

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on November 4, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Bob Pinkerton, Commissioners Martin Goodman, Ed Barnhart, and Wendy Zara, Jon Verity, Pat Kase, and Keith Waldrop, Mack Cook and Shirley Hughes, Assistant City Manager. Mike McNally and Henrietta Goode 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 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Pinkerton.

MINUTES

Commissioner Verity made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2010 meeting. Commissioner Goodman seconded the motion. Commissioner Zara abstained. **The motion passed unanimously.**

New Redevelopment Commission members Commissioner Kase and Commissioner Waldrop introduced themselves.

Chairman Pinkerton said that Commissioner Goode had agreed to be on the board with the stipulation that the meetings begin at 5:00 pm rather than 4:00 pm. There was some discussion about changing the time of the meeting.

PARKING UPDATE

Mr. Cook introduced **Paul Michau**, chairman of the Point neighborhood association. Mr. Michau discussed the encroachment of parkers into the Point, particularly on New Street and Port Republic. There was resistance to banning parking by non-residents at certain hours Point-wide except for residents on the aforementioned streets, who were happy with the task force proposal on how this would be administered.

The proposal is for on-street, residential, permitted-only parking 5 days a week, 8 am – 5 pm to target preventing all-day parking by downtown employees in the Point. Patrons of restaurants are also beginning to park there, but that's not as bad Mr. Michau said. There's also some City Loft overflow, but they got an exemption because of off-site parking elsewhere. There may be a request to go to 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, but for now, they will leave weekends and evenings available for parking other than by residents and their guests.

They will give out decals for registered cars belonging to residents, and hanging tags for guests of residents. If residents need more, they can get extra decals from Lanier. They are asking for the Redevelopment Commission's support when they go before council, as it ties into the larger parking situation. Mr. Michau indicated on a map the areas to which this would apply.

They would prefer that there be signs rather than painted curbs to maintain historic character. Mr. Cook said the fines for this type of violation are very pricey: i.e., \$50 for parking in a fire or no parking zone.

Commissioner Verity made a motion, second by Commissioner Zara, to support the plan. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Cook described the monthly parking operations numbers. Occupancy on Bay Street and in the Marina, from which data can be obtained from the kiosks, were 94.2% of full capacity in July, 82.4% in August, 81.8% in September, and 91.3% in October. Main Street Beaufort did a survey of 19 businesses in March 2010, and they said August - September was the slowest retail period, so that seems to track with parking data. About 50% of the available spaces are covered by the kiosks.

More citations for handicapped and loading zone parking were given in October than previously. Mr. Cook said they are trying to determine "the value of a parking place." They have determined that a 2-hour space is worth about \$39,000 in annual revenue *to the merchants*. If a non-consumer is parking in that space, that much is lost on an annual basis. Based on business license revenue numbers, that amounts to \$110 worth of merchant revenue per hour of parking.

Mr. Cook, the mayor, and John Williams have looked at all the e-mails the mayor has received and tried to see what has triggered complaints.

Complaints

- Enforcement – triggers complaints in other areas, i.e., code enforcement. Many of the complaints about parking are in response to a consistent enforcement effort.
- Pay vs. free – no complaints about the change to \$1 vs. 50 cents an hour. They're more about whether parking should be free.
- Pay stations – they are said not to be user-friendly.
- Signs – there are complaints that there are not enough of them or that they're not clear enough.

Remedies

- On-street "warning" ticket software - They have pressured the Clancy ticket agency to provide a link between the person on the street and the mainframe if the person being cited has ever been cited before. They will suggest a warning system at the street level. They can only track the car, not the driver.

- Merchant validation program – Main Street Beaufort or the merchants can buy a group of tickets, and they can be given to the merchants, so a customer can get validation and pay for an hour of parking at another time.
- Re-programmed screen instructions and contrasting colors – Mr. Cook demonstrated the changes on a kiosk to allow it to be more intuitive. It also will not allow a parker to buy more time than they need, so they can't overspend. These re-programmed kiosks are not yet on the street. They are testing them first.
- More signs – (diagonally-shaped) and 25-hour-a-week non-ticketing attendants to assist parkers.

They have also created a survey to determine what downtown parkers' concerns are so they can be addressed.

Mr. Cook said that 94% of tickets are written for expired meters. The other 6% of offenses are scattered, and they are really police, not parking, matters, but to free up policemen and get them elsewhere, police delegated some of the parking violation responsibilities to Lanier. Commissioner Goodman asked if there were complaints about Lanier (non-police) writing tickets. Mr. Cook said those ticketed for parking in loading areas are some of the more verbal complaints. Chairman Pinkerton said loading zones weren't enforced before, so people don't know that they need to indicate that they're loading or unloading.

Other public safety issues, Commissioner Goodman said, like it or not, shouldn't be complained about; those parked in front of a fire hydrant are flatly violating the law. Mr. Cook said it becomes a criticism of parking – though it is a matter of law – because of the way it is phrased, even though a city has to consistently enforce violations like parking in a fire zone, etc.

Mr. Cook said the problems he's presented are those which the city can fix, not all of those that have been received. He presented a draft-in-process of the 2010 parking plan and explained what was attempted. He said the city staff has now handed it off the Main Street Beaufort with instructions to come back to city council with an idea of what a comprehensive parking plan should be. Mr. Cook said that Redevelopment Commission and Main Street Beaufort are encouraged to use contractual consulting services.

Chairman Pinkerton said that the focus has been shifted to fixing problems and to quit worrying about revenue. A number of things have been done to fix apparent problems. Every complaint has been addressed by some kind of action. The list is "down now to the burning issue of 8-hour parking": location, the price, and the length of time one can park. The plan is to reduce the price as one is further from Bay Street. 4-hour meters on Bay Street are under discussion; "no one really knows what to do about that, yet." Chairman Pinkerton said they need to discuss bagging meters at Christmas and the issuance of warnings, which will be a council matter.

Lanelle Fabian said Main Street Beaufort had sent a request about free 2- and 4-hour parking between Thanksgiving and the New Year. She showed a revised letter. The marina has 4- and 8-hour spaces, so they didn't ask for free parking there to avoid confusion. Now they have requested to bag the library meters and those in the old City Hall. Lanier has to have monthly operating costs, and Redevelopment Commission and Main Street Beaufort would have to give up a portion of the proceeds they earn during that month. People will still pay to park in 8-hour meters and be cited for other parking violations. There's still opportunity for income to come in. The joint parking committee has agreed, and the Main Street Beaufort board has agreed, to forgo their portion of revenue to allow this holiday parking plan. The Redevelopment Commission needs to decide if they are willing to do so as well. Mr. Cook said the Redevelopment Commission is giving up about \$24,000 potentially. Chairman Pinkerton said parkers will still get tickets if they are parked for more than 2 hours (the limit of the free parking) and revenue will come in from that.

Mr. Cook asked if the Redevelopment Commission has the luxury to decide this matter since the Main Street Beaufort board has already announced there will be free parking. Chairman Pinkerton said he thought council had to approve it, and he is not sure the mayor has gone on record.

Chairman Pinkerton and Commissioner Zara agreed that this is a tradition, and so the commission should recommend it. Commissioner Zara, second by Commissioner Barnhart, made a motion to recommend to council that the tradition be continued per the recommendation of Main Street Beaufort as far as specific lots are concerned. Mr. Cook said the library spaces are subject to an agreement between the county and the city; that shouldn't be a problem, "but there are other issues at play."

Commissioner Goodman said if this is done every year, this should be factored into the budget. The Redevelopment Commission needs to ensure that they know what they're giving up and that their budgets reflect that. Commissioner Goodman went on to say that the 18 spaces at the old city hall employees' lot will be pulled out if something happens to that building. They will be private. Chairman Pinkerton said the proposal changes every year depending on different factors. Commissioner Goodman clarified that those spaces are in play this year, though.

Commissioner Barnhart said this is a first year experiment, and they should move forward, learn from it what they can, and budget it in the future. Chairman Pinkerton said a voucher system is too complicated to implement. Commissioner Zara said the last thing they need to do is come up with something else complicated. Commissioner Zara said the motion she made is just for this year. Commissioner Verity asked what happens to the Trask lot. He asked how the employees will be kept off of Bay Street. Ms. Fabian said if they're parked there more than 2 hours, they will get a ticket. It happens now, even without bags. They continue to encourage the business owners to encourage their employees not to do it. Commissioner Zara said this is nothing new. Commissioner Verity said they should encourage Main Street Beaufort to try to keep the employees off the street. They may need to take a more proactive stance in the

future, i.e., taking employees' plate numbers. Commissioner Goodman said in the past the enforcement of the 2 hours of parking was spottier and now Lanier is enforcing it more.

There was general discussion about the 2-hour limit of parking on Bay Street. Commissioner Zara called the question. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Pinkerton said the issue on the warnings is that first-time violators who have an expired meter can get a warning, whether they are 5 minutes or 3 hours over their paid-for time. The ordinance allows Lanier to ticket without limits to frequency. Chairman Pinkerton said the parking sub-committee had proposed an hour-over limit for the warning. Commissioner Zara asked if it was known how many people parked on Bay Street are local and how many are from out of town. Mr. Cook said they haven't done a traffic survey in some time. **Alice Luther** from Lanier Parking Systems said they haven't looked at that, either, for those who have received tickets. In March, Mr. Cook said, it was done unscientifically by where the car was purchased.

Commissioner Verity said the purpose of the warning is to be friendly, and he thinks violators should be free for up to 24 hours to create that friendly atmosphere. Commissioner Zara said tourists have an expectation that they will have to pay to park. Commissioner Verity said then he wouldn't do the warning. Commissioner Zara said the complaints are from the locals; she tends not to favor the warning because there's no gain. Commissioner Barnhart said the more complicated the program, the worse it functions. They're talking about \$10. Commissioner Goodman said not considering the \$10 fine part of it, which is not the Redevelopment Commission's to deal with, if someone is in the 2-hour meters, if they sit there 4 hours, that's a parking space that lost 2 hours of its \$39,000 use to the merchants.

Ms. Fabian said most complaints are from those who didn't realize they had to pay for parking and so got a ticket. Those people are telling merchants they won't come back, which is why this idea came up. Commissioner Goodman asked Ms. Luther if this is a common complaint in other locations. Ms. Luther said yes, and even if they have a meter there, they say they didn't know they had to pay. Ms. Luther said in most cases in other cities Lanier serves, they ticket, not give warnings. Commissioner Goodman said the better scenario might be to give Lanier more flexibility to forgive a ticket. Chairman Pinkerton and Commissioner Zara said they already have that ability. Mr. Cook said the total gross tickets are about half again as much as what they see. 45% of the tickets written are being given back.

Commissioner Verity asked if cars were ever booted. Chairman Pinkerton said they haven't gotten to that yet. Commissioner Verity advocated that as a deterrent. Commissioner Waldrop asked if there were a grace period. Ms. Luther said they try to give one in certain circumstances. Mr. Cook said in the pay stations it's usually a built in 10-minute grace period. Ms. Luther said on Bay Street they have 92 different ways to see that they have to pay, with additional signs, etc.

FINANCE / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Commissioner Goodman said the committee is working on the RFP (at about 90% completion) for the old city hall and are close to finalizing it. Robert Bundy did a walk-through of the building and is in the process of preparing an appraisal in the next two weeks. They should have a finalized RFP to consider, too, by the next meeting. Ms. Hughes and Commissioner Goodman explained the background to the new members. Once the proposals are returned, they will look at the best-use proposal for what the Redevelopment Commission wants to happen. Commissioner Zara asked if it was customary to have the appraised value in the RFP. Commissioner Goodman said yes, in the examples they looked at. If someone can do a desirable project that will put it back on the tax rolls, and it's a big improvement for downtown, they might consider a different price than that appraised. Commissioner Waldrop said the appraisal will be based on some commercial use. Commissioner Goodman said it could be another use, i.e., multi-family residential.

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REHAB COMMITTEE

Commissioner Zara said Commissioner McNally gave her the notes for a progress update. The pilot project committee met again, and they will be approaching the use of a different building than they'd first considered; this one is at 1407 Duke Street (The Frogmore Lodge), and the owners are anxious to sell at a good price. No offer has been made. It would be a single-family house sold at a market-based value. Ms. Hughes said the cleared title will be received via Bill Harvey. The one that fell through will still be considered if the owner lowers the price to a more realistic one. Mike McFee has helped establish values and construction costs by providing data from recent sales.

The finance subcommittee is looking at a map of lots the city owns that could be used in the Northwest Quadrant for workforce housing. They will come up with parameters for doing that. There need to be incentives, and they're figuring that out as they go along. They'd like to meet with The Lawrence Group as soon as possible. Chairman Pinkerton asked when they will be on board. Ms. Hughes said she thinks January 15. The city manager is on vacation, but they need to discuss using the consultants before the start of the actual project.

Commissioner Zara said Libby Anderson is very familiar with the area and has been very helpful, and Commissioner Goode, who is on the commission, lives in the Northwest Quadrant and is part of the neighborhood association. Commissioner Zara said they'd like to get city lots that are not on the tax rolls back on them and create some infill development. They're looking at housing that would sell at a \$135,000 level. They need to determine how they'll finance these rehabs and are identifying who to talk to. They haven't yet spoken to the Housing Authority, she said in response to a question from Commissioner Verity. They want to get the financing, sell the house at a market rate and derive enough money to start their own revolving fund.

Commissioner Zara said she hasn't contacted Habitat for Humanity yet, but she knows that they have lots that they need to put houses on. Ms. Hughes said there are at least 3-4 lots available in the Northwest Quadrant that need to be cleared, and there may be other buildable lots in other neighborhoods. Commissioner Goodman said they need to remember that they're about the whole city, not just the core area. Commissioner Zara said at the retreat they determined

that this would be the first focus area, but they will learn from that how to serve the rest of the city. Commissioner Zara said re: rehabs, Cooter Ramsey had created a letter of agreement for the Northwest Quadrant pilot project; the estimated cost of Mr. Ramsey's architectural services is \$5000 - \$8000, specifically for 1407 Duke Street.

Commissioner Waldrop asked if the state housing finance had been approached. Commissioner Zara said if they consider it, it will be for workforce housing which is 80% of median. On workforce housing, they probably can apply to the state for down payment assistance up to \$20,000, etc. They "are hoping Craig Lawrence and his people can cut through this so the Redevelopment Commission doesn't have to do all the research."

Commissioner Goodman asked, if the contract is done with Mr. Ramsey, has there been consideration of fast-tracking or streamlining the process? Commissioner Barnhart said historic buildings will have to have things put in them that weren't in original code. Changes would be off the back and the historical face reconstructed. Commissioner Goodman asked if Ms. Anderson could meet with the HDRB and ask for fast-tracking for restoration. Commissioner Zara said they can't ask that until they have the designs. Commissioner Barnhart said when they have plans, there will be less resistance than they might think. A lot of people will be in favor of restoration. Commissioner Zara listed the composition of the committee and those interested who support the concept.

BLADEN STREET PROJECT

Chairman Pinkerton said there's not a lot going on with this, owing to the need to correct surveys on individual pieces of property and attempts to get appraisals on them. A DOT meeting indicated everyone is on the same page; DOT is giving \$200,000 to the project.

Ms. Hughes asked if the 3 new Redevelopment Commission members were assigned to sub-committees, and several people said no. Ms. Hughes explained the purpose of a meeting the following week about which Commissioner Zara asked. Chairman Pinkerton said the assignments would be difficult to make until the three committees' duties were explained. Chairman Pinkerton detailed for the new members the three committees: economic development / finance, infrastructure (Bladen Street, Boundary Street Project, etc.), and housing. Commissioner Zara said workforce housing is an economic development issue. Commissioner Barnhart suggested a meeting to take an organizational step back. Chairman Pinkerton proposed doing that next month at the Redevelopment Commission meeting. Commissioner Verity said it should be done outside the regular meeting hours. Commissioner Barnhart suggested a mini-retreat to review the details with the new Redevelopment Commission members; even the less-new members were brand new at the time of the retreat. Commissioner Zara said January would be a better time to do it, and there was general agreement.

Commissioner Barnhart commented that there has been less-than-perfect press as a result of incomplete reporting. They should possibly state for the record what it is that the Redevelopment Commission is and does so they won't be criticized incorrectly for what isn't

their fault. Commissioner Zara said it is commonly misunderstood that they're involved in land use planning and zoning; also, some don't know that the Redevelopment Commission's power is based on state statutes, and if the city council decides to have a Redevelopment Commission, they can have one: "It's not something someone dreams up." Commissioner Barnhart said some believe that the Redevelopment Commission is taking city council's powers, and they're not, so they should make a statement to correct the misimpressions. Commissioner Goodman discussed the limitations of those powers, though it appears they have a lot. Chairman Pinkerton said that the Redevelopment Commission serves at the pleasure of the city council. Commissioner Barnhart said he'd write something up for the Redevelopment Commission to look at.

Commissioner Barnhart said they should also clear up how professional services are selected, and he offered to write up a statement about how those are looked at. Commissioner Goodman said a letter to the editor said The Lawrence Group was gotten without bids, but that saved the city money. Commissioner Barnhart said selecting the lowest bidder to do planning would be a disaster. Commissioner Goodman said it's similar to parking complaints: some of those who are complaining are those who should have gotten tickets in the past and didn't. Main Street Beaufort is the Redevelopment Commission's partner, "and they should be saying positive, explanatory things." Spotty enforcement in the past is the reason they weren't ticketed before.

Commissioner Kase asked how the information would be distributed. Ms. Hughes said they have a contracted individual who will assist them in doing press releases. Commissioner Kase asked if the draft will go through council or the city manager. Ms. Hughes said it depends. Chairman Pinkerton said politically they might want to pass it by someone. Ms. Hughes said John Williams assists them to ensure that what they release is well-written and properly conveys what they want it to convey. Commissioner Kase said the parking anxiety could have been mitigated by controlling the message; by the time they're playing defense, it's too late. Commissioner Verity said all this was introduced as the transition to new members was being made. Commissioner Zara said people don't like change and it won't be perfect, so they need to find out the problems and get them fixed.

Commissioner Goodman praised the problem solving efforts thus far. Those who write a letter to the editor instead of contacting Lanier or others involved make that choice.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Zara made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Barnhart. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:12 pm.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK