

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on October 16, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling and council members Donnie Ann Beer, George O’Kelley, Mike Sutton, and Mike McFee, and City Manager Scott Dadson.

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.

DISCUSSION REGARDING DEPOT AND HAY STREET

Craig Lewis said Phase One of the Rail Trail is near completion with private dollars by the PATH Foundation. It is from the Depot area to Allison Road. They are expecting a November 20 grand opening. The second phase heads from the Depot north; Mr. Lewis said he’s not sure where it will finish, but they will get as close to MCAS as they can. They are within 30 days of releasing an RFP for design services. They expect a 6-month design process and to be under construction next summer.

Mayor Keyserling asked **Dean Moss** if the county could use the engineer who’s been working on Phase One of the project. Mr. Moss said that he doesn’t believe the county has the authority for that – they have to go through the process – but the engineer who did the first phase *is* bidding with a proposal for the next phase.

In regard to the Depot Road, Mr. Lewis described it as “as scruffy a zone as we have” in the midst of neighborhoods. There is a right-of-way through it, the same as the trail. The “rental rates there are as low as they can go now,” he said. The goals from a city standpoint are to maintain Depot as the feature to get to Ribaut Road. Hay and Middleton are neighborhood connections historically; they’re not usually used by trucks. The people who live there use them. They would like the city policy to continue to be using these as routes.

Mr. Dadson said as the county is planning the next phase of the trail. A request from the DOT to formalize Hay Street has been put before the city. It’s being held off on, though, until engineering plans are more formalized, he said. The interconnectivity issue is over informal issues now. He showed an overlay of long-term plans for revitalization of the Depot area. In terms of the industrial space there, it can be accentuated by improved circulation and formalized parking. As investments allow, they can have formal on-street parking and formalize a circulation on both sides of the trail so property owners will have legal access. The PATH foundation has installed 14 spaces. Hay Street is a good place for a crossing. The closer that they can get to the Depot, the safer it will be, Mr. Lewis said.

Mr. Lewis showed the landscaping plan for the first phase. They won’t install anything that will preclude doing the road plan in the future. Getting to Middleton or on either side of Depot is important to be able to provide security as needed and to do basic maintenance.

As to the Depot building itself, Mr. Lewis said the path will go through it, and it will be closed in the evening and people can bypass it if they’re out after dark and go on another trail. The

building is not owned by the city, Mr. Lewis said. It's part of the National Rail Bank, but no one really owns it. The city is "basically a tenant." It's difficult to put money into a building they don't own. They want to preserve it, and it's been cleaned out. The office is too small to upfit. Other buildings in the area could serve compatible uses. The Redevelopment Commission has concluded that this is best, rather than having those functions in the building.

He showed a similar building on a trail in Greenville which they opened up for use as a public space. At some point, Mr. Lewis said, there may be some use found for the Depot building. Mayor Keyserling asked if the Depot building is still structurally sound, and Mr. Lewis said yes. Mr. Moss agreed. He went on to describe what is and was in the building. There are "some bones in there that are very strong," Mr. Moss said. It would take a lot of money to turn it into a useable space, though. Mr. Dadson said the city holds the easement for 100 years on the building. Mr. Moss said they can do what they want, but renovations have to be historically appropriate.

Mr. Moss, representing the Friends of the Spanish Moss Rail Trail, said there's a steel window with shattered glass, as is the door to the left of it. He suggested that the window be removed and it and the door replaced. They are looking at other clean-up options, too. The PATH Foundation wants to put a gooseneck light above the logo for the trail on the front and back of the building.

Councilman McFee asked if there were other openings that need to be secured. Mr. Moss said there are two, and they're within the fence of the adjacent property owner. He went on to describe the removal of some of the equipment and some that's still there which needs to be disguised. Mr. Dadson said staff can work with Mr. Moss to get the things that need to be accomplished done before the November 20 opening.

Councilman Sutton asked about the interior of the building. Mr. Moss said there are pillars, and on the left side, there are two openings with sliding doors on the private property side. They put in a black chain link fence with barbed wire to keep people from going from the building onto private property. Mayor Keyserling asked, if there's not a partition like a fence, is there a safety hazard for people climbing in there? Mr. Dadson said the city has a 20' wide right-of-way that they will continue to maintain, but there are no plans for it at the moment. He said in reality the city will be maintaining this building. When the county is done with their section, there is an MOU that those responsibilities will be shared.

Councilman McFee said there must be some partition inside; Mr. Lewis said it's a big open space, apart from the columns that are in there. They want to remove the office space because it "presents a corner that people can hide around." Mr. Dadson said the Greenville building is basically an open pavilion which is one way to make it safe, by being permanently open. Mr. Lewis said the Greenville building is self-policing, though. Councilman Sutton said he agrees with securing it and waiting to see if something happens. Councilman Sutton asked the allowed use, and Mr. Dadson said Light Industrial. Councilman Sutton said "then that limits its use."

Councilman Sutton asked where the electrical service came from. Mr. Moss indicated it to him and there's another pole which has a transformer on it, and it's within the Rail Trail right-of-way. Mr. Moss said on a cloudy afternoon, there's sufficient light to be comfortable, so they have decided not to light the building inside.

Mr. Moss said the windows and the place where the air conditioning was removed are the major holes that need to be covered. Councilman O'Kelley asked if there's still wooden flooring; Mr. Moss said he thinks it's in the office, too, under the current flooring. There's also no evidence of leaking.

Maxine Lutz said she was "confused about no one owning the building." Councilman O'Kelley said under law someone has to own it. Mr. Moss said the city leases it from BJWSA, and they "hold it in trust." Ms. Lutz clarified that the Redevelopment Commission has decided not to make this a project to bring tenants into. Mr. Dadson said the city has an easement. Ms. Lutz asked who has the oversight over the building's preservation, and Mr. Dadson said city staff. In regard to the window coming out, she asked what would go in its place; Mr. Moss said he'd suggested shutters over it that could be opened and secured. Ms. Lutz said there are "ghosts" in the structure, and Mr. Moss agreed that there are a number of signs of original architecture.

Kathy Lindsay said they were invited to negotiate with the Redevelopment Commission in 2002. The city agreed with the neighborhood association, she said, that it "would be maintained with appropriate historical standards." She asked if it would go through a design review process. She feels it would be "more appropriate to do this in the public eye," so they can have other points of view. Councilman Sutton said he's hearing that they're securing the building in place, and there will be no restoration at this point. Ms. Lindsay said windows, framing, etc. would be removed and while that might be fine, if any work is done on historic fabric, that's why they had asked for oversight. She doesn't know if the city ordinance for historic buildings not in the Historic District is applicable here. Councilman Sutton said this would be a DRB issue. If they were restoring it, they would go to DRB for approval, but they're not. He feels there is no plan to put money into restoration of the project. Ms. Lindsay said that's fine, but if they are talking about removing historic fabric, such as removing windows or anything other than stabilization, they should consider doing it with public review.

Councilman Sutton asked in regard to the glass and door to be removed if any more need to be taken out. Mr. Moss said these two would be the only spaces to which the public has access. On the left exterior wall, which faces private property, there is another door/window combo and another window broken out. They're in the office, so they are not visible unless you're in the office or on the private property. Councilman Sutton said they need to be careful what they take out of the building. It would be simpler to say that the windows should be secured with shutters, but otherwise leave it alone until someone might restore the original fabric: That's stabilization. Mr. Moss recommended taking out the office door and replacing it with a wooden door that can be secured and locked. The glass needs to be gotten out of the way, at least temporarily. Ms. Lindsay said if historic fabric is removed, it's not stabilization. Councilman

Sutton said he sees no problem with putting a solid door in the hole and covering the windows for public safety to secure it for now.

UPDATE ON RAIL TO TRAIL

Ms. Lindsay said that early on, they had discussed the parking design. She said she'd spoken to **Jon Verity**, and there are a lot of different entities involved. She asked if there was a way they could have "a more global team" so that there could be "more public education and input instead of this fragmentation." She's concerned about adequate planning happening so that it doesn't have a negative impact on the neighborhood. She wants to ensure that the public can be involved too in matters such as adequate parking. She asked who to go to when someone wants to weigh in as a resident of the neighborhood.

Joe DeVito said it began with the Northern Regional Implementation Committee but at this point is back to the Metro Planning Commission because all the entities sit on there. If the property were radically changed, they would have to come to the Metro Planning Commission. Mr. DeVito said from the Friends perspective, they will advertise for people to PLEASE not park in the residential neighborhood. This is all they know to do at this point because it's a public street. There's no way to know if they will have adequate parking when Phase Two is complete. Ms. Lindsay said "the neighborhood deserves to have a coherent global plan."

Mayor Keyserling said apart from the specifics to accommodate the Spanish Moss Rail Trail, it's in Sector Two and will go before the Metro Planning Commission. Mayor Keyserling said all three parties are included in that, so as they enter Phases 2 and 3, they will see that they have to address those issues. Short-term, when coming down Allison Road, they want to accommodate the trail, but there will be issues raised, and eventually it will all have to go through the Metro Planning Commission.

Councilman Sutton said he couldn't answer her question, and he feels "no government group could do so." The project is on the fast-track, and he remembers its genesis. His concern at the time was cleaning up the connectors on Depot Road. There is no legal chartered route across this rail bed, he said. The first step was to secure for the city the right to negotiate crossovers in the light industrial area so they can clean it up and plan for the future.

Councilman O'Kelley said he's been to the Greenway in Charleston a lot, and he's never seen a parking problem there. They could ask Charleston how they solved their problem. Mayor Keyserling said he's always assumed the major spot of interest will be at Highway 170 at Beaufort Plaza, which would be promoted as the place for out-of-towners who will park there and go to the trail. Mr. Lewis said a lot of planning has been done and "probably isn't all on one coherent map." Mayor Keyserling said Sectors 2-5 haven't gone through the Planning Commission yet.

Joe McDermott said they want high usage, and he's curious who owns the land behind the Staples shopping center. Mayor Keyserling said he's hearing that the city is in sync with the Friends of the Spanish Moss Rail Trail. He said people assume light industry will stay there, and

a neighborhood center may be for the next generation. If that's so, he asked, is there still adequate parking for the people that are in businesses there? Mr. Lewis said "now it's a free for all for parking and this will create actual spaces."

UPDATE ON RIBAUT AND ALLISON ROADS

Mr. Lewis said the DOT is repaving there, and they suggested wider outside and narrower inside lanes including bike sharrows. They have done traffic counts because the paving is underway. They recommend a palette of options and then later public discussion. On Ribaut Road, there are no major changes at this time. On Allison Road, it will be the southern part of the Rail Trail. There will be no parking, but they may use the hospital lots. However, there's not a way to get there safely. People walk on Allison Road, and the need for sidewalks has been around for a long time. There have been stormwater problems out there, too.

This presentation is about the solutions, Mr. Lewis said. Beaufort Memorial Hospital is going to create a safe and pedestrian-friendly corner. On Allison Road, there are a lot of things in the way, and they will have to buy rights-of-way to build sidewalk, unless they flip everything to the south side. Mr. Lewis said they recommend construction of half of Allison Road and both sides when they have the money for it. They will install a curbed edge, and a 10' multi-use path as a sort of trail extension from the hospital parking lot. In lieu of significant pipe work, they are recommending bio-retention swales to manage stormwater and lessen costs. This would run it down to a French pipe for purification and then pipe it all the way to the marsh with a 10' multi-use trail. Councilman O'Kelley ensured that there would be pipes at the driveways. Mayor Keyserling confirmed that this is staying within the existing right-of-way. Mr. Lewis said the ditch would be modified.

Mr. Lewis showed the phases of the work. To ensure pedestrian safety, they need "a speed table" to slow things down. They would also like to encourage a 3-way stop at Battery Creek to manage speeds in this corridor. Councilman O'Kelley said if that's owned by the highway department, they won't allow them. Mr. Moss said the DOT's responsibility ends at the trail.

Mr. Lewis showed project costs. Mr. Dadson said the DOT has encouraged the city that this is a project they would support. Mayor Keyserling asked if they'd maintain ownership, and Mr. Lewis said "they didn't say that." Mr. Lewis said there are potential grant dollars available. Mr. Lewis said this is a presentation of the conceptual plan. The first request is, if council is okay with the plan, they would start with the south end and then they could go forward and do the grant application. The second request is for council to consider taking this into the city street system. There are "a number of non-standard elements that they will be fighting with DOT about ... Bio-retention is one that will blow their mind," he said.

Mr. Dadson said there's a serious gap at the end of the trailhead. There are differences in grades, complicated property issues on the north end, and there's no safe way to get over to Battery Creek. This would connect the majority of the neighborhood to a major employer and to a parking area. The grant application offers the opportunity to make a solution happen.

Getting the trail to work farther south to Port Royal would be a “big win.” Battery Creek has a sidewalk system, which is a plus.

Mayor Keyserling said one issue is if the hospital has been talked to about taking the 10’ on the north side which has been their intention. They need to be coordinated with. The city has access to the right-of-way on the south side. A second issue is the hospital’s rationale of this as a wellness issue to connect it to their campus; this would be good to do for the application, to incorporate them into the effort.

Councilman Sutton said the grant is up to \$400,000, and it requires a city match. Mr. Dadson said the match is 20%. Councilman Sutton said it’s a great idea, but the street-taking issue isn’t worked out yet. He suggested that they should ask for the 3-way stop without owning the street. Mr. DeVito said they should look at the other end of Battery Creek, too, for stop signs. Mr. Dadson said this is an opportunity to connect a series of good things. If they get the grant, then the city can work on the north side. The south side is quicker and will meet a more immediate need. Mr. Dadson said a speed table will do the same thing as a stop sign.

Mayor Keyserling said council is saying that Mr. Lewis should proceed because they have no objection to this plan. Councilman Sutton said council knows what they want, so he asked what the formal next step is. Mayor Keyserling said they “are just nodding now.” They will formally accept the grant or not, Mr. Dadson said. Mayor Keyserling said this will come back to them as part of Sector Two and Sector Three. Mayor Keyserling said the gist of it is that they want to connect Ribaut Road with the trail in a safer way.

UPDATE ON SOUTHSIDE PARK

Mr. Lewis showed the existing conditions today. The planning to date is coming from the Southside Park committee and the civic Master Plan process. They have been pulling the elements together, he said. He showed the phases of the work to be done in Southside Park. They want to install the loop trail first. The park is 8 acres, and they may want a community garden or to have someone come in and farm it. There will be “maximum opportunities to get into the park without overly fragmenting it.”

The Tree Board would like to start a tree farm at Southside Park, and an area has been identified, Mr. Lewis said. **Liza Hill** said it’s an acre and a half. Mr. Lewis said it could be as large as 2 acres. They will start the tree farm now and then the loop trail. In this area there are already water and electricity, so it’s a good location. Councilman Sutton said the tree farm was in the Southside Park committee plans for many years.

Councilman O’Kelley asked about the designated farm area and asked if they’d take out the tree canopy. Ms. Hill said “absolutely not,” and there’s a full sun area, too. Councilman Sutton said they requested infrastructure including main water lines, including this farm and a dog park. Mr. Dadson said that’s still in a binding agreement when they’re ready to do it; a water system for irrigation is included in that. Mr. Dadson said they’ll get new millings for the loop trail. The understory has been cleared and is staying clear. The obligation with the partner

should be the first things they get done. Mayor Keyserling said the agreement is with BJWSA. Councilman McFee said it wasn't done because the city didn't have final plans at that time. The millings for the loop are in both plans and can be done easily enough. Mr. Dadson said they were held up while they tried to design a stormwater pond and the final outcome was that it wasn't needed for mitigation purposes. Then the city applied for grant money to finish the city's end of deals to match whatever BJWSA put in. Mr. Dadson said they have never backed away from their part of the deal. They have budgeted money each year for materials, etc. and do in-kind donations. They had \$80,000, and they've "eaten some of that in the understory and other things." Mr. Dadson said they've matched grants in the past. The money is "a matter of moving things around." They have \$25,000 in this year's appropriation. Ms. Hill said the city matched, for example, for a grant for restrooms, then the city added more.

Councilman O'Kelley asked if they were only planting live oaks, and Ms. Hill said no. They will plant 50 trees of 5 different species to start. The DOT doesn't approve live oaks, but they will approve others. Mr. Dadson said the live oaks could go on the streets the city owns.

Councilman McFee said moving forward with the arboretum and the trail are the most realistic actions to start with. He added that the park's currently being used. Ms. Hill said there are no outstanding grants. \$8000 worth of trees were planted. Councilman McFee said it would be helpful to know what infrastructure is there to benefit the park. Ms. Hill said that they currently have potable municipal water. She has no irrigation system but thinks council should consider drilling a well for the start of the tree farm. When Southside Park is more developed, they can change the pump out. Mr. DeVito said there was a grey water line, but it wasn't useable for the park at this time. Mr. DeVito said there are already 4 wells on the property, and he can show her where they are.

Councilman O'Kelley said the pump would have to be enclosed from vandalism and cold weather. Ms. Hill said it would be in the well underground. The BJWSA will be vacating the site entirely at the end of the year, Mr. DeVito said.

Councilman Sutton said they need to stake out the trail and get the Tree Fund moving. He'd also like an RFP for a dog park design. It may be able to be done with public funding. There is a Master Plan for the park, and they shouldn't forget about that. Councilman McFee said basically there are two plans. Councilman McFee said Palmetto Animal League did a plan, and it's dated now from a cost standpoint, but it was well below \$50,000. They will be sending it on to him.

Councilman McFee said he knows about grey water reuse. Mr. DeVito said there's a line there, but the quality of the water for a public park has to be higher than it is on a golf course and this isn't. It would have to be permitted. They are looking at it, and it's in their capital plan, but not in the near future. When it becomes available, they will switch the taps over. Staff will bring back a recommendation, Mayor Keyserling said.

Don Starkey asked where the dog park was in this plan. He thinks the Southside Park committee hasn't seen any of these Office of Civic Investment plans. It was pointed out to him

by Ms. Hill. Mr. Starkey asked if there would be a connection to the Rail Trail. Councilman Sutton said a lot of work came before the Office of Civic Investment's drawings. He would like to see them corrected to include the older plan with the new so that council can make changes if they need to. Ms. Hill said there have been seven renditions of the Master Plan for Southside Park. She said the program elements garnered from the public in 2004 are still there and in the same locations, but the water element has changed. Mr. Dadson showed where the connection to the trail would be. The idea has always been to connect to it, he said.

HOLIDAY PARKING REQUEST FROM MAIN STREET BEAUFORT

LaNelle Fabian said this is the same as last year. They requested 2 and 4 hour meters in the past, and it was confusing, so now it's 2 hours free where there is normally paid parking. Mr. Dadson said it worked last year and was manageable. Ms. Fabian said they didn't bag the meters last year because people were unclear about what to do after 2 hours, so they put stickers on the meters so that people could pay if they wanted to stay more than 2 hours. The fines declined a lot, Ms. Fabian said. Mr. Dadson said it will be on the agenda next Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before city council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK