



# City Council Worksession

## Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

February 14, 2023

### I. CALL TO ORDER

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5:00 PM

Mayor Stephen D. Murray III

Members of Council in attendance - Neil Lipsitz, Mike McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate, and Mayor Murray.

### II. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

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#### A. Police Department.

Dale McDorman, Police Chief, introduced Deputy Police Chief Stephenie Price.

### III. PRESENTATIONS

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#### A. City of Beaufort Website Redesign.

Kathleen Williams, Communications and Marketing Director, started off by saying this is the first redesign for the website since it started in 2018 with Civic Plus. Civic Plus is the website host. The new design should go live next month. Some statistics were given for the 2021 top search items and top pages that were visited. A survey was conducted regarding the redesign of the website in the Summer of 2022. She then went over the goals that they hope to obtain with the new website.

Ms. Williams, talked about a new Logo that was created by Bragg Media who also came up with a tagline: Charming since 1711. The committee feels this new logo captures Beaufort's beauty and history.

Councilman Mitchell stated that he is troubled by the tagline wording. He feels it does not accurately depict history.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, inquired about the changing of the logo. Ms. Williams responded by saying that the City Seal would not be changing. This change would be for the logo that is currently being used on the website. That logo shows a pelican flying over the bridge with a life preserver around it.

Mayor Murray stated that he would like to see the City Seal as the logo. He appreciates the work that has been done, but the City Seal gets his vote as the brand/mark for the City. He feels it adequately represents who we are. He also agrees that the tagline: Charming since 1711, is inappropriate.

## IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

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### A. Local 1.1% Hospitality Tax Committee recommendations.

**Alan Eisenman, Finance Director**, spoke about the City Ordinance 7-13003(2) that speaks about how these funds are to be used for advertising to increase tourism and revitalization of the downtown economy. All those that apply must be non-profit organizations. In the FY 2023 budget, \$27,500 was to be allocated in accordance with the Ordinance. The notice to solicit applications was published in the local newspaper on December 29, 2022. It was also posted on the City's website. There were 9 applications totaling \$126,540.00. The staff committee consisted of Alan Eisenman, Reece Bertholf and Linda Roper. They reviewed and rated the proposals based on the criteria stipulated in the Ordinance as well as adhering to the City Council's strategic goals.

Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association - \$10,000.00  
Beaufort Area Hospitality Association - \$10,000.00  
The Gullah Traveling Theater - \$4,000.00  
Beaufort Digital Corridor - \$2,000.00  
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce - \$1,500.00

**Mayor Murray** stated that historically these funds have been for downtown redevelopment.

**Councilman Mitchell** inquired how the data is gathered to see what organization has the most impact.

**Reece Bertholf, Deputy City Manager**, stated that they relied on their submissions.

Applicants were given a chance to speak. Representatives from The Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail, Beaufort Area Hospitality Association, and the Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association all spoke.

**Mayor Murray** stated that he was encouraged to see the Activate Beaufort plan between the Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association and Beaufort Area Hospitality Association last year. He has found out that there has been some discord lately. Hopes that both can come together for the greater good of downtown and the citizens.

All of Council agreed to proceed as recommended.

### B. Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2023 Financial update.

**Alan Eisenman, Finance Director**, went over the Quarterly Report using Open.Gov, our financial transparency website. The Revenues were \$8,112,680.84, with Expenditures of \$12,373,711.74. The Revenues exceed the Expenditures by \$4,261,030.90. The negative figure is not unusual for this time of year, as tax revenues are just starting to come in. He stated that the City is in good financial shape.

### C. Lady's Island Land Use Study.

**Curt Freese, Community Economic Development Director**, went over the scope of services for a Master Planning effort for a stretch of the Sea Island Parkway. He stated that the County has signed a contract with SGA/NW for planning services in the amount of \$50,000.00. The County would like for the City to sign the contract. Mr. Freese stated that during a meeting last year, the City had agreed to fund half of the contract price. He also mentioned that he has received communications that the scope of this work is minor, and overall, this will not address the major issues.

**Councilman Lipsitz** knows that we are not legally obligated but feels we should honor the decision that was previously made.

**Councilman Scallate** feels that having a broader master plan study done on this issue would be a greater use of taxpayer money instead of many smaller studies.

**Mayor Pro Tem, McFee**, stated that this issue keeps coming back around. We need to recognize that we need a much larger comprehensive view of what is happening on Lady's Island.

**Mayor Murray** does not think this proposal gets us where we need to be on the growth on the Sea Islands.

The consensus is to have a meeting between Beaufort County and the City to discuss the next course of action.

D. Southside Park Phase 1 update.

**Linda Roper, Downtown Operations and Community Services Director**, stated that we contracted with Davis and Floyd with Wood and Partners, Inc. in September 2022, to design Phase 1 of the Southside Park. At this time, surveying is being done. On January 17, 2023, Beaufort County notified the City that they would be constructing a basketball court with new pickleball courts. These would be placed alongside of the existing tennis/pickleball courts.

A design workshop was held on January 25, 2023. During this meeting, the topic of the half basketball court came up that was in the previous master plan. Now that the County will be building a full basketball court nearby, the committee feels that the half basketball court is no longer needed, and the playground could be expanded.

**Councilman Lipsitz** feels that the playground should be the main showcase of the park.

All of Council agreed to remove the half basketball court from the plans.

**V. ADJOURN**

**6:54 PM**

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Disclaimer: This document is a summary. All City Council Worksession and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at [www.cityofbeaufort.org](http://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](mailto:tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org).