

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on February 4, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room at 302 Carteret Street. In attendance were Chairman Bob Pinkerton, Commissioners Martin Goodman, James Bellew, Gene Rugala, Mike McNally, Denise Bolin, Ed Barnhart, Wendy Zara, and Jon Verity and City Manager Scott Dadson, and Mack Cook.

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.

UPDATE ON DOWNTOWN PARKING

Mr. Cook provided a review of the background of the city and parking as it relates to Lanier, the Redevelopment Commission, and Main Street Beaufort. In Phase One, the city didn't do much because it wanted retail to be successful during the holiday season. City Human Resources Director Dr. Kimberly Foxworth discussed her experience "working undercover," investigating locals' response to parking. She feels Lanier has raised the standard high.

Councilman Sutton said it was important for the Redevelopment Commission to understand that the "battle" on parking has been going for 25 years and wanted them to know that this is the first time winning it has been achievable.

Scott Diggs, of Lanier Parking, made a presentation about Phase 2. Lanier Parking is Atlanta-based and has been around since 1989. They do all kinds of parking, including the Winter Olympics. They have 1600 employees. They wanted to play an "ambassador" role initially in Phase One. He showed the locations of digital pay stations in the next phase and described how they work. The machines will be ordered very soon. With their rate structure, they don't think there will be a need for "time zones."

Councilman Sutton asked for current hourly rates; Mr. Diggs said \$1.00 an hour. Commissioner Bolin asked if there would be Spanish prompts, too, and Ms. Loomis said there could be. 132 spaces will have traditional meters, 117 will remain in effect. 199 meters will be stored for future use and replaced with pay stations. Commissioner McNally asked if they have to be hard-wired for electricity. **Carrie Loomis** of Lanier Parking said some may be powered and some will be solar.

Lanier wants to modify the hours of enforcement from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. They believe this will help with the employee parking issue. Commissioner McNally asked if there could be employee designated areas or stickers. Mr. Diggs said he'd get back to that and they'll get the option they need. It may not be prudent to have enforcement for all 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, so they'll "mix it up."

Commissioner Goodman asked, if the recommendation is approved, it will be phased in. Mr. Cook said council has to set the rates. Commissioner Goodman said he's asking about changing

hours of enforcement. Mr. Diggs said he thinks it would be a good idea to pick a day, and then do a two-week period where they give notices, then 2 weeks for warnings, then give tickets.

Mr. Diggs said they have a long-term ground lease at the Trask lot next to BB&T for long-term employee parking. The rate structure will make it more economical for downtown employees to use off-street parking. Monthly parking spaces will also be available. There are approximately 100 spaces in the lot. Commissioner McNally asked about the cost of the lease relative to revenues. Mr. Diggs said the company is leasing, so it's a straight expense to Lanier, and the city has no exposure.

He showed a table of proposed new rates. The main change is an expired meter fine going from \$3 to \$15.00, increasing after 7 days without paying and then again at Day 15+. Out of state and in-state tags will be sent to a collection agency which works on contingency fee of 30%. Commissioner McNally asked if the pay stations could be used to pay a citation. Mr. Diggs said the technology is "close" but not ready yet. Ms. Loomis said they can take cards over the phone or online. It can be mailed in or dropped at office. Commissioner Barnhart said the current drop boxes may be targets with the higher fines. Mr. Diggs said they have office space on Scott Street.

Mr. Sutton asked about the rate structure. Mr. Diggs said it's at or less than what they charge in all other cities. Commissioner McNally asked how many people get a ticket out of 1000 with the current system. Ms. Loomis said it depends, based on what is provided to the customers. With the pay stations, there should be fewer tickets and more compliance because they have more options. Mr. Cook said they're now giving about 70 citations a day, which has increased since Lanier took over. Mr. Cook said enforcement in the past was inconsistent. In November – December, when it wasn't enforced, they were probably not even writing 70 a *month*. Mr. Cook said the cost to *legally* park is not significantly rising. It is the cost to *illegally* park that is rising significantly.

Mayor Keyserling asked if there was a way to say on the kiosks that all-day parking is available. Mr. Diggs said yes, there is; they can do whatever they want to on the screens, but doing so would take money out of the city's coffers. They could do \$1 an hour, maximum \$5 a day. But it's better to turn over the spaces, so they haven't done a "day max."

Lanelle Fabian, speaking on behalf of the downtown merchants, said there might be push-back because they had assumed the fines might be \$10. She said they will need to educate the merchants that they will have to tell their customers that they have to pay the meters or the merchants might pay for the meters for their customers.

Commissioner McNally asked about signage directing people to the Trask lot. Mr. Dadson clarified that the Trask lot is competitive with the Lanier spaces and lots; the employees are the ones who need to know about it, and he wouldn't encourage directing non-employees to it because they will lose money. Mr. Birch asked details of rates in the Trask lot. Mr. Diggs said they recommend removing the 8 hour on-street monthly parking option but offering monthly

parking at the Marina, the Scott Street lot, and City Hall lot at \$60 a month. Ms. Fabian said that employees may not be able to afford that monthly rate. Mr. Dadson said it's appropriate for part-time employees. He feels the right incentives are in line for the employers and employees. Mr. Cook said \$720 a year is still less than employees pay now "when they pay their fines on Fridays." **Randall Birch**, incoming chair of Main Street Beaufort, said he doesn't want to push everyone to the Commons and Point. He asked what happens when the Trask lot fills up. Mr. Dadson said a full lot solves the problem. The next issue to deal with will be that push-out.

Chairman Pinkerton asked to clarify the doubling of the hourly parking rate; Commissioner Goodman said the recommendation is \$1.00 an hour on *all* meters. That line item was missed and the recommendation would be amended. Chairman Pinkerton asked how the kiosks would work. Mr. Cook said Main Street Beaufort had recommended a pay-by-stall so people don't have to return to their cars.

Mr. Diggs said out-of-state license plates will be sent to collections in 30 days. In-state license plates will be sent after 60 days. Boots used will be self-releasing. 3 outstanding parking tickets once the third one is 15 days late, makes a car boot-eligible. Calling an 800 number and giving a credit card will result in a code that releases the boot. There's a \$60 fee to disconnect from the boot, plus the back charges on the tickets. Councilman Sutton said there's been discussion about how to stop habitual offenders; there have been boots used before on Bay Street. He asked about Lanier's relationship with the judicial system. Mr. Diggs said they don't need to involve the police or a judge. The call-in system takes Lanier's people out of the equation so they won't be in a fight. He said there's an appeals process if someone feels they've been issued a ticket improperly. The citation issuance process has a camera on it which helps with adjudication.

Mr. Cook said a residential parking discussion is taking place. Bottom line: one should be developed but it shouldn't be implemented until each of the neighborhood associations it would have an impact on ask for it. Mr. Diggs said in other cities they solve the problem with a residential parking plan and visitors' passes. All passes are free. He feels it's best to wait and see how this plan downtown goes.

Mr. Cook said two other parking recommendations are in the packet that are not Lanier-related. One of the most valuable tools in the Redevelopment Commission arsenal is the stormwater system; it's cost-prohibitive to replace it. The curbs and sidewalks are now being cleaned for aesthetic reasons and to proactively protect stormwater. One of the threats to stormwater is the run-off from "rogue parking," i.e. non-conforming parking. That run-off causes severe flooding. They're battling the roadblocks. They're not moving against churches for functions and on Sundays. The lots in question (needing restricted usage and landscape improvement) were designated in the Redevelopment Commission's packets. Mr. Dadson said some are zoned for and some are not. Council will be able to look specifically at each one, and they may send the list to the planning commission, for example, once the Redevelopment Commission has made its recommendation. Mr. Dadson said, from a business perspective, the Redevelopment Commission should make this recommendation.

Councilman Sutton asked Mr. Cook to clarify what is meant by landscaping, and Mr. Cook gave a brief overview of what might be involved in ensuring run-off control. Commissioner McNally asked if the lots' make-up are a variety of materials. Mr. Cook said they all began as grass but now are mixtures of other materials as well, including ponds and holes. Commissioner McNally said if there's a list of approved lots, they will need to be brought up to code.

Commissioner Goodman said what's being done should be notified about a public hearing at a council meeting. Mr. Dadson said these are the rules already; nothing is being changed. The Redevelopment Commission would be recommending that the rules be enforced. Commissioner Goodman asked if a church were to decide that they don't want improvement to a lot they aren't using for parking, but are letting others use, what the options are. Mr. Dadson said they could make it unusable as a parking lot. If they do want to use it for parking they have to bring it up to speed with stops and drainage. If they don't want to use it for parking, they can chain it off or turn it into a garden. Councilman Sutton said the churches can benefit by looking at things differently, such as turning the lot into leased parking or vertical construction.

Mr. Cook said this is one of the Redevelopment Commission's most expensive assets. They are trying to even the playing field commercially/competitively and to protect the integrity of the sewer system. Commissioner McNally asked how the drain basins and pipes are doing. Mr. Cook said there's no formal engineering status report but the system is being flushed out and sediment is not being deposited back in. Mr. Dadson said from an O&M perspective, it's working. Progress is being made, but these lots are undoing their work.

Chairman Pinkerton asked about the recommendation for city staff to ensure that downtown parking is safe after hours. Commissioner Verity made a motion and Commissioner Barnhart seconded to approve all the suggested parking recommendations. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Cook said city staff would like Lanier to be the new tour coordinator. Their contract says they will not mix job functions, so the ambassadors will not be tour coordinators. The city doesn't want to "boot strap" the Redevelopment Commission.

Ms. Fabian asked when this matter would go to council. Mr. Dadson said not before February 23, 2010. Commissioner Goodman said there will be two readings, so Main Street Beaufort will have time to have a merchants' meeting for their input. Commissioner Barnhart asked if the rogue lot violators will be notified by letter, and Mr. Dadson said yes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Keyserling welcomed the new Redevelopment Commission members. Councilman Sutton said it is a significant moment in the city's history. He encouraged them to do their homework and debate the issues, not to look to Mr. Dadson for answers.

Chairman Pinkerton asked the Redevelopment Commission members to introduce themselves and tell about their backgrounds, and they did. Chairman Pinkerton proposed a work session on February 18 at 4:00 p.m. and there was general assent. He briefly reviewed the history of the Redevelopment Commission which has never before had the mission it has now, especially since the council's recent retreat. The Redevelopment Commission's job is to develop a plan for economic prosperity. He handed out a list and copy of the mission statement from a year ago.

Commissioner Verity said an off-site retreat may be best saved for a month or two until they've gotten "deeper into it." He also said he doesn't think leadership should be changed. He recommended maintaining Chairman Pinkerton as the chair. He asked Chairman Pinkerton if he's willing to serve again. He said he would be, temporarily. Commissioner Verity made the motion, second by Commissioner Zara, to maintain Chairman Pinkerton's leadership of the Redevelopment Commission. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Dadson said the Redevelopment Commission should be organized around the charter for it developed at the council's retreat. He warned the commission against making decisions online.

Commissioner Bellew said it's block grant time, which needs to be discussed, and there's not a lot of time to apply. He said most of the block grant money would go to Northwest Quadrant projects and there will be more discussion later.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Barnhart made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Zara. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK