

**Redevelopment Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 5, 2016
Greenville, North Carolina**

Present:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Marshall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracie Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharif Hatoum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeremy King	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Dunn	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Siguaw	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Patterson	

Absent:

<input type="checkbox"/> Angela Marshall	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracie Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharif Hatoum
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeremy King	<input type="checkbox"/> Patricia Dunn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Judy Siguaw	<input type="checkbox"/> Richard Patterson	

Staff:

<input type="checkbox"/> Merrill Flood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Casey Verburg
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McClean Godley (City Council Liaison)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christian Lockamy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roger Johnson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Betty Moseley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Wisemiller	<input type="checkbox"/>

I. Welcome

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes – November 3, 2015

Motion was made by Ms. Dunn and seconded by Ms. Siguaw to approve the meeting minutes from November 3, 2015 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Introductions: New Redevelopment Commissioner; New Economic Development Manager

Mr. Wisemiller introduced the new Redevelopment Commissioner Tracie Gardner and the new Economic Development and Revitalization Manager, Roger Johnson.

Ms. Gardner gave a brief biography.

Mr. Wisemiller stated that Mr. Johnson has given staff some new priorities and projects. He also introduced Ms. Verburg and Mr. Lockamy, the other team members.

V. Consideration of Small Business Plan Competition Grant Recommendations

Ms. Siguaw stated that only one application was received. Others were interested but did not make the deadline.

Ms. Verburg gave a brief overview of the Small Business Plan Competition grant. The subcommittee meets twice a year. It is for small businesses looking to locate or relocate or expand in the Uptown West Greenville Area. They can get \$15,000 or \$30,000 depending on investment in the community or buying

a building or up fitting it. Existing businesses must show a new product or service and new businesses are just looking to locate in the area. We do this in July and December. December does typically have fewer applicants probably due to holidays and the time frame. Applicants can reapply if they were not funded on the first round.

Mr. King asked if there was a waiting period between being denied and reapplying.

Ms. Verburg replied that the guidelines had changed. Prior they had to wait a whole year before reapplying. One applicant applied this round. They are located in West Greenville on 310 B Pennsylvania Avenue. The business is named Future Scholars. The applicant is Mr. Embry Gibson. Mr. Gibson is seeking \$15,000 to help expand the business, which is a development enrichment center.

Ms. Siguaw stated that the committee is a worthwhile concept. They were very enthusiastic. However, there were some problems with business model. Mr. Gibson was not as concerned about making a profit as he was helping the children, however for the competition, the business must be profitable. The subcommittee does not recommend funding Future Scholars.

Ms. Siguaw made the recommendation that the Redevelopment Commission not award this applicant. There will not be any awards made this round.

Motion was made by Ms. Siguaw and seconded by Ms. Marshall to not award funds to the small business plan competition applicant. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Update on the Hodges Alley Project

Mr. Wisemiller gave a brief background on the Hodges Alley project and delineated the location. RDC previously used bond funds to complete Cotanche/Reade streetscape improvements and upgrade Hodges parking lot. One section of the alley, which is owned by the City, was not included in those improvements. In November of 2015, staff presented a design concept to the RDC for the alley improvement. The next step was to get cost estimates for two proposals (brick or pavement) from Tripp Brothers. The proposal is not back yet but we do have the topographical analysis was just completed by the PWD. Staff is analyzing the topographical to complete the cost estimates.

Ms. Siguaw made the suggestion to close the driveway so people wouldn't try to turn there. That way the sidewalk curbing would go all the way across.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that he would pass along the suggestion.

Mr. King asked if procedures were required to close the alleyway to vehicles.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that he didn't think so. It is discouraged now, but there are no citations if they do park there.

VII. Public Comment Period

No comments received.

VIII. Update on the Uptown Theatre Project

Mr. Wisemiller stated that one of the first steps to get the building stabilized. There are some environmental concerns that were found during the last environmental assessment. The City's

application for a \$125,000 sub-grant from the Revolving Loan Fund program was approved by the EPA. This is a partnership between the City of Greenville, the City of Wilson and the county in that region. We are applying for our own grant but it goes through the EPA committee for review. Indications are that it will be successful. EPA requirements for any Brownfields grant is that it goes through an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Community Involvement Plan (CIP). The bid package for the remediation and stabilization services will be sent out next week for advertising and to targeted contacts to engineering firms that specialize in this type of work. Preliminary bids are due January 20 and final bids due in early February.

Mr. King asked if staff had any estimates for the theatre from prior analysis.

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes, an analysis had been done a while back to determine the cost of removing the asbestos and lead-based paint. These two are linked together and must be stabilized at the same time or contamination could occur. To use the funds they must be eligible expenses. \$125,000 should be the high end.

Mr. King asked if this was a sub-grant that had to be paid back.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that this grant will not have to be paid back. The entire revolving loan fund program from the EPA to the partnership is \$1 million. Most of that would go out to private developers and property owners that want to redevelop Brownfields projects. When a private entity does it, then it is a loan. The program participants can apply out of their own fund to do a sub-grant.

Mr. King asked if the sub-grant reduced the \$1 million balance.

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes it will reduce it. However, even with a small interest percentage, the fund will build up over time.

Mr. King stated that he was for the theatre project if it was feasible. He asked for a rundown for the amount spent on the theatre. It might not be wise to save the theatre. Before we approve any more money to be spent this board needs to know that it is worth saving.

Ms. Marshall asked what determines we can't do it. Have we already reached the point that there is no return? This project seems to be creeping along.

Mr. King stated that if there are new stabilization problems with it, then regardless of how pretty it is, then maybe it needs to come down. We all want a downtown theatre, but this one may not be cost effective or a good use of taxpayer funds.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that the RDC portion that was set aside for this project was about \$180,000. Some of that may have been spent on auxiliary funds. As far as the \$125,000, if the building were to be removed, we would have to spend that amount anyway to abate the asbestos and lead-based paint. It has been a challenge for partnerships to spend all of the revolving loan funds.

Mr. King asked if that meant that there was not much demand for the revolving loan fund.

Mr. Wisemiller replied correct.

Mr. King stated that if the goal was demolition then we could sell it to a third party for the demolition cost and save money. The goal has always been to rehabilitate this building, but if this building is not cost effective or worth rehabilitating, we could give it to someone, let them tear it down and they pay

remediation. The taxpayer funds are set aside. Then they can use private dollars to build something there. I don't want to lose the theatre, but it's dictated by the cost.

Mr. Patterson asked if there was a plan B option where you could demolish it and start new or even get a third party come in and build.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that there was not an active alternative option at this time. Maybe down the road someone would be willing to consider that, but we still need to stabilize the building in the short term.

Ms. Dunn asked what the next step was after the stabilization. Someone in the private sector does want it, correct?

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes, they were exploring a project to reuse it now.

Mr. Hatoum asked if it was the same outfit as before.

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes. There are a number of financial mechanisms to help in exploring ways to preserve this theatre.

Mr. Patterson asked if they are ready to move in after this phase.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that they were eager to get started once the deal is done.

Mr. King stated that he would like to see the details of the deal before spending any more funds on it. It is true that the legislator did authorize historic tax credits, and this building would most likely be eligible. However, I don't want to stabilize the building only to have someone else need to stabilize it again in five years. I would like a tenant or a sale in place first before I authorize another dollar.

Mr. Wisemiller asked if he was referring to new money or the money that has already been authorized.

Mr. King replied that he was referring to the new money. We do have money in the budget that we authorized over two years ago. We have worked very hard; we even had the zoning ordinance changed for a theatre. In this public/private partnership it is time for the private partner to make some commitment

Ms. Marshall stated that the committee authorized it two years ago. After two years the authorization could be null and void, right?

Ms. Siguaw asked if the theatre was planning to rent and not purchase the property.

Mr. Wisemiller replied correct.

Mr. King stated that the Lincoln Theatre was planning to rent it but another private entity was planning to purchase it. It will definitely require some public/private partnership. They can't get it to where they need it without our help. He stated that he wanted to see results.

Ms. Marshall stated that she wanted to revisit whole thing. If it was two years ago, bring the board up to date. Also, how committed are these individuals.

Mr. Hatoum stated he wanted to see the amount spent and any amounts appropriated.

Mr. King stated the he wanted to see the cost from acquisition and any other costs associated with it. The new member on the board would probably want to get up to date on it too. The theatre could be great, but he wants some definition.

Ms. Siguaw stated that she wanted to know how soon it would be occupied. Otherwise it will sit vacant.

Mr. Wisemiller stated that the plan would be to move forward. Staff will come back with history, expenses, improvements, studies, and any other expenses for this property. Also the board will be involved with any additional commitments.

Ms. Dunn asked if the people who wanted to purchase it earlier still wants to purchase it. Did they still have a real, strong, viable interest in purchasing it?

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes.

Mr. Patterson asked that staff revisit the parties that are still interested and the process, including the Brownfields part.

IX. Announcement: Public/Stakeholder Meetings for the Town Common Phase-I Development

Mr. Wisemiller stated that a flyer had been given to the committee regarding a public/stakeholder meeting for the Town Commons Phase I Development. The open house/drop-in meeting is January 12, 2016 at the Third Street Community Center. A master plan for the Town Commons was done about six years ago. Also a Tar River Legacy Plan was done a couple years ago. This is the next phase to take the master plan and get it about 60% designed and concentrate on some new investments and improvements. The stakeholder meeting is on January 11th at 3:00–4:30 p.m. They would like to invite two or three RDC members to participate.

Ms. Dunn stated that she wanted to know every single meeting being held regarding the town commons. This is public property and all meetings need to be open to the public. What is meant by stakeholder?

Mr. Wisemiller explained that the stakeholders are the people or properties in that area that will be impacted by any decisions regarding the town commons. This is a public meeting anyone can attend.

Ms. Marshall stated that anyone can attend but specific people are being invited to ensure there is a good representation of public interest.

Mr. King asked who is holding the meeting and where is this meeting being held.

Mr. Wisemiller replied that he did not have that information available at this time. He will get the answers to the committee on January 6th.

Ms. Dunn asked who was in charge of the meeting.

Mr. Wisemiller replied Marcus Morrison with the Recreation and Parks Department.

Ms. Siguaw asked if he was just looking for volunteers to attend the meeting.

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes.

Mr. Hatoum, Mr. King, and Ms. Dunn replied that they would attend. Mr. Patterson will be alternate.

X. Election of Officers

Ms. Marshall nominated Mr. Jeremy King for Chair.

Mr. King stated that it was not an office he seeks, but he will accept the nomination.

Nomination was seconded by Ms. Dunn. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. King nominated Mr. Richard Patterson for Vice-chair.

Nomination was seconded by Mr. Hatoum. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. Report from Secretary

A. Monthly Financial Report

No report was given.

Mr. King asked if Mr. Flood was still contingent in position.

Mr. Wisemiller replied yes. He is still acting director.

XII. Comments from Commission Members

Ms. Siguaw wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. Patterson wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. King stated that he was pleased with the new Economic Development Manager. He feels we are a good team.

XIII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Ms. Dunn and seconded by Mr. King to adjourn the RDC meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Thomas G. Wisemiller,
The Economic Development Project Coordinator
City of Greenville Community Development Department