A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on July 5, 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 McNally, Mike McFee, Alan Dechovitz, Martin Goodman, and Wendy Zara.

Pat Kase, 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.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Verity.

MINUTES

Commissioner McNally made a motion, second by Commissioner Zara, to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2012 meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously. Commissioner McFee abstained from voting because he was absent from the meeting.

REPORTS

Finance Committee

Commissioner Zara said a joint meeting of the Finance and Residential Housing committees would take place the following week. She said they had met with Eric Brown and a contractor in regard to Lafayette Street, and the city attorney will put together a contract and a memo of understanding. The issues raised in the Executive Session seem to be under control, Commissioner Zara said. The timeframe is delayed by about 2 months.

Commercial / Economic Development Committee

Commissioner Goodman said there have been several meetings in regard to the Depot building and an RFP is still being put together. There are several projects pending and **Josh Martin** "is establishing parameters for another meeting." Commissioner Goodman said the Von Harten building is still in financing "limbo."

Residential Committee

Commissioner McNally said he had had a second meeting with **Shirley Wilkins** of Lowcountry Housing Trust. She will be at the July 11 joint meeting with Finance. Ms. Wilkins would like to offer classes for lower-income home buyers on subjects such as how to get a mortgage. They are awaiting information from the Office of Civic Investment about pre-approved plans; they will let architects know that they can submit different types of plans for infill.

Boundary Street Redevelopment District

Chairman Verity said the most recent DOT meetings have brought the city up to date, and the project seems to be on track to begin next spring.

Discussion: Day Dock

Commissioner Dechovitz said council had requested an addendum to the master plan in regard to a day dock and water sports facility in the marina area. He said two different areas are recommended in a packet he distributed to committee members. One option would be comprised of dry stack storage for rowing boats, kayaks, paddle boards, etc.; another is for the day dock and the third is for a combination of the two.

Commissioner Dechovitz said this had been reviewed by **Rick Griffin,** the harbormaster, and has a number of supporters including Main Street Beaufort and others.

The design concept began with an idea of the recreational day dock in the neighborhood of the marina or Waterfront Park, Commissioner Dechovitz said. There was also interest in the possibility of an additional facility operated by a private entity for water sports in the downtown area. The concept is a day dock, a water sports center for storage, and an advertising campaign that would promote the use regionally for visitors to Beaufort as well as local water sport enthusiasts. The day dock concept is 250' long and is meant for boats up to 26'. Larger and small boats can use the existing day dock, or they can stay short term in the existing marina. The mooring field is to have 20 or more moorings, and there will need to be more space for the dinghy traffic that will ensue.

Commissioner Dechovitz said, as in Savannah, those pulling into the day dock would call a group – probably Lanier Parking – after docking which would help to ensure turnover. Depending on demand and design, low floats can be donated to be attached to the day dock. The water sports center could be a temporary or permanent building with rack storage for rowing equipment e.g., shells, kayaks, paddle boards, etc. The building would be about 3000 square feet; the determination of whether it's a permanent or temporary structure would depend on whether there was anticipated development of the marina area, according to Commissioner Dechovitz.

In regard to marketing, Commissioner Dechovitz said he had looked at the way the City of Beaufort is marketed in *The Dossier's Guide*, and there are a lot of out of date businesses, "weak descriptions," and nothing about recent development in Beaufort. The typical reader of *The Dossier's Guide* earns $234,000 a year and is a good market as a "value tourist" for the city.

Commissioner Dechovitz showed photos of a dock in Savannah which is similar in concept to the day dock that Beaufort could have. He also showed conceptual drawings of a Beaufort water sports center and the dry stock storage. The rowing club has said that if they are allowed to install the low floats, they will bring regional rowing clubs for a regatta to see if it's practical. He showed the three options under consideration: option A extends the existing day dock and adds low floats and the water sports building; option B is a 250' day dock in the area behind the Chambers Pavilion, so the building would be near the other recreational day dock at the end of the existing sea wall. It would have one ramp like the one pictured in Savannah and a 40' low-rise float for rowers. This is preferred by the downtown merchants because the day dock is on

the wall which seems to them to be more convenient for day visitors. Option 3 would make all the rowing at the west end of the marina and include dinghy storage; there would be a day dock for motor boats, splitting the two activities and moving the building out of Waterfront Park, which has lower impact on future development of the area.

Commissioner McNally asked if a day dock nearer to the bridge wasn't considered because there wasn't room for the building. Commissioner Dechovitz said he didn't include that option because of security concerns. It might present a policing issue, he said, because it's not as well-lighted.

Commissioner Dechovitz explained that the dry stack would let people kayak without the hassle of bringing the kayak down, storing it, etc. People would be at the water sports area to do all that for them. Commissioner Dechovitz said this wouldn't be city-owned or operated. The city might give out the permits, but it would be run commercially and staffed privately. To have the city operating it isn't financially feasible, and the city has no experience with doing this.

Commissioner McNally asked what the harbormaster's and downtown merchants' views were on the third option. Commissioner Dechovitz said Mr. Griffin would prefer the extension on the west end, and the merchants prefer it on the seawall. Commissioner Dechovitz said council had asked the Redevelopment Commission to explore it and choose a draft addendum, then they will decide if they want to proceed and how.

Chairman Verity said **Henry Chambers** and **Edie Rodgers** had had experience with this in the past. Mr. Chambers said if a building is to be built, he prefers the use of the present marina building that includes Mr. Griffin's office. He thinks that would be more acceptable to the Historic District. The merchants think that they'll generate traffic with a $250,000 dock, but he disagrees. He feels concerned about the interruption of traffic if another building is put in. Chairman Verity asked if Mr. Chambers thought the option would be good to have a storage building downtown. Mr. Chambers said he thinks it's like the Rail Trail in that it's a question of how many people will be satisfied for the cost. He thinks if a building is built, the best place is where the two current marina buildings are.

Commissioner Dechovitz said if the west side of the bathhouse were built to, it would take up 30 parking spaces and would be close to the bath house and bathrooms. Ms. Rodgers asked why they would give up 30 parking spaces to put up a commercial building and add numerous people to the area.

Ms. Rodgers handed out a rendering of the waterfront to make the point that they shouldn't put anything in along the seawall because it could eventually ruin the view of and from the waterfront. She said the idea is appalling to her, i.e., motor boats on the park's sea wall. She believes it will lead to inevitable expansion of dock space which is not what the park was built for. She feels "the magnificent vista should be preserved."

Commissioner McNally asked about the building placement in the exhibits. Commissioner Dechovitz said first he got Exhibit 2B from the Office of Civic Investment, and he asked for a "less contemporary building" which looked more historic Beaufort and more like a rowing center. Minimum square footage would have to be about 3000'.

Commissioner McNally said a water sports center in his opinion should sell kayaks, etc. Commissioner Dechovitz said that's the idea in order to make it work financially for the operator. They would have *some* retail but probably not a lot. 2000' square feet might be for storage, and 1000'might be for retail. There's about 20-30' between the buildings now, he said, which isn't enough space. Commissioner McNally suggested they might be able to put in a small coffee shop. Commissioner Dechovitz said storing and launching the kayaks and selling accessories to people would be where the money is for the operator. Commissioner Dechovitz said Mr. Griffin runs a convenience center, and Commissioner Goodman agreed. Commissioner Dechovitz said they might sell cokes and have a gathering place for post-sports.

Ms. Rodgers asked what the city gains from this. Commissioner Dechovitz said the people who would be attracted to and use it; high-end visitors would come to the area if these sorts of facilities are there, and they will in turn go to downtown stores and restaurants, and potentially hotels, Commissioner Zara added . This would attract a higher level of tourists, Commissioner Dechovitz said. In addition, regionally it would offer more value to those coming downtown. Ms. Rodgers said that kayakers would come in their kayak clothes and therefore not go to restaurants and shops.

Ms. Rodgers said she would like to see this done at the Whitehall property. Commissioner Dechovitz said they would like to see that area developed, but there are currently economic impracticalities, and those might not be solved for some time. The day dock and mooring field installations are already permitted *there*, not over at Whitehall.

Ms. Rodgers said this is, to her, a private property enterprise, not to be put "on the city's pristine park." Commissioner Dechovitz replied that there are already private enterprises in the marina, and this would be a lifestyle benefit on the city's property if it's done.

Chairman Verity agreed with Mr. Chambers that the building should be in the complex that is there already. He said the question was whether to move forward with these options or modify them before giving them to council.

Tommy Logan said he was in "on the tail end of Waterfront Park" development, and knows that the Bay Street property owners association disallows anything extending into the view from some point west on Bay Street. Ms. Rodgers said this issue had come up with a conversation about a boardwalk. Commissioner Dechovitz said this is the first time he's heard about that. Commissioner Zara said a legal agreement would be documented somewhere. Mr. Logan said

they ran into the question with the filling in of the Waterfront Park, and that issue will arise again with the extension of the day dock to the west. Mr. Logan added that the utilities need to be separated and kept off the main seawall to avoid a situation with overextension of the marina. This allows people who don't have boats to benefit from the Waterfront Park with the promenade.

Mr. Logan went on to say that they could take the existing day dock and push it back, then extend a parallel second finger to double the size of it to accommodate what Commissioner Dechovitz was talking about. They also discussed attaching a dock like the one in Savannah to the seawall itself but inside the marina for smaller vessels.

Mr. Logan said he'd like something to be built down there to move the horses elsewhere because of sanitation issues. He agreed that leaving the seawall pristine was the best idea. Mr. Logan said the city currently gets nothing out of the marina businesses, and he feels they should concentrate on the area around the ramp.

Commissioner McNally said he likes the idea of a parallel dock to the one that's there. Commissioner McFee said there's not enough water there for that, and Commissioner Zara agreed. Commissioner Dechovitz said the design of how it's done is not the issue. Council needs to choose the strategy it wants, if it wants to do something. Commissioner Dechovitz said the Redevelopment Commission isn't competent to talk about the design. Mr. Logan said when the 8-acre seawall was filled in, the east end has become silted to the point where the cruise ship docking is affected.

Commissioner McNally said the parallel dock would be a good idea, because the worst part of kayaking is carrying the kayak to the end of the dock. He favors the west end configuration to stay out of pedestrians' way and to stay away from boats in the marina, but he thinks the design elements need to be user-friendly.

Commissioner Zara reiterated that council has to decide if it wants to consider *anything*. Chairman Verity said the Redevelopment Commission did this because they feel there's room for more recreational activities downtown. Chairman Verity said the indicated actions would be to suggest a test; they would recommend that council go after state money to provide more downtown access by water, and that the rowing club test take place for their benefit and the city's. Going forward, there needs to be an indication from council as to what direction they would like the Redevelopment Commission to go. Chairman Verity said the Redevelopment Commission should indicate to council that there is support from them to the extent its feasible, in order to allow people who use the facilities to use the downtown area more often. The money needs to be secured, Chairman Verity added.

Commissioner Zara made a motion to forward to council a recommendation that a test be conducted per Commissioner Dechovitz's memo and that $250,000 in state and federal grants

should be applied for if the test deems this to be something council wants to do. Commissioner McNally seconded the motion.

Mr. Chambers said they must examine going into the channel. Commissioner McFee reiterated that it is too shallow but said they could possibly channel through it. Chairman Verity said they could explore that. Mr. Chambers said they could add 20-40' to the wall. He said they should also determine if it's financially feasible. **Billy Keyserling** said that all the Northeast schools will need to come somewhere to row where it's not frozen for spring training. At the end, there would be regattas, which would bring parents for the weekend. Commissioner Dechovitz said they should challenge the rowing club, which has said they would bring in 4-5 regional clubs. They can then gather to read the test market. Commissioner Zara said they will also know then if there are complaints.

Chairman Verity asked if they should also recommend that one or more of the submitted drawings be approved. Commissioner Dechovitz said it won't go to council until the fall. Mayor Keyserling said when Sector One was done, council had said they'd pass such an idea, but they should have an addendum to look at the economic benefits of the harbor. As opposed to being incremental, they would have a vision of a larger project. Mayor Keyserling said the principal funding source is from the DNR's gas sales for watercraft, and the delegation directs those funds.

Mayor Keyserling feels "council wants to see something done." He also knows "the process can be elongated because there are cycles to the dollars." He thinks they're proposing a 3 to 1 match. DNR provides a grant with the agreement of the delegation, then "they help you to line up the match from federal agencies." Mayor Keyserling said he's asked the delegation, because of the depleting funds, to set aside the first $27,000. Mayor Keyserling said they should add this into the motion somewhere: to get the delegation to get Beaufort in the queue for the funds, even if they're ultimately not taken.

Commissioner Goodman moved to recommended an amendment including indicated actions 1 through 3 put forward by Commissioner Dechovitz. Commissioner Dechovitz said he would prefer council and staff proceed to getting grants for $250,000 on the assumption that they're going to be doing something, then proceed with the test, see if it works, then get all parties together to consider all three options. **Commissioner McNally seconded the motion.**

Commissioner Zara withdrew her motion and made a motion to recommend to council that they undertake testing actions 2 and 3 of Commissioner Dechovitz's memo. Commissioner Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Zara recommended that council apply to the DNR for funds that would allow the city to improve access to waterways. Commissioner Dechovitz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Chambers said in the planning for this, they should note that Beaufort owns all the street down to the river and several parks on the river. In regard to economic impact, the rowing club has a private clubhouse, and there is a park on Ribaut Road that has a 23' bluff and there are 4-5 places with 150' to the river, so no one would see it but the rowers. Chairman Verity said the goal is to get people downtown.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Zara made a motion, second by Commissioner Goodman, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.