

A work session of Beaufort City Council was held on July 21, 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 Mike McFee, Stephen Murray, George O’Kelley, and Phil Cromer, and City Manager Bill Prokop.

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 work session to order at 5:02 p.m.

### **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: DISCUSSION OF MISSION AND GOALS**

**Design Review Board (DRB)** – Ms. Anderson said its mission is to review commercial and multifamily projects outside of the Historic District. It meets when there are projects. The standards may need to be adjusted, Ms. Anderson said, but what they are charged with is straightforward, though it will change/improve with the new code.

Mayor Keyserling recalled that at one time the Design Review Board had expressed envy of the guidelines that the Historic District Review Board has. Design Review Board chairman **Brian Franklin** said his first year on the board was a learning experience about the processes of how the board works. He said in the last two years it has been more consistent. The hard part is not having “real backbone” – a document that would back up the board’s decisions – like Historic District Review Board has. Mr. Franklin was landscape architect for the city in Alexandria, VA. The code had different design requirements in different areas of the city. If council could get them some standards – not even necessarily code – it would be helpful, he said. Staff is good at providing what they provide, but the board feels somewhat on its own. Mr. Franklin said it’s not about whether they want a project but about how to get the best project possible. If they had these standards, the board could give them to developers, so applicants would know what the board would be looking at.

Mayor Keyserling said the Civic Master Plan is subject to change, but that might be the first place to start – while they’re not guidelines, and no code is written yet, “that is sort of the default position.” Also, this would be helpful as the code is written. Councilman O’Kelley said the Comprehensive Plan is the bible, and then the Beaufort Code. Mayor Keyserling said there are gaps there, but the end goal is less guesswork.

Councilman Cromer said the code will be important, and they will need to develop a process that is something that can be given to a developer, including timelines. Mr. Franklin said out-of-town people come in and can be hard-headed, but a general lay-out like Councilman Cromer is citing would give an expectation and encourage development, but “not at the cost of a mediocre product.” Mr. Franklin said some developers basically want the board to design a project for them. Councilman Murray asked if there was a flow chart now. Ms. Anderson said yes – it’s fairly simple and “designed for the average project.” For the Design Review Board, there are typically 2–3 reviews, not including the pre-application meeting.

Councilman Murray asked the worst-case scenario the board has seen. Ms. Anderson said “anything with a drive-through . . . takes a little longer.” She said another example was when the Family Dollar switched architects. Mr. Franklin said it depends on the applicant, if (s)he “is hard-headed and doesn’t follow through” with the board’s requests. Parkers went through 2 or 3 revisions until they moved and picked another property.

Councilman Murray said the balance is to meet “the Beaufort aesthetic” but still not waste time and money. As for people who come unprepared to the meeting, “that’s their fault.” Councilman Murray said they should look at how to cut back a review time that might last as many as four months.

Mr. Prokop said that at the MASC meeting, they had presented a flow chart: once there had been a pre-application meeting and one follow-up meeting, “that’s it.” Essentially, if you have met all the requirements, and the board asks all its questions, then they don’t get to ask more. Mr. Franklin said the DRB tries to do that and will approve a project “with conditions.”

Ms. Anderson explained the work before the pre-application conference, and said after that, they bring in other departments (fire marshal, codes, utility people, etc.), while the developer can go to the Design Review Board simultaneously. Councilman Murray told of “concerns about the pre-app meeting” he had heard from a developer.

Mr. Franklin said in the pre-app meeting, “you have land and an idea that you are reviewing with staff . . . to see if it will float before an investment is made.” If the building grows during the submittal, things can change if a new code applies to it. Mr. Franklin said they strive for consistency, so if an applicant has been through before, like **Cooter Ramsey**, for example, (s)he should have a good understanding of what (s)he will be asked for.

Councilman O’Kelley said a good developer, engineer, or architect, should know the Southern building code, so to shorten it up, he said he assumes the board could meet – if a developer has met with staff once – if they would call a special meeting. Ms. Anderson said if the project is simple enough to do in a couple days, the board might approve it “with an element to be approved by staff.” The submittal schedule allows applicants to come back the next month. Councilman Cromer asked if the board didn’t go by the international building code. Several people responded that yes, they do.

Mayor Keyserling said, “The better the code . . . the better the applicant is educated, the faster the process will go.” The schedule has been adjusted so that applicants can “meet goals sooner,” and “there’s flexibility.” He said he’s hearing that the board wants a clearer playbook and to get the code process moving as quickly as they can.

Mr. Prokop asked the goals of the committee. Mr. Franklin said he’ll approach the board members about doing background study to understand the framework of the Civic Master Plan, and to be consistent with what they are doing, and “if they find out if they’re missing anything,” to adjust to it. They will also “pray for more projects.” If they get more, he would see if they

could meet every two weeks.

Mr. Franklin said he thought the neighborhood design standards might have started as code. Mayor Keyserling said they created some areas that have more specificity than others – the Boundary Street and Bladen Street design districts, for example.

Sprinklers are not required in single-family residential, Ms. Anderson said, in response to a query from Mayor Keyserling. There was a general discussion of a development and how to best and most economically do fire suppression. Mr. Prokop reiterated that sprinklers are not required in single-family residential.

### **Tourism Management Advisory Committee (TMAC)**

Mayor Keyserling explained how TMAC originated. It is active when there are problems, he said, and there's been a question as to whether a broader view should be taken on policies to make tourism and residential living smoother. Chairman **Charlie Williams** said he would like it to be a group that has the task of advising the city about tourism management. Since he's been on the committee, they have dealt with little besides carriage problems. There's some spillover to bus tours and parking, now, as well.

Mayor Keyserling enumerated issues he thinks might come up. He feels council's position is "to get people to walk up Carteret Street," for example, and other streets, in order "to get foot traffic beyond Bay Street." Mayor Keyserling suggested other matters in regard to tourism that the committee might take on and questions to consider, such as about how TMAC overlays with TDAC.

Councilman Murray asked who is on the committee now. Officer Able said **Jerry Stock, Elinor Gray, Kevin Cuppia, Cheryl Neison, and Robb Wells**. Officer Able said they haven't had a quorum since January. There was general discussion about an attendance requirement. Mayor Keyserling said he thinks the Redevelopment Commission is the only group that has that. There are more applications for some boards than others, Ms. Burgess said. Mayor Keyserling said they haven't defined the parameters of the board, so people might not want to be on it to "come and solve horse problems." Mr. Williams suggested that people in the community "might not even know about TMAC." Mayor Keyserling said, with volunteers, "If they know what's coming up," and there are "a clear set of boundaries and expectations," it would be helpful.

Mr. Williams said he feels the committee's understanding of its mission is "a weak area." As long as he's been on it, he said, it has "pertained to the buggy problems." Then it was in "a fallow phase until the problems started bubbling up again." He's been thinking about what the mission is, and if it's nothing but carriages, not many people will be interested.

Mr. Williams said he has thought about goals: he would like to add members in order for the committee to be more effective. He thinks people on the committee may have been on too long, so he thinks a turnover process might be good. **Officer Hope Able** said there are members

on the committee whose terms have expired. Ms. Burgess agreed and said those on TDAC have been on “for quite some time.” Councilman McFee said part of the reason is because the committee was on hiatus – because there were no issues for it to deal with – so the need was not seen for new committee members. Councilman McFee said, when he served on TMAC, they concentrated on the removal of the big tour buses from The Point. If a mission statement says “advise the city on management,” Councilman McFee asked, what does that mean? It needs to be “more finely tuned,” he feels.

Officer Able said the tour guide and test and the Beaufort Knowledge Seminar are among TMAC’s projects, and these will benefit the city, but “they’re not being worked on.” Mr. Williams said one goal for TMAC could be to work on these two projects and complete them. They’ve been worked on, “but not driven to completion.” Councilman Murray asked what the Beaufort Knowledge Seminar is. Mr. Williams said that in Beaufort, a lot of people interface with tourists: clerks, servers, etc. Many people, though, don’t know the area, if they didn’t grow up here. TMAC would put together basic information and then target business owners who could “buy in and educate their front line workers.” Mr. Williams said they envision this being a Power Point presentation.

Councilman Murray said TDAC is in charge of the management of Accommodations Tax money, and he asked if the boards could be merged. Mayor Keyserling said TMAC has such a narrow focus and a defined constituency, and TDAC doesn’t. Could TMAC absorb TDAC? he asked. Councilman Murray said a designated group need to do the grant process.

Mayor Keyserling said that he’d been asked about unified walking maps; Councilman Murray said they “need to go to walking apps.” There was a general discussion about maps. **Maxine Lutz** said she and **Bonnie Hargrove** and Mr. Wells have been working on a map of the cultural district.

Mayor Keyserling said there’s a perception that TMAC is more about enforcement. Mr. Prokop said they should be thinking about Ubers, which could give tours, and there would be no regulations on them. Ms. Lutz said she has been concerned about short-term rental applications, which she believes are “proliferating in the Historic District,” though “the Civic Master Plan wants to see full-time residents.” The city will have to deal with that proliferation, she said, and “its impact on the neighborhoods.” Ms. Lutz said, “You don’t know your neighbor when there are short-term rentals in your neighborhood.” The majority of the houses on her block are transient, she said, and “that bites into the neighborhood.”

Councilman Cromer said that “the name of TMAC could be changed to take out the management component,” and then the committee “could do more.” Mayor Keyserling believes they should get “a bigger group around the table”: TMAC, TDAC, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Beaufort, etc. and determine what tourism issues are. Mr. Williams said they “could figure out who does what” then. Mayor Keyserling suggested including the cultural group that Ms. Lutz had mentioned is a part of Historic Beaufort Foundation.

Mayor Keyserling and Councilman O’Kelley discussed their experience of the public art commission. Mayor Keyserling said the only piece of publically funded art he is aware of is the Robert Smalls bust. He said the community tolerated the cows, then the mermaids, and “the manhole daisies are going over well.”

There was general agreement that there would be a work session about TMAC and tourism in September.

#### **Emergency Management Direction and Control Plan**

Mr. Prokop said council had been presented with a draft of the plan. There’s not currently an emergency management process, so he presented a procedure that was the county’s, which he’d tweaked. He said it covers, “If a hurricane hit tomorrow, what do we do?” Councilman O’Kelley asked if there were a place in the city hall building that council was expected to go. Mayor Keyserling said the mayor and the city manager go to the county building, which has wiring if there’s a power loss. Mr. Prokop said the plan has the procedure, should they be unable to get together as a council.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, and Section 70 (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law, **Councilman O’Kelley made a motion, seconded by Councilman McFee, to enter into Executive Session** for receipt of legal advice. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**Councilman Murray made a motion, second by Councilman O’Kelley to adjourn the Executive Session and resume the work session. The motion passed unanimously.**

There being no further business to come before council, the work session adjourned at 6:45 p.m.