

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on February 10, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Council members Mike McFee, George O’Kelley, Stephen Murray, and Phil Cromer, and Interim 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Keyserling called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

Horse Carriages

TMAC believed it had the authority to grant a request by Suthern Rose Carriage Company for scheduling extra tour dates, but according to the ordinance, they do not. **Mr. Williams** said **Peter White** had made the request in person, and then in writing. At the TMAC meeting, they decided to table it to allow a vote, and then voted unanimously to adopt it. It would be a one-year approval for more carriage tours in April and October 2015, at which time TMAC might or might not make the same recommendation.

Councilman O’Kelley said “special permits doesn't tell me a lot about the volume” in numbers of carriages added to the street. He asked if it would allow more carriages on the street than normal and for a longer period. **Charlie Williams** said Mr. White should address the volume matter. Mr. White said they do this now for non-reoccurring special tours and have had no complaints. This will make increase the number of carriages on the street a little, but “it is the same thing”: people will come, take a tour, and then leave.

Chief Matt Clancy said they currently do special permits for 9 special events. This is a pre-arranged tour for a special occasion such as a wedding, convention, or not-for-profit event, but not for large boat or bus tours, which he said don’t fall under it. Mr. Williams said they are asking for a redefinition of what is permitted as a special permit.

Mayor Keyserling said the Ghost Tours, weddings, etc. were what he thought special events were, and this is about accommodating extra traffic brought here by tour buses. Mr. Prokop said a special event wouldn't be defined. Mayor Keyserling said it would be a wedding, a school tour, etc. **Rose White** said this would be a way to use a form for the buses – one carriage for one bus coming in per hour – and “you have to get a permit in” to **Officer Hope Able** “24 hours in advance, at least.” This will allow them to take care of bus groups and still take care of regular visitors, Ms. White said. People are all trying to take tours at the same time; bus tour contracts are signed months in advance, and because the carriages are very regulated, they don't want that, but they would like one extra carriage per bus. They are asking for a way to accommodate the buses and keep them coming to town. She said she had received an email for 2 more bus tours today.

Ms. White explained how the rotation works for carriages. She said she had applied for 35-40 for April, so it's approximately an additional carriage each day. Councilman McFee asked how the special permit would work for the 2 companies. She said she had asked for permits for the ones who were interested when she thought she was able to [following the TMAC vote]. Councilman McFee asked if the other carriage company was doing the same thing.

Councilman O'Kelley said they could approve it and see how it works. Mayor Keyserling said it's a test, and they want to generate all the business downtown they can. It would take 3 carriages to give rides to everyone on a bus. Ms. White said they would put 2 batches of bus passengers on at 10:00 a.m., for instance, and the next batch would go when that batch came back. Councilman Murray asked if the permits were time-specific, and Ms. White said they were and "for named companies." Councilman Murray asked, with the special permits, if it would be limited, and Mr. Williams said it would be "first come first served."

Mayor Keyserling asked what this does to traffic congestion. Chief Clancy said that's why this definition was put in there, but if this is a test period, that would let them see if it works. He said it would have some impact probably in The Point, where complaints about slow carriages typically come from.

Councilman Cromer suggested they could do a special exception, not a permit. Mayor Keyserling said he recalls that "special events is really special events," which this is not, so he asked if they need to change the ordinance. Councilman McFee suggested they call it "an interim recurring events permit." Mayor Keyserling asked if they would have to change the ordinance. Chief Clancy said neither he nor the city manager would have the authority to do that. Councilman Cromer said he's afraid to change the ordinance because people might take advantage of it like people "want to with the noise ordinance."

Mr. Williams believes a better thing to do is to create another category. In a year, it can either be dropped from the ordinance or made permanent. Mr. Prokop said they could test it for the month of April. Mr. Williams said one month might be skewed in some way (weather, etc.), but if they can compare one to another, they can show that they are not anomalies. He asked Ms. White if that gives them enough time to plan their April. She said yes.

Ms. White said TMAC had asked if they could bring in more people for April and/or October. Councilman Murray asked if there was a particular limit to numbers of carriages on the streets. Would council be violating its own ordinance? Chief Clancy explained the rotation and said "putting on the special event puts another horse out there." Ms. White said there could only be 4 on the streets at one time and 6 in town at one time.

Mayor Keyserling said it's hard to take away something in an ordinance once it's in there. He feels like he's hearing that it's worth a try. He said there's "a question of putting a sunset to it." Mayor Keyserling said they will have to go through two readings of an ordinance amendment. Councilman Cromer said again that he feels there should be an exception in this case, rather than an ordinance change, and if it's extended, they could change the ordinance; he fears that

if they change the ordinance, they will “open up a can of worms for other issues.” Councilman McFee said this is a peak season recurring issue and should be looked at.

There was a general conversation about the ways this could be done. Councilman Murray suggested that Mr. Williams, Bill Harvey, and Mr. Prokop should draft an ordinance change called “a peak season overflow exception.”

Councilman O’Kelley said there was no representative from the other carriage company, and he asked if this would create another carriage war. Officer Able said **Walter Gay** was present at the TMAC meetings. Mr. Williams said Mr. Gay had spoken against the exception because he “didn't feel it was necessary.”

Councilman Murray suggested giving the city manager and the chief of police more flexibility to manage the volume. Councilman McFee said the city manager is given the authority with special events; it need not come to council every time.

Economic Development

Mayor Keyserling said these items are allotted a lot of time on the retreat agenda. The general mode of operation is through the Alliance, but there is no LEA anymore, so there’s not an economic development connection to the county. The county “invested quite a lot of money” on a study and a plan, he said.

Councilman Murray said if a prospect calls about moving its business here, there’s no one for them to talk to now; “it’s not as seamless as it could be,” Councilman Murray said. In this community, the definition of economic development is complex, and everyone has a different one. He read the definition from Wikipedia and then his own: to expand the tax base and create higher paying jobs for the community’s residents. As of January 1, the Lowcountry Economic Alliance has collapsed. In 2011, the LEA paid consultants to do an economic development study on the Lowcountry. They did a competitive assessment.

- In the economic analysis, the takeaways were
 - The Lowcountry fared poorly compared to other places in the US.
 - Income share has fallen dramatically; there is greater poverty because of retirees and because the tourism focus creates lower-paying jobs.
- A SWOT summary
 - The region has much going for it, but the tax base is not sufficient, and growing it needs to be a priority to build investment.
 - There’s a lack of adequate spec buildings to be competitive. Most people are looking for existing space.
 - The Lowcountry is associated with tourism, so people should be brought to the area to enjoy it.
- A target cluster selection
 - Consultants looked at Beaufort’s clusters and considered what they would be in the future. Who should the area try to attract and support as primary and secondary employers? Prime employers attract the others to the community.

- There's very little manufacturing or other primary employers in the area; government, including the military, is the largest.
- The consultants determined that the target clusters should be back office and IT, healthcare and biomedical, light manufacturing and assembly, and logistics and distribution.

Three priorities, Councilman Murray said, were improving the Lowcountry's shovel-ready sites, expanding workforce development and education, and improving the business climate with a greater awareness of economic development and R&D, a focus on business retention and expansion; marketing and economic development efforts – defense contracts – aligning tourism and economic development marketing, etc. The LEA had made videos, which Councilman Murray showed.

Redevelopment Commission

Mayor Keyserling has come to the conclusion, he said, that they should talk about how they adopted a big city Redevelopment Commission for a small town, so they need to make it localized to make it successful. It's "not performing," and the commissioners and council aren't happy. Mayor Keyserling feels "it's time to change it." There has been talk with the Beaufort Housing Authority for 7 years about aligning with their Community Development Corporation. Mayor Keyserling said that someone needs to be stimulating the housing business, "though not be in" that business. Mayor Keyserling said there is more going on than in his previous 6 years as mayor, plus revenues are flat, so they need to figure out how to do more with less or with the same amount of money.

Councilman Cromer asked that there be FOIA training for staff and council, and he requested of the city manager that he set that up. Mayor Keyserling said it's been done within the last 12 months, but "you can't learn too much about it."

Councilman Cromer asked about the parking committee letter, and Councilman McFee said it went out yesterday. The organizational meeting is February 16. Councilman O'Kelley is the liaison.

Mr. Prokop agreed that FOIA training is important, particularly for staff. Councilman Murray said in addition to the annual training, he would like the guides from the Press Association or the Municipal Association to be given to anyone on a board or commission.

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, second by Councilman Murray, to enter into Executive Session** to discuss personnel and land acquisition. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The work session was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Beaufort City Council was held on February 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, council members Mike McFee, George O’Kelley, Stephen Murray and Phil Cromer, and Interim 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Keyserling called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilman O’Kelley made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to adjourn the Executive Session and enter the regular council session. The motion passed unanimously.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman McFee led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Dickerson, Charles Street, said he’d noticed that all city and county meeting notices are absent from the paper, and he asked council to find out why.

MINUTES

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Cromer, to approve the minutes of council’s special meeting and work session January 20, 2015. In regard to page 2, Councilman Cromer asked that in the middle paragraph, it should say “builders’ risk insurance,” not just insurance. On the bottom of p. 4, Councilman Cromer asked that Mayor Riley’s name be spelled correctly. **The motion to accept the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

RESOLUTION OPPOSING SEISMIC TESTING AND OFFSHORE DRILLING ACTIVITIES

Councilman McFee made a motion, second by Councilman Murray, to approve the resolution. Mayor Keyserling said the Coastal Conservation League and Oceana had attended a council workshop, and then there was a forum. Even those who support the industry and seismic testing “acknowledge that there’s very little out there,” Mayor Keyserling said. He had been consulting with mayors; it’s on the Town of Port Royal’s agenda tonight and on the Town of Hilton Head Island’s soon. He feels the likelihood of it being worth it is not very great, and a resolution would put the city on the record as feeling it is inappropriate for the South Carolina coast.

Councilman Murray said he feels that energy independence is important, but it being “in our backyard puts a different spin on it.” He said he had gone to the American Petroleum Institute’s website, and he shared a graphic of potential energy sources off the South Carolina coast. There’s about 6 months or less of America’s supply there. He feels the risk to the environment and the economic drivers in the area are not worth it. He shared a list of pros and cons. Councilman Murray said he has an issue with the last paragraph of the resolution, in regard to

renewable energy sources, and feels “more homework needs to be done” about such sources. **Councilman Murray made a motion to amend the resolution by striking that paragraph; Councilman Cromer seconded the motion.**

Mayor Keyserling said he feels it does not obligate the city to anything and is “part of the public education ... to get people thinking. The energy companies are fighting solar, and that’s why it’s not doing well. He listed other reasons that he feels it shouldn't be stricken; for example, he would like to encourage other energy alternatives, and he “would like people to think bigger.” Councilman O’Kelley called the question on the motion to amend the second to last paragraph. **The motion failed 3-2, Councilman Murray and Councilman Cromer opposed.**

Councilman McFee said in the local election 2 years ago, he was asked about immigration and other national issues such as this; he feels it’s not worth the investment and concerns it could raise to do seismic testing off the South Carolina coast because of the local and regional effects it may have. Councilman Cromer agreed. Councilman O’Kelley said he had been involved in research “when it was believed that there was a lot of oil out there,” but now that they know better, he is not persuaded, and he doesn’t “want to see a BP Gulf spill incident on Hunting Island or Fripp.”

Samantha Segal, from Oceana, thanked the mayor and council “for standing up for the residents” of Beaufort and South Carolina. Another employee of Oceana, **Randy Sturgill**, a field organizer, also thanked council and described what the ocean meant to him. **The motion passed unanimously.**

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman McFee made a motion to appoint **Timothy Rentz** to the Metropolitan Planning Commission and **Robert Albright** to the Design Review Board.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Prokop said **Isaiah Smalls** has retired as the director of Public Works, and **Lamar Taylor** will be the interim director.

Staff has agreed to take on extra responsibilities in regard to parking; **Linda Roper** will be the court administrator and staff representative for all parking issues and will work closely with Park Beaufort.

Mr. Prokop introduced **Alice Wallace** and **Robert Kamper**.

Dave Coleman said there would be a Boundary Street preconstruction meeting coming up. They expect the project to last about 250 days.

Mr. Coleman said that Boundary Street plans are being reviewed by DOT, and construction could begin as early as June if all goes well. They anticipate substantial completion by early 2017. Mr. Coleman said they have learned that the way to build the road is to put the utilities in

the duct bank then take them up the street. They have to build the duct bank to get the cables off the poles, and then they can expand the road. If they started at the other end, “the complexity goes way up.”

Mr. Prokop said in regard to communications, the city has 900+ followers on its Facebook page, and staff is posting on Twitter and Instagram; the new website should be up in a week, and it will be more current and easier to use. He said customer service is a priority, and they welcome comments about what they can do to improve it. Also, staff would request that council contact legislators about a law repealing business licenses, which could mean the city would lose 1/3 of its revenue.

MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Keyserling thanked Oceana for providing education, and Beaufort businesswoman **Megan Feight**, who had circulated a petition opposing drilling.

He welcomed Ms. Wallace back and jokingly asked if anything she was doing would generate phone calls to council. Mr. Kamper said most of the experience thus far has been positive. The pay stations in the parking lots have all been programmed to ensure that there’s a rate structure, so it doesn't seem to just be for 2 hours only. If you want to park for 4 hours, you will get the free 2 hours at the beginning. There were issues with the signs on some of the meters about 2-hour parking, Mr. Kamper said. They tried putting it on the screen in the machine, but that didn't look good, so today, inside the Bay Street meters, they had created a highlighted note inside the meter itself that says that people can buy an extra hour. He also explained a new payment process. Mr. Kamper said on Bay Street, the meters would not zero out when people left if their two hours weren’t up, so they will continue to time the parking and let people add on an extra hour.

Mr. Prokop said parking is mainly an employee issue – people are moving from one 2-hour parking spot to another – so they will be enforcing that. Mr. Kamper said that they are getting pushback on that. In regard to license plate recognition software, they will have a 60-day trial beginning after its installation in March.

REPORTS BY COUNCIL

Councilman Murray said the film festival starts tomorrow and recommended people attend.

Councilman McFee said he would be bartending at the film festival opening night.

Councilman Cromer asked if the council photos on the city WS could be Photoshopped.

There being no further business to come before council, **Councilman O’Kelley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Murray seconded. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.