



City Council Regular Meeting Meeting Minutes – Electronic Meeting

April 13, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

7:08PM

Mayor, Stephen D, Murray III

All of Council members in attendance - Phil Cromer, Neil Lipsitz, Mike McFee, Mitch Mitchell and Mayor Murray.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee

III. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Character Education Proclamation - Clinton Brown, Joseph Shanklin Elementary School

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Cromer.

Approval was unanimous.

B. Proclamation proclaiming April 2021 as Donate for Life Month

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Cromer.

Approval was unanimous.

C. Proclamation proclaiming April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Cromer.

Approval was unanimous.

D. Proclamation proclaiming April 2021 as Fair Housing Month

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Cromer and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

Approval was unanimous.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Deborah Gray, 1300 Barnwell Bluff, asked that Council continue to hold off on decisions regarding development that is part of the lawsuit, until this matter has been resolved through the court.

Email from Westley Byrne, 1307 North Street regarding 700 Bay Street is attached to these minutes.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Zoning Map Amendment at 1703 Lafayette St.

David Prichard, Community and Economic Development Director, stated that the property is 29,877 square feet, and runs along Lafayette and Cuthbert Streets. The lot is currently vacant. The applicant is requesting to have this parcel rezoned from T3-S to T3-N which would increase the allowable density for the construction of residential cottages. He mentioned that the allowable land uses are very similar between the two. One difference is that 2 to 3-unit dwellings are not permitted in T3-S, but in T3-N they are allowed conditionally. Mr. Prichard stated that all public notices were sent out as applicable.

Arthur Ellis, 1505 Lafayette Street, stated that he is opposed to this request. He wants to preserve and protect the marsh and the views. He wants the original integrity of the design preserved and mentioned that there is enough property in the area that is already zoned for this kind of development.

Kenneth Hoffman, 2101 Simms Street, feels this is a great plan that will meet the goals of affordable housing.

Deborah Gray, 1300 Barnwell Bluff, inquired about how many residential cottages this development could have. Mr. Prichard responded by stating that no development plans have been submitted, and the application does not have the number of units at this time. He did state that there could be roughly 4 to 5.

Linda Berg, 2005 Cuthbert Street, stated she is new to Beaufort and purchased her property with the understanding that the zoning would remain the same for each lot on Cuthbert Street. There are other lots that are undeveloped and inquired if any archeological studies have been done. She asked that parking be looked at to see how that would be handled. She stated that she could not find any background information on Beaufort Midway Development, or about Corey Post who drew up the plans.

Francis Ackerman, 2215 Wilson Drive, agrees with Mr. Ellis's comments and stated that the area is one of the most unique that she has had the opportunity to live in. She feels that this has nothing to do with affordable housing, and that any stormwater improvements that will be needed should be added into the development costs and not placed on the taxpayers.

Sara Bruns, 2000 Cuthbert Street, is opposed to the idea and does not want to see the landscape disturbed.

Kathleen Loretta, 1705 Lafayette Street, agrees with everyone that is opposed to the idea. She does not feel this development will enhance the neighborhood at all.

John Musselman, 1604 Lafayette Street, bought his house 3 months ago and moved there because of the view. Does not feel that this development would fit into the neighborhood.

Sue Cosner, 1405 Laudonniere Street, asked that the investment that is already being made in single-family construction in the area not be overlooked.

Various letters and a petition from citizens regarding this issue are attached to these minutes.

VI. MINUTES

B. Special Council Meeting - March 30, 2021

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Minutes approved as presented.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Authorize City Manager to enter into Contract for Compensation Study

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Cromer and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Kathy Todd, Finance Director, gave background information on RFP 2021-113 for an Employee Compensation Study that will be done City-wide. The committee recommends that Evergreen Solutions, LLC be awarded this contract for the sum of \$22,500.00.

Approval was unanimous.

B. Business License Appeal - Beaufort Construction of South Carolina

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Cromer and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Kathy Todd, Finance Director, gave background information on this issue. She stated that this is an appeal made by Mr. Marty Miley regarding penalties that were assessed in the amount of \$2,231.39 that were related to their 2020 Business License.

Mr. Miley was then afforded the opportunity to give his position on this matter.

Councilman Cromer inquired if Council could make an adjustment on the penalty. Ms. Todd stated yes.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, made a motion to amend the penalty by 50 percent. Motion was seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

The original main motion was withdrawn.

Approval was unanimous on the amendment to reduce the penalty by 50 percent.

VIII. REPORTS

City Manager's Report

Mr. Prokop reported that for those that have Flood Insurance, that the rate has dropped to a 6 from a 7 per the Community Rating System and that this will give the citizens an additional 5 percent off their insurance. This new rate will take effect April 1, 2022. He reported that it will be up to the citizens to contact their insurance companies to ensure that the discount gets applied. It is not automatic.

The plaque at the Matthew J. Clancy Law Enforcement Center has been placed on the Police Department building.

Reported that there are two new businesses coming soon to Beaufort Town Center. They are Food Lion and J. Lee's Coney Island.

Ribbon Cutting for the Mossy Oaks Stormwater Project will be on Thursday, May 6, 2021, starting at 10 am. This event is open to the public.

Live after 5 Downtown Beaufort will take place on Thursday, April 15, 2021. This event starts at 5pm and ends at 8pm. There will be live music, late night shopping, and food specials.

The swings in the Waterfront Park are being restored. They will be removed in groups over the next several weeks and will be returned.

A “Walk Around” was done with members of the Army Corps of Engineers last week. They were shown areas that face issues with regards to rising sea levels and King Tides. The application process will begin soon.

Mayor’s Report

Mayor Murray responded to resident concerns about the tree cutting that is being conducted by Dominion Energy. Legal Council has been consulted about options to manage the cutting, but the State General Assembly gives Utility Companies extensive range in this matter. Members of the State Delegation have been contacted to see what can be done in the future. He thanked Neal Pugliese, Project Manager, for addressing citizen concerns. He also stated that Master Arborist, Mike Murphy, has been very involved.

Reported Beaufort County Council voted to put the Local Option Sales Tax on the ballot in November 2021 in first reading. There are two more readings to follow before passing.

In closing, he stated that the South Coast Cyber Center was awarded a 1.3-million-dollar grant.

Councilman Mitchell

Reported that he had attended a gathering with Indivisible Beaufort and will be attending a meeting with a group of people from Beaufort’s Northwest Quadrant.

Talks continue regarding the rejuvenation of the Green Street Gym, and on the possible establishment of a Community Garden.

Councilman Lipsitz

Informed everyone that the Southside Park Task Force is ending, and they will be giving a presentation to Council at the Worksession on Tuesday, April 27, 2021.

He encouraged citizens to please consider getting the COVID vaccine, and to continue to wear their masks.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee

Echoed Councilman Lipsitz in encouraging citizens to get the vaccine.

Gave Council a report on the last Lowcountry Area Transportation Study meeting.

Councilman Cromer

Reported that the Beaufort History Museum now has 5 new members and thanked City Manager, Bill Prokop, and Kathleen Williams, Communications and Marketing Director, for getting the word out via the City’s communication avenues.

IX. ADJOURN

8:55 PM

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman, Cromer and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee

All in favor.

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 (Agenda section). Audio recordings are available upon request by contacting the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.