

A regular session of Beaufort City Council was held on July 16, 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, Phil Cromer, and Bill Prokop, city manager. Stephen Murray was an excused absence.

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.

Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to adjourn the Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to direct staff to draft a proclamation for the opening of USCB's fall session. The motion passed unanimously.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Keyserling called the regular council meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman McFee led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

RESOLUTION COMMENDING RICK GRIFFIN FOR YEARS OF SERVICE OF OPERATING THE CITY'S MARINA

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the proclamation. The motion passed unanimously. Councilman McFee read the proclamation, and Mayor Keyserling presented it to Mr. Griffin.

RESOLUTION COMMENDING QUINN PEITZ FOR SERVICE ON THE CITY'S HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW BOARD

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the proclamation. The motion passed unanimously. [L] [SEP] Councilman McFee read the proclamation, and Mayor Keyserling presented it to Mr. Peitz.

RESOLUTION COMMENDING CHUCK SYMES FOR SERVICE ON THE CITY'S HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW BOARD [L] [SEP]

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

[L] [SEP]

MINUTES

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the minutes of council's special work session and regular meeting on May 7, 2019. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to approve the minutes of council’s work session and regular meeting on June 11, 2019. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZATION TO ALLOW THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL FOR USE OF SOUTHSIDE PARK

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilwoman Sutton, to table this item. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Keyserling said HT is working with the county on a soccer field at another park. He invited comments from the public on Holy Trinity’s use of Southside Park.

Connie Hipp, 2305 Waverly Way, said she is one of the original members of the Southside Park committee from 2004. She is concerned about whether this will be a passive or active park. Ms. Hipp has “heard different stories” about how Holy Trinity is planning to use the park, and she’s glad the matter is tabled, because she would like to know more about what the city has agreed to before it happens. If Southside Park is going to be an active park, Ms. Hipp said, she would “like to see it called that.”

Mayor Keyserling said the county park manager had said that if there were playgrounds in Southside Park, it would not “be a passive park.” Ms. Hipp said playgrounds had been planned for the park for many years, but no equipment has been put in. The park committee felt like the neighborhood could use a playground, she said, but she’s not sure about having regularly scheduled soccer games there.

Ms. Hipp said the park committee did a lot of research about other communities’ parks; they had been tasked with finding the best use for Southside Park, which “doesn’t include regularly scheduled soccer games.” She thinks Holy Trinity has “good alternatives” to using Southside Park.

Jeff Merrill said he thinks a passive park is a good thing for the community. He said the open space where the soccer field is proposed adds an opportunity for people to go to Southside Park and do what they like to do. Parking at Southside Park when Holy Trinity is using the field – especially for games – would be another concern. Mr. Merrill asked how much of the park would be used to create additional parking spaces, which he feels would be “a large expense” for the city. Also, a large retention pond is supposed to be put into Southside Park to help with stormwater issues, he said, so he asked if the proposed soccer field area would be used for that, or if the city would have to move the field closer to the dog park, which would also take up space that people currently play in. The city would have to fence off that drainage pond so people don’t drown in it, Mr. Merrill added. He has many questions, including about costs, he said, which haven’t been discussed yet.

Mayor Keyserling said Mr. Prichard has an “as-built” of what is at Southside Park and

what could go there. Mr. Merrill asked if that is on the city's website, and Councilman McFee asked if it is online. He was told it is not. Mayor Keyserling said unfortunately, "we've been 15 years without a plan" for Southside Park. He feels young families in "a neighborhood that's falling down" should have a playground.

About the definition of a passive park as one without even a playground, County Councilperson **Alice Howard** said that definition is the county's, not the city's, and the City of Beaufort is not obligated to follow that definition for its city parks. "You can do whatever you want" with a city park, she said, including having a playground at Southside Park and still considering it a passive park.

Mayor Keyserling said Holy Trinity is working with Ms. Howard and county staff to find a location for its soccer field.

Sandi Cavanagh, 4 Abbey Lane, said she was told years ago that Southside Park would be passive, and she is okay with not having a playground there, though that would be nice. She is concerned that with a soccer field in the park, there would be too much traffic, given the number of people, children, and pets using the park.

Barb Chemsak said she has researched the matter, and around the country, there are many different definitions of "passive" parks. She recommends the definition used in Alexandria, Virginia, where active/passive is determined by whether the space is scheduled or unscheduled. A dog park, for example, is unscheduled, so a park with one would be considered "passive," Ms. Chemsak said: Anyone could use it whenever they wanted to during park hours, and the same would be true of a playground.

Ms. Chemsak told Mr. Merrill that the retention pond at Southside Park is no longer planned.

Ms. Chemsak said she looked at the draft ordinance for Beaufort County, and the city could follow that if it wanted to, but it does not *have* to. She is concerned because Southside Park has been a passive park "since day one," and she doesn't want that to change.

Ms. Howard said she lives in the vicinity of Southside Park at 1705 Riverside Drive. She and others had been led to believe that the money from the sale of Bob Jones Field would go to repair Basil Green, but then after watching council's work session, it sounded like that wouldn't meet Holy Trinity's needs. There are several "feasible" sites that Holy Trinity hasn't looked at, Ms. Howard said, and some public school fields that could be used. She feels they are "very close" to finding sites that Beaufort County could schedule for the school. They are in negotiations for the sale of Bob Jones, Ms. Howard said, so she appreciates that council is tabling this matter.

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE GATEWAY CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the ordinance on first reading. Ms. Todd said on June 22, 1999, council adopted an ordinance to establish the Gateway Corridor Redevelopment District, and in 2002 and 2004, city council “authorized the obligations of principal amount of \$4 million and \$2 million, respectively,” for redevelopment projects in that area. As of June 30, 2018, the city “had retired all of the obligations under both of those bonds,” she said, and paid all redevelopment project costs; no surplus money remains. “According to state law, the municipality should adopt an ordinance dissolving the tax allocation fund for the project,” so this ordinance does that and terminates its designation as a redevelopment project area, Ms. Todd said. **The motion passed unanimously.**

REAPPOINTMENTS AND AN APPOINTMENT TO THE CULTURAL DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD (CDAB)

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to reappoint Bonnie Hargrove (USCB Center for the Arts), Megan Morris (Santa Elena Foundation), Jacque Wedler (Historic Beaufort Foundation), and Carol Lauvray (Beaufort History Museum) to CDAB, and to appoint Lynda Dyer (Convention & Visitors Bureau) to CDAB. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Prokop thanked Public Works, the police department, and the fire department for working together to hang a flag from the Woods Bridge, which required special hangers and a state engineer to come to Beaufort to show where it could be put. The flag was taken down when someone saw it was ripped, he said. The city plans more decorations for next year “if we can get through the procedures,” Mr. Prokop said.

Mr. Prokop shared the city’s workers’ comp ratings: in 2016, it was 1.63; in 2017, it was 1.35; in 2018, it was 1.18, and it is .99 so far in 2019, thanks in large part to training employees.

Mr. Prokop said Water Festival has begun. The parade is this weekend, and he hopes everyone enjoys all of the festival.

Mr. Prokop thanked Safe Harbor, which will be the city’s marina operator as of August 1. Safe Harbor has offered current marina employees positions, and for benefits, etc., the day they started working for Mr. Griffin would still be considered their first day, he said.

There will be a stormwater meeting on July 30 with “all of our partners,” Mr. Prokop said, to help determine what needs to be done for the city to get its stormwater projects permitted. He said they are looking at using temporary pumps instead of permanent pumps to deal with stormwater problems. The Rising Sea Level Coalition is doing mapping and other work free of charge, Mr. Prokop said, and a senior intern was

hired for about \$12,000. \$1.5 million in grants has been received for stormwater work, and they feel more granting opportunities are out there, he said.

Mr. Prokop said hurricane season has started, so residents should be prepared and follow the precautions the city issues. When a mandatory evacuation order is issued, there will be no one to help those who stay if they call 911, he said.

Beaufort is growing and changing, Mr. Prokop said, and there have been more permits issued for residential building, as well as the growing number of commercial businesses. USCB and TCL are also growing rapidly, he said. New retail businesses are moving into Beaufort, and shopping centers are being renovated. Soon, 25 to 35 properties are going to be annexed into the city at their owners' request, Mr. Prokop said; the annexation petition will go to the Metropolitan Planning Commission first, then to city council. Beaufort needs to adjust to the changes, he said, in this "exciting and challenging time for the City of Beaufort." By following the strategic plan and working with its partners, the city will be "great," he said.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The next city council meeting will be August 27, Mayor Keyserling said.

He felt this year's Water Festival fireworks were the best he's seen.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Cromer said the Beaufort History Museum had a very successful exhibit on The Melody Makers, which generated a lot of museum memberships.

On the "housing that is affordable" front, Councilman Cromer said the groundbreaking for an 8-unit complex on land donated by the City of Beaufort would be the following day at 9:00 a.m. The Mossy Oaks Habitat for Humanity homes – also built on land donated by the city – should be done in August, he said.

There being no further business to come before council, Councilman Cromer made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to adjourn the regular council meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.