

A work session of Beaufort City Council was held on January 22, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Councilwoman Nan Sutton, Councilmen Stephen Murray, Mike McFee, and Phil Cromer, and Bill Prokop, city manager.

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

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Keyserling called the work session to order at 5:03 p.m. 

### **EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION**

Police Chief **Matt Clancy** introduced police department patrolwomen **Cynthia Garber** and **Jennifer Patrone**.

**Linda Roper** introduced **Bernadette Macchi**, administrative assistant in Downtown Operations and Community Services.

### **UPDATE ON MOSSY OAKS DRAINAGE PROJECT**

**Neal Pugliese** said this problem “has not changed.” He reviewed the project timeline from June 2018 to June 2020. The Spanish Moss Trail geotechnical survey is expected at the end of January or beginning of February, he said; the survey “will tell us the consistency of the Spanish Moss Trail” in the project area.

Mr. Pugliese said the Army Corps of Engineers’ jurisdictional determination is a formal report that can be submitted to allow upgrades, among other results. It and a Mossy Oaks task force/neighborhood meeting are expected in February 2019, he said.

The \$1 million bond was secured in December, Mr. Pugliese said. All of the stakeholders are working well together. Portions of the Jane Way canal system have been claimed by the Army Corps of Engineers, so the city/county cannot do work on those portions. The Southside Park detention pond is being designed to have minimal disruption to other park features, he said.

**Jarod Fralix** discussed the project’s challenges: First, the Spanish Moss Trail presents challenges such as the potential for a “Katrina effect” on the causeway, which would mean that the substructure would need additional reinforcement.

Next, Mr. Fralix said, they hope to “clean and prep” those portions of the Jane Way canal not taken over by the Army Corps of Engineers, so the project can have “some forward momentum” before formal permitting is obtained. Mr. Pugliese said they have been discussing performing this maintenance with the school. The work can be done with in-house employees and contractors, he said.

The third challenge is the 4-acre Southside Park detention pond. Mr. Fralix said when they get the letter from the Army Corps of Engineers about the pond, they will go to Commerce for permission to do the work at Southside Park without having “the rest of the downstream permits in hand” for the work that is covered by the Community Development Block Grant.

Mr. Pugliese showed the 9 challenged areas and their priority with the updated estimates for their costs. He told Councilman Murray that the estimates did not include the work in the Spanish Moss Trail area; he estimates that fortifying it, if the natural material is not suitable, would cost \$250,000, but all of the estimates would be refined over time.

Mr. Pugliese showed the status of design and permitting for each of the 9 challenged areas. Mr. Fralix discussed the permitting strategy.

Mr. Pugliese showed the strategies for Mossy Oaks with each of the regulatory agencies going forward.

Councilman Murray asked about “the opportunity for routine maintenance” that had been mentioned. Mr. Fralix said within the next month or two, they would submit “smaller plans” to DHEC and OCRM for a “briefer review.” If it’s more work than Public Works could do, they could go out for bid while getting permitting from local authorities, he said.

Mr. Prokop asked if permitting time would take longer than actual construction. Mr. Pugliese said that’s probably a fair statement, but they have “if and then strategies,” and this is a priority. Mr. Prokop said it’s important to let residents know that the city is ready to do the work, but bureaucratic processes must be followed.

Mayor Keyserling asked if the plan is still to start on whatever the Army Corps of Engineers gives permission to start on, and Mr. Pugliese said that’s correct. There was a discussion about when the work on the Spanish Moss Trail might start. The pond work in Southside Park will be “very visible,” Mr. Fralix said. Mayor Keyserling said he has been getting phone calls about when the work would begin, now that it’s after the first of the year. Councilwoman Sutton said it’s also important that work is happening before the beginning of hurricane season on June 1.

**Barb Chemsak** asked about the design of the pond in Southside Park. Mr. Fralix said the determination was made by where the saltwater infiltration stops, among other factors.

**Rhonda Carey** suggested that at the Mossy Oaks neighborhood meeting, the project representatives should break the project’s elements down “very specifically” for the people in the neighborhood, and in laymen’s terms, so they know exactly what the

planned steps are. Mr. Pugliese said they are looking forward to that meeting, and they will go into a lot of detail and will take all of the questions, as they did at the last meeting.

Ms. Chemsak asked for the neighborhood meeting to be held somewhere other than the school's cafeteria. Mr. Pugliese said they are looking at that.

### **LADY'S ISLAND PLAN**

**Rob Merchant**, Beaufort County Community Development, began his presentation by discussing why the Lady's Island Plan was done. The public was concerned about growth, he said, and 2 years ago at a Lady's Island planning meeting, the room was packed, indicating the interest of the community in looking at ways to manage growth better. A steering committee was formed about a year ago, he said, and he described the members of that group and their affiliations. He also noted the contributions of city, county, and Town of Port Royal staff, and of **Greg Dale**, the facilitator.

Mr. Merchant described how "extensive citizen input" was obtained (e.g., through two surveys) and the "concerns" that citizens expressed about future growth on Lady's Island (e.g., natural resource protection, quality of life).

Under the current ordinances, Mr. Merchant said, they looked at how much growth Lady's Island could sustain and determined 8,795 dwelling units. There are many constraints to that growth, he said, but it set off an alarm that future growth needs to be managed. He told Councilman Murray that he would estimate that there are about 4,000 dwelling units on Lady's Island right now.

Mr. Merchant said Lady's Island "is in two jurisdictions," which makes planning even more important. He shared the vision statement for the plan. Lady's Island is many things to different people, he said. The 4 common goals of the plan are quality of place, connections (i.e., transportation, including modes other than vehicles, such as pedestrian and bicycle transportation), preservation and protection of natural resources, and stewardship by Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and local civic organizations.

From the goals, the committee determined seven planning themes to organize the work on Lady's Island, Mr. Merchant said: manage growth, create a walkable center, strengthen neighborhoods, manage traffic congestion (fully implementing the recommendations of the Lady's Island Corridor Study), bicycle and pedestrian facilities, adequate infrastructure, and transparency.

Mr. Merchant reviewed the five essential actions to come out of the steering committee: modify the growth boundary to prevent future urban growth on rural margins and limit the footprint of suburban/urban density growth; when sewer is not available, reduce density to no more than one unit per acre or base zoning, whichever is

less dense; develop policies to limit fill; improve the transportation network, and increase civic engagement.

Councilman Murray said he has no problem with reducing the growth boundary, but he has trouble with the language because it creates the perception that this would keep all of northern Beaufort County rural, when much of the density there is suburban, not rural. He thinks the language should be changed to make it clear that this would not mean that there would be *no* development there.

Mayor Keyserling said the development at Oyster Bluff was a big concern, but regulations have not been introduced as a result. He said he wants to ensure that the groundwork is laid to fix problems now by ordinance, and he wants to respond as people have asked them to and not just create “lofty plans.” Mayor Keyserling feels they should break down the vision for Lady’s Island “into specific steps.”

Mr. Merchant said he feels that modifying the growth boundary “sends a good message,” but he doesn’t think that message is that this will solve all of the problems on Lady’s Island. Councilman Murray said drawing the growth boundaries back is “just one small piece” of prohibiting growth on northern Lady’s Island, and there will be others. Mr. Merchant said this plan is “a policy statement.”

Mr. Merchant said “limiting the fill” means minimizing the use of fill dirt in flood-prone and low-lying properties where the use of fill would enable development that could not otherwise occur. To increase civic engagement, a committee would be set up to help implement and maintain the plan as a way to continually manage growth on Lady’s Island, he said.

Mr. Merchant reviewed implementation steps for the Lady’s Island Plan. He said the Natural Resources committee of Beaufort County Council recommended working with **Jon Rimbaud** on the language related to the airport to make it more in line with the existing plan. Three sections of the plan say there is to be no runway extension, he said. Councilwoman Sutton said she thinks the language should be “more open” and not include the word “never” in regard to the runway extension. Mayor Keyserling said he doesn’t think the debate about this is “critical” because there are many things about managing growth in the plan that are more important, so he would like to see the language about the runway extension taken out.

Mayor Keyserling said he thinks the Lady’s Island Plan is “a vision,” and it’s important for public perception to make that clear in order to “manage expectations.”

Councilman Murray said he would wait to see the language that the county and the airport come up with about the runway extension. His first impulse was that the language about it should be stricken from the plan, but now he finds it to be “a mixed message.”

Mr. Merchant said county council's Natural Resources committee made a minor change today: recommending going to 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres when sewer is not available.

Mr. Merchant said the plan recommends that the Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee (LICPC) oversee the implementation of the plan, and the steering committee has been "looking at what that would look like." Councilman McFee asked if that wouldn't be "an additional layer of bureaucracy," which "we've been trying to simplify." Mr. Merchant explained how the county uses the LICPC currently to get input. This is being considered as an "informal" layer, not regulatory, he said. He told Councilman McFee that any matters that went to the committee would then go to the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). They are still discussing how this would work, Mr. Merchant said, but they don't want to add any "additional layers of complexity."

Councilman Murray asked how what they are considering for the LICPC's role differs from what the MPC and other entities do. The plan suggests "a whole new layer of bureaucracy that the development community would have to go through," he said. Mr. Merchant said joint projects have successfully gone before the LICPC in the past. The appointment of its members has not been formal, but they would want to formalize that process for this role. LIBPA (Lady's Island Business Professionals Association) is different, he said, as is Sea Island Corridor Coalition; LICPC "has a unique and specific role." The county is giving the LICPC more tasks, Mr. Merchant said, and formalizing its role, rather than starting another committee.

Mr. Merchant said **David Prichard** and he are "very involved in this process," and they don't want the review process to be any more cumbersome than it is, so they will be looking at how to make it more effective.

Council will hold a special work session on January 29 to discuss the Lady's Island Plan.

### **SPANISH MOSS TRAIL CONNECTOR DRAFT RESOLUTION**

Councilman McFee said he's concerned about #8 in the resolution: "The city will support the Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail in their efforts to raise funds for the [SEP] connector, to include an examination of current City income streams that could be allocated to [SEP] its construction."

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Councilwoman Sutton said she shared that concern. She asked if the city needs to be "committed on paper like this." Mayor Keyserling said the goal of the resolution is "to send a message to the principal lender," but he shares the concern. **Dean Moss** asked if council is okay with the city being the applicant for grants. In order to raise funds for the extension, which will be a city asset, he said he needs a clear indication that the City of Beaufort is, in fact, behind him in that effort.

Councilman Murray said he'd like points #8 and #9 stricken. Councilman McFee suggested they "re-verbiate #9."

Councilman Murray said the feedback he's gotten is that this project is not a priority. He's concerned about having to make up for lacking funding to build the connector and about the connector being a maintenance liability for the city. He said he's nervous about the language in the resolution saying that the city "agrees that time is of the essence" for developing the connector, so it will "immediately initiate activities to make it a reality."

Mr. Moss said his objective is to raise \$1 million and to seek a match for the other \$1 million, and then to bring the money to the city to do the project. He understands the city's crumbling infrastructure and the need for large investments to preserve and enhance that infrastructure, but he also believes this project is "potentially so momentous to the City of Beaufort" that the city *needs* to build it if Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail can get the money to do it. It would be "an important step to put something significant out there" for the community, visitors, etc., he said, rather than just repairing current infrastructure.

Mr. Moss agreed that #9 could be struck, but it's important that council "express interest in the vision" of this project. He thinks the vision should be expanded of what could be along that corridor. Mayor Keyserling said he disagreed with Mr. Moss about that vision.

Councilman Murray said he thinks the trail is "transformational" and has important potential, but Beaufort's population is leaving, per capita income is very low, so this connector is not an important priority. Although he likes it, he feels it's not "responsible," given how many other projects need to be done. The city can't be asked to contribute \$1 million-plus *and* be responsible for trail maintenance, Councilman Murray said.

There was a general discussion about changes and deletions to the language of the resolution. Mr. Moss said PATH would build the connector and "give it to you" if Mr. Moss brings the city \$2 million.

Mr. Moss said Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail has signed a contract for the survey work, so the city will have a survey of the entire corridor.

#### **STATUS OF HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

Mr. Prokop said Holy Trinity would like "to postpone everything" concerning a soccer field in Southside Park until June because the school is in discussions with the county about Bob Jones Field, but if that doesn't work out, the school wants to know if council supports the original 3-year contract with the city. He said the school would use the facilities they have for this spring.

There being no further business to come before council, the work session was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

## **CITY REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT TO BEAUFORT COUNTY STORMWATER BOARD**

**Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to appoint Neil Desai to the stormwater board. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Prokop said there has been a fire at Walmart on Robert Smalls Parkway, but it was "only in the deli." The store has been closed, but it will probably open up later tonight. He added that the fire department is offering any businesses training in using fire extinguishers.

Mr. Prokop said the Beaufort 2030 Lab 1 was a success, and the city was well-represented by the volunteers that the city invited to participate. Lab 2 on February 13 will be "where the real work begins," he said.

March 11 and 12 are the dates for the annual retreat at the St. Helena library, Mr. Prokop said. June 11 will be the first public hearing on the budget. He reviewed other upcoming projects.

22% of the current police department is female, Mr. Prokop said, and 6 City of Beaufort officers have recently graduated from the police academy.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Keyserling discussed the activities of Young Leaders of Beaufort and said "Reconstruction Beaufort is growing."

United Community Task Force has an event coming up, Mayor Keyserling said, and he is working to involve the Old Commons and Northwest Quadrant neighborhoods in it.

The Trump administration called back "the seismic testing team" to "work on the permits" during the federal government shutdown, Mayor Keyserling said, but a federal judge issued an injunction against this.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilman Murray said the Beaufort County Economic Development Corp (EDC) had a strategic planning retreat last week. Year-to-date, the EDC has booked \$20.3 million in capital investment countywide, he said.

Councilman Cromer said the current Beaufort History Museum exhibit about films shot in Beaufort is a success, and it will continue through February. The museum's annual meeting is coming up, he said, and he announced the next lecture in the Beaufort History Series.

Councilman McFee said **Natalie Daise's** art show is opening this week at the USCB

Center for the Arts gallery, and the opening reception is this Thursday.

There were general comments about the Beaufort 2030 meeting. Councilman Murray asked if there's a process to keep the participants in the process engaged. Mayor Keyserling said they might be able to discuss that in Lab 2 when they discuss next steps.

**There being no further business to come before council, Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to adjourn the regular council meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.**