



New Bern Housing Authority and the City of New Bern

**CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS PLANNING GRANT**  
**Trent Court/Craven Terrace/Greater Five Points Neighborhood**

**Economic Development Working Group**  
Tuesday, March 31 at 4 pm at Development Services Offices

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. Attendees:** Susan Namowicz, Alana Gentry, Melvin Cooper, Roger Bellamy, Jim Bisbee, Corinne Coor, Mickey Miller, Cindy Blot, Jamie Thompson, Dawn Baldwin Gibson, Nancy Defede, Michael Rose Watson, Deedra Durocher, Bruce Simmons, Joe Mansfield, Bill Brennan, Vana Prewitt, Jamara Wallace

**2. Handouts:** Minutes from March 17, 2015

**3. Review of last meeting minutes:** one correction: Change Community Black Caucus to Community Black Council.

**4. Review of Existing Conditions and Needs:**

- In an effort to look at successful small businesses in the CNI community, Nancy Difede with Precision Molding at 908 George Street was asked to speak. She described the company's history and discussed the issues her employees face living in the area. Most critical issues include lack of transportation, lack of enforcement of rental housing standards causing inordinately high utility bills, childcare needs, and overwhelmed public/low-income health facilities. Despite negative perceptions about residents in the neighborhood not wanting to work, she finds a strong work ethic but often times overwhelming basic needs make it difficult to do so.
- Dawn Baldwin Gibson spoke about Genesis 457 Community Development Center. Among other initiatives, Genesis 457 CDC has a mobile food truck program which feeds thousands, offers classes and counseling for job seekers, operates the Little Red Bookmobile, partners with many local organizations for such things as computer donations and Suddenlink internet service, and partners with the SBA to assist with small business start-ups. Ms. Gibson shared that Wilmington's Housing Authority has an

excellent program for rebuilding their LMI community, to include training and mentoring in order to change the mindset of relying on others.

- The group suggested starting microbusinesses and having small loans for these startups. The group discussed Fleet Readiness Center and other local employers having living wage paying jobs but cannot find local employees trained for their specialized needs. The group also discussed the importance of self-sufficiency, education, and enlisting the faith community in our efforts.

**5. List of Critical Needs.** The group was tasked with developing the most critical economic development needs so that we can begin to build a matrix including strategies to address those needs. A number of needs (employability, transportation, and childcare) are being addressed by other CNI working groups. An initial list of nine was honed down to three:

- Entrepreneurial job creation in the CNI community
- Mentoring/Collaboration
- Living Wage paying jobs

**6. New Business.** Motion made by Cindy Blot to appoint Dawn Baldwin Gibson as Co-Lead of Economic Development Working Group. Group voted and agreed.

**7. Next steps or proposed agenda items for next meeting:**

- Set goals based on critical needs.
- The working group is to read the following reports prior to our next meeting:

<http://choicenewbern.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Econ-Develop-Report-Jan2015.pdf>

<http://choicenewbern.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CNI-Neighborhood-Task-Force-presentation-03-03-152.pdf>

**8. Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 14  
4:00 pm  
Development Services Conf Room