

A work session of Beaufort City Council was held on August 16, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling and Councilmen Mike McFee, George O’Kelley, Stephen Murray, and Phil Cromer, and Bill Prokop, city manager.

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 5:00 p.m.

BEAUFORT COUNTY LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Deborah Johnson said she is on the Beaufort County Library System’s Board of Trustees and is the chair of the strategic planning committee. As part of the strategic planning process, 2,800 people took a survey about the library, and “we are now on a listening tour,” she said, where they ask people about the library, which is what they will do with city council today. They have already done this in 2 other municipalities in the county, she said.

Marilyn Harcharik asked council questions (in italics) and council responded.

If Beaufort County had no libraries, what would you put in one that you built?

- Councilman Murray: It would follow the St. Helena model, offering access to technology and a 3-D lab. There would be more focus on electronic media than on print media.
- Councilman McFee: It would offer the ability to get online to get information.
- Councilmen Cromer and O’Kelley: It would have a South Carolina room that would be the same as in the current Beaufort library for research.
- Councilman O’Kelley: He agreed there should be access to technology, but he said older people prefer the printed page, and people go to the library to read magazines and newspapers, too. Where the library is located is also important.
- Councilman Cromer: Ample parking
- Mayor Keyserling: More accessible hours – evenings and weekends
- Councilman Murray: Meeting space or dedicated office spaces – Ms. Harcharik asked if he meant a study area. Councilman Murray said yes.
- Mr. Prokop: Educational material and programs for areas that don’t have access to those
- Councilman Cromer: A conference room for meetings – He said the one at St. Helena is nice.
- Councilman O’Kelley: Anything that they can do to get children interested early in reading “will bring them back.”

What role should the library play in the community?

- Councilman McFee: It is a resource for educators (e.g., historical research).
- Mayor Keyserling: It should be a gathering place that belongs to everybody and is an opportunity for them to engage in the exchange of information.

- Councilman Murray: Libraries are gathering spots; while there's so much information online, the library helps you find the *right* information and brings critical thinking to that process. Also, the library offers technology education (e.g., Wi-Fi, Word, Excel).
- Mr. Prokop: It's good to have a place to go that houses a community's history, so, for example, people who are new to the community can learn that history. Libraries "should be the hardware store of old," he said: a place to go and find out what is going on, and a meeting and community center.
- Councilman O'Kelley: There needs to be an "evolution" of libraries, which are not the only sources of books and information now that there are bookstores like Barnes and Noble and cell phone access. Even some Barnes and Noble stores may close, he said, because people read on Kindles, for example, and many people don't read books in their printed forms anymore.
- Mr. Prokop: They could "offer more than just . . . the hardware of a library," such as coffee and pastries, which would make the library more like a bookstore, where people can read inside of it while having a cup of coffee; he knows of two libraries that did this.

What could the library do better to serve "your jurisdiction's needs" or to encourage people to use it more?

- Councilman Murray: The libraries' hours need to be extended beyond regular business hours. Also, there are complaints that parking at the downtown library. The city is responsible for helping to find a solution for that, he said.
- Councilman Cromer: The library's lecture series is important, and the history museum is collaborating with the library to do some of those.

What will the City of Beaufort need from the library in the next 5 years?

- Mayor Keyserling: More bike racks, he hopes
- Councilman Murray: "The downtown facility is in need of a facelift," because while it was "a first class facility when it was built, if you go in there now, it feels sort of tired," especially compared to other libraries in the county.
- Councilman O'Kelley: "I don't see that . . . It still looks like a very serviceable building to me."
- Mayor Keyserling: "It still looks like a library, not a piece of art," while "library design has changed."
- Councilman O'Kelley: People should be able to walk to it. The Point, the Old Commons, and the Bluff all are close enough for that. He feels that vehicle access to it could be improved (i.e., the turn-in off on Scott Street).
- Councilman McFee: It needs to keep "pace with technology."

Ms. Harcharik asked Councilman Murray about his "facelift" comment: Did he mean that's needed on the *inside* of the building (e.g., furniture and carpet)? Councilman Murray said yes. Ms. Harcharik agreed: "Pretty much everything in there is about 25 years old."

Mr. Prokop said good communication is needed between the city and the library. One example would be “joint purchasing.” Also, the city can promote the library to city employees if it knows beforehand what is happening at the library. He would like the current communication, which is good, “to improve even further.”

Mayor Keyserling said the “whole spirit of the library community is lifted” because of the hiring of its director, **Ray McBride**, who is doing a lot of outreach and collaboration.

What are some outdated aspects of the library?

Mayor Keyserling: “Technology can always be updated, upgraded, and expanded.”

Mr. Prokop: Access

Councilman McFee: Hours

What are some innovative aspects of the library?

Councilman Murray: Wi-Fi hotspots, the 3-D lab at Saint Helena

Mr. Prokop: Access to e-books and streaming movies

What are some essential, core elements of the library?

Councilman O’Kelley: The Carolina Room for research

Mr. Prokop: The children’s area

Mayor Keyserling: Its customer service

There was a discussion about parking at the Beaufort library. Mr. Prokop said only 4 library employees took Mr. McBride up on an offer of free or discounted parking. Councilman Murray said he hears complaints about paying to park there from the library’s patrons, so he suggested validation or a token program for patrons so it could be free for them.

Is there anything you consider a poor use of library funds or something you feel it should be spending money on?

Mr. Prokop: Not using funds for maintenance is not only an issue at the library.

What is amazing about the library?

Councilman McFee: Its staff

Councilman Cromer: The Carolina Room

Councilman Murray: Audiobooks

Councilman O’Kelley: The research opportunities there

Councilman McFee: The staff helping patrons to find books (e.g., finding a book at other branches for people all reading the same book for their book club)

What would you suggest to help the library for planning for future?

Councilman McFee: Stay in the city

Mr. Prokop asked if tourists come to the library to learn about Beaufort history, or to the St. Helena branch to see the 3-D printer. Is the library “missing an opportunity to showcase what it

has and draw (tourists) in?" he asked. Ms. Johnson said not many tourists come in at the Beaufort branch, but it's downtown, so when they do, they are usually "looking for a little information." Visitors to Beaufort do not often attend programs the library puts on, she said. Hilton Head has a large tourist population that comes in to use their library's printers and for other things. Now that there's more collaboration, there might be more opportunities, Ms. Johnson said.

Councilman McFee asked if there are "reciprocal" library cards or part-time/temporary library cards. The library has a reasonable fee that visitors can pay to use its facilities, Ms. Johnson said, such as the computers and printer. "Seasonal people" come to the "Books Sandwiched In" programs, Ms. Harcharik said, but they're "not tourists wandering" into the library while exploring downtown.

Councilman O'Kelley said, "We take the library for granted. It's there, (and) it's always been there," so this survey is a good way to get people to think more about the library, which "is a good thing, but it's not something you think about a lot." On average, Councilman O'Kelley feels people don't think about it more than a couple times a year. He'll use it for research, and while he used to check out books, he doesn't anymore. There are lending libraries now (e.g., at Harvey's barber shop), and McIntosh Book Shoppe sells used books for \$8, he said.

Mayor Keyserling said within the last 8 years, city council "was ready to vote for a library impact fee." But the master plan for the library was to move the county administrative staff out to Burton Wells, and council asked, "'Why would we be supporting sprawl?' and it went away." He's "ready to revisit that" at some point, Mayor Keyserling said, "because you've sort of got to 'pay to play.'" He doesn't recall the fee being "huge," and he feels Beaufort "should not be the only municipality that doesn't pay an impact fee" for its library, especially since the library is "reaching out and being a partner" to the city. The impact fee pays for the bookmobile, he said, and he asked how the fees are administered.

The fees collected by the county go into a designated fund, Ms. Johnson said, and "technically those fees are supposed to be used in the area" from which they have been collected. For example, the Bluffton branch has "built a lab like the one at St. Helena" with the impact fees they've received, which have always been plentiful because of Sun City's residents. Ms. Johnson said the plan the mayor had referred to for a branch in Burton Wells is still on Beaufort County's CIP (capital improvement plan) list because of the projections about the way Beaufort County is to grow. This strategic plan is important because it looks at "where services need to be provided," she said.

The bookmobile was meant to provide library services to rural areas, but it can't go anywhere that doesn't pay impact fees, because those fees paid for its purchase, Ms. Johnson said. Councilman McFee said the impact fee is \$53 per dwelling for new construction. Mayor Keyserling said that's higher than he thought, but nonetheless, he thinks it's time for a conversation about implementing this fee in Beaufort.

CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Bonnie Hargrove said that the Cultural Arts District advisory board has been “building infrastructure” and meeting informally to determine what they want to do with their current partners. They envision “swapping information” and not duplicating it, she said; it will be “one big, happy family promoting downtown.”

The Humanities Festival was a success, Ms. Hargrove said. The Beaufort Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, Santa Elena Foundation, Historic Beaufort Foundation, and the Beaufort Museum are the named partners, she said, and representatives of those groups will meet this week with Ms. Johnson “about possibly moving forward with an NEA grant.” They also have approval to work with a consultant on a strategic plan, Ms. Hargrove said. She will have much more information when she comes back from a conference in Columbia.

Megan Meyer, Santa Elena Foundation, described the parameters of the cultural arts district: “a big triangle” from USCB’s Center for the Arts to Waterfront Park to Santa Elena. There is “a lot of opportunity within that” area, she said, and it could have a “ripple effect” on parking, mobility, tourism, outreach and awareness, “enhanced curriculum for students,” etc. She feels the city’s collaboration is “awesome.” The meetings will be open and recorded. The structure is coming, Ms. Meyer said.

Mayor Keyserling said 10 years ago, there was no Beaufort History Museum, no Santa Elena Foundation, etc. They have “moved so far in a short amount of time.” The “problem with nonprofits” is that they “mistakenly get . . . competitive . . . because we’re all looking for money.” Instead, he said, they should be collaborative about raising money. For example, “the Humanities Festival surprised me,” Mayor Keyserling said, “with the spirit and the collaboration that was there.”

Mayor Keyserling feels that someone leaving one museum should be directed to another, and this group should “facilitate that kind of collaboration.” There is now a museum pass, **Jaque Wedler**, Historic Beaufort Foundation, said. People pay full price at the Verdier House, for example, and then they get a sticker, so if they go to Beaufort History Museum or to Santa Elena, they get \$1 off of those museum’s admission prices. Councilman McFee said this is reciprocal among the museums.

Mayor Keyserling said council would make the formal appointments to the advisory board at the next city council meeting. Ms. Hargrove said meetings will be on the third Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m., except in December and July, when they plan not to meet.

There being no further business to come before council, the work session was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.