

A regular meeting of the Beaufort City Council was held on November 24, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Council members Donnie Ann Beer, Gary B. Fordham, Mike Sutton, Mike McFee, and City Manager Scott Dadson, and Shirley Hughes. 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

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Beer. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Mayor.

PROCLAMATION NAMING DECEMBER 4TH ARBOR DAY

Councilwoman Beer made the motion, seconded by Councilman Fordham, to make the proclamation. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

ADOPTION OF “VISION BEAUFORT 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”

Mayor Keyserling opened this public hearing. Mr. Dadson introduced Craig Lewis with Lawrence Group, who made the presentation. Mr. Dadson also pointed out Libby Anderson, David Lott, Joe DeVito, and Harley Laing.

Mr. Lewis reviewed the key elements in a comp plan by statute. He said this plan is intended to be different from previous plans in that it has economic, environmental, and social elements. He enumerated “the key action items” for growth, including updating the UDO and making the development process predictable; for the environment, i.e., preserving and protecting the environment; climate change and energy, i.e., reducing solid waste; social infrastructure, i.e., focusing on neighborhoods and parks, housing diversity; and transportation access and mobility, i.e., bicycle and pedestrian networks to improve quality of life.

The plan focuses on “complete street” recommendations, including considering the re-routing of US 21. “Economic prosperity action items” include aggressively attracting the jobs that are appropriate to this community and prioritizing infill and development. “Serving citizens” action items include ensuring a healthy financial position, providing efficient services, etc. Mr. Lewis also pointed out action items for setting priorities for implementation, i.e., working aggressively with regional partners and implementing and expanding the city’s capital improvement plan. He went on to show council the key changes that had been made to the draft based on public and Planning Commission suggestions, such as clarifying population trend data sources and usage.

Dwayne Smalley, Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood Association president, asked whether the 100 recommendations of the neighborhood’s study group would be included in the plan. Mr. Lewis said his impression was that they were seen as “a parallel effort” and would be in the next appendix. David Lott said the proposal wasn’t rejected outright, but it was too voluminous to do it justice. He reiterated the idea that the Northwest Quadrant plan is a parallel to the comp plan.

There being no further public comment, the mayor closed this public hearing.

MINUTES

The minutes of the council work session meeting on November 3, 2009 were presented to council for review. Councilman McFee pointed out that Mr. Wedler's name had been misspelled, as were "home tours," according to Councilwoman Beer. Councilwoman Beer said in the second paragraph of the section on Northern Beaufort County road projects, it should read "a bridge is being moved *to* Ribaut," not *at*. Mayor Keyserling said that in the Northern Area Plan Implementation Report section, it should read Beaufort/Port Royal would like two members of each *municipality*, not "council." In that same section, "a commission sub-committee" should read "a sub-committee of the county planning commission." On motion by Councilman McFee, second by Councilwoman Beer, council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended

The minutes of the regular council meeting on November 10, 2009 were presented to council for review. On motion by Councilwoman Beer, second by Councilman Fordham, council voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

MOTION APPROVING SIGN COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman McFee seconded approval of the recommendations. The proposal of the signage committee was submitted to council in work session. Mayor Keyserling briefly reviewed the report. Councilman McFee called the committee's work thorough and thought-provoking. Mayor Keyserling said the committee had photographed highway department signs and documented all of them. Councilwoman Beer said it's an example of how people feel about Beaufort. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dadson said he'd send a copy to the SCDOT and say that council had approved these changes. Mayor Keyserling suggested also sending it to the legislature designation.

MOTION APPROVING HOLIDAY BONUSES FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman McFee seconded approval of the bonuses. Ms. Hughes said bonuses are included as part of the budget process, and they come to council to approve them before the checks are cut. Councilman Fordham said some constituents – and he himself – live on social security, which doesn't include a cost of living adjustment this year. He recommended that the \$200 bonus be reduced to \$100 to be more in line with current economics. Councilwoman Beer said the work the city people have done to put the city in a good place financially in difficult times makes her want to give the bonus. Councilman Sutton feels that the employees' performance should be a factor in the bonus distribution. Ms. Hughes said holiday bonuses have historically been done annually. There are merit-based bonuses which weren't done last year and may not be done this year. Councilman Sutton said he'd support it, but he would like to see the merit pay and bonus situations looked at together. Mayor Keyserling said it's a Christmas gift. Ms. Hughes said it's part of the budget process; it could be done away with. Councilman McFee said they have that option every year. Councilwoman Beer said staff is smaller and has a bigger workload as a result, so if the city can afford to do it, she thinks the gift should be given. Councilman Fordham said that, though Ms. Hughes called the bonuses "historic", he's been on council since '99 and the bonus then was \$75 and has been increased

over time. He doesn't feel like it's that historic, and he has continued to oppose it. Mayor Keyserling said if Councilman Fordham voted for the budget, he'd supported the bonuses, and is changing his mind now. Councilman Fordham offered: "No doubt about it." The vote was 4-1 in favor of giving the bonuses, with Councilman Fordham opposed.

NAME APPOINTEES TO CENSUS 2010 FULL COUNT COMMITTEE

Following a brief discussion about who had been contacted thus far for committee membership, council agreed to finalize their decisions at the next work session.

ORDINANCE AMENDING PLANNING COMMISSION

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman Sutton seconded approval of the 11-23-09 ordinance on first reading. Ms. Anderson said **Harley Laing** and she had met with Bill Harvey. She reviewed the changes that would be made. The first change was on page 2, item 2, re: the composition of the Planning Commission. The next change extended the terms of the appointments to the Planning Commission from two to three years. Ms. Anderson said if they're appointed to finish the unexpired term, that time doesn't count toward their two full terms. Mayor Keyserling said he's concerned about the wording. He made a suggestion to clarify the language. The next change, under "powers and duties" on page 3 hasn't been made yet. On the recommendation of the Implementation Committee, the wording has changed to "ensure a comprehensive plan for the growth area" with the second sentence stricken. Mr. Dadson said that is a recommended amendment to the motion on the table. Ms. Anderson said there were several other editorial changes.

Mr. Laing referred to item 6, paragraph E, and said the Implementation Committee is able to conveniently handle other matters, so this catchall phrase has been included to allow the Planning Commission to handle other matters as the Implementation Committee has. Councilwoman Beer took the gavel, and Mayor Keyserling moved to make the amendment to the original motion, seconded by Councilman Sutton, that included the change under "powers and duties" and struck the sentence that followed it. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Keyserling said Beaufort County is working together again and has made a resolution supporting the tenets of regional planning and are starting the process passing an ordinance which is similar to Port Royal's. He's excited about the cooperation among governmental entities. Councilman Sutton said, having been sitting on these meetings for 3 years, he knows that combined planning review is going to be tested and won't be easy, but "it's the main piece of all this work" and he agrees that if that piece can work, all the years of effort make it worth sitting at that table. Councilwoman Beer said government cooperation is a big step to achieving what the experts are recommending. Councilman McFee said it's a testament to the community. He feels the Redevelopment Commission will also be a success and he praised the commission. Mr. Dadson said it will be put in a first reading perspective, as Port Royal will do at their next meeting. It will be forwarded to county council for their three reading process. If the county puts it into a first reading mode, it will require discussion of outstanding issues before further action. What the Northern Area Planning Commission has recommended are joint planning efforts for the city, town, and county. Also, if a project goes through this process, final authority belongs to the originating jurisdiction. That's the way the current Planning Commission works.

Joe DeVito, chair of the current Planning Commission said, “You’re right. It works.” He said it’s great to see the county come on board and praised the work of the committee. The motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE ADOPTING “VISION BEAUFORT 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman McFee seconded approval of the ordinance on first reading. Mr. Dadson said it requires two readings, and he recommended reading it as-is and putting it on work session agenda. Planning Commission members can attend as well as staff and members of the public to talk through issues before the second reading. He likes that this plan has a lot for groups to take from to keep the fabric of the city together. Technically, he feels it works well. Councilman Sutton asked how the Northwest Quadrant recommendations would be folded into the plan. He’d like to talk about that at the work session. Mr. Dadson said the Northwest Quadrant work plan has been looked at to see how it fits. He feels that’s been organized. He thinks Mr. Lott is saying the best thing to do is to use the comp plan to take action on that. Councilman Sutton asked if there would be action plans for specific neighborhoods as an appendix, and Mr. Dadson said yes. Mayor Keyserling said as he read the plan, he realized the Northwest Quadrant is 6 months to 2 years ahead of every other neighborhood. He sees the respective neighborhood plans as appendices. Councilman Sutton said he wants it clear by the second reading. Mr. DeVito clarified how the group saw the Northwest Quadrant plan. Mr. Dadson said they can adopt that strategy and those efforts when they adopt the comp plan. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Dadson said Councilman Fordham had asked that bridge opening issues be coordinated. The city, Port Royal and the county have coordinated and signed a letter to the Coast Guard to say it would be open on the hour until the completion of McTeer. The letter also discusses the construction schedule. He feels it should be better coordinated because of this joint participation.

REPORTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman Fordham said he’d like the Beaufort Housing Authority Executive Director, Mr. Boyd, to come to city council to discuss their projects. Mayor Keyserling said the Housing Authority was a creation of the city, but the broader community has taken ownership of it. Mr. Dadson said the city has the majority of appointments. Councilman Fordham said he’d like to have a report from the Housing Authority, particularly about what they’re doing about workforce housing, which doesn’t appear to have anything happening. Councilman Sutton suggested an overview of who they are, where they are overall in relation to housing, and what they’re doing in the city and the greater community. Mayor Keyserling warned that it’s a good idea, but with the exception of NSP, the group is a rental housing manager. Councilman Fordham felt that who should do more and how it should be done should be discussed, if the Housing Authority is not going to do it. Councilwoman Beer asked if the Barnard Group wasn’t supposed to be doing something about that. Mr. Dadson said their partnership with the Redevelopment Commission has never been finalized.

Councilwoman Beer said she was in Myrtle Beach for a conference including an economist who said things don’t look good economically, and it will be a long, drawn out road to recovery.

Mayor Keyserling asked to go over the workshop agenda and suggested that the Redevelopment Commission applications begin to be reviewed. Mr. Dadson said it's added to the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before City Council, Councilwoman Beer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Fordham. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
MS. SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK