



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: What @sog_ced is reading online: September 2019

By CED News and Social Media

Article: https://ced.sog.unc.edu/what-sog_ced-is-reading-online-september-2019/

This entry was posted on September 30, 2019 and is filed under CED News & Social Media



The following are articles and reports on the web that the Community and Economic

Development Program at the UNC School of Government shared through social media over the past month. Follow us on twitter or facebook to receive regular updates.

Items of interest related to CED in North Carolina:

City of Marion, NC took ownership of Drexel plant, used grants to demolish and clean up site, and then will place site on the market. Excellent example of smart and legal approach to reuse of industrial site.<http://bit.ly/2PY0ycZ>

Nonprofit Quarterly piece takes critical look at business location incentives, offers advice, mentions decision by Buncombe County NC to move some incentive funds to small business loans. <http://bit.ly/2Nmeg7v>

City of Albemarle adopts housing code capable of addressing vacant buildings with “green-yellow-red” approach devised by UNC SOG faculty member and DFI Director Tyler Mulligan:<http://bit.ly/2nQOxsj>

Other CED items:

NY Times article suggests that Opportunity Zone investments are not helping the designated communities, <https://nyti.ms/2LfKuPA>, a concern we at SOG CED shared with local governments last year here: <https://unc.live/2DucfzB>.

Zillow analysis: “Starting Salaries for Teachers Don’t Pay the Rent.” Teachers in Raleigh require 41% of their salary to afford median rent. Charlotte teachers use 37%. HUD defines cost-burdened families as those “who pay more than 30% of their income for housing” and “may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” <http://bit.ly/2MTsufU>

Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies paper describes steep decline in past 5 years of number of rental units that are affordable to those earning \$24k or less (rent of \$600 or less). <http://bit.ly/2LG1a2l>

DFI in the News:

AIM Magazine describes the transformational work being done by DFI in Kinston and other cities around NC. We’re grateful for strong partners like LGFCU and the City of Kinston Planning Department who make this important work possible. <http://bit.ly/2kCw0hW>



City of Lumberton selects private developer for affordable housing project for seniors, as part of DFI's work to bring new housing to hurricane-impacted communities. <http://bit.ly/2MV0f0f>

UNC's finest in action — graduate students from DFI's Community Revitalization course present their redevelopment feasibility analysis of the Old Helena School to Person County Commissioners: <http://bit.ly/2meXQS1>

The School of Government made a presentation about DFI to the UNC Board of Governors (BoG). Materials provided to the BoG for the meeting can be viewed here. A News & Observer story on September 18 described the presentation and reiterated information from a prior story. A September 19 update to the story concludes by stating that "Several board members said they supported DFI's mission and praised its work," but the story did not provide any of the positive comments from board members. Here are some quotes about DFI made by officials at that meeting:

- Governor Fetzner: "This is an outstanding service, especially in rural communities of North Carolina without which they would have no in-house capabilities of doing some of these projects. So it's a great benefit to North Carolina. Thank you for continuing this program."
- Governor Rucho: "I fully believe that this program has a role in North Carolina, as Mr. Fetzner alluded to. Clearly it should be there, it's outreach for the university to be able to go into the communities ... and telling a town or city that yes, that project that you had is probably not financially viable, and that's part of what you're doing and I applaud you for that."
- Governor Blue: "In my other life, I'm a county manager, so I've seen first-hand the effects of these types of DFI projects with various communities, and when you deal with rural communities, you have to be creative, you have to find ways to make them work.... We need to focus on the good that this program has brought to many communities that would otherwise not have it."
- Governor Kotis: "So you aren't bringing in the developers or investors, you are establishing that a viable model is out there, and then letting the government agencies use that to attract investment." In one recent project, for example, DFI contacted over a hundred private development firms about a development opportunity offered by a local government and engaged more than a third of those firms in direct follow up discussions about the opportunity.
- UNC System General Counsel Tom Anderson: "This is essentially an outgrowth of an academic program with a service component so it falls squarely within what we would expect universities to do."
- Governor Holmes closed the agenda item by stating: "You are doing incredible work for the citizens of North Carolina, and on behalf of this Committee and the Board, I thank you for that."

Governor Rucho also asked for additional information on DFI's impact: "It would be helpful for us to see how successful you are, knowing that this is an important part of the role of the university system in outreach." Related to that question, School of Government Dean Mike Smith displayed the following information on the screen during his presentation:

DFI has worked on **139 projects in 85 communities** across North Carolina.

- 62% of DFI projects have taken place in rural counties
- 77% of DFI projects are located in distressed census tracts

A map was displayed during the presentation showing multiple DFI projects that had "broken ground" (that is, started construction), each by a different private developer, totaling over \$100 million in private investment.



In addition, the information provided to Board of Governors members for the meeting (and available on the Board of Governors website here starting on page 5) contained the following information about DFI's educational impact:

107 UNC students from public administration, business, planning, and other professional de-gree programs from UNC campuses have learned public and private sector revitalization tech-niques by assisting communities with actual redevelopment projects.

52 DFI graduate student fellows mentor other students, perform expert-level analysis, and contribute high-level strategic thinking about projects.

679 public officials have received formal training in community development and develop-ment finance by DFI staff.

Finally, Governor Holmes stated the following in his report during the BoG session on September 20, recorded here : "The Committee is fully satisfied with Mr. Smith's report that all questions have been answered on DFI.... We need to quit being overshadowed by the little sound bites and snippets that really don't have any basis and be sure that we're promoting the good work we do. There was nothing more clear than the good work that this program does."

For more information about DFI's impact and comments from local officials about the impact of DFI's work, see the following blog post by Sarah Mye: DFI: Of the Public, For the Public.

Last month's edition of "What @sog_ced is reading...."

What @sog_ced is reading online: August 2019

Compiled by Marcia Perritt