support new residential development expected to take place in the neighborhoods surrounding the school. As envisioned in the Revitalization Plan, the project includes the acquisition of several blocks of blighted housing in the Fourteenth Avenue – Tyson Street area. It is expected that City staff will engage in joint planning

activities with the School Board to ensure that revitalization planning for surrounding neighborhoods is coordinated. Improvements to Sadie Saulter School will serve to promote other uses such as after-school and community meeting facilities.

UPDATE: City staff have recently made contact with Pitt County Schools officials and are in the process of setting a meeting to provide an update to those officials on revitalization efforts in West Greenville and to learn of any plans the school system may have for Sadie Saulter.

4. Adaptive Re-use Projects for Historic Structures

The Redevelopment Commission will solicit input and receive inquiries from interested parties including architectural and development firms intent on finding new uses for unoccupied and underutilized historic structures within the Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Project area. The Redevelopment Commission will review any proposals, and where appropriate, may take action to partner with an interested developer and/or facilitate the redevelopment of these structures.

UPDATE: Staff working on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission have initiated discussion with two separate development firms with regard to the feasibility of completing a historic adaptive reuse of the city-owned Albemarle Warehouse. One potential re-use of the warehouse is as a small business incubator. This and other options will continue to be explored over the coming months. In an effort to raise awareness with regard to the potential value of historic buildings in Greenville's historic center city, a group of design students affiliated with East Carolina University have been engaged to develop conceptual plans for adaptive reuse projects of several buildings. The plans and illustrations will be presented by the students at a future Redevelopment Commission meeting.

5. West Greenville Building Block Grants

To facilitate small business growth in appropriate locations within the West Greenville Redevelopment Project area, the Redevelopment Commission introduced the Building Blocks façade grant program during the last fiscal year. For the inaugural Fall/Winter 2006-07 grant cycle, the Redevelopment Commission awarded two grants for a total of up to \$10,000 in grant funds. These initial allotments will leverage up to \$20,000 in West Greenville building improvements.

The Building Blocks program is intended to support and compliment other business and employment-creation programs that aim to maximize the potential for expansion or creation of business ventures in West Greenville.

UPDATE: Momentum for the Building Blocks grants program has been building since the program was introduced in the fall of 2006. During the first grant cycle, a total of four projects were funded in a total amount of nearly \$8,000. Those projects include a new

store front for a commercial building on Pitt Street, along with exterior repairs to an office building on West Fifth Street. Prior to the fall 2007 grant cycle, the Redevelopment Commission modified the program such that the direct grant and matching amounts were raised to \$2,500 and \$7,500 respectively. Those changes resulted in the submittal of five applications for the fall 2007 grant cycle in a total amount of nearly \$43,000 which will in turn leverage nearly \$80,000 in additional private investment.

6. West Greenville Business Plan Competition

To facilitate the expansion of small business in appropriate locations within the West Greenville Redevelopment Project area, the Redevelopment Commission will develop a business plan competition program. The program will be developed in conjunction with the local office of the North Carolina Small Business Technology Development Center and will utilize existing SBTDC training and assistance programs to help participants develop their plans. This program will be paired with other business and employment-creation programs to maximize the potential for expansion or creation of business ventures.

UPDATE: The Redevelopment Commission recently approved the program guidelines for the business plan competition, and staff has received letters of interest from organizations interested in providing business counseling services to competition award recipients. It is expected that the first awards for the program will be made by the Redevelopment Commission in the summer of 2008.

7. West Greenville Small Business Loan Pool**

The creation of a low interest loan pool will aim to spur small business growth in appropriate locations within the West Greenville Redevelopment Project area. The program will be designed to assist existing businesses and start-ups with limited access to financing through conventional means. It is expected that the Redevelopment Commission will partner with several lenders to guarantee conventional loans, providing funding to qualifying business ventures. This program will be paired with other business and employment creation programs in order to maximize the potential for expansion or creation of business enterprises.

UPDATE: Through discussions with local banks, as well as through dialog with representatives of the Community Investment Corporation of North Carolina, staff is in the early stages of developing a model for a small business loan pool. It is expected that a proposal for this program will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission for consideration during the spring of 2008.

8. West Greenville Assisted Living Center**

In conjunction with a goal established by the Greenville City Council, the Redevelopment Commission will assess the feasibility of establishing an assisted living center in the West Greenville Redevelopment Project area. Assisted living facilities are typically designed for residents who might need assistance with their daily routines but still wish to live as independently as possible. These facilities can bridge the gap between independent living and nursing homes while providing an intermediate level of long-term care appropriate for many seniors.

Assisted living centers represent enticing investment opportunities for developers of low-income projects who rely on tax credits to make projects feasible. State Financing Agencies tend to look favorably on assisted living centers, giving them higher scores in the competition among developers to land available low-income tax credits.

City staff is in the process of gathering general background information on assisted living centers; looking at prospective case studies; and conducting preliminary feasibility analysis. If that study indicates clear support for an assisted living center in West Greenville, the RDC will then work with a tax credit developer to implement the vision.

UPDATE: There have been some limited discussions with public and private development partners with regard to the development of an assisted living center in West Greenville, but at the present time there does not appear to be momentum for this project, largely due to the inability to locate a tract of land large enough for such a facility to be constructed.

9. West Greenville Scattered Site Multifamily “Big House” Project

The Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan identifies the provision of diverse forms of affordable housing as a high priority for the West Greenville Redevelopment project area. While a number of homeownership initiatives are underway through ongoing CDBG programs, the development of high quality yet affordable multifamily rental housing units will provide good options for those West Greenville residents who do not have the desire or capacity to reside in ownership housing.

The Redevelopment Commission has selected Landmark Development of Winston-Salem, NC as its development partner and has joined with Landmark in the submission of an application for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to fund 48 housing units. Should the project be funded, the Redevelopment Commission will work with Landmark through the final design, construction and lease phases to bring the development on-line.

UPDATE: The Redevelopment Commission signed the ground lease for land along West Fifth Street and Bonners Lane with Landmark Development in October, and it is expected that Landmark will begin construction on the 48 unit project in the early summer of 2008.

10. Streetscape Pilot Projects**

As part of its 2005 – 2006 Annual Work Plan, the Redevelopment Commission selected a consultant to develop a set of design guidelines for future streetscape improvement projects undertaken within the Revitalization Project area. The goal of the design process was to create a unique and distinctive vision for public spaces within the project area. Key factors considered in the process included, vehicular/pedestrian/bicycle access, public utility location and improvements, street and gateway character, and wayfinding.

Based on cost estimates and prioritization developed as part of the master planning process, the Redevelopment Commission and Greenville City Council have selected the Cotanche Street – Reade Circle and West Fifth Street Gateway as pilot projects.

UPDATE: The Redevelopment Commission has approved a contract with Reynolds and Jewell, a Raleigh-based landscape architecture firm to complete final design of the Cotanche and Reade Streetscape project. It is expected that construction of the project will take place during the summer of 2008. The Redevelopment Commission has selected the local engineering and design services firm of Rivers and Associates to complete the final design and construction documents for the West Fifth Street gateway project. It is expected that the streetscape design will include a civic art component that will honor long time Greenville educator C.M. Eppes. Rivers and Associates has completed survey work for the project, and public meetings have been scheduled for mid-January. It is expected that the project will be bid for construction in late summer of 2008.

11. Comprehensive Wayfinding Project

The design and installation of a comprehensive citywide wayfinding system will have an immediate positive impact on Greenville’s urban core. Such a system was recommended as part of the Center City – West Greenville Streetscape Master Plan and has been given a high priority by both the Redevelopment Commission and the Greenville City Council. Once implemented, the wayfinding system will help visitors and residents to navigate throughout the city using all modes of transportation. Upon completion, the sign system will also help to “brand” Greenville’s distinctive urban core and promote key civic, educational, commercial and transportation facilities.

UPDATE: The Redevelopment Commission awarded a design contract to the firm of RMJM Hillier of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the completion of Greenville’s first comprehensive wayfinding system. The design process is well under way, with several forums and individual stakeholder meetings having taken place. Based on comments from citizens and stakeholders, the system design has been completed with sign programming and location analysis well under way. Installation of the system’s first two phases scheduled to occur in the late spring of 2008.

12. Revitalization Area TIF District

Project development financing was recently authorized in North Carolina. Also known as Tax increment financing (TIF), it allows cities to establish special districts and to leverage public improvements within those districts that are expected to generate private-sector investment. N.C. law requires collaboration with county government, the N.C. Local Government Commission, and equity investors; therefore planning is vital to establishing an effective TIF District. The location and size, and quality of development within the district can determine whether the project will be successful.

During the 2006-07 Fiscal Year, City staff dedicated considerable time and effort to investigating the suitability of creating a TIF district to assist with the financing of public projects. As TIF financing remains new to the State of North Carolina, implementation of a district will depend on the strength of the private development projects that are proposed for the district. Several private sector development projects may be nearing the stage in their planning processes that would make the creation of a TIF district feasible.

In the 2007-08 fiscal year, the Redevelopment Commission and City staff in consultation with the Greenville City Council will begin a process that could potentially lead to the creation of a TIF district. By performing fiscal due diligence and market analysis on all proposals and alternatives, the Redevelopment Commission will ensure that any new TIF District is viable. However, a recent legal challenge to North Carolina's laws allowing TIF financing may cause delays in Greenville's ability to form a district.

UPDATE: Working in concert with the City Council, the Redevelopment Commission and city staff continue to receive proposals from private sector developers for a variety of projects in the historic center city. In nearly all cases, developers are seeking city assistance with infrastructure installation to include surface and structured parking, streetscape, roadway and utility improvements. There is a strong likelihood that tax increment financing will be used in one or more projects as a financial mechanism to assist with installation of the public improvements cited above. Determination as to the suitability of TIF financing will be made on a case by case basis.

13. Restaurant Start-Up Initiative

The Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan calls for a lively and diverse mix of restaurants and entertainment venues in the Center City business district. In recent years, the number and quality of restaurants in the area has experienced a significant upgrade. However, the potential for additional restaurant growth remains strong, given the number of downtown workers as well as ECU students, faculty, and staff in close proximity to the Center City.

Beginning in the 2007-08 fiscal year, the Redevelopment Commission will begin developing a Restaurant Start-up Initiative with the goal of attracting exciting new restaurants to the Center City. City staff will evaluate restaurant incentive programs developed by Winston-Salem and other municipalities. Based on case study research and market analysis, the Redevelopment Commission will evaluate the feasibility of creating a Center City Restaurant District/Zone and will consider whether any incentives should be applied to the program.

Similar to the West Greenville small business incubator and low interest loan programs, the Restaurant Start-up Initiative would aim to work with ECU's Small Business & Technology Development Center and/or Pitt Community College's Small Business Center to provide consultant support to program participants

UPDATE: Although detailed study of this initiative is scheduled to take place in 2008, city staff has been in contact with two separate business people who have expressed an interest in establishing a restaurant in the West Greenville area. There has also been recent private sector interest in opening new restaurants in two vacant buildings within the Uptown Commercial District. Staff will continue to work with those and other interested groups in order to determine what sort of public actions might best leverage private investment in restaurant start-up's.

14. Residential & Mixed Use Project Development

The Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan calls for mixed use office, residential and retail development in the Uptown Central Business District. Toward this end, the Redevelopment Commission will explore redevelopment options for key business corridors. Redevelopment of important but underutilized corridors has the potential to jumpstart downtown office, residential, and retail sectors while creating a vital node for cultural activity. By introducing mixed-use office/residential development around relatively underutilized public and semi-public open spaces such as the Town Common, larger scale mixed-use redevelopment has the potential to energize the overlapping pedestrian, business, and entertainment zones while “pulling” commercial activity down the length of key commercial corridors.

UPDATE: Working in concert with the City Council, the Redevelopment Commission and city staff continue to receive proposals from private sector developers for a variety of projects in the historic center city. In nearly all cases, developers are seeking city assistance with infrastructure installation to include surface and structured parking, streetscape, and utility improvements. In addition to the Nathaniel Village residential development on West Fifth Street, it is expected that private sector developers will announce plans for two additional development projects within the next few months. Each of these projects is either entirely residential, or, has a residential component.

15. West Greenville Business Incubator

Development of a business incubator in West Greenville 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. Amenities might include furnished office space; conference and training rooms; computer lab with high-speed Internet connection or wireless technology; office equipment; and reception services. Technical Assistance allows entrepreneurs to consult with business experts; collaborate with other tenants on problem solving, lead generation, and new ideas; and to get referrals on training programs, workshops, and financing. Incubator participants also reach new clients through onsite networking resources.

In the 2006-07 fiscal year, the Redevelopment Commission visited successful small business incubators in Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Siler City, as part of its effort to complete a preliminary feasibility study of the Project. Valuable lessons learned from that study will guide the RDC as it takes the next steps in program development.

If the feasibility study indicates that West Greenville is primed for a small business incubator, the RDC will work closely with the City of Greenville and other resources to pursue additional steps as needed.

UPDATE: The Redevelopment Commission recently contracted with the North Carolina Small Business and Technology Center to complete a feasibility study focused on the establishment of a small business incubator in West Greenville. As part of that process, the Redevelopment Commission hosted a well attended public forum during which an outspoken group of small business people, political leaders and community activists called for the establishment of an incubator. As part of the feasibility study process, the Redevelopment Commission is working to establish a steering committee that will help guide the feasibility study as well as to potentially advocate for the establishment of an incubator. The feasibility process has been temporarily put on hold due to a lack of city staff resources to manage and support the steering committee process.

16. Open Air Market Initiative

Historically, Greenville citizens have actively supported public events in the Center City such as Sunday in the Park, Greenville's International Festival and more recently, Uptown Art Walks and Freeboot Fridays. Such events not only bring Greenville's citizens together in a multicultural social atmosphere but also serve to promote commerce within the urban core. In addition to sponsoring festivals and events, many municipalities have established open air markets that serve an important social function and help build local economies by promoting area farmers, artisans and other cottage industries. Given the notable absence of fresh food sales in Greenville's urban core, an open air market would be a valuable, albeit partial alternative to supermarkets predominantly located in exurban areas.

UPDATE: A group of local merchants under the auspices of the Uptown Greenville organization recently established the Uptown Umbrella Market that has been operating on select Saturday mornings for the last several months. By most accounts the market has been a success, particularly in its capacity to attract additional customers and visitors to the Uptown Commercial District. Staff will continue to analyze the Umbrella Market along with other market opportunities, and make recommendations to the Redevelopment Commission for any activities or programs that might augment the private sector market activities currently in place.

17. Civic Art Initiative

One of the key recommendations of the recently adopted Streetscape Master Plan was the creation of a civic art program. The Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan likewise calls for “creating and expanding cultural resources” within the Revitalization Project Area. Across the nation, some 350 jurisdictions have established civic art programs, including cities in North Carolina such as Cary, Chapel Hill and Raleigh (Americans for the Arts, 2003). Upcoming construction projects associated with two streetscape pilot projects - one in the Uptown and one in West Greenville - provide opportunities to incorporate civic art projects. Such pilot projects may serve as a catalyst for implementing broader, City-wide approaches to civic art.

UPDATE: As mentioned above, there will be a civic art component included in the design of the West Fifth Street Gateway streetscape project. Additionally, city staff have been active in the Painted Pirate project jointly sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the ECU Alumni Association. The project will ultimately lead to the display of two-dozen creatively decorated pirate statues at prominent locations throughout the center city and wider Greenville areas. Public reaction to these projects will help to determine the public appetite for additional civic art projects throughout Greenville.

18. Revitalization Area Marketing Program

City Council called for more extensive marketing programs to promote Center City revitalization as part of its 2007-08 Annual Goals Statement. The Revitalization Area Marketing Program will aim 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. The Marketing Program will utilize a variety of media - including but not limited to press releases & feature articles; brochures/handbooks; targeted marketing pieces – to promote positive Center City revitalization stories and accomplishments. The program will sponsor and/or hold special events and public informational meetings to gather input on and support for Center City and West Greenville revitalization initiatives. In addition, the marketing program would create, maintain, and make accessible via online resources, data relevant to Center City revitalization. These marketing initiatives could be enhanced by

applying for grants to support planning & marketing of downtown revitalization programs.

UPDATE: In advance of the design of a broader marketing program, city staff has been working with several interns to study local demographics that might be used in a marketing campaign. An intern from the ECU Public Administration graduate program is conducting research on how development costs in Greenville's center city compare to peer cities throughout the state. Favorable data will be considered for inclusion in future marketing efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Don Edwards and seconded by Mr. Robert Thompson to adjourn the January 8, 2008 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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