



CITY OF BEAUFORT
1911 Boundary Street
Council Chambers
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29902
(843) 525-7070

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA

January 16, 2018

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS DUE TO A PHYSICAL CHALLENGE, PLEASE CALL IVETTE BURGESS 525-7070 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF MEDIA NOTIFICATION

"In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all local media was duly notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting."

PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM – 1ST FLOOR
1911 BOUNDARY STREET

7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

December 5, 2017

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recommended Update to the Strategic Plan for Retreat Discussion
- B. Consideration of Refining RDC Structure

III. INITIATIVES

- A. *Economic Development* – Stephen Murray
- B. *Infill* – Mike McFee
- C. *Downtown* – Nan Sutton
- D. *Marina & Waterfront Park* – Mike Sutton & Bill Prokop
- E. *Affordable Housing* – Phil Cromer
- F. *Boundary Street* – Billy Keyserling & Jon Verity

IV. PUBLIC & PRIVATE PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Revisions Since December 5, 2017

V. OTHER

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission (RDC) was held on December 5, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Jon Verity, Commissioners Mike Sutton, Mike McFee, Nan Sutton, Steven Green, and Frank Lesesne, and Bill Prokop, city manager. Commissioners Stephen Murray, Billy Keyserling, and Phil Cromer were absent.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Chairman Verity called the Redevelopment Commission meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioner McFee made a motion, second by Commissioner Green, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2017 Redevelopment Commission meeting. Deborah Johnson said Mr. Prokop had sent an email saying that “in future all minutes need to be noted ‘DRAFT’ until approved, and on page 1, high-speed Wi-Fi should read [that the] equipment cost is estimated to be \$17,000 and another \$3,000 of poles,” for a “total cost of \$20,000, [which is] a budget savings of \$15,000.” Ms. Johnson said Commissioner Cromer had sent an email in his absence with the following corrections to the minutes: on page 3, in the third paragraph, third sentence, “Paplardo” should be spelled “Pappalardo,” and 2 references to Mr. “Levine” on page 7 should be spelled “Levin.” **The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT 2018

Chairman Verity said there were meetings before last year’s retreat to determine what to emphasize. He asked if the commissioners would like to do that again. Commissioner McFee said he thought the meetings were helpful. He said he’s not sure they’re as important as they were last year, but he has no objection to them.

Ms. Johnson said it had been suggested that “we use that time to look at the stuff that we put down last year and reflect on whether those need to stay in the strategic plan or not.” This could be done in a meeting or in “some other fashion.”

Chairman Verity suggested that the commissioners consider the question and let him or Ms. Johnson know what they would like to do. Commissioners will discuss the initiatives after the first of the year to determine what they would like to discuss at the retreat, he said.

INITIATIVES

Infill

Commissioner McFee said all of the letters about the Washington Street initiative have gone out, and they have been receiving phone calls. They have had a preliminary meeting with Historic Beaufort Foundation (HBF) and are possibly partnering with them in the Washington / Duke / Greene Street area.

There have been a number of meetings about Washington Street Park, Commissioner McFee

said, and the Historic District Review Board (HDRB) meeting about building restrooms there – for which the city has a grant – will be December 13.

Ms. Johnson said Washington Street is “very different than Duke Street,” in that there is “a lot of property for sale” and “a lot of vacant lots,” as well as “a lot more heirs’ property.” All of the research has been done, she said, and the maps will be swapped out in the “war room.”

Commissioner McFee said Washington Street Park is “an established park,” and the property owners, the BCCC – Beaufort County Community Center, and the city are “working to create an anchor there” for Washington Street infill.

Ms. Johnson said two projects have been presented as infill projects on Duke Street. She will do analysis on the incentives for Duke Street and use that analysis for Washington Street.

There was a discussion about the general store and what has been done with that property. Commissioner M. Sutton said the prospective buyer “wants to do something with it.” Ms. Johnson said there is a Department of Transportation (DOT) easement through the middle of the building, and the prospective buyer is “very committed” to the property.

Mr. Prokop said the city has been working with the county’s legal department and auditor to establish a process to put property that is demolished “on the tax record, so that we don’t have to wait until it’s sold. It’ll be due with next year’s taxes.” (i.e., “The lien for the demolition” and other costs will be “on the next tax bill,” unlike as it is now, when “it can only be executed when the property is sold.”) There was a general discussion about this.

Maxine Lutz replied to Chairman Verity that there is “good energy around” Duke and Washington Streets. She said HBF is looking into its next “foray into the Northwest Quadrant.”

Marina & Waterfront Park

Chairman Verity said Sasaki Associates has come forward with a detailed proposal, and the commissioners should discuss that at the next RDC meeting. It covers “the extension of the park that they didn’t finish last time,” for example, as well as “talking about the marina itself and downtown.” Commissioner M. Sutton said he has a concern, noted in a previous meeting’s minutes, about the city’s obligation with the current marina operator, “how much information council has,” and whether the RDC “legally can or should be talking about it in public, prior to...understanding fully where you’re going with that.” He thinks the focus of the marina discussion was narrowed to “ideas and concepts,” but then the Sasaki plan came up, so the decision was made to “wait for that to happen” and have “that discussion,” then determine “if there’s another path” they want to take after that is reviewed.

Chairman Verity said he thinks it would be ideal for the RDC to wait until after the first of the year to review and discuss the Sasaki plan. He said Sasaki Associates would be looking for a fee of approximately \$100,000. What the city has been given is a basic proposal without detail, Chairman Verity said. Mr. Prokop said he had responded to Sasaki that “we couldn't do

anything until the new budget year.”

Mr. Prokop said a mason is repairing damaged brickwork, etc. at the marina.

Mr. Prokop said the Wi-Fi in Waterfront Park has been upgraded.

Economic Development

Mr. Prokop said two pieces of property – 3 acres and 16 acres – in Commerce Park have been sold to two purchasers, and city council would approve the sales on December 12. There is a lot of commercial development activity in the city, he said, including interest in taking over the former Chevrolet dealership on Highway 21 by a different business (not a car dealer).

Beaufort Digital Corridor (BDC) is advertising its Code Camp, which will start in February and run for 8 weeks at a cost of \$295, Mr. Prokop said. Also, three companies that are interested in space in the BDC are coming to visit it, including one from Virginia that is “looking for 4 locations,” he said.

Mr. Prokop said the Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting to look at “community investment development or business investment development.” There is only one such program in South Carolina, but there are 26 of them in Georgia, he said. He explained what a representative from one of the larger such programs in Georgia had described about how the program works.

Mr. Prokop said SCE&G has agreed to put streetlights in Commerce Park, which is “part of the grant cost” from Hargray for road surfacing there. Chairman Verity asked the timeframe for improvements in Commerce Park. Mr. Prokop said the city is awaiting a survey on the roads, and “early spring” is probably when the work would be done.

Commissioner Lesesne said he had received an email from **James Atkins** about Lady’s Island airport improvements. He asked if Mr. Prokop had talked to Mr. Atkins. Commissioner McFee said the idea is to “give improved vision and exposure to our local airport,” including upgrading the website and bringing “attention to the economic benefit” of the airport, as well as “recraft[ing] the name” from “Frogmore International,” and tying it into use by more corporate travellers, as the current business use now is frequently “tied to Secession” Golf Course and “property owners [at] Dataw.” The Beaufort Aeronautic Association (BAA) is leading this, he said, which is a group of “those who have planes at the airport.” They are not asking for money but for opportunities to generate support and for help “to get our county council a little bit more on board with it,” Commissioner McFee said.

Commissioner M. Sutton said he met with Mr. Atkins and reminded him that the airport is a county airport, and its name is the Lady’s Island Airport; Frogmore International has been a joking name for many years, he said, but its logo and other things about the airport play “more into Frogmore International than . . . into a regional hub-type place for those types of planes.” Commissioner M. Sutton said he found it interesting that the idea of lengthening runways was

“pushed off,” though it is part of the airport’s master plan, so he suggested to Mr. Atkins that the BAA work with the county (possibly with the RDC’s help) on “re-visioning that master plan.” The airport has no money and has not spent any to do the safety upgrades, Commissioner M. Sutton said; the runway expansion of 1500’ in total that was envisioned in the master plan was meant to allow different types of aircraft, so the airport could offer a different level of service, but that expansion might never happen.

The BAA is comprised of airport users, Commissioner M. Sutton said; they’re not the ones who control the airport, so if the RDC were to be involved in this effort with the group, it should be because “their sales pitch is economic development,” and he agrees with it. Their programs to raise public awareness are “fabulous,” Commissioner M. Sutton feels – they are trying to “jumpstart the idea of young aviators” – which he thinks will “pay off . . . in the long run.”

The burden is currently on those who use the airport to make it financially successful, Commissioner M. Sutton said, but the county could get an excellent return on investment for leasing hangars it built; the hangars are currently 100% leased, and pilots don’t care who owns the hangars they lease. There was a discussion of the recent issue of the county and the City of Beaufort both owning some land on which a hangar is to be built.

Commissioner M. Sutton said he’d suggested Mr. Atkins go to **Graham Carter** for more information and to **Jon Rembold**, though he said Mr. Rembold “has his hands full with Hilton Head Airport.”

Commissioner Lesesne asked the next steps on the Whitehall property. Mr. Prokop said the developers have gone “back to the drawing board” and are fine-tuning a plan that “meets all our requirements.” Chairman Verity said **Sam Levin** owns two-thirds of the property, and he is trying to respond to what was raised at the MPC meeting in November, where the plan was not approved, so the next step is to try to make the plan better. Chairman Verity said, “We’d like it to meet more of the master plan’s key elements.” He feels Mr. Levin is “sensitive to what is going on in the city” because his family has lived here for many years.

Downtown

Commissioner N. Sutton said a lot is going on downtown. There is a new high-end decorating shop, a new cook shop, and a new organic clothing store. A t-shirt shop – “Cute Cotton” – on Carteret Street put in merchandise, but then “disappeared,” she said. Beaufort Clothing was sold, she said, and the owner of Barefoot Bubba’s has opened “a higher-end t-shirt shop.”

Commissioner McFee said the most recent First Friday was “great,” and was well-attended because it was held in conjunction with Night on the Town. Commissioner N. Sutton said it’s a little hard to tell how successful “the stand-alone First Fridays” are because, for example, the November one had bad weather, but she knows the Downtown Merchants Association is working on the events.

A past Main Street director, **Lise Sundrla**, is going to start work on “a strategic plan for

downtown,” Commissioner N. Sutton said, and there will be a meeting in January for a “serious discussion” about getting this set up. Chairman Verity said there has been discussion about the need for leadership downtown and getting various parties, including downtown business and property owners, together to discuss this.

Mr. Prokop said he has discussed a joint study with the Chamber of Commerce about what is needed downtown. Ms. Sundrla will head that up, he said, and 3 to 5 “Main Street experts from around the Southeast” will work on pulling together information, including from “reports that have been done,” so the city will know what potential costs might be before budget season.

Mr. Prokop said the day dock goes to the HDRB meeting for review on December 13. The bid has not been awarded yet, he said, but two of the four companies that have bid were within what was budgeted for the work, he said. If the project is awarded in December or early January, the day dock should be built in March or April and will be ready for boating season. The meeting with the HDRB is its “last hurdle,” Mr. Prokop said.

Commissioner Lesesne asked about the approval of B&Bs on Bay Street. Commissioner McFee said there would just be one. Mr. Prokop said the ZBOA approved a special exception for that B&B last week and placed conditions on that approval.

Affordable Housing

Ms. Johnson said there is a lot of activity in the southern part of Beaufort County that will affect Northern Beaufort County. The National Bank of South Carolina is holding a luncheon with USCB that Commissioner Murray was invited to attend. Realtors on Hilton Head are having another group meeting, she said, and the housing needs assessment is on-track.

“Beaufort Housing Authority is struggling with the finances” for their housing project on the property the city gave it, Ms. Johnson said, and the Lowcountry Affordable Housing Coalition is helping them to find partners to help make the project work. She explained the problem and said this is intended to be low- to moderate-income housing. Mr. Prokop said the transfers were done for the land for Beaufort Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity.

Boundary Street

Chairman Verity said there was a meeting a couple days ago about “the future of Boundary Street.” Mr. Prokop said right now, the under-paving would be done by December 21; the final paving will not be done until February or March. Landscaping and fine-tuning of sidewalks and drains will be done in January. Mr. Prokop said they expect the project to be done by March, which is three months ahead of schedule, and it is under budget. They may not need to touch the contingency fund, he said.

Chairman Verity said the discussion at the meeting was about how to promote more activity on Boundary Street and how to attract commercial real estate agents from Charleston, Savannah, etc. They discussed having a meeting to bring “everybody in” on Boundary Street, he said, and discussed having a ribbon-cutting or other celebration when the project is finished. They also

looked at vacant properties and at those that potentially could be developed, Chairman Verity said.

The Beaufort Plaza area, which Chairman Verity said belongs to “the **Paul Trask** family,” was delayed in its development, but there are “lots of plans” for it in the future. The current tenants “have one-year leases,” he said, so “those spaces will be available, and we would hope that [Mr. Trask] would be able to really fill it up fairly quickly.”

Chairman Verity said the hope is “to attract more people to use the Boundary Street corridor.” When the project is finished, they will need to look at Boundary Street East; there will be new student housing there, and DOT will re-pave Highway 21 from the Woods Bridge to Greenlawn Drive in May 2018. The student housing on Boundary Street will be for 96 students, and the university is committed to growing its student body, Chairman Verity said. Most of the students will be living on Boundary Street, not on Carteret Street (except for those living at the Grace White House), which is what “the neighborhood groups” had expressed they wanted it to be. There will be “a lot of change in that section of Boundary Street,” he said, and a lot of opportunity, especially if it’s activated by hundreds of students, so the RDC may need to discuss that.

Mr. Prokop said Councilman Murray had mentioned that they should be thinking about whether “the parallel road . . . from Hogarth [Street] to the shopping center” should be continued if there is funding left after the Boundary Street project is complete. Chairman Verity said, “That would certainly open up that back space, which is largely vacant.” At the retreat, he said, “one of the major topics” should be a discussion about “how we want to handle” both the east and west portions of Boundary Street, including possible opportunities on the east side of Boundary Street, past City Hall, about which there has not been any discussion.

Mr. Prokop said, “We are set to start tomorrow on Pick Pocket” Plantation Drive, the costs are known, and “all the engineering’s done,” but “property owners that are back there” have some issues to work out with Mr. Trask, “mainly the nursing home, which doesn't see a purpose for” the connection.

The engineering is almost done on Greenlawn Drive, Mr. Prokop said, and within the next month, the city will be ready to begin work. From Boundary Street to Bi-Lo, there will be streetlights put in, as well as some parking areas along the road and a sidewalk on one side, he said. Mr. Prokop met with **Dick Stewart** and Beaufort Housing Authority to “solve the easement issue” there, and “to move the easement to Greenlawn” Drive. Beaufort Housing Authority appears to be willing to do this, he said, but it has to take the matter to its board.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROJECTS IN PROGRESS – REVISIONS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2017

Ms. Johnson told the commissioners to look at the list, especially at the section about downtown, and she reviewed some of the changes, such as on Boundary Street (e.g., some businesses in Newcastle Square have moved to Beaufort Town Center), and the “many businesses” that are “moving around,” rather than closing their doors. Ms. Johnson said the

residential projects part of the list is not up-to-date because of the large number of commercial projects.

Commissioner M. Sutton made a motion, second by Commissioner Lesesne, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 5:54 p.m.

DRAFT