

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on October 4, 2012 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 Mike McFee, Wendy Zara, Alan Dechovitz, Henrietta Goode, Pat Kase, and Martin Goodman.

Keith Waldrop and Mike McNally 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.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Chairman Verity.

MINUTES

Chairman Verity pointed out that the first sentence under the subheading "Boundary Street Redevelopment" should be under the title "Marsh Gardens PUD." Chairman Verity asked that the thank you to Mr. Martin in the final paragraph of the minutes be specified as being to **Josh Martin**. Commissioner Dechovitz said the response rate from the Main Street merchants in regard to the day dock should be **85%**, not 95%. **Commissioner Goodman made a motion, second by Commissioner McFee, to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2012 meeting as revised. The motion passed unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion of Commissioner Goodman, seconded by Commissioner McFee, the commission voted to move into Executive Session pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70(a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Laws for a discussion of contractual matters. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Zara, seconded by Commissioner Goode, made a motion to come out of Executive Session and resume the Redevelopment Commission regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Chairman Verity said the discussion had been about the contract with the Lawrence Group. The approval of the contract is by a vote of the commission. They discussed the value of having a contract relationship as opposed to having full-time staff. **Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kase, to approve the addendum to the contract as proposed. The motion passed unanimously.**

REPORTS

Finance Committee

Commissioner Zara said she had attended a Lowcountry Housing Trust meeting, and she gave the Redevelopment Commission members the group's annual report. Also, Commissioner Zara said Josh Martin was working on incentives but didn't finish putting it together; **Craig Lewis** said he has it.

Residential Committee

Commissioner Goode said they have candidates for a grant based on the houses she knows are in need. The families will be notified about the project. **Brenda Dooley** has proposed applying for a grant that would give \$6000 per family for home improvement, and repayment is waived if the residents stay in the home for five years. Commissioner Goode said the grant Ms. Dooley was looking at has too soon of a deadline, and they will likely apply in the next quarter. Commissioner McFee said they have to have specific names of owners for this grant.

Commissioner Goode said they are also working with LOCOG on another grant because some families will need more than \$6000 to complete repairs. One grant is for more money than the other is, Commissioner Goode said. Commissioner Zara said they need specific addresses. Commissioner McFee said the program Commissioner Zara is talking about is a loan, not a “forgiven over a period of time” grant.

Libby Anderson said she thinks the Home Fund is a forgivable loan / grant. All the properties are in the Northwest Quadrant, and they have a rating system with criteria such as being near the streetscape project. LOCOG is the project administrator. Ms. Anderson said she would get with Barbara Johnson the following day for an update and to discuss it. Six properties are to be rehabbed, hopefully, and Ms. Anderson said “it’s moving along slowly.”

Commissioner Goode said that when they have identified the families, they will meet with them, discuss their needs, and “see where they fit in the scheme of things.”

Commercial / Economic Development Committee

Commissioner Goodman said they met with **Craig Lewis** and his group in regard to the Depot Building, and they have concluded it is “best served as a civic building.” There is some money to be allocated by the Rail Trail group for working on the inside of that building, Commissioner Goodman said. They were not specific about the amount of money or the scope of their work in the building. They discussed changes to the trail crossing and the parking. Also, though this is the trailhead now, it may be in the Redevelopment Commission’s interest to put pressure on the county to take it to 170 and beyond. The real trailhead will be at Highway 170. It may not be at the Depot Building once the county gets going with the rest of the trail. He said they’re “in a holding pattern.”

Mr. Lewis said they are trying to maintain two crossings on the Spanish Moss Rail Trail. They want something at Middleton and Hay Streets. He showed the original plan done months ago and the most recent plan in place. They are scaling back on the hardscaping elements outside of the Depot Building itself and are looking at screening shrubs and basic grass patterns.

Mr. Lewis said in regard to the Depot Building, the trail is complete through the building. It’s completely cleaned out and the slab has been poured. There is very small percentage of the

building that is built-out, and they want to eliminate the old office. They want it to be police-able and secure. He showed a similar structure in Greenville. They are cleaning and putting in lighting at the Depot Building now. Commissioner Kase asked if there were funds to do restrooms; Mr. Lewis said they are recommending against putting restrooms in that building.

A member of the public who has ridden on the portion of the trail that is finished so far said that the trail is concrete, and every 4-5', there is a crack and therefore it's bumpy. He asked if the same material would be used in other portions of the trail. Mr. Lewis said they also considered the material unusual; most trails are asphalt. They didn't know it was concrete until a week and a half ago; they believe it was chosen because concrete is lower maintenance and less expensive. There have been no decisions made on future phases, he said. The county will run those future phases, and they will look at what they want to do. Mr. Lewis said the project has no affiliation with the city except that the city is cooperating with it. The city has forwarded on staff-level concerns and comments.

Maxine Lutz asked if there were no requirements in regard to pervious and impervious surfaces. Chairman Verity said the city doesn't own the land; BJWSA has the rights to it, Commissioner Zara said, and they had to get permits.

Merritt Patterson said the landowners in the area were concerned because they didn't know what was going on. One of the concerns was that the rail trail project is in a light industrial zoning area, and about 20% of available parking is being used down there. Though it's been through the City of Beaufort planning process, the property owners are concerned about access to the existing properties and buildings, large sections of parking that have been eliminated, and stormwater. The trail is raised, and there's no provision for stormwater run-off. As the properties are developed, Mr. Patterson said, they are taking back DOT roads to help create parking, and in this dense area, they are eliminating 20-30% of the parking. He was expressing his concerns, he said, because he didn't have anywhere else to express them.

Mr. Lewis said they have permits, and the project has been engineered. BJWSA holds the permit as the owner. They are putting back green space in the area, and he hopes they will be able to better formalize the parking. Over time, he hopes they will consider long-term provisions. Mr. Lewis said they will have some parking in the Beaufort Plaza area. The parking in this area is for the owners and businesses. Commissioner Goodman said that point is short-term, not long-term, and he agrees with Mr. Patterson's expressed concerns. Mr. Lewis said they will clear old shrubs and overgrowth, and the businesses should have "more room for informal parking," he believes. He said they will continue to express their concerns. Mr. Patterson was encouraged to continue to register his concerns as well.

Ms. Lutz asked Mr. Lewis if, even though this project was permitted, they didn't have to plan for stormwater run-off. Mr. Lewis said they *did* have to. Mr. Patterson said the ditches along the railroad have been sealed off, and they will keep drainage off the path, but they have filled

in the ditches. They have determined that there's no need for retention or detention. Mr. Lewis said they are swapping impervious surface for impervious surface. Mr. Patterson said it wasn't addressed in the permitting process. Commissioner Zara asked if they already had stormwater problems, and Mr. Patterson said yes, and now it's gotten worse. The large ditches would drain the stormwater, but this project has failed to maintain them or not addressed it at this time. Commissioner McFee said they once drained into the creek. Mr. Patterson said that was better than what they have now. Commissioner Zara said the parking lot didn't take parking away from a business's properties. Mr. Lewis said a railroad is not public land.

Commissioner Dechovitz said after someone parks in a place for years, they come to think of it as theirs, whether it is or not. Chairman Verity asked Mr. Lewis if they would have more influence with the county than they have had so far. Mr. Lewis said he hopes so. Commissioner Zara said the City of Beaufort, the county, and the Friends of the Spanish Moss Rail Trail consider this a prototype for the rest of the trail; it's in the agreement. Commissioner Dechovitz asked who is responsible for parking and drainage problems there. Mr. Lewis said it's BJWSA's right-of-way, and the county is part of the intergovernmental agreement in regard to stormwater.

Commissioner Dechovitz said the property owners need to be talking to someone other than the Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Patterson said the development ordinance says that all development within the city limits will comply with the UDO, so the authority lies with the City of Beaufort. Mr. Lewis said some organizations are exempt from city-authority, but Mr. Patterson is right for the most part. Mr. Patterson said it would be unfair to provide public parking at Basil Green and not spend money to provide it here. Mr. Lewis said no public money has been spent yet, though Chairman Verity said they expect that they will.

Mr. Lewis introduced **Julie Franklin** who joined the Lawrence Group on Monday. He discussed her background and accomplishments. He said she's very experienced with South Carolina redevelopment issues.

Boundary Street Redevelopment District

Mr. Lewis said Boundary Street is "moving along." The TIGER 3 grant is signed, and they have approvals of the 30% engineering set and have approvals to move forward to the 70%. They are beginning right-of-way acquisition. A firm is getting appraisals for various rights-of-way. They are still on target for late spring-early summer of 2013 to get contracts out with construction beginning in the fall. Because of the timing, Mr. Lewis said that they have discussed construction in Beaufort Plaza with Paul Trask and the merchants to take place *after* the Christmas season.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: DAY DOCK AND MARINA AREA REDEVELOPMENT

Commissioner Dechovitz said the Metropolitan Planning Commission and The Point Association had been met with, and council had had a public hearing. They have had "a lot of email traffic"

in regard to the water sports center and the day dock at the marina. The Metropolitan Planning Commission approved the addendum with a small modification to be more general relative to the length of the day dock, Commissioner Dechovitz said, so they removed that wording. Because it was difficult for people to accept that the artist conceptions were just that, rather than a design document, they have moved away from discussing the design itself and are saying they will build a building in the Beaufort style as approved by the HDRB and consistent with the form-based code.

Commissioner Dechovitz said at the public hearing, they had 26 speakers, of which two were opposed, two were ambiguous, and the balance were in favor of the project. The speakers were private citizens as well as citizens in the Rowing Club, the Power Squadron, and downtown merchants. Kevin Cuppia, Tony Royal, David Cargile, and LaNelle Fabian have been representing the latter. 85% of them supported the day dock and the water sports center and assumed council would approve them, so they are encouraging the merchants to come in and express themselves at the council's first reading the following week.

Commissioner Dechovitz said the meeting with The Point Association was mainly positive and had a very large audience. His sense is that the public would like to see this day dock built as would the merchants. Council can make this addendum part of the civic master plan. Chairman Verity said that Edie Rodgers and Henry Chambers were opposed to it and have been for 20 years. Chairman Verity said there was some concern about different aspects of the plan, but he wouldn't say the group was opposed to having a day dock there.

Commissioner Dechovitz said members of the Redevelopment Commission should be aware that they were asked what happens to parking if they build a 7000 square foot building. He said the footprint would be 3500 square feet and two stories. The older concrete block buildings that are "not in the Beaufort style" would be removed. They will gain 10 – 20 parking spaces, according to Mr. Lewis, Commissioner Dechovitz said, plus it will be a better-looking site. Commissioner Zara said the horse carriages will be gone, but several people responded that they might still be in that location. Commissioner Dechovitz said long-term that would be positive, but they would need somewhere else for them to go.

Chairman Verity said there were questions about safety, too. Commissioner Dechovitz said as this has been publicized in the newspaper, and many merchants now know he is involved with it, they have expressed their interest in modern retail space in the downtown area near the marina to support their businesses. So the Redevelopment Commission should keep in mind, Commissioner Dechovitz said, that once there's a developer interested in doing something generally consistent with the master plan, some merchants might want to move into the area. He said there may be "untapped demand for that particular development."

Mr. Lewis said they got another letter of support in today. Commissioner Zara said she had seen the Army Corps of Engineers e-mail. Commissioner Dechovitz said he has talked with **Scott**

Dadson, and the city last year, not anticipating that council would be interested in the day dock project and the water sports center, wrote an application to the Army Corps of Engineers which included a mooring field which controls how long boats can be informally moored before they must move. It requested the authority to expand the existing day dock, which engineers have decided is impractical, floating docks for motor boats at the marina, and the ability to support a more modern electrical system. That permit, which is now being processed, started a year ago and didn't anticipate the current plans. Rather than stop its progress, they decided to go ahead with the permit that they have, and when it's approved, they expect to have money from state and federal sources, and then they will go back to the Army Corps of Engineers and ask for a modification of the permit. It will hopefully not delay the day dock, he added.

Mr. Lewis said the Redevelopment Commission should discuss "how to deal with the disposition of that property," meaning the whole marina site. He said they have been approached by developers. Commissioner Goodman said they could seek guidance from city council. Chairman Verity said it sounds like it would be sent to Commissioner Goodman's committee.

Commissioner Dechovitz said that the Redevelopment Commission should be aware that 6-7 months ago, Pete Richards discussed bringing Admiral Dewey's flagship to the Beaufort area. At the time, it appeared to be a pipe dream, but Commissioner Dechovitz said a number of cities have dropped out, so Beaufort is in the running for this project with San Francisco. The boat's in Philadelphia, so sending it to San Francisco "would be prohibitive." A floating dry dock could potentially bring it to this area, most likely in Port Royal. He added that the committee is thinking that the restoration of the ship into a museum would be all done in the local area, so it could create skilled craft jobs that are needed in this area and be an economic boon. The permits for the contestants go sometime in the early spring, Commissioner Dechovitz said.

Lafayette Street

Mr. Lewis said they have heard back from Eric Brown and his group, and they are "very close to completion."

Other Business

Mr. Lewis said the Office of Civic Investment has not been as diligent as they could be with information and communication, and they will be presenting monthly updates and a budget-to-date. Chairman Verity said it will become a regular report.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.