A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on October 6, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Jon Verity and Commissioners Mike McNally, Martin Goodman, Mike McFee, Ed Barnhart, Keith Waldrop, and Scott Dadson, City Manager.

Henrietta Goode, Wendy Zara, and Pat Kase were absent.

In accordance with 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

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by the chairman.

MINUTES

Commissioner Barnhart made a motion, second by Commissioner McFee, to approve the September 1, 2011 minutes as submitted. **The motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT – CIVIC Master Plan: VOLUME 1 – SECTOR ONE: DOWNTOWN

Chairman Verity showed the addition to the Master Plan which he said adds Sector One and updates everything. The city will approve it for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. **Josh Martin** described the appendices that are in this Comprehensive Plan amendment. Current projects have been included as well, Mr. Martin said. He said the Planning Commission would hear it, and then the city council would have two readings. As the sectors are moved through, it will become a multi-volume document. Commissioner Waldrop asked why the additions were being made sector by sector. Mr. Martin said they will do the form-based code the same way, sector by sector, and explained the rationale behind this method. Mr. Dadson said this gives council the Redevelopment Commission's endorsement. The document may change. **Commissioner Barnhart made a motion, second by Commissioner McNally, to approve and pass it on to city council. The motion passed unanimously.**

REPORTS

Residential Committee

Mike McNally reviewed some meetings that have taken place; he said the committee had been "somewhat on hold" owing to the charettes. Said there will be an RFP to the Redevelopment Commission in draft form for uses for unused land.

Bladen Street

The negotiations with property owners are finished, plans are finished, the project has been advertised for bid, and November 1 or 2 the project will be awarded for construction, Commissioner McNally said. They are hoping for a January construction date. The Duke Street project is in review at the SCDOT. The second CDBG will probably have to have a fresh application. Commissioner McNally said the first project would have to be substantially complete in order for them to apply for it. Mr. Martin said that the Office of Civic Investment

had been mistaken about the date for that, and they feel they will be on track to apply for it. Commissioner Waldrop asked about Duke Street and why it's subject to DOT approval. There was general agreement that the street belongs to SCDOT. Chairman Verity said Duke shouldn't be in the state inventory, so there may be room for discussion as to whether – city budget allowing – ownership of Duke could be taken back by the city. Mr. Dadson explained how SCDOT came to own certain streets as opposed to local government. Beaufort has occasionally taken back streets such as those around the municipal building, but it has to be done very carefully. Chairman Verity said Port Royal has taken most of their streets back. Mr. Dadson said they have studied what other cities in South Carolina have done to creatively take back streets from the state. Commissioner Goodman said it boils down to money, and Mr. Dadson said that and also "the formula to raise money." Chairman Verity said the SCDOT is now focusing somewhat more on the projects Beaufort was looking at.

Commercial Committee

Commissioner Goodman said the committee did not meet in the past month. He has been working with Mr. Martin on projects. They have met with the new owner of the Lipsitz Building. They have told him they would help find tenants for the building. Commissioner Goodman said there would be apartments upstairs, and downstairs will look like it did in the past in regard to the windows.

Commissioner Goodman said he had attended the Main Street Beaufort economic development meeting. **LaNelle Fabian** sent Commissioner Goodman prospects she had spoken with, and he had contacted them in regard to locating their businesses in downtown Beaufort.

Ms. Fabian said she had found information on the national Main Street site. It's a poster that says that the building is not empty – it's "full of potential." Ms. Fabian was told that the sign has been successful elsewhere. She said they would like to add as contacts Mr. Martin and the Redevelopment Commission. She has a committee ready to hang the signs if the Redevelopment Commission wants to partner with Main Street Beaufort. She said the signs are meant to show that there are empty buildings, but "we care." Commissioner Goodman said putting Office of Civic Investment on there would tie into the city and show that there is effort being made. Mr. Martin said the Redevelopment Commission should be listed as the contact, and then the Office of Civic Investment's information given.

Commissioner McNally said he feels the message is a bit negative, and there was some discussion as to how it might be reworded. Ms. Fabian said the signs will create curiosity. Commissioner Waldrop said he agreed with Commissioner McNally's concern. Commissioner Barnhart said the investment is small, and if it creates any interest in the properties, it's worth it. Chairman Verity said they can be printed at Office of Civic Investment, and Mr. Martin agreed. Ms. Fabian said it included the QR code. Commissioner McNally asked how many storefronts it would go in on Bay Street. Ms. Fabian said about 7. Commissioner McNally said he doesn't like the idea of seeing "Empty" that many times. Commissioner Waldrop said they could tie it into the potential use of the building in the Redevelopment Commission's and the Office of Civic Investment's work. Commissioner Goodman said some of the information could be

added into the Main Street Beaufort web site, i.e., "Based on the Master Plan, possible uses are…"

Mr. Martin said Historic Beaufort Foundation had "a huge file" about the Lipsitz building.

Boundary Street Project Update

Mr. Martin said a TIGER 3 grant had recently been applied for. The application is for Boundary Street Phases 1 A and 1B to take it from the Rail to Trail head, improvement of Neil Road, and Boundary Street to Marsh Road as well as interior improvements of Beaufort Plaza. The grant is for $30 million, and there is a $9 million match from the one-cent sales tax. 25% of the funds have to be spent in a rural designation. They don't require a local match, but this is at 33% which makes the application stronger. Mr. Martin said it's "a strong application for a town this size to have." The full application is due at the end of the month, Mr. Martin said, and the award should be known in 60-90 days, so they should know if it's awarded by the end of the year.

PRESENTATION: OFFICE OF CIVIC INVESTMENT ON SECTORS 2 & 3 CHARETTE PRESENTATION

Mr. Martin presented an abbreviated version of the charette presentation. He described the purposes of the charette and the Office of Civic Investment process that was used. He showed a graphic of Sectors Two and Three. Port Royal was included and participated "a good amount," Mr. Martin said. He said they made an effort to determine the "centers and edges" of neighborhoods. There are strides being made to coordinate with TCL and the hospital on their Master Plans. There are neighborhood schools and a lot of park space in these sectors. They did a synoptic survey as they did with Sector One. The survey data showed this is a primary residential area. He showed the distribution of owner-occupied vs. renters. There was a good geographical distribution represented in the process, Mr. Martin said. Project maps were developed for the charette teams.

Key Issues:

- Viable transportation choices for everyone
- Reconnect the grid
- More park/civic space and waterfront access
- Pedestrian-scale development and redevelopment on Ribaut Road
- Focus activity in nodes along the Rail to Trail and Ribaut Road – Mr. Martin said there's a lot of excitement about the Rail to Trail, and the current condition is "more of a breeding ground for nefarious activity" than if it's paved and developed.
- Increase development

He showed graphics representing the "comparisons of neighborhoods' fabric." He went on to discuss the waterfront accessibility in various areas. They looked at the opportunities to improve that for some neighborhoods. He showed the current view to the trailhead for the Rail to Trail. There was a rendering done for the new Beaufort Plaza redevelopment. There is a plan

to open up the area as park land with public access to the area behind where the Kentucky Fried Chicken currently is.

Mr. Martin showed the view on the Rail to Trail when it first opens up at the water crossing. He showed potential infill along Battery Creek and North Hermitage Road and at the North Street Trailhead. There will be public viewing spots of the water along the trail. He showed the potential redevelopment of Riverview Charter School. They want to preserve neighborhood schools, he said. They would bring in new playing fields for another school when Riverview Charter School moves out. In regard to redevelopment, Mr. Martin said they need to be aware of introducing a lot of people living in the areas which are work places now because that could potentially cause erosion. The style in the Depot area "has room to be more funky and eclectic," he said. He showed the Depot as a greenway center.

Mr. Martin showed potential waterfront infill in the area south of Cottage Farms. In Southside Park, there are many "schemes that may be phasing schemes." They want to legalize agriculture and the area could become a community garden and phase into something else. He said that Lauren Kelly had developed a plan for community garden plots. They had interest by people in developing their front yards into farms, and in the Comprehensive Plan they need to be cognizant that they keep such things legal, as well as solar efforts. There are many other potential uses within Southside Park, including reconstructing wetlands; the overall stormwater management plan could take a look at that as well, Mr. Martin said.

The county nature preserve is "rather wet and bog-like" and to very well-marked. They looked at how it could be improved with boardwalks and possibly an educational center. In regard to neighborhood development opportunities, they looked at modified cul de sacs to accommodate stormwater and new infill. Mr. Martin said the Piggly Wiggly shopping center at Mossy Oaks has potential for redevelopment, not in the immediate future but as part of other development. He went on to show infill opportunities long Ribaut Road. The sidewalks on Ribaut Road are right up against the street and seem unsafe. All residents in these sectors were to bury the utilities. He showed a schematic of that with bike lanes and pedestrians along with the cars. There may be a material change in the center. They have looked at infill and possible parallel parking opportunities on Ribaut Road.

On Allison Road, Mr. Martin said, there are redevelopment areas, and he said "there's a lot of room to grow in Sector Two and Sector Three." Hospital planning is difficult, he said, because the buildings can't be closed down and are "the ultimate Rubik's Cube" as a result. They have a lot of parking lots and aren't very well-thought out over time. There's potential for a shared parking deck. They are looking at a potential conference center for retreats and seminars on the TCL/BMH campuses with a series of cottages on Polk Island with a boardwalk. He showed the ultimate build-out of both campuses. Mr. Martin said they are also looking to create green spaces with views connected all the way out to the marsh. They looked at how they would like to address institutional architecture – a new building or a parking garage – and the scale, materials, operational windows, etc. for design guidelines.

He showed a rendering of a potential roundabout at Ribaut Road and Bay Street, then at the county administration buildings and the vacant Harvey property. If the jail were to go away, he said, they could add more connection to the water and potentially an assisted living facility village. They are looking to reformat the county building property but keeping it there and growing it while "inserting other options" there.

They did a street regulating plan for all streets in Sector Two and Sector Three, with attention to those with no sidewalks or unsafe ones. Ribaut Road needs to be safe for pedestrians, and have sidewalks and facilities for *all* modes of transportation. He said the county has asked to use their diagrams of the Rail to Trail for its own presentations.

Commissioner Waldrop said at one point there was a contingency for a roundabout in front of City Hall. Mr. Martin said it's covered in the Boundary Street plan, and there are differing opinions as to whether it should be a T-intersection or a roundabout.

Commissioner McNally said it's clearly a 50-year plan. The market will turn around, and this investment will make Beaufort a better opportunity for residential and commercial development. He proposed questions a residential developer might ask about a potential infill neighborhood. He asked how much all the property is worth in a particular area to acquire it. He would have to know if water, sewer and electric were available to service that area. They would also have to know square footage, which Mr. Martin said the Office of Civic Investment has. Commissioner McNally said he doesn't see one developer doing it all, but if it were divided into economic sectors for a variety of developers, that would be useful "to help the market come." That would show developers that they had "little economic packages" to show developers that Beaufort was ready for them with numbers, etc. Chairman Verity said they need to prioritize highest and most immediate need, and Commissioner McNally agreed. Commissioner McNally said they could have an evolving linear graph of their priorities and wishes.

Chairman Verity said since the Rail To Trail is moving forward, they may be able to move off of that and move on to other planning for redevelopment. He added that there must be similar issues of vacant and abandoned houses and property. Mr. Martin said they mapped that. Chairman Verity said they need to aggressively approach that in these sectors as well. Commissioner Goodman said they don't have to deal with the historic areas in the same ways, so it may cost less.

Mr. Martin said they have talked to Lowcountry Housing Trust about looking at ALL the opportunities in the city. They have the same level of data for these areas as they have for the city, Mr. Martin said. Commissioner McNally asked if the parceling he discussed is within the scope of the Office of Civic Investment's contract. Mr. Martin said he thinks they can do that. Commissioner Goodman said in the *next* sector, down Highway 170, it will be different because it's very commercial. He asked if they'd look at properties that aren't in the city, and Mr. Martin said yes, and they did that in these two sectors, too. Commissioner Goodman said a comprehensive site review and a good plan, even though it's not in the city, will be a good

opportunity for the owner or potential owner to see what can be done under form-based code and start a conversation about annexation worth his/her while. Mr. Martin said form-based code will eliminate the density shopping that's gone on in the past. The city, town, and county will be calibrated on the same level. In regard to a master planning perspective, they don't look at boundaries, Mr. Martin said.

Chairman Verity asked about next steps for the Office of Civic Investment. Mr. Martin said they will be creating the Master Plan document for Sector Two and Three. They will be working on the form-based code as they take a break before doing Sector Four; it will be a big process to do before June of 2012.

Commissioner Waldrop asked if the neighborhood structure Mr. Martin showed was only in the Office of Civic Investment's mind or the minds of the neighborhood residents as well. He used the example of Grant Park in Atlanta which has a strong sense of community. Mr. Martin said the neighborhood structure as a whole is much more organized in Sector One. In Sector Two, if people are "in the middle," they want to form neighborhood associations. Spanish Point is more planned, but there are areas in between that are less organized fragments. The plan is to organize neighborhoods because the neighborhood associations there create great neighborhoods and civic pride. In Sector Two and Three, they have some work to do to achieve that.

Merritt Patterson said he wanted to discuss the Depot Road area. There's sensitivity to not being able to operate businesses down there. They provide services not appropriate elsewhere. The city is attempting to put residents down there and trying to regulate the businesses to accommodate homeowners, Mr. Patterson said: "They want to improve the look of the place." Though he and others support redevelopment and improving the look of the area, he said that if the city "includes residential in the mix," and the contractors, etc., come out in the morning to work, the police will respond to complaints which may include shut-downs, and the businesses there are sensitive to that. Where there was no residential planned, he said he's noted that "we did end up with 14 dwelling units," and he doesn't know what the form-based code will add in terms of live-work units. There is "a business plan and a capital plan afoot," Mr. Patterson said, and he's looking for a way that light industrial can be accommodated. The businesses in the area are willingly participating in the process, he said, but they don't want the planning process to put up an impediment to development.

Mr. McNally asked if it would be better to have residential in that area but with "some sort of definite buffer" such as landscaping for screening. Mr. Martin said in the form-based code, this would be a special district and unlike a Neighborhood Commercial District, etc. This area will have to be coded independently and differently from other areas, as will TCL and the hospital. Mr. Patterson said that if the Sector One area is built out as is planned for in the next 50 years, there will need to be an expanded area for refrigeration and storage, etc. This area "could be undersized in the long view." Commissioner McFee said the Beaufort Industrial Park would accommodate larger scale businesses of the type that would be needed at the 80,000 population density projection and the Depot Road area would remain small scale. Mr. Patterson

said a lot of code is residentially based and there's concern that this won't serve business / commercial interests.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the commission, Commissioner Goodman made a motion to adjourn, second by Commissioner McFee. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

ATTEST: _____

IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK