

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on March 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.

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 Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2010 meeting. Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PARKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Dadson said council will vote on some of the parking issues at the next city council meeting March 9, 2010. Lanelle Fabian said Main Street Beaufort had a board meeting and the matter of changing the parking time from 6 to 9 pm came up again and they will have a statement for council at the March 9 meeting.

Commissioner Goodman said the Redevelopment Commission has been charged by city council to take care of parking as a partner with Main Street Beaufort. City council is looking for direction on the 6 to 9pm issue; he feels they should take some leadership on that matter. Part of the problem with parking is the restaurant workers coming in to park at 4 pm. If the 6 to 9pm issue is dropped out, it won't be fixed. He has heard many complaints about not being able to find parking at night. Lanier has provided an inexpensive lot; employees walking to their cars can get a police escort. He's concerned if city council doesn't include it in there, when will it show up again? He doesn't feel sure the complaints are valid. Commissioner Barnhart said he has been listening to people; they have no problem with other aspects but don't like raising it to 9 pm; perhaps they could raise it until 7 pm.

Mr. Dadson said about the 6 pm to 9 pm issue that people respond to incentives. They want to be able to stop the cruising effect, get people into stores, and maintain a ratio of 85% full / 15% available. He raised the idea from the city council work session of creating time "zones" on different days and at different times instead of just raising it all to 9 pm. He also said that there are two different markets for day time employees and customers and night time (3-11 pm) employees and customers. Commissioner Goodman said that at the Main Street Beaufort meeting, universally the problem they have is from 3:30 – 6:00 when the employees take up spaces, so the merchants don't stay open later because customers can't get parking. Retailers would adjust their hours to the foot traffic.

Commissioner Barnhart said it needs to be kept simple and go until at least 7 pm. There's a "seasonality" to it. Mid-March – August is entirely different than off-season. Chairman Pinkerton said he has some concerns about cutting it off at 6 pm.

Commissioner Zara made a motion that the meters be in effect from 10 am to 7 pm; Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion for the purposes of discussion. Commissioner Goodman thinks it should be until 9 pm for the sake of the employee parking issue and because it creates a marketing opportunity for retailers and restaurants, such as reimbursing fees with purchase. Commissioner Zara amended the motion to 9 pm; Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. Commissioner Barnhart clarified that they are recommending to city council that they are supporting the original suggestion of changing the time from 6 to 9 pm. **The motion passed unanimously.**

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Commissioner Bellew said he's been updating the web site regularly with a page of information. He feels basically as if he has collected all the information for the investigation. There's still some debate on whether to use the existing 501c3.

If the 501c3 is set, there are 5 steps to go through. The first has been done: "do your homework on what geographic area is covered and understand if it fits in with the community's needs." Next, they must form a steering committee and send it to them. The steering committee has to do a training conference call series. Then they form a board, get the 501c3, ratify bylaws, make an affiliate agreement and when that's all done, they're done. Commissioner Bellew said the 501c3 would be a separate, stand-alone vehicle in partnership with other groups, i.e., HBF, Main Street Beaufort, Habitat for Humanity, etc.

Commissioner Goodman said it needs to be bigger than the city of Beaufort. Commissioner Bellew said there's some pushback that "Beaufort is interested in Beaufort and the Northwest Quadrant." Commissioner Goodman said that may be true today, but there are other areas that need discussion. Commissioner Bellew said all those ideas need to be fleshed out. They're ready to do the five steps "pretty rapidly."

Commissioner Goodman asked if they've met with the Housing Authority; Commissioner Bellew said he'd met with Ed Boyd. He thinks that it needs to be stand-alone. Being in with any governmental agency isn't the best idea. Mr. Boyd saw an opportunity at a partnership level. Everyone wants reinvestment and revitalization. Commissioner Zara said some grants won't go to government organizations and some need to go to a 501c3. She doesn't feel it needs to be a partnership structurally. The Design Center is the quickest vehicle.

Chairman Pinkerton asked how long it takes to become a 501c3, and several committee members said 60-90 days. Commissioner Bellew said it's good they have no money in there yet which will expedite matters. Commissioner Zara said there is no staffing - and no start-up money to get it. Commissioner Bellew said that at the Northwest Quadrant meeting, the feeling was to start with the local guys on County Council about getting money for affordable housing.

Commissioner Zara recommended Paul Sommerville as the “most up to speed on affordable housing.”

Commissioner Bellew said he spoke with Port Royal Town Manager Van Willis, and he thinks it’s a great idea. Chairman Pinkerton said that’s another reason to be an independent organization. Commissioner Goodman said Lowes will donate some things. Commissioner Bellew said they will get in touch with a local Lowes to get in-kind donations of lumber and tools, etc. Cricket is another option.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Dadson said he has had a meeting on the **Boundary Street Project**, so it’s moving forward. County Council still has to make a final vote, but the contract has been signed.

Mr. Dadson said that on **Bladen Street**, they have tried to work with east side property owners about the turn-over of properties to widen the street and put in parking on both sides, but they’ve been unsuccessful to date. They are trying to create form-based code. The owners were nervous, as is the city, about the expectation of what could be built and how. They will bring a proposal to the committee. In the next ten days, they will make another effort to work with the property owners. They don’t want an incomplete block. The form-based code will allow the buildings to move up in exchange for elements for the public good. They have funding to take it all the way to Bay Street.

Mr. Dadson said there has been a discussion about the underutilized **Trough Park** on North Street. They want a use that’s appropriate to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Goodman asked about the old jail. Mr. Dadson said he doesn’t know anything.

RETREAT REVIEW

Mr. Dadson said he and Chairman Pinkerton had met to discuss how to deal with the retreat. They need to determine dates and what they want to accomplish. The charter was difficult to write and is threefold. Mr. Dadson said he understands what it says, but not how to accomplish it. He feels there are “lots of organizations doing these things.” They need to create a strategy for continuing economic development in commercial sectors which involves the continuing expansion of tourism, military, education, and health care and expanded opportunities in the arts and in recruitment of creative knowledge-based industries. These are new opportunities to be added to the economic development base. There also needs to be a strategy for quality of life through efficient infill and mixed use development – prosperity through urban design and development. The Redevelopment Commission can organize parcels of property and put together deals, he said. It needs to be the group that “does, as opposed to plans.”

He suggested that the person who did the council retreat could do the Redevelopment Commission retreat, and he went on to explain how that retreat worked in its three days and what was considered under the Redevelopment Commission portion. Chairman Pinkerton and Mr. Dadson agree that they should use a similar system. Mr. Dadson said they need to

understand their market. He developed an outline with the idea for a two-day retreat beginning one evening with people who helped write the comp plan, particularly the economic prosperity piece, and a look at the redevelopment/infill/mixed use piece and how it ties back into it. He feels other people need to be brought to the table from various relevant groups representing arts, military, education, health care, etc: Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Beaufort, hospital, MCAS, Lowcountry Economic Network, Arts Council, the City CFO, and USCB and TCL's Chief Development Officer). This creates continuity with potential partners.

He will know how to better allocate resources after this is organized and the retreat accomplished. They want to look at the economic base, not the tax base. The city generates 63% of its revenues based on per capita income, household income, educational attainment, labor force, and employment segmentation (the kinds of jobs out there). How good each of those things is adds up to buying power, which increase the businesses' bottom line. If the elements are better, they drive real estate demand, which then drives 23% - 30% of income. The city benefits from the demand on rooftops. They have to begin by understanding this particular environment.

At the end of the retreat, the Redevelopment Commission will have a 24-month work plan, and it will tie in with city council. Commissioner Goodman said that he'd add Historic Review Board or Historic Beaufort Foundation to the table, too. Commissioner Barnhart said the inhibitions in the system should also be understood. Commissioner Zara agreed. Commissioner Barnhart said if people can be brought in, the ball will start rolling and momentum can be created. Mr. Dadson presented possible dates to the commission. The decision was for March 29 and 30. The April 1 Redevelopment Commission meeting was moved to April 8.

HORSE AND CARRIAGE COMMITTEE

Councilman Mike Sutton said he's chairing a committee and would like to include a member of the Redevelopment Commission for the horse and buggy business. The goal is to listen to facts gathered by other people to understand the vehicles' difficulties and how that might relate to the "buggy wars" and what the city can do. They are important to the city and tourism and a surprisingly significant economic factor. The committee will have 30 days to produce a document for city council. They will only have 1-2 meetings. Commissioner Goodman asked if the goal was to have city council look at the carriage ordinance. Councilman Sutton replied that it can be. The expiration on contract dates is looming in 2011, and this might provide information for that. Also, he feels the problem may be bigger than the carriage companies themselves, and there may be things the city can do.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Dadson explained when the moves are anticipated to happen into the new building.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Zara made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Goodman. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm.

ATTEST: _____
SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK