

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE  
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
OF GREENSBORO  
JULY 5, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Redevelopment Commission of Greensboro (RCG) was held on Wednesday, July 5, 2017, in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building commencing at 5:00 p.m. The following members were present: Robert Enochs, Chair; Clinton Gravely; Charles McQueary; Dawn Chaney; and Angela Harris. Staff present included Dyan Arkin, Hanna Cockburn and Russ Clegg. Also present was Andrew Kelly, Attorney for the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**a) May 3, 2017**

Mr. Gravely moved approval of the May 3, 2017 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Chaney. The Commission voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Enochs, Gravely, McQueary, Chaney, Harris. Nays: None.)

**WILLOW OAKS REDEVELOPMENT AREA:**

**a) Willow Oaks Redevelopment Plan Update Public Hearing (FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION)**

Hanna Cockburn stated that Russ Clegg would be making the presentation. Staff had presented an overview of the plan to the Commission at previous meetings and printed copies of the Plan were given to each Commission member for their review. Staff explained that the Commission was asked to hold a public hearing and to vote whether or not to recommend the Plan to City Council for their consideration, and to ask the Planning Board to conduct a technical review of the plan as per North Carolina Redevelopment Law.

Russ Clegg, Planning Department, stated that Commissioners have received a draft of the update. He provided background information on the Willow Oaks neighborhood and described the area in the Redevelopment boundaries as it exists today. The Willow Oaks Neighborhood Plan is a plan within a plan and the area in the Redevelopment Plan is bigger than the Willow Oaks neighborhood. The Willow Oaks Neighborhood Plan focuses on the area for which the Greensboro Housing Authority received a Hope VI Grant to replace Morningside Homes with a neo-Traditional mixed income neighborhood based on traditional building methods. The Willow Oaks Redevelopment Plan is a bigger area, which was designed to spread that improvement out across neighborhood broader area. Staff is recommending that the Plan name be changed from Morningside/Lincoln Grove Redevelopment Plan to Willow Oaks Redevelopment Plan.

Per North Carolina Redevelopment Law, the RCG holds a public hearing and then makes a recommendation to City Council and asks City Council to hold a public hearing at their next meeting and consider adoption.. The Planning Board reviews the technical aspects of the Plan and makes a recommendation to City Council to either adopt the Plan, not adopt the Plan, or adopt it with some modifications, The Neighborhood Plan piece has been reviewed by the Planning Board at a public hearing at their last meeting in July and their recommendation will also be going to City Council at the September 5, 2017 meeting.

This project started before the year 2000, with a lot of planning, meetings, and neighborhood input from Morningside Homes and surrounding residents. In 2000, the original Redevelopment Plan was adopted. A master developer was selected and the development went well until the recession in 2008, when development stopped. However, at that point, enough had been completed for the Greensboro Housing Authority to close out their original grant for the Hope VI project, and development transitioned

to the RCG and the Greensboro Housing Development Partnership. A few years later, the Agreement with the developer ended, so at this point in time there is no Master Developer or builder on site associated with the project. Since that time, City staff put out a commercial RFP in 2014, which did not get any responses. They have worked with the neighborhood to get a sense of what development would make sense to them. They also worked with the National Development Council on technical analyses.. Mr. Clegg showed a map of the redevelopment area, which is substantially bigger than the Willow Oaks neighborhood. It was originally divided into five (5) zones, which were shown on the map and explained in detail.

The planning process started last fall with three public meetings. A Technical Advisory Committee, composed of stakeholders, area schools, business representatives, and City staff, and a neighborhood steering committee helped drive participation and develop an overall sense of the neighborhood. Positive feedback was received from the neighborhood about the way things have been developed. Mr. Clegg noted that the residents of Willow Oaks are anxious to see everything finished out in the neighborhood. The following key issues were noted as a result of the public process: provide smooth transitions between the Willow Oaks neighborhood and the surrounding areas; address parking and green space issues that have become apparent since the neighborhood has now been lived in for several years; and create a flexible program that will attract new development but also maintain the high standard of architecture and quality of houses that currently exist.

The boundaries of the updated Redevelopment Plan are the same as what was originally adopted. At this time there is no plan to purchase additional property or do additional relocations.

In terms of land use, this plan does not have any changes to the General Future Land Use Maps (GFLUM). The one suggestion for a zoning change would be to increase the area of traditional neighborhood zoning, but that will not be done at this time since the area will probably not be ripe for redevelopment for a while.

The Plan addresses identified parking issues by adding stripes where there is on-street parking to make it clear that parking is allowed there and by moving the curb over to create some parking spaces where possible. In areas of new development, more parking will be included.

Other recommendations include taking some of the vacant lots to create passive outdoor green space and connecting the neighborhood in a better way to the YMCA, universities, and other amenities in the area and along Gate City Boulevard.

Suggested changes to the streets include possibly adding a round-about in the area at the corner of Gillespie Street and McConnell Road and closing off a portion of Lincoln Street to alleviate some of the traffic issues in the area. Another suggestion is an open air, roofed commercial space that would be a good way to create a neighborhood center without building a commercial building that may become vacant based on current estimates of demand for retail. The community could start with a pop-up farmer's market and pop-up tents to see what would work in this area, and what the neighborhood is interested in. The Plan proposes alley-loaded attached single-family homes next to the open air market area with detached single-family homes nearby. The attached and detached homes would build on the infrastructure that is already there.

He explained that Area 3 is being seen as an area rehabilitation of housing that is already there and for the replacement of older obsolete housing. The Plan does not call for direct City involvement in this area.

Area 4 is located on the other side of Highway 29 and is the site of several three-story apartment buildings that will continue to be marketed primarily to students who attend nearby universities. The Plan recommends keeping the zoning the same in this area.

Development in Area 5 is projected to be a long-term project and will require a significant investment. Better road circulation and putting in a different type of housing stock will be necessary to create a more cohesive neighborhood.

In response to questions posed by Commission members, Mr. Clegg stated that the big changes would be consolidation of the existing plans into one document, so from a developer's standpoint, it would be a lot simpler. Flexibility is being added to the design standards to make it a better opportunity for development without compromising quality. Staff is also working on the platting for the area and trying to make more flexibility. They are also conscientiously making green space. Plan implementation will be monitored by staff and the neighborhood residents.

Councilwoman Hightower stated that she is very opposed to a Family Dollar in this area. Sue Schwartz stated that staff has also done a market research report by an outside entity and one report stated that the recommendation is for a flexible event space in this area for more of a community market space.

Chair Enochs asked if there were speakers wishing to speak on this matter.

#### **Public Hearing:**

Maria Hamlin, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro, stated that they applaud all the work that has gone into this Plan and that the architectural standards are very high. She feels it would serve the community better if there was affordable and work force housing development. She likes the farmer's market idea. Habitat has built six houses in this area and renovated five. She suggests that lot sizes be increased to allow room for a rear yard for families with children, and parking should be addressed. She also mentioned that steep stairways are unsafe, and they have found that their clients are not interested in that style of house. The elderly population would also have difficulty with that type of stairway.

Phil Barbee, Habitat for Humanity Director of Land Development, stated that they are trying to build houses that work for both young families and the aging in place residents. The architectural guidelines produce beautiful, but expensive houses, and some of the requirements, especially the windows are much more expensive. Some of the trim required added to the costs.

Councilwoman Hightower stated that they have been working closely with the neighbors about what their community wants and she hears the concerns from Habitat that they want to make it affordable for them to build, but they cannot always just go the cheap route. Standards were put in Willow Oaks for a reason and Willow Oaks is in a great area. One of the failures of Willows Oaks was marketing and it is recognized that marketing was not done very well on those properties. Now is the opportunity to market this area properly and be able to promote this community to its highest and best use. The idea of a farmer's market is great and the neighbors are the ones that suggested that. There are community gardens all around and that is one way to pull people in a cohesive way to be able to network with one another.

There being no other speakers the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Enochs moved to recommend the proposed Willow Oaks Plan to City Council as submitted by staff, seconded by Mr. McQueary. The Commission voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Enochs, Harris, McQueary, Gravely, and Chaney. Nays: None.)

### **SOUTH ELM STREET REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

#### **(a) Master Developer Update**

Robert Chapman, South Elm Development Group, stated that Southside is a model for the whole country as it is diverse, integrated, and has a range of housing prices available. It has been four years since they signed a 12-year Master Developer Agreement with the Redevelopment Commission. The first objective was to write some very stringent architectural guidelines, green building guidelines, and to then begin the process of recruiting occupants to this site. The first focus was on winning the competition to be the site of the downtown university campus, Union Square Campus. About 20 different sites were considered, and this one was chosen. Last year, they signed a Letter of Intent with a very well-known local developer who wanted to acquire all the property on the west side of South Elm Street to build 260 or more apartments. As they began crunching the numbers they ran into a brick wall with low comparable rents, and ultimately, their president stated they simply could not give their investors the return on equity that they had to have to get the equity needed to do the project. So last September, they excused themselves and the Letter of Intent was negated. Last summer, Bob Isner introduced them to a developer from Charlotte, who assigned two people to work on making their plans happen. They then determined that they, also, could not make the numbers work. Another development company was then identified, and they said that they needed substantial subsidy from the City in order to make the project work. He invited Marcus Jackson to speak on the matter at this time.

Marcus Jackson, Managing Director of Urban Investments for Trademark Properties, based in Raleigh, NC, presented an information package to the Commission members. He specializes in investment advisory services, both brokerage and development, only in urban locations. He has a heavy presence in Durham, Raleigh and Chapel Hill and is now prominently entering the Triad area, although he has been operating in the Triad area for about 15 years. In their research on multifamily rents, they found that Greensboro tends to range around \$1.35/sq. ft. Rents would need to be raised to \$1.60/sq. ft. to justify urban apartment construction, which would include a parking deck. The City of Greensboro has shown a will and capacity to develop and provide housing for this area. With regard to marketing, they have done email blasts and deployed a number of different vehicles to promote a property, including LoopNet, which is similar to MLS listings for commercial property sales. They have also been speaking with a number of multifamily developers and other types of developers hoping to get some response on this project.

Mr. McQueary stated that A&T State University has a very strong Engineering school and their relationships may be important to potential developers. John Merrill would be the best contact person.

Bob Chapman stated that in January they received a call from a person that he and Marcus had met a number of times in Winston-Salem, Milt Rhodes, who is a resident of Southside and works for Arden Development Group, which is a subsidiary or controlled by Parks Family, (Parks Motor Company) in the region, and their principal is a planner at heart, and was a member of the Planning Department of the City of New York for many years. He showed a short clip of a development he worked on with Milt Rhodes in Durham, a Master Plan for infill development on a 13 acre car dealership site. That project did not move forward because another entity purchased that property.

Greenline Holdings, an arm of the Arden Development Group, has submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) for development of the three acres between South Elm Street and the railroad tracks.

Dyan Arkin stated that the LOI can be discussed further at the scheduled August meeting, unless there is a need for a Special Called meeting before then. Mr. Chapman stated that Mr. Rhodes has stated that he would be happy to come a make a presentation and answer the Commission members' questions in about two weeks. Mr. McQueary asked that Dyan and Bob work together and let the Commission know if a Special meeting is needed before the August meeting to discuss the LOI.

Evon Smith, South Elm Development Group, stated that she developed some of the first for-sale housing in downtown Winston-Salem and feels that it really spawned a sense of ownership and place making, because it showed the area was not a transient community. It was very well received. She wants to see the right thing done for the community here in Greensboro, also.

Bob Isner, South Elm Development Group, stated that Commissioners should go visit the Arlington Street townhomes as they are a unique property and have really been an upgrade for this area. Ms. Arkin asked Commissioners to look at the website for the Weldon Village, which the Arden Group is developing. Website information is included in the Commission members' packets.

Mr. McQueary suggested that Ms. Arkin move forward with SEDG. Chair Enochs asked that Ms. Arkin keep the Commission updated.

### **RCG BY-LAWS:**

#### **(a) Consideration of Revisions**

Ms. Chaney moved to recommend the revisions to the By-Laws, as submitted by staff, seconded by Ms. Harris. The Commission voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Enochs, Harris, McQueary, Gravely, and Chaney. Nays: None.)

### **STAFF UPDATES:**

Ms. Arkin followed up with the Clerk's office on term expiration dates for Commission members. She has clarified the process. Ms. Chaney has been reappointed. Mr. Enochs has not been reappointed, and staff is still waiting on information on that. Mr. McQueary will be eligible for reappointment at the end of December, 2017; Mr. Gravely's term runs through 2020; and Ms. Harris will be eligible for reappointment at the end of 2018 when her term expires.

Ms. Arkin informed members that the Family Dollar Store on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive is for sale. She requested more information from the developer of the store, and there is an accepted offer on it, but the due diligence period has not been completed. She will update the Commission when information becomes available.

### **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:**

Ms. Arkin stated that Mr. McQueary had sent a very intriguing e-mail about Growing High Point, which is an organization in High Point that addresses food security with community gardens on land purchased from public entities. They are funded by a family foundation, and there is not a family foundation in Greensboro doing anything similar, but that there are some interesting things going on in Greensboro. In 2015 a Fresh Food Access Plan was approved, and in 2016 the Local Food Promotion Program Implementation Grant for \$470,000 was awarded to the City of Greensboro. There are a lot of initiatives that have happened since then and a lot of organizations working on food security issues. She suggested a presentation from folks that are more involved in it to see if there is an overlap between the property owned by the Commission and some of these initiatives. She will keep the Commission updated on this if there is an interest. She will try and get something together for the August meeting.

Ms. Arkin presented flyers regarding the new PART intermodal structure that has been constructed off West Market Street. Hanna Cockburn stated that the new hub is north of I-40 and is adjacent to their Administrative Offices. It has allowed them to consolidate and they are in the process of constructing a new maintenance facility, bringing everything together for PART. The site is named for Howard Coble in recognition for the work that he did for many years on the Transportation Committee in Congress and for his contributions toward getting some funding reserved for this project. Part intends to request LEED certification for this facility.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Schwartz  
Planning Director  
SS: jd

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