

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

June 3, 2008
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	Dennis Mitchell, Chair
Britt Laughinghouse	Robert Thompson, Vice- Chair
Evan Lewis	Terri Williams

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melissa Hill

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Holly Garriott, Emerge Gallery; Max R. Joyner, Jr., City Council; Liaison; Steve Kirkman; Brian Starky, OBS Landscape Architects of Raleigh, NC; and Sterling Stevens, Strahan Associates Architects of Raleigh, NC

RIVERS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.: Marvin E. Garner, Jr., AICP, Associate Project Manager; and Myriah Shewchuck, ASLA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2008: APPROVED

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Ms. Terri Williams to approve the May 6, 2008 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF WEST FIFTH STREET GATEWAY DESIGN

The Commission listened to a presentation of the West Fifth Street Gateway Design team.

Ms. Shewchuck: Public input was received on January 15, January 17 and March 25, 2008 for the West Fifth Street Gateway Design. The goal of the design process was to create a unique and distinctive vision for public spaces within the project area. Public input included: wider sidewalks; a safe well lit area; pedestrian friendly area; slow traffic on Fifth Street; new bus shelters; benches with backs; a new gateway at Memorial

Drive; memory markers; and decorative neighborhood markers and crosswalk paving. The citizen's vision is to see the West Fifth Street Gateway as being alive, safe, beautiful, well lit and walkable. The citizen's priorities are to have utility improvements, lighting, site furniture and pedestrian safety.

The Commission was shown a proposed drawing of how the West Fifth Street Gateway Design is being proposed.

Ms. Garriott: There will be a call for artists for the wall and gateway sculpture. There will be an announced call for artists during the summer of 2008. The submission deadline for the artists will be towards the end of summer/beginning of fall. The initial artist selection and the finalists' site visit will be the fall of 2008. The finalists' presentation of concepts will be the winter of 2008. Contract signed with selected artists will be winter/spring 2008. Artwork installed by 2009.

Ms. Shewchuck: We are working with the utility companies, Embarq and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to get the utilities underground. The Study and Report Phase is nearing completion. Over the next three months, the West Fifth Street Gateway Design team will be working on the Preliminary Design Phase, the Final Design Phase and the Bidding and Negotiations Phase.

The Commission thanked the West Fifth Street Gateway Design team for a job well done.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

CONSIDERATION OF WEST FIFTH STREET GATEWAY DESIGN

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Don Edwards for the Design Team to move forward with the timeline for the West Fifth Street Gateway Design project. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF FISCAL YEAR 08-09 WORK AND FINANCIAL PLAN

Mr. Rees: Denise Walsh, Executive Director of Uptown Greenville, wrote a letter to the Redevelopment Commission on behalf of the Uptown Greenville Board of Directors asking that the research and development of the 5 Points Plaza, a multipurpose event and parking space at the corner of 5th and Evans, be added to the 2009/2009 program of work. The Commission is being asked to consider the Fiscal Year 08-09 Work and Financial Plan. Of the sixteen total items in the current work plan, all but one represent carry-over items from the 2007-2008 annual program of work. The presence of these carry-over items is illustrative of the scope and complexity of the work undertaken by the Redevelopment Commission in furtherance the goals and objectives outlined in the

Center City – West Greenville Revitalization Plan. This work plan will guide City of Greenville staff and private contractors who will carry out a defined set of activities listed herein and timed to coincide with the City’s fiscal year running from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. The 2008-2009 Work Plan Items are:

1. Business Retention Program
2. Center City Design Standards
3. Adaptive Re-use Projects for Historic Structures
4. West Greenville Building Block Grants
5. West Greenville Business Plan Competition
6. West Greenville Assisted Living Center
7. Streetscape Pilot Projects
8. Comprehensive Wayfinding Project
9. Revitalization Area Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District
10. Restaurant Start-Up Initiative
11. Residential and Mixed Use Project Development
12. West Greenville Business Incubator
13. Open Air Market Initiative
14. Civic Art Initiative
15. Revitalization Area Marketing Program
16. Town Common Area Improvement Study

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Don Edwards to approve the FY 08 – 09 Work and Financial Plan as proposed with the addition of the research and development of the 5 Points Plaza, a multipurpose event and parking space, at the corner of 5th and Evans Street. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT FROM SECRETARY

Expenditure Report

Mr. Flood distributed the expenditure reports for West Greenville and the Center City for review by the Commission.

Fiscal Year 07-08 Third Quarter Report

Mr. Rees reported on the third quarter report for Fiscal Year 07-08.

2007 – 2008 Annual Program of Work 3rd 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 collaboratively with Uptown Greenville staff to develop a tiered plan that would lead to the implementation of a full business retention program, although one that is likely tailored to a volunteer/intern led effort. 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. As a first step, Uptown Greenville has agreed to use their interns to survey existing businesses. This survey will become the basis for additional retention efforts in the coming fiscal year.

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 early summer 2008, with opportunities for public comment prior to follow in the early fall. 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: Based on recent conversations with Pitt County School staff, it appears that the school system intends to maintain Sadie Saulter in its current configuration for the near future. At the present time, the school is under capacity, but is utilized as a type of magnet school for music and foreign language programs. The school system has formed a committee intended to study school growth patterns and needs for Pitt County. The ultimate fate of Sadie Saulter school is likely to be determined as a result of the findings and recommendations of that study.

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 were presented by students accompanied by ECU faculty and City of Greenville staff at a recent conference sponsored by the university.

Recently, a local development group secured an option to purchase the Imperial Tobacco complex located along Atlantic Avenue. Despite a catastrophic fire that destroyed much of the Imperial complex, the developer is currently conducting due diligence activities, which are in part being facilitated by the City's recently awarded EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant.

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: During the first months of 2008, the Redevelopment Commission approved the program guidelines for the business plan competition, selected three local business counseling service providers to assist competition entrants and advertised the program through a wide variety of outlets. To date, more than two dozen entrepreneurs and

small business people have expressed interest in the program, many of whom are expected to complete and submit business plans. Business plan contestants will have until July 1, 2008 to turn in their completed business plans and applications. Awards will be made by the Redevelopment Commission within 30-60 days following the due date.

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, city staff developed a loan pool model based on similar programs in other North Carolina cities. During the process of developing program details, staff learned that bond funds, such as those from the voter approved 2004 General Obligation issue for West Greenville, could not be used in the manner necessary to insure a loan pool program. It is estimated that between \$300,000 - \$500,000 in cash reserves would be necessary in order to guarantee a loan pool large enough ensure substantial participation by local lending institutions.

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 during the summer or early fall 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 starting in January of 2009. 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 has led a series of public workshops over the course of the late winter and early spring of 2008. A final design will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission for approval in June of 2008. It is expected that construction of the project will begin during late 2008 or early 2009.

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 adopted by both the Redevelopment Commission and the City Council. It is expected that several prototype signs will be installed during the early summer of 2008, with construction of the system slated to begin in the fall 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: Throughout the first part of the current fiscal year, city staff has been in contact with several business people who have expressed an interest in establishing restaurants within the bounds of the Center City – West Greenville revitalization areas. City staff has continued an active dialog with those entrepreneurs, in hopes that they

will follow through with their concepts. City staff has also initiated a dialog with faculty members at East Carolina University from the Department of Hospitality Management in hopes of developing joint programming that can serve as a resource to interested restaurateurs. Working in conjunction with Uptown Greenville, the Redevelopment Commission will consider business assistance programs that might serve as incentives for the locations of new restaurants within the Center City revitalization area.

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 several 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 has established an eleven member steering committee that will help guide the feasibility study as well as to potentially advocate for the establishment of an incubator. The first meeting of the steering committee is scheduled for early June of 2008.

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 established the Uptown Umbrella Market in the fall of 2007. 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. In April of 2008, the Uptown Greenville merchant's association approved the location of a civic, multi-use space capable of hosting a market, as their top priority for 2008. Under the leadership of the Uptown Greenville design committee, a preliminary design study will be completed by East Carolina University design students and faculty during the summer of 2008. It is expected that those preliminary plans will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission in the fall of 2008.

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 as well as in the Cotanche and Reade streetscape enhancement 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 has culminated in the display of two-dozen creatively decorated pirate statues at prominent locations throughout the center city and wider Greenville areas. Preliminary planning continues for the inclusion of public art in the two streetscape projects mentioned as well as for wider civic art programming throughout the City of 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. In April of 2008, the City sponsored a booth at the Chamber of commerce Business Expo held at the local convention center. The event was well

attended, and city staff was able to promote several business assistance programs as well as other ongoing revitalization efforts.

Update on Incubator Steering Committee

Mr. Rees: The Incubator Steering Committee will be meeting twice a month from now until December 2008.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

There were no comments from Commission members.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Robert Thompson and seconded by Mr. Don Edwards to adjourn the June 3, 2008 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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