

A regular session of Beaufort City Council was held on March 26, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Councilwoman Nan Sutton, Councilmen Mike McFee, Stephen Murray, 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 regular council meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman McFee led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROCLAMATION

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the proclamation of Raheem Butler as Lady's Island Middle School's student of the month. The motion passed unanimously. Councilman McFee read the proclamation, and Mayor Keyserling presented it to Mr. Butler. He thanked everyone in his school and the young man he helped, which led to his receiving his award.

PROCLAMATION OF MARCH AS DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH ^[L]_[SEP]

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the proclamation. Councilman McFee read the proclamation, and Mayor Keyserling presented it to a representative of the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

RESOLUTION COMMENDING JON VERITY, FRANK LESESNE, MIKE SUTTON, STEVEN GREEN, & DEBORAH JOHNSON FOR THEIR SERVICE ON THE CITY'S REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ^[L]_[SEP]

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Thompson said he had come to city council previously about a problem with noise from "muscle cars in Beaufort," and he hasn't "seen much progress" on the matter, though today was better. He described some of the incidents he has observed. A young Marine in his neighborhood has a Camaro, he said, and Mr. Thompson told him the noise from his car would not be tolerated, or he'd contact the Marine's commanding officer, which he did, but the noise has begun again.

The county doesn't have a noise ordinance, Mr. Thompson said, so he went to the county and said the city has "a great one," and the county should adopt it. The key to solving the problem is enforcement, he said. The highway patrol doesn't enforce the

state's noise ordinance, and when he inquired about this, he was told to work on the city and county level.

Mr. Thompson said he had spoken to the sheriff's department today, and then he didn't hear any loud cars except once, so he believes the sheriff's department was stopping loud cars. He thanked the sheriff's department and the City of Beaufort police department, and he asked city council to help with this.

Kathy Todd read a press release from the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) that named the City of Beaufort's finance department as a recipient of "the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation award" for its fiscal year 2019 budget.

PUBLIC HEARING: LIGHT POLE STANDARDS

Mayor Keyserling opened this public hearing. David Prichard said the pole height in the city's ordinance was not sufficient for large, auto-centric parking lots at shopping centers. The Metropolitan Planning Commission agreed to a 30' maximum for light poles, he said. Poles in transect zones are 15', which the commissioners liked. The language is being changed to make the maximum pole height 15' in pedestrian areas and in a large parking lot, poles could go up to 30', Mr. Prichard said.

Maxine Lutz, 811 North Street, said her historic neighborhood is a mixed-use district, and she has questions about the definition of "auto-centric" and about the inclusion of all districts in this amendment. She asked if it would apply to the Historic District. Ms. Lutz said she understands "the genesis of the" change was a strip mall developer, but she's concerned about the ordinance applying to *all* auto-centric locations (e.g., a neighbor of hers has 6 cars in their yard).

Ms. Lutz asked if "all districts" in the proposal would apply to the Historic District, which is subordinate to the Milner and Secretary of the Interior guidelines. She is opposed to light poles higher than 15' in the Historic District or higher than 25' in any other auto-centric area.

Mayor Keyserling read a section of the ordinance relating to what is considered auto-centric. Ms. Lutz said that it sounds like the ordinance doesn't apply to the Historic District and downtown.

Heather Seifert, executive director of the Historic Beaufort Foundation (HBF), said the zoning amendment "causes concern" because the wording appears to include all parking lots in all districts, including historic districts. She read relevant sections of the Milner guidelines and the Beaufort Code.

Ms. Seifert said a 30' light pole in the Historic District would be "inappropriate" and an unwanted light source in areas that are a mix of residential and commercial properties. She said she hopes council will continue to protect the Historic District.

Mayor Keyserling suggested that Ms. Lutz and Ms. Seifert talk to Mr. Prichard about referencing the Historic District in the zoning amendment. **Mayor Keyserling closed this public hearing.**

MINUTES

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the minutes of the council special work session January 29, 2019. Councilman McFee abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting. Councilman Cromer noted the following amendments:

- On page 3, in the next to last line of the third paragraph, the word “possibly” should be “possible.”
- On page 6, in the third paragraph, it should be “*has sailed*” not “*ha sailed*.”
- On page 10, in the first line of the third paragraph, “options” should be “option.”

Councilman Murray noted the following amendments:

- On page 3, in the last paragraph, Jon Rembold’s name is misspelled.
- On page 6, in the second paragraph from bottom, “public businesses” should be “private businesses.”

The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed 4-0.

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the minutes of the council work session and regular meeting February 26, 2019.

Councilman McFee abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting. Councilman Cromer said on page 12, in the last paragraph, it should be “*they do,*” not “*the do.*” **The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed 4-0.**

FY 2019 BUDGET AMENDMENT #2

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to approve the amendment on second reading. Ms. Todd said the Greenlawn streetscape project was approved in last year’s budget. It is also funded by a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds. TIF 2 would cover the remaining portion, so this moves an additional \$1 million in TIF 2 funds to allow construction on the project to move forward. **The motion passed unanimously.**

CO-SPONSORSHIP REQUEST FOR USE OF WATERFRONT PARK FROM AGAPE HOSPICE CARE FOR “LIFE BLOOMS ETERNALLY”

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to approve the request for the May 9, 2019 ^[L]_[SEP] event. Rhonda Carey said this is a recurring event, and the city co-sponsored it last year. She described the event, which commemorates the lives of those the hospice has helped. **The motion passed unanimously.**

CO-SPONSORSHIP REQUEST FOR USE OF WATERFRONT PARK FROM HOPEFUL HORIZON FOR “TAKE BACK THE NIGHT”

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to approve the request for the April 26, 2019 event. Theresa Lacey, community educator for Hopeful Horizon, said all of the organization’s services are free and confidential. Take Back The Night is an event to “celebrate the trajectory of sexual assault victims . . . from victim to survivor” and a show of community support. The motion passed unanimously.

CO-SPONSORSHIP REQUEST FOR USE OF WATERFRONT PARK FROM FIRST SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BEAUFORT FOR ANNUAL EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to approve the request for the April 21, 2019 ^{SEP} event. Ms. Carey said this is also an annual event, and staff supports it; it is open to the public of all faiths. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST FOR STREET CLOSURES FROM DOWNTOWN BEAUFORT MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION FOR FIRST FRIDAYS

Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to approve the request for the events on April 5, June 7, and September 6, 2019. Ms. Carey said this request is made on behalf of the Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association. The closures support the quarterly street closures for the monthly events. They are asking for the street closures from 4 to 8, and she described the streets that the association is requesting to have closed. Ms. Carey said the themes are a combination of First Friday and ArtWalk in April, a Father’s Day theme in June, and a football theme in September. They are also asking for co-sponsorship for police, fire and Public Works services. Ms. Carey said staff supports this request.

Councilman Murray said at the Beaufort 2030, there was a request to capture better data. First Friday attendance appears to be increasing, so he asked if anyone is tracking or estimating the attendance. Ms. Carey said in the last couple of months, the shops have offered incentives, such as door prize drawings to get people in, and they have counted the number of those entries that have been collected. There should be some ways to track interest in First Fridays, she said, so they have been discussing ways to work with merchants to monitor sales and foot traffic and to come up with a mechanism to count attendees.

Councilwoman Sutton said stores know how many people made purchases during First Fridays, but not how many people came in the door, unless someone in the store had a counter.

Ms. Carey said Palmetto Animal League is going to do an animal adoption event during a First Friday, and they are looking for ways to reach out to other groups to give them an opportunity to be seen and also to bring in more people from those organizations’ supporters. It is “on our radar” to do better tracking of numbers, she said, but they haven’t yet found a way to acquire concrete data.

Councilman McFee suggested that there are city cameras downtown, and they could

assess three hourly pictures during First Fridays to count people. Councilman Murray said the event appears to be successful, but with its investment in downtown events, the city’s “real goal is to make merchants’ cash registers ring,” so “more tangible metrics” would be interesting to get. **The motion passed unanimously.**

REQUEST FOR STREET CLOSURE FROM THE MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE TO HOST ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the request for the May 27, 2019 event. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF NOISE ORDINANCE FROM HISTORIC BEAUFORT FOUNDATION FOR THE ANNUAL SOIREE

Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the request for the event on May 11, 2019 from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. ^[L]_[SEP]Ms. Seifert said this is HBF’s largest fundraiser each year, and it’s always held in someone’s historic home. Tickets are available online, she said. **The motion passed unanimously.**

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN THE 2020 CENSUS ^[L]_[SEP]

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

2019 CDBG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY NEEDS – STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Prokop showed the staff recommendations, saying there were originally five, but staff missed the deadline for an infrastructure grant. He’s unsure if the city would be eligible to apply because it has two open CDBG-funded projects – the Greenlawn Drive streetscape and the Mossy Oaks drainage project – but staff made recommendations in case the city ends up being eligible. The recommended priorities are 1. housing programs, 2. drainage improvements, 3. improvements to public recreation facilities, and 4. streetscape improvements. **Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.**

AMENDING PART 9 CHAPTER 1 OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL SECTIONS 9-1002 AND 9-1003

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the ordinance amendment on first reading. Ivette Burgess said these are items that law enforcement no longer uses, that have been legally challenged, or that are outdated. These are part of “housekeeping” the ordinances, Councilman Murray said, and they were discussed in a council work session. **The motion passed unanimously.**

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Prokop said city staff is hoping the replica of the Santa Maria ship is coming in soon, but there may be delays because of weather. It is scheduled for March 29.

Weeding is taking place on the Boundary Street median, Mr. Prokop said, and they are thinning out some of the plants. On April 6, a full team will be replacing the trees that have died. The work is normally done early Tuesday mornings, he said.

Staff is in the process of finalizing the 2019 goals and finalizing the plans from the Beaufort 2030 labs, which will be integrated into the city's budget process and will be made available to the public.

The United Community Task Force (UCTF) had a great event last Friday, with educators from Chicago and Jacksonville discussing successes that "took the community to make things happen," Mr. Prokop said. Kids in the UCTF program are using the Greene Street Gym tonight after three months of negotiation, he said, and they will be there three nights a week. The task force is always looking for volunteers to work with the kids, he added.

Mr. Prokop congratulated Ms. Todd and the finance team GFOA budget award, which he said reflects the transparency they strive to achieve.

"Taste of Beaufort-plus-plus" will take place in about a month, Mr. Prokop said, and "wait 'til you see what they have planned for the fall," with "bigger and better" community events than ever before.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Keyserling said on April 4, there will be a preview of a 4-part series on Reconstruction produced by Dr. **Henry Louis Gates**. On April 5, Dr. Gates will be here, and "the Young Leaders of Beaufort" will see a part of the film and be able to ask him questions about it. This show will be broadcast live around the state, Mayor Keyserling said.

Mayor Keyserling said they are waiting on a date on the official opening of the National Reconstruction Era Park; the Town of Port Royal will host the event.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Cromer said more than 600 people showed up for a recent encampment at Beaufort History Museum.

The Beaufort History Museum and the Beaufort County Library will co-sponsor a lecture on tales of the Beaufort County sheriff's and coroner's offices, Councilman Cromer said.

Councilman Murray said Code Camp has kicked off at Beaufort Digital Corridor, and "Co-working at the Corridor" is every Friday.

Councilman Murray noted that Fire Chief **Reese Bertholf** was on the organizing

committee for Saturday's Twilight Run, which raised more than \$100,000 for Riverview Charter School.

Councilman Murray said he had attended the county's Natural Resources Committee meeting, and **John Weaver**, Beaufort County interim administrator, has instituted "a number of procedural and programmatic changes" to how Open Land Trust . . . and the Rural and Critical Lands board conduct acquisition on behalf of the county." Both Open Land Trust and Rural and Critical Lands presented letters stating their disagreement with the process and several of the procedural changes. Councilman Murray said he commented "as an individual," not as a councilperson, because he also disagrees with the way the changes are being forced upon the two organizations.

At a county council meeting last night, the county proposed "carving out 20% of the last three Rural and Critical" Lands referendums "to dedicate to park . . . improvements," Councilman Murray said, "which is allowed per the referendums that were voted on by the voters, but there are a number of issues that council members and other members of the public, in addition to Rural and Critical Lands folks, brought up." He thinks the motion to approve the proposal failed with a vote of 5 to 5, but he anticipates "it will come back up." Councilman Murray feels *all* the citizens of the county "are invested in Rural and Critical Lands" and have a sense of ownership of it, though the county manages it, so he wants people to be aware of these proposed programmatic changes, which he thinks shouldn't be "dictated by the county administrator," but should be "an open, transparent, and inclusive process to bring stakeholders who are invested in that program together" on this. He feels that some procedural and programmatic changes need to be made, but he hopes interested citizens "will continue to monitor" Mr. Weaver's actions and will let county council know their thoughts.

Mayor Keyserling agreed and said the trustees are "spending money directly, without some sort of oversight," which is "not transparent." Councilman Murray said *The Beaufort Gazette* had quoted him, and while the quote was "accurate," it "was a bit out of context." At the Natural Resources Committee meeting, the interim administrator had said one reason he was proposing these changes was "in response to county council not being aware of the Whitehall project" until voting on it on August 27, 2018. Councilman Murray said he knows that is "completely untrue" because of an article from "mid- to late-July" in *The Beaufort Gazette*, as well as "a number of conversations" between city and county council members in that same time period, so he wanted to publically correct Mr. Weaver's remarks and place the quote he had given to *The Beaufort Gazette* in the correct context.

Councilman Murray also encouraged citizens to look at a 40-minute presentation Mr. Weaver made during a county strategic planning meeting "about two weeks ago," in which Mr. Weaver threatened to sue "all of the municipalities for road maintenance" and "the military installations for stormwater fees, to kick Santa Elena out of the federal courthouse, to discontinue ferry service to Daufuskie Island, [and] to sell Camp St.

Mary's," in addition to a number of other "unreasonable, demanding, frivolous . . . items," all of which Councilman Murray finds "ridiculous."

Councilman McFee said there are many who see this "constant abuse," and who would like to see that "change sooner [rather] than later."

Councilman McFee reviewed that the Northern Regional Planning Implementation Committee had made changes to the Lady's Island Plan and said a revised draft of the plan should come to city and county councils soon.

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 8:15 p.m.