

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on September 3, 2009 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, Donnie Ann Beer, Mike McFee, Mayor Billy Keyserling, City Manager Scott Dadson, and Shirley Hughes. Commissioners Gary Fordham, Mike Sutton, and Gene Rugala 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.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Beer moved to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion of Councilwoman Beer, seconded by Commissioner Bellew, the commission voted to move into Executive Session pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70(a) of the South Carolina Code of Laws to discuss the proposed sale and disposal of property. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Beer made a motion to come out of Executive Session, and Commissioner Goodman seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

GOVERNANCE

The city manager passed out a memo regarding governance. He said that the consensus of the committee has been to remove council members from the commission and go back to a more traditional form. He concurs with this idea. The city manager said that in other redevelopment commissions he's seen, the city manager sits in on the meetings. He suggested that the commission go to 7-9 members with subcommittees. The commission has had the mission of improving housing and economic development. Each aspect requires a "different sort of energy" and "different conversations." He recommended that with 9 members, there be two sub-groups to cover these two functions, and then the commission would get together to meet as a whole. Chairman Pinkerton asked if other commissions are doing that. The city manager said he's seen "variations on a theme." He likes the way Myrtle Beach's redevelopment commission does it. He also described the way Rock Hill's Commission is configured. It has to have its own stand-alone set of authorities: power to borrow, bond, condemn, etc. Referring to the second page of his memo, he compared the city staff's assessment of the city's assets (property, revenue streams and cash) as they relate to the Redevelopment Commission's mission: housing, commercial development, and business expansion and enhancement.

Chairman Pinkerton asked for more definition of "missions." The city manager said that commercial development was something "on the lot" that generates money, i.e., rent or taxes. Business expansion and enhancement means using assets to encourage business growth. Chairman Pinkerton asked where Boundary Street or a parking garage would fall. The city

manager said Boundary Street has elements of all three missions. The Municipal Improvement District (MID) is a powerful tool, but Myrtle Beach showed him that there are better ways to go. Mayor Keyserling called the MID “important” because something better turned up while they explored it.

The city manager said that Myrtle Beach’s Redevelopment Commission had parking and got all revenue but also had all costs. Their redevelopment commission goes out and sells the idea. City council holds true title to any assets. He recommended that this redevelopment commission spin off into sub-groups and create partnerships with other groups, i.e., Housing Authority, Main Street Beaufort, etc. On housing, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) communicated a model to the Housing Authority. The problem has been creating direction to have it reach its potential. The power is moving various assets through it and access to HUD. He said on- and off-street parking may also be moved into assets to hire an executive director, etc. The city can then move their assets elsewhere. The city has no profit motive to keep parking, whereas merchants do. He still recommends removing council except as an appointment authority. Savannah combines their Housing Authority, their Main Street and their Redevelopment Commission into one body.

Commissioner Bellew said that, whether it’s one big group or sub-committees, “you look at how to divide up the assets in a way that makes sense.” The city manager said that council still controls the assets. Commissioner Bellew asked what the advantage is to having two subgroups. The city manager replied that the advantage is partnerships, and with others than just with the city. Mayor Keyserling said that he needs time to digest the information he’s been given. He agrees with getting council off the Redevelopment Commission but still wonders what the council’s relationship will be to the Redevelopment Commission. He wondered what the tie to council would be, other than the city manager; appointments and assets will be a part of that relationship. He feels it should be a whole, be larger, and be more work-related (as opposed to advising). He sees three functions as the city manager does. He also agrees with the partnerships with for- and non-profit groups, in order to get more work done. He’s given up on the NSP model because he feels the entrepreneurial drive isn’t there.

Commissioner Goodman said that when the slots are filled, there needs to be discussion about breaking into the sub-groups, and picking people for the sub-groups whose interests mesh with the work. Commissioner McFee said that the appointments need to be made on the basis of the sub-committees. Mayor Keyserling agreed. The city manager said that he wants a structure that has its own appointment authority, with control coming from whoever holds the purse-strings. In the Housing Authority set-up, that is missing. In Myrtle Beach, the Redevelopment Commission is stand-alone; the council gives them the asset and says, “When you’re profitable, you can get a director, etc., and when you need us, you come to us. Our control is our appointment.” Commissioner Goodman clarified that “You don’t give the asset, you allow them use of the asset,” which is another control.

Mayor Keyserling said that he’s having a problem divorcing council from the entrepreneurial side. The city manager said that the council member could name him/herself. Mayor Keyserling said he doesn’t know that he wants to limit the council to just basic functions. The city manager responded that by putting it off to a separate board, it also gives the council “coverage.” The

commission has responsibility if things go wrong. The commission will have to get support before it comes to council. Mayor Keyserling feels that it's an issue of control and guidance, and he's less concerned with control than with guidance. He sees it more as an implement to work with the city to do the kind of growing that's needed to survive. He doesn't want to abdicate part of what he feels he's been elected to do. The city manager said that by spinning off groups, cities organize the fragmentation of the issue, acting as a whole. Groups like planning commission are extra hands and have the effect of a cover for particular issues; pushing responsibility off of council is an advantage to council.

Mayor Keyserling said that the council had all these boards and commissions that had "sort of floated off." Some shouldn't be touched, but in reality some are "so far off on their own, they're not really part of the city." While he said he doesn't want to be involved in a zoning hearing, he wants to have a relationship with them so that they'll come to him when they have a problem.

Chairman Pinkerton asked how often people are reappointed to commissions, and the city manager said that there are term limits. Chairman Pinkerton said that the city council, if they don't like the direction of a group, can examine it, and then exert control. The city manager said yes, then added that limiting assets has just as much effect as giving them. Mayor Keyserling asked if there was a model that's "in between," and the city manager replied that council could reconfigure this model if they wanted to.

Commissioner Goodman said that the Redevelopment Commission is a working body, and the members need to be committed to spending time on it. If council picks the right people and has some governance, they can create further momentum. He sees it as an opportunity for council to get extra hands, more community involvement, and accomplish what they want without having to physically do it. Commissioner Bellew said that to have a group willing to do that, council will have to give up some control. Commissioner Goodman said that up until a year ago, the commission just met; they didn't "get out there and work" until NSP and MID, etc. Mayor Keyserling added that consistently it's noted that there needs to be more room made for more people to get more done.

The city manager said that the Redevelopment Commission doesn't need to make a decision immediately, but they do need a higher ratio of citizens to council members on the commission. And the members don't need to feel intimidated about making hard decisions by a council member's presence. Shirley Hughes said that when appointing a board that will function well, it's incumbent on council to have periodic quarterly or twice a year sit-downs with the committee, not to be at their meetings. Council can express concerns at that time if the committee's going off-track. Commissioner Beer said that having the city manager on the board will help it not get too out of hand, too. The city manager said that council should always have the authority to remove anybody. Meeting with the chair once a month is "preventative maintenance." Mayor Keyserling said that in his role, he's seen a lot of fragmentation, and he's afraid to add to that. The city manager encouraged the group to go online and look at other redevelopment commission structures. Chairman Pinkerton said the matter needs to be kept on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Beer made the motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Bellew seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK