



City Council Worksession

Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

June 10, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

Members of Council in attendance - Philip Cromer, Neil Lipsitz, Michael McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate.

II. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

A. Human Resources.

Ivette Burgess, Human Resources Director, introduced Shenai Johnson.

B. Police Department.

Stephenie Price, Police Chief, introduced Eric Spenser.

C. Public Works Department.

Nate Farrow, Public Works Director, introduced Casey Underwood.

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Short-Term Rental Program Regulations.

Justin Rose, Business License Administrator, started off by going over what defines a short-term rental. Some of the key ordinance provisions are that the cap is 6 percent of lots and not homes on a lot. If a property is owner occupied, then it does not count towards the cap. Other requirements are parking and noise compliance, monitored fire alarm systems and a safety inspection must be done. He then went over the application process which is done in 3 tiers.

Bruce Skipper, Chief Building Official, spoke about the components of the Safety Inspection. The codes office performs the initial Safety Inspection, then all other inspections are done by the Fire Department. The emergency contact, if notified, must be able to respond within 3 hours. No general liability policy is required.

Mr. Rose went over the number of short-term rentals in each neighborhood and the number of pending units. The current number and how many actually went towards the cap. **Councilman Mitchell** inquired if all the units could be on the same street, and **Mr. Rose** responded yes. The cap is by neighborhood and there is no cap by street. **Councilman Lipsitz** feels this needs to be addressed.

There was a discussion about Accessory Dwelling Units and a primary residence being on 1 lot. If a lot had 2 ADU's that were short-term rentals and a primary residence on it, then the 2 would only be counted as 1 towards the cap since it is calculated by lot and not by unit. If an owner is physically living on the property, then nothing gets counted towards the cap.

Mr. Rose stated Host Compliance is used to help with monitoring and enforcement. It tracks listings across Airbnb, VRBO and other platforms. It identifies unregistered short-term rentals. It uses geo-location and address matching and provides a real-time data and market analysis.

Ken Meola, Codes Enforcement Officer, went over enforcement actions and penalties, that included permits possibly being revoked.

It was stated that when a property changes hands, the new owners must resubmit to have a short-term rental. It does not automatically get carried over. The new owners must go back through the entire process.

Councilman Scallate inquired about the \$1,000.00 post-facto fee charged to those who were operating without prior approval. Instead of allowing them to just pay the fee and proceed, maybe they should pay the fee and not be able to reapply for two years. Is there a better way to structure the ordinance to deter this from happening. **Mr. Rose** stated this does not happen very often.

Mayor Cromer does not want to see clustering of units. It changes the integrity of the neighborhood. It is like having a commercial hotel in the middle of a neighborhood. He also inquired if corporations are buying up property for this purpose.

Alan Eisenman, Finance Director, mentioned the new short-term rental map, which is located on our website, where you can see the locations of all rental units.

There was a discussion about closing an exemption allowed in the T-4N Zone.

Staff will proceed with drafting a revised ordinance.

B. Housing Repair Program Update.

JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager, stated staff has been working with the Housing Trust to finalize the application process for the program. The projected date for the application process to begin is on July 1, 2025. This will be open for 30 to 45 days. After that, the review process will begin. **Ashley Brandon, Public Information Officer**, is working on a communications plan with the Housing Trust. There will be public events to help applicants with their applications. The city has been broken down into five zones.

1. Pigeon Point and Northern Downtown area
2. 100 Pines area
3. Ribaut Road/Mossy Oaks area
4. Robert Smalls Parkway area
5. Lady's Island that are in the city limits

Funds would be split between these zones until it can be determined where the applications came from. Then funds can be moved as necessary. The purpose of this program is to focus first on owner occupied residences.

Claude Hicks, Executive Director of the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, stated a local home inspector with 35 years of experience in the field has been obtained to do the inspections. He will be following the state guidelines regarding the scope of work that can be done.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

A. Nuisance Abatement Ordinance.

JJ Sauv , Deputy City Manager stated this issue came about because of some issues which occurred at a multi-family housing complex. The city currently lacks a unified ordinance defining and addressing public nuisances in a comprehensive manner. Staff reviewed ordinances from Columbia, Rock Hill, North Charleston, Richland County, and Horry County. He spoke about the legal authorities the city has to regulate nuisances. If Council is supportive, the ordinance would be brought back for first reading at the July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Sauv  we need to define what a public nuisance is. What would the enforcement look like, and what type of penalties might be assessed. Our ordinance would be a supplement to the state statues and not a replacement.

Councilman Lipsitz wants to make sure this ordinance can address issues that may arise at short-term rental houses so the owner can be held accountable.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, would like to explore what are the limits the city could require of an owner/manager of a multi-family housing unit to provide as it relates to security. He feels we should be able to impose some type of requirements if they have demonstrated that the area has become a chronic nuisance.

Councilman Scallate wants to ensure there are no conflicts with what we already have established in our ordinances like overgrown vegetation. He likes what the City of Columbia has in their ordinance regarding refuse/garbage and would like to see it in ours.

Staff will bring this back for first reading at the July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting and will model it after the City of Columbia's ordinance.

B. Operation of Golf Carts in City Limits.

Councilman Scallate stated the State of South Carolina enacted a law that gives municipalities the opportunity to govern golf carts and the hours they can be operated. One of the changes enacted was to require seatbelts for kids 12 and under. He wanted to have the conversation to see if there was an appetite in the city to identify our hours of operation, possible on include usage at night. He took a poll online and received over 300 responses and 78 percent were in favor of golf carts being allowed on the roads at night. He stated Section 56-2-90 speaks to golf cart registration.

We would need to identify primary and secondary roads, as golf carts are not allowed on primary roads. They can only cross over them.

Councilman Lipsitz is in favor of allowing golf carts at night, with seatbelts being worn by all occupants no matter their age.

Councilman Mitchell inquired why would golf carts in gated communities be exempt. The reason is because those roads are private and not owned by the city or state. He would like to see these rules apply even in gated communities if they are in the city limits.

Mr. Marshall feels turn signals and lights should also be required for nighttime driving.

Staff will draft a golf cart ordinance and bring it back at a future Worksession.

C. Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail Memorandum of Understanding for Kids in Parks Program.

Nate Farrow, Public Works Director, spoke about what role the City of Beaufort would play in the MOU. The city would only be responsible for maintaining the appearance of the Trailhead. The Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail and Kids in the Parks program are taking on the responsibility for the kiosks and fliers.

Council is supportive of this moving forward.

The following addressed Council with their comments and concerns on topics discussed:

Jared Madison, 2618 Holmes Drive
Eric Hartman, Cottage Farms
Felice LaMarca, Godfrey Street
Joe Macdermant, Boundary Street
Donald Goodwine, 911 Greene Street
Patrick Canning, 212 Burroughs Ave
Warren Cooler, 2805 West Royal Oaks
Danny Williams, 613 Mystic Drive West
Scott Robinson, 811 Elizabeth Lane

V. ADJOURN

6:59 PM

Disclaimer: This document is a summary. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Any questions, please contact the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the City's bulletin board and website www.cityofbeaufort.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.