

A special session and work session of Beaufort City Council was held on January 20, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling and council members, George O’Kelley, Mike McFee, Stephen Murray, and Phil Comer, 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 special session to order at 5:00 p.m.

MOTION AUTHORIZING CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT REGARDING NEW FIRE STATION

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to authorize the city manager to enter into the agreement. Mr. Dadson said **David Coleman, Lauren Kelly, Bill Harvey, and Kathy Todd** have reviewed the contract at length and have corrected issues in it. It reflects the RFQ, the bid itself, the value engineering, and all other legal matters to be covered.

Councilman Cromer asked about the hazardous materials and said there is “another indemnify and hold harmless clause” on page 28 of the contract. He said that the attorney general had forbidden public entities such as the city from entering into such agreements. Mr. Coleman said that’s not in relation to any existing site materials. Councilman Cromer said the architects, Hussey, Gay and Bell, should know about the attorney general’s ruling and that that’s in there. Councilman Cromer asked about insurance, and Mr. Dadson and Ms. Todd said that the contractor doesn’t purchase it. Ms. Todd said in the A1A contract, the indemnification section was stricken, but the architect can be indemnified; the city can’t. Councilman Murray asked **Chief Sammy Negron** if he was happy with the fire station, and fire chief jokingly offered a motion to approve as submitted. **The motion passed unanimously.**

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATIONS 2015 ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to support the resolution. Councilman Cromer said these are initiatives for the coming legislative year. They have a round of field hearings among city and town governments to help them set targets. Councilman Cromer said Beaufort and another city hadn’t done this yet and “that’s why [they] got the email.” **The motion passed unanimously.**

Councilman O’Kelley made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to adjourn the special session and go into the work session. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Keyserling opened the work session at 5:09 p.m.

BOARDS AND COMMISSION INTERVIEWS FOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING

COMMISSION

There was a “huge response” from people volunteering to fill positions on the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, Mayor Keyserling said. There are 11 applicants, but only one position on each.

Mayor Keyserling introduced **Bill Prokop**, Human Resources director who starts February 1, 2015 in the position of interim city manager.

Mayor Keyserling explained how the Metropolitan Planning Commission had been formed, and Timothy Rentz, James Pickard, Michael Tomy, Hakim Bayyoud, Edwin Patterson, Thomas Hermann, Don Starkey, Mary Louise O’Reilly were interviewed as a group about their interest and qualifications.

PRESENTATION: SEISMIC TESTING AND OFFSHORE DRILLING

BK said he is interested in this issue and asked **Samantha Siegel**, from Oceana, and **Hamilton Davis**, energy and climate director, Coastal Conservation League, to discuss offshore drilling. Mr. Davis said there’s continually been a lot of support for offshore drilling on the East Coast and potentially for development. It’s a political issue now, supported by Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott, he said, and he hopes to stay away from the political aspect.

Those who support offshore drilling do so because they believe it will reduce gas prices, reduce dependency on foreign energy, and could be an economic strategy to create jobs, Mr. Davis said.

Environment: He showed pictures from the Deepwater Horizon explosion, in which 210 million gallons of oil were released, affecting 1100 miles of the coastline. Thus far, 900 dolphins have been killed, there are still sea turtle problems, and it has affected the shellfish harvest, lead to closures of fisheries, mutated fish, and damage to coral reef habitat. No one yet knows the total extent of the damage. Mr. Davis said the resources off the coast of South Carolina “are things like the Blake Plateau,” where “oil companies would drill ... if they were allowed to,” which is extensive, untouched deep-water coral habitat, one of the most pristine in the world, and drilling could have an impact on it. The onshore infrastructure that supports the offshore industry is also a factor, not just rigs way offshore. Big storm events lead to oil spills or when there are accidents at the pipeline storage facilities when infrastructure fails.

Mr. Davis showed the effects of the equipment, such as a seismic air gun, which is many times more intense than a jet plane. He discussed the effects on fish and wildlife – which abandon habitat, suffer hearing loss, and are generally disrupted. 138,000 dolphins, whales, sea turtles, and fisheries could be affected.

Economy: Any jobs created or revenue generated has to be balanced against tourism, Mr. Davis said. South Carolina's coastal communities employ 79,000 in tourism. At best, offshore drilling is a gamble, and at worst, it disregards what's important about the South Carolina coast. The last time the legislature looked at it was in 2009.

Costs are considered to be the cost of cleanup from spills, the emissions from operations, etc., Mr. Davis said. The environmental costs outweigh the benefits by about 3 to 1. He said the regions where the US controls oil and gas reserves are already under development. The Atlantic region "just (doesn't) have that much." The Bush administration looked at the Gulf and concluded the reserves would have no impact on the US economy because they are too small.

Energy / Transparency: The feds have green-lighted seismic exploration, Mr. Davis said. If the permits are granted, the public will never see the information. The feds will use it to decide where leasing will take place. There's no opportunity to do a cost-benefit analysis. In regard to the 5-year leasing plan, there's been a request for information; there is a 45-day comment period, and they are waiting for the draft proposal to be published. There will be a final draft proposal, which Congress comments on, and then the leasing option will be available. Whether South Carolina will be included remains to be seen, but people think South Carolina will be in the first draft, he said. CCL would like to see communities like Beaufort speak out about their concerns to the state and federal legislatures. The more voices raised, the better.

Councilman McFee asked for the origin of and clarification on the numbers, and Mr. Davis said they're from Parks and Recreation Tourism Management for ocean-based tourism and fisheries, and they're "the best (he) can get." Councilman Murray said statewide, the number seems low. Mr. Davis said statewide it's 200,000+ employees. Mayor Keyserling said, "This is just the directly threatened universe," and doesn't include people who might spend the night in an inland town on their way to the ocean. Mr. Davis said that, according to PRT, the coastal areas are only a quarter of the statewide tourism, which is surprising.

Councilman O'Kelley asked what council could do. Mr. Davis said a resolution that spells out the concerns of the community would be helpful. The feds have heard from the governor and (lobbying) groups in Washington, but not communities and not the legislature. Councilman O'Kelley asked if the CCL has templates for a resolution, and Mr. Davis said they did. Councilman O'Kelley said council would be glad to have a work session on the resolution idea.

Mayor Keyserling said the Beaufort County mayors would talk about it in 2 weeks. He had asked Mayor Reilly to see if they "could get ... the coastal mayors to come together on this." Councilman O'Kelley said in the 1970s, he had been involved in checking the titles from the Savannah River Bridge to the ocean. There was a big move to go to the Georgia Banks "for the next great economic boom and then that died." Councilman

O’Kelley said that what had struck him in the presentation was that the cost is not worth it because “there’s just not that much (oil offshore).”

Councilman McFee asked about the seismic air gun and where Mr. Davis had gotten the percentages he gave. Mr. Davis said the statistics from the 1970s and early-1980s seismic testing along the East Coast and the exploratory drilling of wells. They would have to find something that would substantially change it to affect the level of economic activity. Mayor Keyserling said he has “no illusions” they’ll come to Beaufort and Hilton Head Island, but they will probably go to Georgetown. It could have an impact on the military operations going back and forth in that area, and that could have a wider effect.

Mr. Davis said Georgia hasn’t been actively engaged. The new governor is interested in drilling, but people who live and work there aren’t. Tybee Island had created the first ordinance against seismic testing, Ms. Siegel said.

Mr. Pickerd asked Mr. Davis rhetorically if there were any marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico, making the argument that if they had “all been shot with 3-D seismic matter ... there shouldn't be any left.” Mr. Davis said he is reporting what other groups have reported. Mr. Pickerd said that based on what Mr. Davis had said, “there should be a mass of dead sea life trailing behind” the seismic tests. Ms. Siegel said they “have seen mass strandings with seismic.” Mr. Pickerd said the drilling that was done “wasn’t to find oil and gas.” He said Mr. Davis had said that the data should be released to the public, but that would mean giving that information to the oil and gas companies’ competition. Mr. Davis said he agrees that this testing is paid for by the feds, which is why he thinks the numbers should be a matter of public record. **Kate Schafer**, CCL, introduced herself and described her areas of expertise. Mayor Keyserling thanked them for coming to Beaufort.

Discussion: Parking – Blue Ribbon Task Force

Councilman Murray said he had consolidated thoughts, emails, and lists into a form for council to work from tonight. **Ivette Burgess** had given council copies. He read from a template for the blue ribbon parking task force. Councilman Murray said it needs more discussion and homework before anything is done. The best way seems to make 5-6 person sub-committees with specific goals. He tried to make the smallest number of sub-committees possible, he said, and they included private parking assets; future challenges and opportunities; parking garage feasibility; business owner and employee parking and enforcement – Councilman Murray said he feels this is one of the biggest issues; surveying people in town and outside of it (e.g., Dataw, etc.) to accumulate data on parking.

Councilman Murray went on to say that all reports would be in by June 15, 2015. Councilman Cromer said the task force would need to look at angled parking and one-way traffic as a possibility. Councilman McFee said diagonal parking isn’t supported by DOT, so the city would have to take the streets. Mayor Keyserling said that there is a

recommendation that calls for one-waying Bay Street and Craven to make a one-way circle.

There was agreement to put this matter that Councilman Cromer brought up under “future challenges.” Mayor Keyserling called employee parking “a stand-alone issue.” They are looking at whether the 2 free hours help, and if there is a way to enforce employee parking. He thinks they should keep it separate. Mayor Keyserling said he would put mostly Bay Street merchants on that sub-committee because “they’ve got to tame themselves.” He said, “It’s always about employee parking,” and called that aspect of the problem “so big.” Main Street has tried to have the conversation for years, he said, but it hasn’t worked. He suggested some people who might want to be involved on this committee.

Mayor Keyserling said the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to do the collection of data; they need to be sensitive to merchants’ concerns about privacy. Councilman Murray said he would have hesitation as a small business owner about someone wanting to come look at his business’s financial records. Mayor Keyserling said the last thing he wants to know is what one business or another does. He just wants to see if it makes a difference to have the 2-hour free parking. The hospitality and retail numbers need to be broken out separately, he feels.

Mayor Keyserling said that according to the **Seth Harry** study, in the comparison between retail and hospitality, hospitality does “pretty well” vs. the retail. Councilman Murray said the hospitality business happens in the evening when they don’t have a parking problem. Councilman McFee said that lunch is competitive with the retail, but the evening/dinner is different.

Councilman Murray said he wants a very clear confidentiality agreement for data collection. Councilman McFee asked if they could apply the figure that is in the business license. Ms. Todd said the business license ordinance captures the *annual* revenue of a business but not month-to-month. The city needs to obtain the revenue data and hold it confidential, Ms. Todd said.

Councilman Murray said each sub-committee would have a chair, and they would report back to council. There was a discussion about who should be put on the committees. Mayor Keyserling feels that people from Main Street Beaufort and Chamber of Commerce should be “expert witnesses” and not serve on the committees because the same people are always on the city’s committees.

There was a discussion about where parking spaces were and how that would affect who serves on the committees. Mayor Keyserling said he had spoken to people about what they are doing in regard to the task force. **Gene Rugula** had called and asked to be on it; **Pete Palmer** had said he would after some consideration “but with the right to run away.”

Mayor Keyserling said since 2002 or 2003, the city has had a plan for “Baby Boundary Street” to restore on-street parking, which will slow down traffic. They’re spending \$26 million for 1.3 miles, Councilman Murray said. Mayor Keyserling said at some point it has to come to Bellamy Curve.

Mayor Keyserling said he recommends **Nan Sutton** to chair the committee. She’s a good merchant and a good bridge between the Bay Street merchants. Councilman Murray said she had asked for a couple of days to think about it, but she has a lot of the qualities needed to be chair.

Mayor Keyserling said **Maxine Lutz** is at the table already as an organizational stakeholder. He said he thinks he might like some new people and some fresh perspectives. Councilman Murray said **Greg Darden** is in the industry already and should be a resource. It’s the same thing with SP+. Councilman McFee said he would like to see **Kevin Cuppia** on this committee because he has already been on 2 blue ribbon parking committees. Councilman McFee said he would pick him for the employee parking subcommittee. Mayor Keyserling said he tried to avoid including people “who already have the answers.”

There was a general discussion about people on the list and who thought they should serve and where. Ms. Lutz suggested someone be included from the Old Commons, the Bluff, and The Point. **Alice Washington** was on the list, but Ms. Lutz said she recommended **Della Wortham** “as a diversity candidate.” Her husband is the Old Commons chair. **Dick Stewart** prefers that **Courtney Waddell** serve on the committee over **Sharon Stewart**, who’d expressed interest, Mayor Keyserling said.

Councilman Cromer said if they ever have any residential development downtown, there would be an issue with on-street parking. Mayor Keyserling said “that could go under ‘code changes.’” Councilman McFee said **Edward Dukes** would like to be on the committee. Mayor Keyserling said to “make sure that he’s there for more than just promoting one idea.” He then asked if they “really need **Bill Chambers**.” Councilman Murray said a percentage of those on the list wouldn’t want to participate. If they have 25 names and 5 subcommittees, they are probably OK.

Mayor Keyserling listed those whom he had spoken to. Mayor Keyserling said they would give Ms. Burgess a marked-up list. Councilman McFee said **Donna Lang** would like to be a part of it. Councilman Cromer asked who would serve on it from the library, and Mayor Keyserling said they are on the list because they get a lot of complaints about paid parking in the library lot.

Ms. Lutz mentioned **Jane Sidwell** or her husband, **Lloyd**, serving. Council then chose people from the list to invite to serve on the committee. There followed a discussion

about when they would tell people that the committee would be meeting and how many meetings to expect.

In regard to the chairs, Councilman McFee said he favors forming the subcommittees and then letting the committees choose their chairs. There was further discussion about the committees and who would serve on them.

There being no further business to come before council, the work session adjourned at 7:28 p.m.