

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on November 30, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Council members Donnie Ann Beer, Mike Sutton, and Mayor Keyserling and City Manager Scott Dadson. Mike McFee was absent.

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 5:03 p.m.

Council members and Bob Moquin discussed the purpose of the agenda item regarding the state of tourism management. Councilman Sutton suggested placing the matter last on the agenda so that, if there's time, council members can look at the materials and familiarize themselves with it.

Mayor Keyserling said Councilman McFee had a death in his family and was excused from the meeting.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – INTERVIEWS

Jeff Thomas and **Mary Ann Norton** were interviewed for positions on the Historic Design Review Board (HDRB).

BANNER DISCUSSION – BAY STREET / RIBAUT ROAD

Mr. Dadson said a sign in front of City Hall had been discussed and then council asked staff to work with **Ann Bluntzer** of the Open Land Trust to come up with a design that complements the open space. Mayor Keyserling said there was no one from the neighborhood association for the neighborhood at Ribaut Road and Bay Street. Edward Dukes was informed of the meeting, Mr. Dadson said.

Ms. Bluntzer said the neighborhood led the charge 2-3 years ago to remove the banners. They approached the Open Land Trust board of directors, then came to the city and agreed that the banners would move to the new City Hall when it was built. If City Hall is an important place to keep the citizens informed, they can compromise. She doesn't know if those in the neighborhood have seen the plans shown to council or not, but that could be important.

Ms. Bluntzer has spoken with **Eliza Hill** about the plan, and Ms. Hill made the scale smaller. Two organizations can have signs there at once. It would probably be letters on a sign, rather than banners. Ms. Hill said it's a concept idea. The materials should be the same as those in City Hall. Mayor Keyserling said he wasn't on council when the matter came up and had assumed that council had agreed that the banners would come down at Bay and Ribaut and go to City Hall. He asked if there were a clear idea of what council wanted to do. Mr. Dadson said the city can have a community-oriented sign. Mayor Keyserling asked if they feel strongly that they want something at that intersection. Councilwoman Beer said she thinks so because it's a highly visible spot. Signs seem to fit there, and it's "a quieter corner" than in front of the City Hall. GF

said he has lived on Ribaut practically his whole life and there have always been signs there. If they get the Open Land Trust to agree to let the city have signs, it's a good place to have them. Councilman Sutton said he remembers the discussion among council and the former mayor. He's opposed to NOT doing signs there. The mayor at the time said if there were a spot at the new City Hall, they might be able to have signs there. Councilman Sutton said he doesn't understand why those spots on Ribaut are open land. Ms. Bluntzer said they were donated. Councilman Sutton said the not-for-profit groups use the area for their signs. Mayor Keyserling wanted to ensure that they were not breaking a prior commitment. Councilwoman Beer and Councilman Sutton said that council didn't make any commitments on this matter. Mr. Dadson said they need to respect both public information and open space. Mayor Keyserling said he likes what they have. If it's not banners, and is on a hard surface, the cost probably runs up exponentially. They wouldn't need to use the truck to hang the banners, which takes the cost down. Mayor Keyserling said the design for the lettered non-banner sign "feels too much like a monument" for his taste. Ms. Hill explained how the banners would look in the revised design. Councilwoman Beer said in the City Hall location, the not-for-profits could help pay for the signs with organizational seals, as in other cities.

Ms. Bluntzer said the park open land is an entry point to the downtown historic district and maybe needs a little more thought about design and consideration of what Ribaut will look like in the next 10-20 years. Mayor Keyserling thinks "lower and landscaped" is a huge improvement. Councilman Sutton said it's a little too formal for his taste in the presented drawing; he'd prefer two ivy-covered columns. Ms. Hill said she designed the columns at Pigeon Point Park, and they're quite simple. Ms. Bluntzer said they had veered away from that idea because of input from people who were against the banners. Councilman Sutton said he's had one person complain about the banners, and it's become a big issue. Councilman Sutton said it would be nice if the banners were off the two power poles, but he doesn't think the matter merits a lot of study and a "sign battle." Ms. Bluntzer said she doesn't either, and said council should share with Ms. Hill what they want.

Councilman Sutton said he wants it very simple. Mayor Keyserling said if it were done as a simple reader board, it would have to be maintained and few are. He said he's hearing that lower and landscaped is better, and the post idea may be a better direction. Councilman Sutton said the city does the landscaping on the land at the corner of Bay and Ribaut. He thinks they should blend in columns that the banners can go between.

Ms. Bluntzer said if they keep banners, they need to be prepared for the outspoken citizens who don't like banners. Mr. Dadson said those people are dealing with two boards of directors; Open Land Trust has rights on the property. Ms. Bluntzer had asked if her board would support something similar to the sign at the base of the Woods Bridge and the board said yes. Ms. Hill said she'd go with different materials than wood if they went with a sign, so it wouldn't deteriorate like the Woods Bridge sign, and it can be smaller and simpler. Councilman Sutton said the reduced size won't work like a banner does, in his opinion.

Mayor Keyserling asked if council wants the sign at City Hall. Mr. Dadson said they should decide based on what the city wants, and there should be enough space to put the information in. He agreed with Councilman Sutton that simpler is better. Mr. Dadson said what they are doing is allowing people to have space, and the banner size is currently based on the size of the space between the two power poles. Ms. Bluntzer asked **Lanelle Fabian** if Main Street Beaufort maintained the sign on Woods Bridge. Ms. Fabian said yes, but she doesn't know what's required to "tweak it" or the cost for maintenance. She said there's a need to have the logo/brand in the public eye, and without it, "people lose something to connect to."

Councilman Sutton said uniformity in the banners would be nice. Mr. Dadson asked Ms. Hill if she had enough information to go forward with different designs, and she said yes and asked if they would like rough costs for the next go-round. There was general agreement that they would.

DISCUSSION REGARDING UNDERGROUNDING OF POWER LINES IN THE POINT WITH THE TREE BOARD

Barb Farior of the Tree Board said they'd met with SCE&G and picked a targeted area with high visibility; the loop selected is "single-phase and very doable." The total cost is \$92,623.00. Mr. Dadson said there's never been cause found to force the low voltage providers to go underground. Mayor Keyserling said nothing prevents the city from asking. **Bill Harvey** said cable companies will likely follow suit when the power company digs holes. Mr. Dadson said those companies "are not looking to trim trees like SCE&G." Councilman Sutton said over the years, wires have been added, and no one wants to take them off.

Mayor Keyserling said this neighborhood the Tree Board chose has the means and can be organized and go to their cable providers and say they will stay customers if the company will bury the cables. Ms. Farior said this is the highest priority loop they would like to do first, not the whole Point. The trees are wonderful, and it's all single-phase, which is important to cost. They would like to investigate other areas and they are looking at the loop around South Side Park.

Mayor Keyserling said he'd like to look at other places SCE&G has said they would be willing to bury lines; he recalled that David Temple had said there are some on North Street and Ribaut Road. Ms. Farior said those are three-phase, so the cost will triple. Mayor Keyserling said there was a proposal that council rejected, according to Mr. Temple. No one in the assembled group recalled that rejection. There was some discussion about the feasibility of the railroad tracks that are proposed to be made into walking/bike paths.

Mr. Dadson asked how many other neighborhoods or spot areas the board could come up with to present estimates, etc. Ms. Farior said there are none that have been looked at other than South Side and this area of The Point, but they could come up with some. Mr. Dadson asked if they would give the numbers and projections for a few years hence. The number they presented for this area of the Point "doesn't scare" him, so he'd like them to come up with a list of five or so areas that would benefit from undergrounding so that he can crunch the numbers

on them. Ms. Farrior said \$53 per linear foot for single phase would be a pretty good estimate, she was told.

Ms. Hill had a large scale map of all the lines in Beaufort. The Tree Board walked the areas and came up with the Point. The POA people there were very positive about it and are talking about doing the whole Point. She said they will look at Mossy Oaks and Pigeon Point, too. Mr. Dadson said he respects their priority, but he doesn't want to add another list of things to it. If they only concentrate on that neighborhood, he recalls that the battles of the tree-trimming wars came from lots of neighborhoods. He would like the list to put in the CIP that is as comprehensive as possible and prioritized. They can plan how to chip away at it, then, if council approves it after number-crunching.

Councilman Sutton said a missing piece is what future ordinance changes might be appropriate to push the low voltage off the poles when the lines are buried. Mr. Harvey said there are many regulations regarding telecommunications. They can look into that. Mayor Keyserling said the problem needs to be identified, then they must figure out how to finance it.

Councilwoman Beer asked if the cost includes changing the wiring on the houses. Ms. Farrior said it doesn't include any ancillary costs. Ms. Hill said they can provide rough numbers on it, based on Bladen Street.

DISCUSSION REGARDING ADDING NEW SECTIONS TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) PERTAINING TO BLADEN STREET REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND REZONING 14 PARCELS OF PROPERTY IN THE BLADEN STREET AREA TO BLADEN STREET REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Mr. Dadson said this is unique in that public dollars are invested in the public right-of-way. This is a coordinated effort. Council has the development rules in their packets. The rezoning is for properties that the Redevelopment Commission has been able to negotiate to obtain. There are three properties not on the list yet, because they are still in negotiation. At this time, Mr. Dadson said the clock is ticking on the public money to invest in the right-of-way, and they need to move forward. Those three can be brought in if negotiations are successful. The dollars may not be there at that point, though.

Mr. Harvey said they're trying to keep both tracks going. **Mike McNally** of the Redevelopment Commission said the process started in May 2010. He described the work that had been done. He said each property is very unique and has a situation that needs to be resolved in the code. Mayor Keyserling asked the timeframe. Mr. Dadson said they need to go out to bid in January. Mayor Keyserling said historically, they have spent money without net results for the direct beneficiaries. His instinct is to proceed and let the three remaining properties go. They'll do the other side of the street and welcome those three in when they have the money for the infrastructure. They don't want to force anyone to do anything. Mr. McNally agreed. He said they'd met with SCDOT, and there's a separate increment. The Redevelopment Commission project on Bladen will run from Duke to North Street. There is a desire to expand the park as a separate tag-on project and dig up the bricks.

Mr. Dadson said they want to create the correct park size and a nice entranceway at that end of the street. They will maximize their money there. In the next phase, they'll "spider off that project" and move the public facility infrastructure. They want to create in the public right-of-way the ability for pedestrians to walk, for people to park, put in street trees in the public space, etc.

Mayor Keyserling summarized that the agreement is to do the whole east side of Bladen and most of the other side, less a block and a half. Mr. McNally said there are a lot of specific issues to deal with the three "hold-outs." Mr. Dadson said for now 14 properties are available and should be moved on. If the others come along, council can take a separate action, but there is no "halfway in," Mayor Keyserling added. Anyone who wants to buy those properties will want to be in on this, Mayor Keyserling said.

Steve Tully discussed the development he wants to do on Bladen. With the form-based code, the city wants "to see the green spread all the way." Councilman Sutton said the form-based code allows some ideas that don't exist in current zoning. Mr. Tully's whole lot is in the historic district. Mayor Keyserling thanked Mr. Tully for his efforts as the biggest property owner. Mr. Tully discussed some of his plans and said it's a great opportunity and they all benefit.

Mr. Dadson said they can leverage money other than the city's in this area. The Northwest Quadrant and Historic Beaufort Foundation have been at the table; discussions have included all the players. Mayor Keyserling said the best way to explain to people the unknown is to show it to them, and that's why he had thanked Mr. Tully.

Mayor Keyserling said most of the current building permits are in the greater downtown area. **Alan Patterson** said that's the only real market where there's interest right now. Councilman Sutton said it's been a long time coming. Mr. Tully said on his project, each page/property had a page in the plan with specifications. The form-based code has some language – regarding density and set back issues, for example – such as "should" and "shalls," that needs to be changed on his particular property. Mr. Dadson said Cooter Ramsey has made some changes and knows he needs to do more. Mr. Dadson said this has been through reviews and asked how council would like to proceed. Mayor Keyserling said it's been through public hearings, and Councilman Sutton said he's ready to put it on the agenda for a first reading.

Councilman Sutton said because the code is changing, these are the guiding factors in an appeal which goes to HDRB now. If it goes there, the guidance needs to be well laid out. He'd like to see that discussion. When a form-based code is put over a historic district, this document would be gone to first, then the HDRB. Mr. Dadson said certain buildings have been thought of on an individual basis. This controls the site plan; the conservation book is the guiding pattern book to create interpretations of patterns into that.

Councilman Sutton said an example of an issue that will come up is overall building height. He questions the ability to build a 55' building on Bladen Street that is 5' more than what's been

allowed before. If someone comes to the city with a 55' building, and they've done the necessary preliminary work, they should be able to do it. There may be a conflict with historic design standards. Mr. Tully said their intent is to do exactly what is in the form-based code. He wants the option to go 1.5 stories, for example, and that's why he has a problem with "shall be 2 stories." Mr. Dadson said Mr. Ramsey can come to the next workshop to explain more.

Mr. Dadson said buildings in the more traditional format are about number of stories, not height. Mr. Ramsey is trying to strike a balance. It's "about stories and scale and how everything fits together." Councilman Sutton said they don't want houses that look like replicas of historic buildings.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STATE OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Mr. Dadson explained the document. He said the report ties in regulatory actions that TMAC does with the financial pieces of it. It includes carriages, walking tours, buses, etc. There are holes in data in one year, but even without that, it calculates consistently. He explained the package including the way data is organized in it, such as complaints, types of tours available, and renewals. They organized it by revenues vs. costs from 2006 – 2010

Bob Moquin, Convention and Visitors Bureau, asked what the jump was from 2007 – 2008. Mr. Dadson said they went from having a non-officered tour coordinator to having a police officer in order to have someone with legal authority to enforce. In 2007, when the bids went out, they went from \$10,000 per carriage company to an uncertain but "huge jump up." That's the only real increase that is seen on that side. Everything above it is the other types of tours and is fairly nominal compared to the carriages. There's a graphic at the end, of all complaints totaled.

Mr. Dadson asked if this is what they need to go to TMAC. These are rules and regulations, not vision. Vision should be discussed with Mr. Moquin and **Carlotta Ungaro**. Councilman Sutton said this is helpful for the one type of tour business that Beaufort does. He doesn't get anything out of it related to other tours. Mr. Dadson said there are no complaints about the other tour operators.

Councilwoman Beer read from it that the other types of tours' complaints were about one a year. Mr. Dadson said this information is purely from a regulatory standpoint. Mayor Keyserling said he thinks residents of the Point are tired of complaining. Mr. Dadson said the data is cumulative, not by year; Councilman Sutton said he'd like to see it broken down by year, too. Mayor Keyserling said more than half the problems are coming from the industry itself because they can't get along with each other. Councilman Sutton said the complaints from the operators are down significantly in a measurable time period. The driver issues about stopping on the route come from residents who see it, but when questioned, the drivers "lie about it." Mayor Keyserling said on a tour he went on this year, the carriage made three stops. **Randall Burch** said the same thing happened on a carriage ride he took, but it was because it was an old horse.

Mr. Dadson said the data drives him to other pieces of the ordinance that are beyond the complaint issue. Would more competition lessen complaints or raise them, he wondered. Councilman Sutton suggested one owner, managed by the city. Mr. Dadson said in other cities that have carriage tours, he's noticed that the more competition there is, the more prices level out, and it's easier to manage and more predictable. It's not a huge market in Beaufort, especially compared to cities that aren't as small. There are interesting alternatives like walking tours because the downtown area is so small. Ms. Ungaro said tourists want the horse and carriage. Mr. Dadson said it raises questions. People are now making different decisions about what they want.

Councilman Sutton asked if there would even be discussion if there weren't a pie chart of problems. Mayor Keyserling said no, other than about vision. Councilman Sutton said that's a key discussion to have, but on the matter of carriages, it's about how much the city wants to regulate and manage it. If the operators can't solve a problem, the city solves it, i.e., clean-up. Someone needs to audit the process. Councilman Sutton said people are bothered by the inaccuracy of the tour guides. Council needs to discuss what they want to be marketing. Councilwoman Beer said they have to take a test based on the information provided to them by Historic Beaufort Foundation. Councilman Sutton said they should have made Historic Beaufort Foundation be a part of the process. Mayor Keyserling said the guides are entertainers.

Mr. Dadson said the management issues Councilman Sutton discussed are what TMAC should discuss, and this information gives them the chance to move forward on that. TMAC can do regulation. These numbers are small, and he wonders if the right things are being done from a branding perspective. Councilman Sutton asked what is being marketed in Beaufort. Mr. Moquin said "it's an experience." He added that they need to know what the product is. They need to do a destination assessment of what they are and what they want to strive to be. Ms. Ungaro said what's being marketed is history / romance. The brand assessment a year and a half ago showed that what people want is to relax and stroll. Councilman Sutton said if that's the case, do the types of tours offered provide that? Ms. Ungaro said if the tour guides are certified by Historic Beaufort Foundation, they can be marketed as "historic tours." The others can market themselves as entertainers. Mr. Burch asked who's verifying that the tour guides are giving the information out that was in the handbook and test. Mr. Dadson said what Mr. Burch heard on his tour was different, which is partly a matter of enforcement and partly an issue of what they want to do. Councilman Sutton said if the tour guides knew that the city wants to market romance and history, they could do that. Mr. Moquin said they "want to be authentic, regardless of what they're marketing." Mr. Moquin said that if it becomes an unenjoyable history tour, that's where the surveys will be necessary. Councilman Sutton said he'd like to see the two pieces tied together. TMAC and Historic Beaufort Foundation should be in on this together. A volunteer committee on Historic Beaufort Foundation could audit what's being said on the tours for historical accuracy. The operators can be brought in and told if what's being said is not meeting the marketing goals of the city.

Mr. Dadson said it's good that the CVB has a presence in the core now. He's concerned about when people stop doing the tours, if and how they are encouraged to do other things. How is a

tourist moved into a product that they want? A richer experience would lead them to want the things that make Beaufort interesting and different. He asked how they get people to return and bring their businesses, etc. Their first experience should be what leads to the second and the third: regular trips, second homes, etc.

Mayor Keyserling said Councilman Sutton watched three buses unload, walk down West Street, see the Waterfront Park and spend 45-minutes to an hour there having lunch, then get back on the bus at the parking lot. They didn't even have to walk back and consequently didn't see anything. If the merchants are hurting, it's because the park is being sold, not a fuller experience. Councilman Sutton said Walter Gay and the Whites are bringing buses here, and their customers can either ride a carriage or have lunch. The carriage operators made the deals with the bus tour companies, and money is changing hands to get them to come downtown. Susan Sauers brings 80% of the buses here, Ms. Ungaro said, and she told the hotels that they don't give her deals. The Parris Island graduation piece is also a problem. Mr. Burch said Beaufort is just "a potty and lunch break" to the people on the tour buses. Ms. Ungaro said 60 people on a bus can't all fit on carriages. Ms. Ungaro said her organization is not advertising the market to the bus tours.

Mayor Keyserling said he's hearing that the industry is very burdensome and labor intensive and compacting the problems. Mr. Dadson said the various groups are reacting in the market to what they think is a market driver for them. Anyone who innovates is doing it within those circles. The question still is what they want it to do. Buses wedged their way in. They need to craft the product that is offered; that's a missing link in all of this. Ms. Ungaro said nothing is done to bring the buses here. Mayor Keyserling said the carriages are bringing the buses here, and they have a measurable impact. Mr. Burch said 3 buses fill 4 carriages and make a little extra money. The majority of people taking tours are not bus-related. Ms. Ungaro said the bus numbers are way down.

Mr. Moquin said they need to look at resources: financial as well as time. Unlike general leisure consumers, tour operators are target marketing a trade group. If they want to facilitate it, they can go directly to those motor coach operators and work out what they can do when they get here. He's also had preliminary discussions, and some of the tour operators are staying off the exit on I-95. They get cheap rates at chain hotels, and it's an easy on and off the highway to Savannah, Charleston, and here. To get to that group is a one-on-one sales approach as opposed to mass marketing. Mayor Keyserling said he's not promoting motor coaches; he's questioning whether Beaufort is too small of a community to have them.

Mr. Burch said the downtown shops see this much differently. As a retailer he sees that someone downtown is making some money from bus tours. He doesn't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater; it's subsidizing downtown restaurants. Ms. Ungaro said they haven't gone after that market because they have gone for the high-end market instead of the broader base.

Mr. Dadson said there are ice cream shops, etc. downtown, but there are also a lot of private galleries. He told Mr. Moquin they need to get organizations better coordinated that are in the business of attracting people. Councilman Sutton said the fragmentation between the various groups is extensive. He doesn't like the fact that there are several groups marketing. Ms. Ungaro said because of limited funds, they aren't buying ads in Black media. Councilman Sutton said too many people are marketing, and they don't know what they're marketing. Mayor Keyserling said there needs to be a product packaged and who it's delivered to shouldn't be scatter-shot. Each group is doing their own thing. Councilman Sutton said they want to manage tourism, but the groups need to connect. The easiest way to do that is to have one person in charge. The buggies are marketing their business and it would be better if the city were doing it.

Ms. Ungaro said they're asking for the Chamber of Commerce's media marketing plan. Mayor Keyserling said no, he would like to see their target market and what approach is being taken to reach them. Mr. Burch said Mr. Moquin knows who his target market is, and they have recently been market surveyed on the internet. He doesn't think it's as disconnected as council seems to think. He thinks they need to discuss how to most efficiently use every dollar. He feels Fripp has realized they have a partner in Beaufort and are sending their visitors to Beaufort for one day to offer a better experience. Main Street Beaufort's portion of this is to keep it centered within the historic piece and to complement what Mr. Moquin is doing.

Mr. Moquin said decisions are being made without research. When he arrived, he asked the number of annual visitors, and five people gave different five answers. Occupancy reports only give one view, which doesn't include day visitors, who need to be converted to overnight guests. The branding assessment made profiles of inquiries to identify who the audience is. The 30,000 inquiries were profiled: 45-65 years old, highly educated, affluent empty-nesters in spring and fall; it's a very different market in the summer when people come for the beach. They asked them what their interests were. They looked at population and bought in those 4 markets for the profile they had. They're now going to their core audience, identified with what they have thus far.

The CVB is willing to be accountable, Mr. Moquin said. Councilman Sutton said that's what this council wants, in order to have confidence in the marketing being done and funded in part by the city. They need to know that the city services used meet the needs of that audience. Ms. Ungaro said when the festivals were spun off, they wanted to be the marketer, and they would work to identify the pieces missing in a bigger picture role. Mr. Burch said the marketing impact of the Shrimp Festival is as important as anything else they do. They pulled people from around the country and 99% of them said they'd come back. Events are marketing tools. Councilman Sutton said Main Street Beaufort was never meant to be an events group. No one has mentioned Water Festival and Gullah Festival. Water Festival is considered a local event, and infrastructure is used for ten days in the city core, but they're rarely represented unless they need something. They need to be included.

Mr. Moquin said the partnership with the USCB tourism program did the survey. Main Street Beaufort was the first organization with that event to offer something quantifiable, and they allowed them to see the return on investment. They could identify how many nights people were coming and staying. Other groups like Historic Beaufort Foundation are being brought to the table to quantify what is happening and how the money is being invested. Councilman Sutton said that process through USCB with a tourism component should be cultivated and brought into the ATAX qualification as part of the process. Those who get money and use it on an event have to quantify it through such a process. Then they can show the city the numbers they want to see and can show that they're marketing outside the area.

Ms. Fabian said Main Street Beaufort has done a Power Point presentation about what Main Street Beaufort is and what they do, and she'd like to do it for the council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK