

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on June 2, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were and Commissioners Mike McNally, Martin Goodman, Ed Barnhart, Pat Kase, Mike McFee, and Scott Dadson, City Manager.

Chairman Jon Verity, Wendy Zara, Keith Waldrop, 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 5:00 p.m. by the vice-chairman.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Goodman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Barnhart, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

REPORTS

Finance Committee

Commissioner McNally offered a report from a conversation with Commissioner Zara. Commissioner Zara and Commissioner Waldrop met with CBC to discuss their linked deposit program. Commissioner Waldrop is going to stop in Columbia to check with State offices on that matter. The city manager is going to recommend Beaufort's participation in the Lowcountry Housing Trust in the budget. The Town of Port Royal will participate, too. Mr. Dadson said right now it's an equal partnership, and they're looking for a third party to join in.

Committee members have met with Ed Boyd from Beaufort Housing Authority. The group is interested in projects that involve ownership, not just rentals, Commissioner McNally said. They have a lot of experience in applying for and getting grants. There is a particular shortage of military housing.

Commercial Committee

Commissioner Goodman said they have been working with people interested in the old City Hall. They're waiting on proposals to come back and are hopeful that the latest proposal will be agreeable. If they agree, Chairman Verity will call an Redevelopment Commission meeting, and there would be an Executive Session for the proposed contract and a vote on making a recommendation to city council.

Mr. Dadson suggested having a meeting and not making a motion, then having the city attorney draft the resolution to recommend to city council that they approve the contract.

Commissioner Barnhart suggested the city attorney could begin drawing up the contract now so as not to waste time. Commissioner Goodman said some pieces could be drafted, but there have been small ongoing changes. Mr. Dadson said they should get it to the city attorney to get started and told Commissioner Goodman that he would get it to the city attorney.

Commissioner Barnhart said moving it quickly – as the client wants to – will look good. Commissioner McFee said the terms were fine with him. Commissioner Goodman said an engineering study is ordered. Mr. Dadson said it's in process. Commissioner Goodman said it wasn't in the original terms. Commissioner Kase said it might affirm what the appraisal says. Commissioner Goodman reviewed the appropriate portion of the agreement, and Mr. Dadson said, "We'll get that done."

Mr. Dadson said the prior study on the building from 1994 has been lost. Commissioner Goodman said they know abatement was done, so there was a report at some time.

Residential Committee

Commissioner McNally said the projects underway in the last few months have been turned over to the Office of Civic Investment for further development. Jim Moss' property is one of those projects. He discussed some interest in putting six units on the property and restoring a historically significant cottage there. Zoning concerns need to be "tweaked" and then a proposal will be submitted to the owner. Commissioner Barnhart said it looks similar to what Josh Martin is interested in doing conceptually.

Commissioner McNally said that an owner on Bladen Street has shown interest in developing his property which is a vacant lot. He's looking to put in multiple units, which Commissioner McNally described.

Commissioner McNally asked if other Redevelopment Commission members had received an invitation to the Crystal Lake Park event.

Commissioner McNally said Commissioner Waldrop made a point about the commission's mission statement and suggested revising it. He questioned whether "distressed areas" in the statement should be changed to show that some of the mission could be infill. Mr. Dadson said by law that is the Redevelopment Commission's charge. They could take it out. Commissioner McNally said he suggested it be passed to the PR committee.

Commissioner McNally said the residential committee meetings in June and July will be cancelled. The next will be August 10, 2011. Commissioner Barnhart said the Redevelopment Commission might not have a quorum in July. Commissioner McNally said he would ask Chairman Verity to poll the Redevelopment Commission about cancelling meetings. Mr. Dadson said "skipping meetings is routine in the summer."

Commissioner McNally and Chairman Verity discussed improving communication among the Redevelopment Commission members and staff to avoid duplication of efforts. John Williams has scheduled some regular meeting dates and asked that the committee chairs attend if the meetings were in their area of interest. Chairman Verity also has said he and Commissioner McNally would attend the council workshops the fourth Tuesday of each month in which the Planning Commission and Redevelopment Commission meet with city council. Commissioner McNally said they felt that committee members could attend those as well.

Redevelopment Commission Project Book

Naomi Leeman from the Office of Civic Investment gave an overview of the project book and said chapters 1-4 would be updated every 6 months and individuals could update their binders as things happened. She reviewed the differences between this draft and the previous draft. She described additions to the short-term projects section. The old City Hall project has been updated.

Mr. Dadson said on page 13 in Code, #3 has been assigned and is actively being done.

Ms. Leeman said there are new drawings in the city-owned properties section. This includes updates on the 1411 Duke Street project. Most of it has stayed pretty much the same, Ms. Leeman said, except for some revisions. In the Mid-Term Projects section, she said the extension of Waterfront Park would be a good project to start, even though it won't be quickly completed.

In the appendix, she said the Redevelopment Commission members probably have more materials than the Office of Civic Investment does and included in the book.

Commissioner Kase said in Incentives, there is a recap of the Beaufort 2003 program and something from a web site, which Ms. Leeman said Mr. Martin had e-mailed around. Commissioner Kase asked Mr. Dadson to provide direction on these. Commissioner Kase said he doesn't know what's required to get implementation approved. He wants to know if it's still valid, and if it's a good balance between doing enough and not doing things that they shouldn't. Commissioner Goodman said this isn't in place now but was put forward by Mr. Martin for their review. Commissioner Kase said there's a third document off the city's website and that all three documents should be merged into a comprehensive document.

Mr. Dadson said the question was if these were the things they wanted to provide incentives for. He feels the list should change and Commissioner Kase agreed. It's not student and senior housing only; it's for any kind of downtown residential project as it follows the form-based code. Mr. Dadson cited page 4 as projects having higher priority if they hit the hot points on the map. There should be more points if the property is mixed use, etc. He feels that the first priority should be to ensure that the project is in these sectors. Secondly, the permitting process is just as important to ensure its correctness.

Mr. Dadson said they have a vision. If the incentives tie back to it, it's good. Commissioner Kase said on page 2, there is possibly better language to describe the Redevelopment Commission's mission as a good starting point for revising it. Commissioner Kase said they could look at the incentives documents and what's on the website, review it, and decide what they'd like to do. Mr. Dadson said they could say they'll make recommendations back to council. These are the incentives for Sector 1, he said, and there will be different incentives for different sections.

Commissioner Goodman asked if they have interest in creating incentives that have to do with business other than the redevelopment of property. It would have to be tied back to business license fees somehow, he said. Commissioner Kase said he had “questions about wandering out of bounds.” Mr. Dadson said as far as business licenses, it’s not out of bounds to think about them as they apply to Sector One. Things that aren’t on the list like sprinklers, capacity fees, DOT, etc. all affect businesses. Most of this is in the review process and creating predictability therein. This will be the great policy debate for city council, Mr. Dadson said.

In regard to business and economic development, Mr. Dadson said, people are watching where Lowcountry Economic Network is going. Asking Kim Statler and her staff about this is appropriate, Mr. Dadson feels. He would keep it specific to Sector One. Commissioner Goodman said while it’s important to talk to Ms. Statler, “the projects the Redevelopment Commission does are under her radar screen.” Mr. Dadson said the city “communicates with her a lot and she works to try to focus it locally,” which is what city council wants in addition to a regional focus.

Commissioner Goodman said he had spoken to a Chamber of Commerce representative, and its mission is now business-based, not tourism-based. Commissioner Goodman said incentives for more opportunities for retail space would be key. Commissioner Barnhart said he has spoken to people who are starting up small businesses that are computer based, and they should be involved with a community where they could help one another. They’re “currently hiding because they don’t want to pay fees and licenses.”

Commissioner Kase said there’s an incentive for knowledge and technology-based businesses specifically. Mr. Dadson listed some resources for such businesses. Commissioner Barnhart suggested these business owners should be invited to a meeting to show what is available to them. Mr. Dadson said they have suggested “a business amnesty program and then giving them a bump-start.” Commissioner Goodman said it’s a good idea to bring in the Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Kase suggested taking this to the PR committee to create awareness of the set of standards they now have. Ms. Leeman said the incubator for small businesses is one of the projects they have listed.

BLADEN STREET PROJECT

Commissioner McNally said plans are finished. They have had slow responses from some of the east side property owners. Those owners have all felt the appraised values were low for the 3’ easements. In discussions with Mr. Dadson, he was referred to the city attorney, and Commissioner McNally proposed to Mr. Harvey that a registered letter be sent to the owners on the east side about what’s been done and the statement of a final offer. The letter could say that the owners have 10 days to respond, and if there’s no response, it will be taken as a “No,” the offer to pay for the easement will be revoked, and the project built without it. They will still improve for those properties on the south side with trees, lights, and improved parking. Some will have full 9’ sidewalks, and those who don’t want to participate will have 6’ in the existing

right-of-way. They will save money this way. What will happen to that 3' strip later will be subject to site plan review. The Planning Commission may require sidewalks at the owners' cost. So they can accept the proposal and get the city to build it, *or* they cannot get the bigger sidewalk or the money at appraised value. The plans probably wouldn't have to be rebid. Commissioner McNally concluded that Bladen Street "is going to be a go."

Commissioner Kase said when they met with Geddes, they could have done a better job of packaging the incentives to the owners. He feels some property owners didn't understand how much to their advantage it was. Their concerns might have been mitigated if it were more clearly packaged. Commissioner McNally said "Maybe," but he feels all the individuals understood what they were getting. On the other side of the street they are taking 12', and some people saw the benefit, while others didn't want to and were left out. He feels it's a perception of "How much can I get?" This letter will be a "fish or cut bait" matter.

Commissioner McNally said the good thing to come out of this is the establishment of relationships. Commissioner Goodman said this will keep them from holding up the project, as some may believe they'll be offered more money in the future.

Commissioner McNally said one problem in the area is the old liquor store, and getting that 3' "could be tricky because there's something under default." There is not the time to invest.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the commission, Commissioner Barnhart made a motion to adjourn, second by Commissioner Goodman. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK