

Information Item

Date: September 12, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager
Ken Millett, Economic Development Director

Subject:
Financial Assistance to S.G. Atkins CDC for the Purchase of Property for Revitalization

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



The Simon Green Atkins Community Development Corporation (Atkins CDC) is a non-profit organization focused on revitalizing neighborhoods surrounding Winston-Salem State University. The City previously partnered with the organization on the redevelopment of The Enterprise Center on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard as well as the implementation of the East End Master Plan.

The Atkins CDC has approached the City for possible financial assistance in the acquisition and revitalization of the abandoned Nissen Wagon Works site at 1539 Waughtown Street. After serving as home to Nissen's manufacturing, it transitioned to a Western Electric facility from the 1940s through 1990s. Since then, it has been abandoned and fallen into disrepair. The potential project is in its early stages with specific details to be determined.

The Atkins CDC envisions the first phase of redevelopment to include activating approximately 96,000 square feet into co-warehousing space. This phase would provide the opportunity for multiple companies to use shared warehouse space without having to purchase or lease an entire building. The space provides flexibility to small and growing companies by allowing them to only pay for space currently needed while space can be added as needed, as well as shorter term leases.

The reuse could accomplish the goal of revitalizing an abandoned property into an activity center by providing increased investment, job opportunities for those in the area, and decreasing blight.

Several issues remain to be navigated, including a facility assessment, rezoning assessment, and required environmental mitigation. The property is located within the Waughtown-Belview National Historic District. However, it does not have a local historic designation. Any federal involvement such as brownfields assistance in the redevelopment will require Section 106 Review by the NC State Historic Preservation Office to determine whether the project will have an adverse effect on the property or district.

Staff will present additional information at the Finance Committee meeting. Carol Davis, Executive Director of the Atkins CDC, will also be in attendance to provide information and answer questions.