

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on May 17, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Keyserling and council members Donnie Ann Beer, Mike Sutton, Mike McFee, and City Manager Scott Dadson.

In accordance with the 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.

Mayor Keyserling called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

#### **DISCUSSION OF GULLAH FESTIVAL PARKING**

Mr. Dadson said that as a result of a council discussion, there needed to be follow-up on the Gullah Festival parking issue. **Ivette Burgess** said that at a meeting with those involved, it was agreed that the use of the parking lot for Thursday for preparation would be in the areas highlighted in pink on a handout she gave to council. The spaces are primarily along the marina side. Staff didn't want the Gullah Festival to use the entire lot, and festival organizers agreed. Other sections would be utilized during the festival itself, and other spaces will be available for carriage tours, Rick Griffin, etc.

**Bob Moquin** said a representative would meet with a Gullah Festival representative regarding expediting motor coach permits with pre-sales, which Ms. Burgess said had been discussed at their meeting.

#### **DISCUSSION OF ON-SITE PARKING**

Mr. Dadson said at a past work session, council discussed parking past the currently managed part of the parking program. Staff has clarified the existing conditions and suggested measures that could be taken to take it from 56 to 78 managed spaces on Carteret Street. **Libby Anderson** said the biggest change would be moving bus loading zones from Carteret to Craven Street. Mr. Dadson said from Craven to Bay it's managed; from Craven to Duke, it's not metered. There is a small section with a one-hour limit between North and King, and Ms. Anderson said it's recommended to eliminate that. From Craven to Duke Streets is unmanaged.

Mr. Dadson suggested that if it starts to fill up, the city could begin to manage it as they wanted to. Mayor Keyserling said there are four new businesses on the stretch. He wondered about the unintended consequences to The Point and Old Commons neighborhoods. If downtown is to really grow, he wondered if there should be parameters for turn-over – perhaps not meters but a sign that says 2-hour parking. If the city is encouraging business, the city should do something to help businesses.

Mayor Keyserling speculated that these 22 open spaces are being parked in all day. With the Port Republic parking lot gone, there is no low-rate, long-term parking for downtown employees, Mayor Keyserling said. Mr. Dadson said they should identify where long-term free

parking is happening; Mayor Keyserling said it's happening wherever is closest to where employees work. Mr. Dadson said he's not sure that's so; "people park in the oddest spots."

**Randall Burch** said the one-hour parking they referred to is probably working and taking it away would have an impact, and he would be concerned about switching it without knowing what long-term plans are for that corridor. The unmetered spaces on Craven have an effect on the metered spaces, he feels.

Mr. Moquin asked Mr. Dadson if he had said that the bus parking would be affected. Mr. Dadson said if council chose to make them regular car slots, it would add five spaces to the inventory. Councilman McFee asked why they need two slots on one side and three slots on the other on Craven. Mr. Dadson said that's what could be physically put in. **Heather Winch** asked where the buses would go. Mayor Keyserling said the Office of Civic Investment has said there would be drop-off, and they wouldn't "park per se." Councilman Sutton asked how the buses are operating now. Ms. Winch said from a TMAC perspective, she would have a problem with moving bus traffic in front of the Arsenal; it's difficult to maneuver, is very congested, and is a problem for carriages. She suggested motor coaches closest to the old Carnegie building be moved up north, away from the corner. If a bus is parked there, those turning right have to creep out in traffic.

**Rose White** said a bus had pulled up in front of the Arsenal, let people off at the gate, and was there for 30 minutes; cars had to go into the other lane to go around them. Carriages have trees and a sidewalk there and can't go around, so she would suggest the buses not be put there. Mr. Burch said that was a bus driver error; the end point is clearly marked. That can't be regulated. He thinks it's working at the Visitors' Center. If they're moved to Craven Street, he wondered where the visitors in cars would park.

Mr. Dadson said the managed area ends at Craven and Carteret. From Craven to Duke, they observed if there were enough spaces there for their needs. Even if the bus spaces stay, they get 23 spaces. There are issues about people and patients being able to get into offices and The Chocolate Tree. The question is whether opening this up will relieve some pressure off finding places to park. Will people stay there all day if it's opened up? If so, the city will have to intervene. Staff also observed that there are five significant parking lots that front Carteret, four of which are on corners.

Mayor Keyserling said he'd invited **Charles Friedman** to speak about his concerns. Dr. Friedman said he has a dental office, and patients have a hard time finding parking near it. There are open spaces between Craven and Duke, but the first unmetered block is taken advantage of. In that one block, his office is having a big problem. He would like a time limit to dissuade people from parking there all day. Mr. Burch suggested the parking plan should be a mix of eight-hour and one-hour parking. There probably needs to be a mixed use, and as businesses develop, they

can look at it over time to increase efficiency. People at VCB meetings need to park there, and employees need to be accommodated, too.

Mr. Dadson said there are 16 spaces from North to Duke. Putting up a sign means they have to enforce it; the city is no longer in that business, and it can be cumbersome to chalk the tires, etc. If council puts limits on the parking, they need to decide how they want to manage it and where the resources will come from. Mayor Keyserling said retail has opened on the corner, including Dr. Friedman's practice. Dr. Friedman said the other offices on the street are low-volume.

Mayor Keyserling said no one is opposed to adding spaces. The two spaces in front of the Arsenal could be blocked when the buses are coming. He's seen a bus unload and then go pick up elsewhere. He understands the need for turn-over to give spaces for The Arsenal, but if they put the two meters where the buses are on the south side, they could be bagged ahead of time for the window of time in which the buses will be there, usually 10 minutes.

Mr. Burch said the VCB doesn't want to be in the towing business. They have had 141 buses from January to April so far this year, Mr. Moquin said. Mr. Burch said Mr. Moquin is selling the passes ahead of time which helps them understand how many buses are truly coming. They are trying to become friendlier for the buses because of their economic impact. Mr. Dadson asked if they could live with keeping the one space between Craven and North and in the short-term see how it goes.

Ms. Winch said part of the next agenda item is related to TMAC. The current ordinance indicates that there is small bus access for the Visitors' Center. Now there aren't designated spaces for that to happen due to moves. She recommended holding off on the bus spots to avoid having to re-paint them.

Ms. White said the bus season for the spring is nearly over until mid-September. Most mornings they come in and unload, get passes, etc. Instead of moving the bus spaces, the ones north of Craven are the ones people are using. The others aren't used next to Rainey's Antiques because they don't want people to have to walk across the street to get to the Visitors' Center. Councilman McFee said the plan was to have people walk the downtown area; Ms. White said many are too elderly or impaired to walk from the Visitors' Center to downtown. Mayor Keyserling said the Visitors' Center is on Craven which *is* downtown; if they are getting off the bus to use the bathroom, they could do that in Waterfront Park. The Arsenal was intended to extend those two streets into the core; the Greenery contract is to make that area more connected to the Waterfront Park. Ms. White said visitors in cars do that, even though buses don't. People walk from the Chamber, just not the buses with elderly people on them. Mr. Burch said "this is a long-term piece," and as the Visitors' Center is expanded, it will be a destination for the buses' passengers as well in the long-term.

Councilman Sutton said if the Chamber can manage with one bus unloading zone, that's fine. Ms. White said some go to Bay, and some go to Craven, when she was asked where the buses go to get to Bay. Councilman Sutton said anyone on a bus tour would expect to walk a town that is more than two-blocks wide. The buses need to be off-loaded at the Chamber, and "people should be told to explore." Mr. Moquin agreed and said it's an education process.

Councilman Sutton said the city is growing, and if out-of-town companies dictate how people experience the city, that's a problem. Councilman McFee said a handicapped issue is one thing, but in general terms, he agrees. Councilman McFee said people who have to do the short-tour because of disabilities will do so, and the rest can walk through the back streets of the city into the commercial core.

Mayor Keyserling said he hears agreement on implementing new spaces, and at least two are saying to at least try without the space to the north on Craven. Councilman McFee said there's no question on added spaces. Mayor Keyserling said they need to think long-term on Carteret. Mr. Moquin said since they have moved, they've added 13 employees who now need to park in the area between Craven and North Streets; they use the spaces from 8 a.m. on. The block in front of the church "will change dramatically." The Baptist Church two blocks up has an empty lot, and they make it available to Chamber and VCB employees which can free up a block, and managing with some meters will help immensely. Councilman McFee said there's no plan for meters on North Street. He said Craven has been the break for management; moving it further would be an entirely different matter. Other than putting on potential limitations that won't be enforced, metering any further down Carteret is not what council was talking about.

Councilman Sutton said the 6-block study is a perfect first step and that should be looked at sequentially across the city. There can be better management by painting the unpainted, curbed spots. Neighborhood by neighborhood, they need to look at The Point, for example, in this level of detail. The streets that weren't designed for parking shouldn't allow parking there; if they can accommodate parking and aren't causing harm to emergency vehicles, that should be looked at. Mayor Keyserling asked Ms. Anderson if the Office of Civic Investment was looking at more formalized on-street parking. Ms. Anderson said they are looking at that, but not in The Point.

Councilman McFee said there are several areas that have cars parked in front of houses on Port Republic, and it's not delineated parking, but nothing is done about it. Mayor Keyserling said there are complaints about needing speed bumps and four-way stops. If there's room for organized parking in The Point, it will slow down traffic. Mr. Moquin said it's good to hear that they're looking at other streets; on Scott Street, there are no parking lines. Depending on the car or time of day, there may be 5-10 cars. Painting parking lines and looking at Scott between Craven and North would gain a couple spots for the city.

Mr. Dadson said there “is a relationship between what is allowed on private property and the public infrastructure.” Rules need to change at the same time the city is making capital investments. Adding spaces is the proper first step. If they begin filling up, and it’s monitored, and they are shown to be 8-hour or 4-hour spaces, they can begin to make decisions about where to deal with on-street parking and about limiting off-street parking. People being there is a sign of success.

Councilman Sutton said they have lost parking in front of the not-for-profit organizations such as the church on Craven Street. “Overnight 2-3 parking spaces were lost, yellow lines painted, and the meters went away,” he said. They lost parking in the area where they want it, and there are long yellow lines now, except at every funeral and on Sundays. Mayor Keyserling said “they got that for funerals.” Councilwoman Beer said at her church, “they put up cones in the morning.”

#### **UPDATE FROM THE TOURISM MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TMAC)**

Ms. Winch said she is here to provide an update about what the committee has accomplished and to get council input on what council wants to accomplish. There may need to be an ordinance later this summer. “The goal line changes” and additional requests have appeared since her original meeting with council. She thanked Mr. Moquin and the “visioning” exercise. She feels TMAC is behind the curve in terms of time.

To date, they have looked at the agreement with the carriage tour operators and the issues that had arisen. There were open action items for the carriage tour operators and the city that hadn’t been completed. The agreement had expired, and when it did, conditions eroded again rapidly. TMAC managed to get action taken. They revised the slot rotation again to one that was agreeable with the carriage tour operators which was not what was agreed to in council meetings. It was revised and approved. They had follow-up regarding Sandlapper Tours and their bus being reinstated and Suthern Rose’s request for allocating a bus slot from one of the out-of-town short buses / van. They consulted existing operators and provided that feedback to Suthern Rose. There was no action taken, and they don’t intend to take any, because they are “looking at the ordinances in a holistic way,” rather than patching up issues piecemeal.

TMAC is “still spending 99% of its time on enforcement issues,” she said. Officer Carter has moved forward to position them to re-write the ordinance. They have met with staff about the ordinance. They amended the vehicle inspection checklist with respect to vans and small touring vehicles. Officer Carter has issued verbal warnings and tickets to the carriage companies for soliciting and stopping issues. They looked at other cities’ arrangements for clean-up procedures. Savannah and Charleston use an independent contractor for clean-up; when the carriage tour operators do it themselves, there are constant complaints.

TMAC wants to balance the needs of visitors and the needs of the citizens. The tour routes the carriage tours use are a two-mile loop. All leave from the marina parking lot; the smaller bus

tours all follow the same route. How much pressure can be put on two-miles of tour route is the question, Ms. Winch said.

They would like to simplify improving accountability of the carriage tour companies in terms of their operations. If someone gets a ticket, the carriage tour driver or bus driver is responsible for it as well. They want to make the companies accountable, not the individuals. Councilman Sutton asked her to clarify her statement. Ms. Winch said if someone runs a stop sign, they should get a ticket. Ms. Winch said after so many violations by a company or its employees, it might result in suspension or revocation of their license; this is an idea they are considering. How they'll increase this accountability hasn't been worked out.

Ms. Winch said of the data they have tracked, two-thirds of complaints were from carriage tour operators complaining about each other. They are looking at how to manage the clean-up operations. Slot rotation and soliciting is second for causing problems, "but only by a hair." It's still a major issue, and they are attempting to address it. Stopping traffic violations, horse conditions and resting, heat, and operating in adverse weather conditions are also issues. They have started receiving comments from the tour operators, and TMAC committee members will be surveying their constituents. Ms. Winch said she knows that among people where she lives, top complaints would be about clean-up and misinformation being given on the tours. They might have "secret shoppers" on the tours to ensure that correct information is being given out.

Ms. Winch said if carriages ran in all available slots at maximum capacity (16), 2756 visitors could be transported through The Point alone. Vans allow for 4 hourly departures; 2 are in-town and 2 are out-of-town slots for people coming from Ridgeland, Charleston, etc. They are not nearly fully utilized, and neither are the in-town slots for that matter. There are 251 slots per week if all 4 slots were used each time. There could be 424 potential tours on 2 miles of road.

TMAC has been approached about the possibility of using electric carts that carry 9-15 passengers as alternatives for touring vehicles; they are considering how that would be fit into a slot rotation. So now there are potentially additional demands on the slot rotations. They will address boat and walking tours, as well, but these have had no complaints. The only complaints about small and large touring vehicles like buses are about them not being registered, and that's usually because they didn't know to register.

Ms. Winch asked council to offer what they would like to see addressed. There's been talk about the carriage tours being limited because of heat, etc. during the summer, and a member of council had suggested that they might be able to operate buses instead during those times, but there are new issues that arise with that.

Mayor Keyserling asked Ms. Winch if TMAC had considered what the 2 miles which the tours cover can sustain, and how they can figure that out. Ms. Winch said people now would say they're at a saturation point at certain times of year. Pedi-cabs are prohibited right now by ordinance. If they don't hold up traffic and keep moving, should they be considered? People live and work along those 2 miles. The Chamber of Commerce and VCB are good at bringing things back downtown, and she suspects that requests will come forward in the next several months to relocate other things so others can have access to the bus passengers being dropped off at The Arsenal.

Ms. Winch said the ordinance isn't being addressed because other things have been addressed, and they can't deal with those issues and revise the ordinance by October; they came to this realization last week. They are going to revise the ordinance *in toto*, not waive a piece of it for 6 months to allow the out of town slots to be used by a local company. There would be too many potential confrontations between now and when the ordinance is revised; they don't want to have to deal with buses the way they have to deal with carriages.

Mayor Keyserling said that saturation issues and the question of balance – “we can only take so much” – need to be addressed. To balance it, managing the activities they do must be done. There can only be so many tours. There are only a certain number of tours that are tolerable, but if additional routes are found, that would raise the tolerance a little more and then work backwards from there. The city needs to accommodate tourists the best it can, be a city people live and work in, and see to the people who come here to retire. Charleston has failed and is not the livable place people grew up in. Ms. Winch said Charleston has 5-6 different routes, and they're assigned. The Carteret and Craven intersection is “a crisis point waiting to happen.” Councilman McFee said it's the only traffic light the carriages can be on. There were alternative crossings in the past.

**Peter White** said tours have not increased in the last 5 years; what Ms. Winch cited is the potential number of tours, but in reality it's declined over the years, though it's heavy in the spring and fall. He said the potential numbers Ms. Winch gave are not happening now. Ms. White said the carriages, except in April and May, can be busy, but they still aren't at capacity. The tours are available by ordinance, but they aren't being used.

Councilman Sutton said council intervened in some issues prior to convening TMAC; Ms. Winch said they have solved all of those, and the sign issue is being addressed. Councilman Sutton said TMAC was convened to look at the ordinance; he wants to see answers to the question of one touring company as opposed to two. Second, after studying the buggies, “the slots are the slots and whether there's a bus or a horse doesn't matter,” but it shouldn't include more tours. So if they have 10 slots, they can run a bus in bad weather but not both in one slot. He would like feedback from TMAC on that.

Mayor Keyserling said it's a question of a viable number of slots and how they're divided. Councilman Sutton said if they had one company, they'd have fewer problems. He is not saying to change that now, but he wondered if it's now time to go back to the state attorney general and get a second opinion on having one company. Mr. Dadson said it's a basic matter of the public good and a monopoly / exclusion doesn't meet the public good.

Councilman Sutton said there's the issue of saturation of tour routes. Every tour goes down his street, and he accepts that he lives in a tourist town. The battle of the tour companies is personality driven; Ms. Winch said that's always been true, not just with these companies. Councilman Sutton said one company would make business license renewal much easier. Tying in the bus and buggy operations without increasing tours is a question that needs to be answered; tourists "should have the option to take a buggy or a bus."

Councilman Sutton said there's been contention about where tickets are sold. The carriage tour company can decide where they're sold, but the kiosk was built to make it easier for the consumers. If it's the only place they're sold, it would solve some issues; selling in many places creates problems. Mayor Keyserling suggested only the kiosk and the Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Winch said the cost to the city is not equaled by the revenues; carriage tours cost the city more to operate than the city receives from the tour company. Councilman Sutton said that's not the carriage tour operators' fault. Mayor Keyserling asked "what can we tolerate, what does it cost, and if there are tour companies, how can we increase the quality so the consumer gets the most out of it?" The drivers have to represent the city in the way the city wants, not the way the drivers want to.

Ms. Winch said if they could make two-thirds of the issues go away – solicitation, clean-up and traffic are the majority of the complaints – "from an enforcement standpoint, TMAC is no longer in the warning business." They are giving tickets. Councilman Sutton said if the system is good, it should be enforceable. They can have that discussion with the judicial side in the future. Officer Carter said most of their cases are one person's word against another's, and that won't do well in court. Most are worked out outside of that realm. Ms. Winch said if there are two witnesses to a violation, which happens, she expects they will receive a summons to testify.

Mr. Burch suggested that in Charleston there are five routes, and "the visitor doesn't know whether they're getting the best or least tour." The city could inventory at least another route and provide a different historical perspective. Ms. Winch said they can do that, but they haven't done much in the way of instructing that they use one route or another on their given day. The timing of carriage tours should be at a certain place by a certain time which could solve some of the traffic problems. Ms. White said they had that about seven years ago, and people were using it as a way to coerce people to go on their tours. People who come more than once on a tour will ask if it's going along certain places. Some drivers will do different options when

they're with faster horses. When they tried to follow four different routes, it caused more confusion because the routes crossed each other too much.

### **VISITORS-CONVENTION BUREAU (VCB) VISION REGARDING TOURISM**

Mr. Moquin said they "needed to identify who we are as a community and get buy-in." They performed a branding exercise with TMAC and shared branding and marketing research that was done. He explained the process of determining branding. His timeline is to come back to council in July. It's not the VCB coming up with the vision, he said; it's the VCB collaborating with other groups and seeing how it all relates. He feels "it's about the visitor experience." He agrees there's a balance to be struck and growth of the tourism business needs to be managed. The VCB is going through a methodical process. He "would like to go through an exercise with council and staff and collate that information with other information."

Mayor Keyserling asked if they didn't do this same process two years ago in focus groups and what Mr. Moquin is talking about happened. The money was used for re-branding that didn't really appear, and now doing it again concerns him. The branding operation occurred, and though Mr. Moquin wasn't here at that time, there may be data available from that earlier effort. Mayor Keyserling wondered if there is a target; is there a saturation point or a threshold? Beaufort can't be everything to everybody. What is the model that will help businesses and also respect people who live here or are considering living here? It's a small resource, but if tourism were better managed, it might have more depth; pieces get left out like Parris Island and Hunting Island, etc. The profile of who comes here, what they spend, etc. is needed.

Mr. Moquin said he hasn't heard about the effort done two years ago it. The branding study is something they go back to, and it ties into consumer feedback. Some of the efforts "are more sweat equity"; no one is being brought in from the outside. They're "asking the collective brain trust in the community" what they think and a lot of commonality is coming out of the sessions, Mr. Moquin said.

Mr. Moquin said the visitors that come here and the money they have to invest is strategically spent on empty-nesters and females first, and that needs to be matched up to the product and how they promote it. The media they buy now is specific. Mayor Keyserling asked what the missing product is and what the opportunity was for an entrepreneur.

Mr. Burch said for Parris Island they have a program in the Visitors' Center and are working with Parris Island for the families who go to graduations to visit the Greater Beaufort area as well. There's a portal in the Parris Island website to try to get people to hang out in Beaufort after graduation. He said there was a letter sent to the Gullah-Geechee Corridor community to suggest that Penn Center be the center of it.

Mayor Keyserling said he wanted to address in the work session a range of issues above and beyond the specifics Mr. Burch was giving, which is what TMAC asked for when the mayor met with them. To give TMAC direction, Mayor Keyserling feels there should be a vision to give them a sense of magnitude: is it just horses and carriages or bigger issues? Should they be involved in short-term rentals, for example? They need to get off of just the horses and carriages because no one will stay on TMAC and its doing a disservice to businesses and tourists, Mayor Keyserling feels.

Councilman Sutton said council had asked Mr. Moquin specifically to look at what tourism is, and what its future is, but they “still don’t have an answer.” Councilman Sutton said he has asked what they are marketing when they market Beaufort. He provided the current listing of things to do in Beaufort on Trip Advisor. Councilman Sutton said if money is being spent to market Beaufort, he thinks Beaufort knows what it is. He said Trip Advisor gives the sense that there are a lot of reasons to stay after graduation. He wants to know if the Chamber of Commerce and VCB are doing the same. He said he “wants to know what story is being told.”

Mr. Moquin asked Councilman Sutton to reiterate his questions so he can give specific answers. If the story isn’t being told by the Chamber of Commerce and VCB, why is the city spending money to market through them? Councilman Sutton asked. Mayor Keyserling said there are parking issues and short-term rental issues that are beyond the carriage tours. The auditing of the content of the tour operators leaves a distinct impression of Beaufort with visitors.

The need for accountability is across all the tour operators, Ms. Winch said. The city attorney didn’t change his response after reviewing the possibility of having just one tour company. TMAC needs to know if there’s that possibility before they create something that’s not really needed.

Mr. Moquin said Councilman Sutton was talking about marketing and how Beaufort is framed as a destination; Mayor Keyserling brought up issues. Mr. Moquin said getting tourists here is the marketing part, and then “the experience” is parking, short-term rentals, etc. Mayor Keyserling responded that Beaufort has a waterfront, for example, and he wondered if it’s used as well as it could be. Should there be a winter rowing tournament? Could kayaks be stored downtown? The reality is they have horse carriage rides and places to shop. Cemeteries are maintained but is there something there that could be used for tourism? What does a city do and what are the management issues for TMAC? Decisions are then made around dollars.

Mr. Moquin said who Beaufort is as a product ties into the opportunities Mayor Keyserling is asking about. Mayor Keyserling asked if Beaufort could become a wellness destination where people would come 10-14 days and walk, ride bikes, see history, get lectures, etc. instead of the notion of merely filling up rooms. Tourism discussions “invariably go to spending money to fill beds and what are we doing about the carriage wars.”

Mr. Dadson said a couple of years ago he and Ms. Winch “discussed the test of tourism”: who do you attract, when they get here do they stay, and do they buy the product that matches what they did and saw? Is the product for the tourists to invest in once they’ve come and thought about it a little bit? Did they experience the water or Gullah history? Is the product then there for them to invest in? The main issue, he feels, is if they came here and had an experience, is it there for them to invest in?

Mr. Burch said the visitors’ guide has evolved. It was put together with the end-user in mind instead of just generating ads. It’s put together to get people here, Mr. Burch said. An RFP was put out for it and it will move the city forward, he feels. The VCB isn’t just downtown Beaufort. Mayor Keyserling said he wants to know what the guide will look like in 10 years, and how the city can help them get there.

Mayor Keyserling said they need to know what the issues are that need management. Ms. Winch said they will see some things will change in the ordinance as happened last time, including a quarterly report that relates to the entirety of the ordinance. Some things will be eliminated from the ordinance; she feels the enforcement should be done on a broader level. The tour givers are the primary ambassadors of Beaufort: the step-aboard guides, the carriage tour operators, and walking tour guides.

Mr. Moquin provided a handout of a monthly “dashboard.” In the first year at the Arsenal, there were 43,000 visitors, and they “are now tracking a projected pace of 53,000 for this year.” Ms. Winch suggested that getting tracking data – which is not given now voluntarily - could help TMAC determine when tours ran, for example. Mr. Dadson said they could bid out the best tour slots; Ms. Winch said they have talked about individually bidding out every slot. Mr. Dadson said that would give them data as to what the tour companies think is the best time of day, week, and year. Councilman McFee said if it could be managed that way, other, bigger cities would be doing that. Ms. Winch said they have a “solution set” which she can’t disclose yet.

Mr. Moquin said they would come back with the answers in a work session in July. Councilman Sutton said Ms. Winch had asked about the direction council would take in reference to the number of tour company operators. He’d like to seek an opinion of the State since the only one available is dated. Mayor Keyserling said there appeared to be consensus. He said the city attorney could write a letter, and it won’t hurt to ask the question. Councilman McFee warned that it took 17 weeks to get an answer from the State on a real estate question. Mayor Keyserling asked if they knew of other places where it’s limited to one operator. Councilwoman Beer suggested asking for the opinion no matter how long it took.

Mr. Dadson said when others are excluded from competition in the public right-of-way, there’s a limit. Ms. Winch said there are other ways; not everyone might be willing to pay a certain price per axle. At a certain threshold, it might not be worth it for both companies to do it. Mr. Dadson said competition will bring things back to their natural balance.

Mayor Keyserling said he hears that council is running behind on providing direction. Ms. Winch said she wants advice on the revision of the ordinance, not necessarily long-term vision. They're trying to revise it to move the city forward with what the ordinance says. They can incorporate things like tour auditing, and then they'll deal with specifics like who parks where, etc.

Mayor Keyserling asked if a contractual matter would be helped by an Executive Session, and Ms. Winch said they will when they're prepared to deal with the contract.

**Ron Petit** said he's heard these issues raised before, including the need to gain focus. Tourism can't be sold unless it's specifically known what it is. Of those coming to Beaufort, many are going to Parris Island graduation, but most of them are financially stressed by getting here and drive several days. The cost of the travel is high, and 95% of them can't wait to leave to get back to their job and reduce the expenses of staying and of eating out.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK