

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on July 7, 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 Wendy Zara, Mike McFee, Martin Goodman, Pat Kase, and Henrietta Goode, and Scott Dadson, City Manager.

Mike McNally, Ed Barnhart, Jon Verity, and Keith Waldrop 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 5:01 p.m. by the chairman.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Goodman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McFee, to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2011 meeting.

Commissioner McFee pointed out that on page 2, the engineering study should be clarified to have been about asbestos abatement. He also indicated that the reference on page 5 to "Geddes" should be "Geddes Dowling." Commissioner Zara abstained from the vote because she was not present at the June 2 meeting. **The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

REPORTS

Finance Committee

Commissioner Zara said the city and the Town of Port Royal are planning to join the Lowcountry Housing Trust. The Town of Port Royal still needs approval. Commissioner McFee said it's approved with the budget, and if a resolution is required, that will be done, too. Also, the participants must be educated. Commissioner McFee is assembling data and information. Lowcountry Housing Trust likes to have a needs assessment survey. Commissioner Zara said the LCOG has not yet been approached about this. The county doesn't have anything like this, she said. Much data exists, but it may not show specific areas of need. **Josh Martin** said they can "knock the survey out," but he is not aware of a true needs assessment.

Commissioner Zara said comp plans, the UDO, etc. needed to be provided; Mr. Martin added a variety of stake holders and plans. He said they want a long "laundry list of everything they know" and a specific list of projects. Lowcountry Housing Trust wants to know barriers and dollar amounts to "understand the lay of the land."

Chairman Verity asked the target date, and Mr. Dadson said sometime in August is feasible to get it in front of council. How quickly the Town of Port Royal moves is up to them. Commissioner Zara said the initial stakeholder meeting may be after Labor Day. Commissioner Goodman asked if this would be a local board. Commissioner Zara said Lowcountry Housing

Trust is saying that they will have a person from Beaufort / Port Royal on their board and a person on their loan committee.

Mr. Dadson said when Lowcountry Housing Trust comes to Beaufort, they'll be "housed" at City Hall. Commissioner Zara said hopefully down the road, other jurisdictions will participate. Bluffton or the Housing Authority and others could participate, and there wouldn't be a change to the contribution rate, though the shares might change. Mr. Dadson said the initial documents likely have some "rules about people getting in" on it.

Commissioner Zara said the committee is also working with BJWSA to lower capacity fees for some areas with certain criteria. Addresses in the Northwest Quadrant and Pigeon Point primarily were put together, and Dean Moss gave the committee numbers to put in a county-wide context. Mr. Dadson said a lot came out of the meeting. Commissioner Zara said BJWSA has done this with Sun City or part of it; they are "interested in greater efficiency." So rehabs or new construction that has appliances, etc. that use less water will have that assumed into their rates, following certain criteria that must be met to get the benefit.

Commissioner Goodman asked if there were adjustments on impact and usage fees for commercial. Mr. Dadson said there are complications and limits to this for BJWSA. The city had asked questions about the "broader aspects of public good," and he hopes that the conversation "will be drilled down more." Mr. Dadson said it's a question of what the market is looking for in terms of incentive. The price point that gives incentive to change behavior needs to be considered. Time needs to be considered, too. Commissioner Kase asked about whether other utilities might be interested in the same thing, and Mr. Dadson said that's a possibility. Commissioner Goodman said "infill and use don't traditionally require more infrastructure." Commissioner McFee said reuse from a commercial standpoint changes the impact dramatically.

Mr. Dadson clarified that the discussion was good, but it has been internal up until this point. They are preparing a letter in an effort to continue the conversation. There was general discussion about the application of this incentive in commercial businesses, too. Commissioner Goodman said he hoped there would be incentive to create the infill i.e., "If you build this, we'll do that."

Commercial Committee

Commissioner Goodman said there was a press conference about the Lowcountry Produce lease signing at Old City Hall. Commissioner Goodman said he feels it's a good project that fits many needs. He has asked the renters about the development process to get permitting, and a developer had said that it "could be onerous." He asked them, when they are finished and have their CO, if they would come to the Redevelopment Commission and discuss their process, so the commission can track their experience as a "beta test we can live with." It will be beneficial to see what holds them up if that happens, Commissioner Goodman said. Commissioner Zara said if things go wrong, they "need to talk to the person who's on the other side of that." Commissioner Goodman said the committee's next project is unknown.

Bladen Street Project

Mr. Dadson said they're still negotiating, talking to property owners, and "getting things organized." Their date is August.

Boundary Street Project Update

Mr. Martin said they're still working on the DOT to approve the Phase 1 concept for Boundary Street. They're down to details of gutters, curbs, etc. The DOT wanted more information on auto-turn for trucks, and now he's waiting to hear back from them. Boundary Street property owners who will be affected by right-of-way changes may have property exchanges that will happen on the private side when the parallel road is proposed.

The rail-to-trail project is going on, Mr. Martin said, and they are looking at a traffic study that would help facilitate pedestrian and bike safety when the trail head occurs and slow traffic. There are concepts with Beaufort Plaza being worked through. There is a third stimulus for TIGER 3, and this project fits what they are trying to do with it so they can apply to supplement cash flow. The application process must happen quickly, and there may be private partnerships to be pursued, too.

Other Office of Civic Investment projects

Mr. Martin said in reference to the Duke Street Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), around the end of July the project will be submitted to DOT, and construction could be substantially completed by December 31, 2011. There is work on-going.

Mr. Martin said the Office of Civic Investment is working with USCB on a house USCB acquired for student housing and on the school's "longer-range housing vision." Chairman Verity asked if students in that house have to park on campus. Mr. Martin said he wasn't sure. Commissioner Goodman said there's a parking lot across the street from the house.

Mr. Martin said Midtown is "moving along," and a new house has been submitted for construction. They are also trying to coordinate a new community garden site.

Beaufort Memorial Hospital has submitted a new building that will be reviewed at next week's Design Review Board meeting, Mr. Martin said.

Private property owners have been coming in to the Office of Civic Investment office with conceptual site plans, Mr. Martin said. Staff is telling them to hire design professionals. Especially along Bladen Street, he said, there "seems to be a lot of excitement."

Mr. Martin said drawings are prepared of the road diet for the section east of City Hall to Bellamy's Curve. DOT has given preliminary approval. The bike lanes' diagram is approved, and the details need to be finalized with Mr. Dadson and Public Works.

The Office of Civic Investment has spoken with Habitat for Humanity about upcoming projects. They are interested in focusing on the historic district, and there will be a walk-about next week, Mr. Martin said.

Mr. Martin and others in the Office of Civic Investment office will be moving from Bay Street to an office upstairs in City Hall.

There have been discussions about county form-based code, Mr. Martin said. The Office of Civic Investment has submitted final comments on the Opticos draft for the county code. They're still working with staff on "local items." They will need a steering committee to be formed with various organizations, so that "we're writing it together." If form-based code is adopted but not scenario-tested, it can sit unused once the consultants leave.

Mr. Martin said the Office of Civic Investment has continued to meet with a section of North Street regarding converting it to "Water Trough Park."

The Office of Civic Investment is looking at other federal grants to possibly bring housing concepts they are looking at to life with federal funds.

Mr. Martin said in reference to Sector 2 development, charettes 2 and 3 as originally designed combined. The next charrette will be for a week starting September 27. Public workshops will begin September 6. Everything will be back by December 16 for the master plan. The final report on the first installment in the civic master plan will be ready in a few weeks with all recommendations, retail reports, etc. They want to work with staff to make that an amendment to the comp plan, Mr. Martin said.

PRESENTATION: LANELLE FABIAN, DIRECTOR OF MAIN STREET BEAUFORT

Ms. Fabian said she would make a presentation about Main Street Beaufort and what it is and does. The organization is just over 26 years old. It was created to revitalize the downtown district while still preserving it. The Main Street program is part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street district is bounded by the Beaufort River, Boundary Street, and Ribaut Road. There are 2 full-time staff, 1 part-time staff, 17 board members, 122 members and friends, 11 committees and subcommittees and "hundreds of volunteers."

Funding is 43% earned income, 25% from public sources/grants and designated funds such as Accommodations Tax, Hospitality Tax and a portion of designated parking money. 19% comes from stakeholder support. 12% of a grant is earmarked as an admin fee for operations, 88% goes *outside* of the downtown area to promote downtown Beaufort. Owing to the partnership with the Redevelopment Commission, the 15% is designated to run local and regional ads. Of festival money, 86% goes back into the community: restaurants, local vendors used, etc., and 14% goes into the operational fund.

National Main Street works on a four-point approach, Ms. Fabian said: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Beaufort added a fifth point: the merchants. May was

National Small Business Week. She discussed the small and independently-owned businesses' contributions to the community. Main Street Beaufort can offer government-specific responses from the merchants in their organization.

Commissioner Goode left the meeting.

Ms. Fabian said that Taste of Beaufort and the Shrimp Festival are promoted with tax money; that money is not used to put the festivals on. Main Street Beaufort does park concerts, movies, and Night on the Town to create memories and create a small-town feel for Beaufort, she said. Beaufort Beauties is a new fundraiser, and they hope it will grow to do things like purchase computers, etc. Five other not-for-profits are also chosen for donations from the fundraiser.

Ms. Fabian said they promote Main Street Beaufort with a billboard on Highway 17 and rack cards at trade shows. Any downtown events in their area are promoted, as are all merchants, whether they are Main Street Beaufort members or not.

AMEX offered a credit for buying at small businesses last Christmas shopping season and Main Street Beaufort got involved to remind citizens that 68% of money spent at local merchants goes back into the community, Ms. Fabian said.

They are working on cohesive branding for their organization, Ms. Fabian said. She went on to explain that design includes making downtown look good, signs, product placement in the stores, and getting buildings in shape to get infill. They can show how buildings can be income producing properties with design money. They can't apply for brick and mortar money, but they might be able to partner with the Redevelopment Commission when they have correct designs that are approved.

The Economic Restructuring Committee, Ms. Fabian said, has been changed to the Business Development Committee. They want to "sharpen the competitiveness of business enterprises." They can do this through education and consultation among other means.

Ms. Fabian said Main Street Beaufort has available commercial properties on their web site, but they don't want "just renters." They have a list of the numbers of kinds of businesses they have, and they can look to complement that with other businesses that can fill the properties in a sustainable way.

Ms. Fabian invited Redevelopment Commission members to the Main Street Beaufort board retreat August 4. Chairman Verity asked if the Main Street Beaufort board knows what the Redevelopment Commission does and the work they have done in the Main Street Beaufort sector. The Redevelopment Commission presentation might be helpful at the retreat, Chairman Verity said. Ms. Fabian said Demetri Baches did a presentation at the annual meeting and she has been and will continue to go to retreats with Office of Civic Investment staff. She said "we want to be your partners." Business development needs to be "beefed up," and that effort has

begun. Randall Burch is the chairman, she said in response to a question from Commissioner McFee. All the committees are open currently. They “want to get everybody involved” and not appear secretive.

Chairman Verity said the Redevelopment Commission wants to be helpful and to share ideas between Main Street Beaufort and the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Goodman said the commercial committee could benefit from attendance by a Main Street Beaufort board member. Ms. Fabian said they would like someone on the Redevelopment Commission to join the Main Street Beaufort board. Commissioner Zara said the merchants are encouraged to have attractive windows, but there’s nothing Main Street Beaufort can do if they don’t, and Ms. Fabian agreed.

Mayor Keyserling asked how many businesses that have licenses in the service area are members of Main Street Beaufort. He feels there’s still a heavy Bay Street orientation when there are beauty salons, photography studios and 3 new businesses on Charles Street. There are major changes coming to Boundary Street, Mayor Keyserling said, and he wondered if they knew about those plans. He said “Main Street Beaufort needs to see the opportunities in the growth areas.” Ms. Fabian said that’s “been a struggle.” “Uptown is considered downtown,” she said. Shoofly Kitchen was their “business of the year,” and City Hall was awarded “best new construction.” They have been trying to choose board members representing areas other than Bay Street.

Kevin Cuppia said they do encourage other businesses not on Bay Street to be involved, but others have a sense that the organization is just representing Bay Street. Ms. Fabian said they haven’t given up. The business directory on their web site isn’t just about their members; it’s about everyone in their district. They have perks and co-op advertising for members, but they try to include everyone. Possibly the branding may help with this effort. Chairman Verity asked what they do in Greenville, where their Main Street organization “has done a great job.” Ms. Fabian said their retreat is there, and one of the companies they’re looking at for branding is from there.

Mayor Keyserling said the perception when he looks at festivals is that someone on Boundary Street might not see the benefit of being a part of Main Street Beaufort. KC said there have been events on Dick Stewart’s property, for example, and Ms. Fabian said Main Street Beaufort will promote those as well. Mayor Keyserling said \$9-10 million has been invested on Carteret. Ms. Fabian said the TV commercials they’ve produced include Uptown, and they will continue to make the effort to be inclusive. They “are not stuck on Bay or at Waterfront Park.”

Chairman Verity invited Redevelopment Commission members to attend a meeting the following day with the Historic Beaufort Foundation Preservation Committee meeting at noon at the Verdier House.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the commission, Commissioner Zara made a motion to adjourn, second by Commissioner Goodman. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK