



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, July 21, 2015 at 4:00 pm
Stanley White Rec Center, 901 Chapman Street

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Roger Bellamy, Cindy Blot, Melvin Cooper, Deedra Durocher, Dawn Baldwin Gibson, Vernon Guion, Joe Mansfield, Bruce Simmon, Sue Steinhauser, Jamara Wallace

Handouts: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of July 7, 2015 meeting, updated New Bern Choice Neighborhoods Economic Development Strategy Matrix

1. Meeting was called to order by Cindy Blot at 4:08 pm.

2. Minutes of last meeting on July 7 were reviewed and approved by those present.

3. Discussion on Matrix handout: C. Blot indicated that all suggestions for the Matrix had been received after the last meeting and were reflected in the updated handout.

- B. Simmon noted that in researching the five approved HUD projects, the % increase indicator in the Metrics column was present in all of them; the group agreed to reverse the decision made at the last meeting and to put the % goal back into the Matrix.
- It was agreed Tourism should be kept in the Metrics section because it represents employment, history and economic development opportunities in the CN area. Given the City's recent certification as a Retirement Community, and the activities at Tryon Palace, there would seem to be possibilities and models to build from. D. Baldwin Gibson mentioned a recent tour within the CN area was very well received and audio tours have good potential for self-guided programs.
- Regarding adding partners to the Matrix, it was suggested to add the Dryborough Association, with Ethel Seton as the contact. This group has a lot to offer, particularly in the area of tourism and history. We need to more specifically identify schools and churches as well. The North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College (NCA&T) should also be added since they do a lot of work in community development. Dr. Meeshay Williams-Wheeler would be a good contact for our committee and should be invited to join us at a future meeting. Although there is no longer a SCORE group, there may be a revised group formed consisting of entrepreneurs rather than retired executives, and such a group should be listed as a partner. The Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at Eastern Carolina University would be another good partner to add.
- Under Strategies, it was suggested that "to include job skills & training" should be added as part of the Workforce Development Center. The bullet regarding the business incubator/accelerator should add "to provide opportunity to resident entrepreneurs". An additional bullet should be added to read: "Leverage partnerships with local groups" to emphasize the importance and diversity of the partners identified.
- There was discussion about stipulating any contracts within the study area have requirements for hiring residents or using businesses from within that area. C. Blot noted this was already included in any government-funded project, but it would still be good to emphasize.
- C. Blot will redo the Matrix to include the necessary changes following our discussion and will send them out prior to the next meeting. These should be reviewed closely and comments sent to her as soon as possible because we are close to the time when our final Matrix must be submitted.

4. Five Points/Duffyfield Marketing/Branding Campaign:

- J. Wallace, the current Chair of the Duffyfield Residents Council, explained that a Strategic Plan, and a companion Work Plan, were developed by the Council in 2000 with the goals for the community divided into 8 specific components, including: neighborhood pride, investment worthiness, care & attention to elderly residents, youth activities, plus more. An overall plan to revitalize the community by creating more homeownership and removing blight/dilapidated buildings, was meant to increase investment in the area. There was an initial charrette to allow for a free and open discussion about what residents did and did not see as priorities, a challenge given the 22 distinct neighborhoods and some strong personalities from the Duffyfield area.
- C. Blot and J. Wallace introduced S. Steinhauser, the Community Development Director for the City of New Bern, whom he invited to attend today's meeting because of her experience with this Strategic & Work Plan as part of the City of New Bern's Community Block Grant Program. She explained that because the City needed to include the Greater Duffyfield neighborhoods to reach the population number needed for the grant, they created an arbitrary boundary that did not include the Five Points neighborhoods. In about 2001, following a crisis of increased crime in that area, the Police Department received a grant that led to another charrette with the community. At that time a large number of residents, particularly homeowners, were involved with the Strategic and Work Plans that had been created the year before. Neighborhood councils were created but no funds were available. Even so, there was a good deal of support and involvement up to late 2005. Since then, it has been very difficult to mobilize residents for any focused attention to the original goals. Residents were/are frustrated that all the studies and proposals have not resulted in the changes identified more than ten years ago. There seemed to be a perception that the City was supposed to do everything rather than have advocacy and changes come from within the community itself. Now, there seems to be a good deal of skepticism and mistrust of the City for any more studies, grants, plans, or promises. In addition, with less than 30% home ownership in the CN area, there is little incentive for current residents to see themselves as invested in becoming involved. Some of the original leaders involved in promoting the Plans and Goals, like the Sampsons who were an initial driving force for change, are aging out or have relocated out of the area. There is also some resentment for labels and/or the perceived effort to lump all the neighborhoods under the umbrella of Greater Duffyfield.
- D. Baldwin Gibson said she hears a lot about a lack of leadership in the black community but that hasn't been her experience; there really are a number of key leaders working in the community, although most of them are within the churches. These individuals need to be brought into these discussions and engaged in our efforts.
- S. Steinhauser said she's been disappointed that the initial effort in 2000-2001 has fallen apart because it did offer a lot of good strategies and action plans for the community. However, as people have fallen away or disbanded the resident councils, with the exception of the Duffyfield Council, it is difficult to work on the original 8 goals when there isn't a lot of "buy-in" within the community, primarily among renters.
- M. Cooper noted that word of mouth is the best form of communication and it's important for neighbors to communicate with each other. There is a need to re-educate the community regarding their rights and what the outcomes could be if they were to buy-in and follow the plan. There needs to be tangible results however in order to keep folks motivated. All of this takes a person or couple of people to consistently keep things organized and moving along. There was discussion about whether there were any grants available to support such an effort.
- J. Wallace said initially, when the Strategic & Work Plans were developed in 2000, there were staff and professional assistance available to hold things together for the first 4-5 years, but this was not sustainable and is certainly one of the factors in the lack of the Plans' survival or accomplishments. The Duffyfield Council has tried to re-evaluate the full list of goals to reduce them to something

doable today, but this has been a work in progress for the last ten years with little success. He feels that rather than re-inventing the wheel, we could discuss and update the original Strategic & Work Plans and confront some of the existing perceptions. We also need to recognize the realities and potentials with two different demographics: Washington Park, for instance, consists of older, owner-occupied homes which are very different from the rental and public housing areas closer to Broad Street.

- D. Baldwin Gibson noted there are systemic issues of entitlement and there needs to be an effort to change the mentality of “give me” while addressing the real feelings of discouragement and helplessness. People have to feel more personally secure before they can “buy-in” to something beyond themselves and this comes with improved employment and educational opportunities.
- S. Steinhauser suggested that to get people together again and working toward some of the original goals, there has to be one person talking with people and committing to this full-time. There needs to be a central bank of information on resources and programs available. While most foundation or government grants do not fund staffing or operations, it might be possible to get private or corporate funds for support. D. Baldwin Gibson agreed there needs to be a more aggressive effort to secure grant funds from multiple and/or non-traditional sources.
- J. Wallace said that R. Bellamy, C. Blot and he had met since the last meeting to discuss the Branding Campaign and the Duffyfield Council has agreed to serve as the 501-c-3 entity for any grant submissions. We’d need to receive some small grants before we submit a proposal to Our Town to build strength and credibility, so they are working on creating 3 objectives and goals for such grants.

5. Updates-New Business: C. Blot will send out a map of the CN study area which identifies the businesses and owners within that area.

6. Next meeting: Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at 4:00 pm at the Stanley White Rec Center.

7. Meeting adjourned.