

A regular meeting of the Beaufort City Council was held on June 9, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall, 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. 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 6:09 p.m.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The invocation was given by Dr. Carlos Williams of Life House Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Mayor.

### **Public Hearing on an Ordinance Rezoning Property at 905 Bladen St. from General Residential to Neighborhood Commercial District**

The mayor opened the public hearing. Libby Anderson said that Benjamin Smith is one of the property owners in the area under discussion. The property has a single family dwelling of about 25 square feet on it. In this residential zone, all types of residential dwellings are allowed as well as schools and churches and special exceptions by Zoning Board of Appeals for group homes, etc. Mr. Smith is seeking a Neighborhood Commercial District zoning in a General Residential zone. Building size is limited to 2500 square feet to prevent big retail buildings with the exception of mixed use buildings. Drive-through facilities are not permitted. This property is located in one of two blocks on Bladen Street's east side that is still zoned General Residential. The Future Land Use map supports this zoning change to mixed use, as do other policies in the comprehensive plan. The new streetscape has given the area a more urban look than it's had before and made the area ripe for more intense development activity because parking is not an issue. While the lot and structure are small, it may be able to convert to a small office building. Public notification has been made. The planning commission tabled the motion and directed staff to look at the matter in greater detail. She said staff wouldn't recommend a single mid-block rezoning, but agrees there needs to be a closer look at this 2-block area.

Councilman Sutton asked how many actual letters of public notice were sent out. Ms. Anderson replied that although it's policy to do so, notification is a courtesy, not a requirement; it is required to post a notice and publish notice in the newspaper. Councilman Sutton said that there are about 20 plats in 22 blocks, and only one letter was received in response to the notification. The city manager said a neighborhood meeting was held in addition to the planning commission meeting and the current public hearing. Ms. Anderson said that the owners in the immediate area were notified by two means. Six properties are being considered for re-zoning. Of those, three said they support the idea, and two said they did not, but one of those was hearsay. Given this, she reiterated that the matter is worth studying in more detail.

In response to a question from Councilman Sutton, Ms. Anderson said that "We're only looking at the lots that front on Bladen."

**Benjamin Smith**, 905 Bladen Street, the property owner/applicant said that he's been talking to neighbors about getting the two blocks approved. He has no plans to do anything with the

property of a commercial nature immediately, but he has been approached twice about renting the property out to a business.

**Carl Jones**, 901 and 911 Bladen Street, said he wanted to voice opposition to making the area Neighborhood Commercial. He wants to know how the change will affect him and his family tax-wise, etc. If it's beneficial, he might change his mind. He's one of last few owners in the area; the other houses are rental homes. He wants to know about the ramifications of the change. Councilman Sutton agreed that Mr. Jones and his mother may be last owners on Bladen and expressed his personal commitment not to "lose the neighborhood." He said Mr. Jones could call him any time. Mayor Keyserling told Mr. Jones that the change in designation would give him "more flexibility of use." Councilman McFee told Mr. Jones that he appreciates his interest and concern. Staff will be able to illuminate the issue for him after Mr. Jones has reviewed the map in the packet. Councilwoman Beer added that "wherever you live in the city, we still represent you."

Councilman McFee asked Ms. Anderson about requirements for businesses that back up to the General Residential area. She answered that a commercial lot abutting a residential lot has to put out a screening device between the lots, like a privacy fence. Outside the historic district, the Historic Review Board may require an additional buffer. If these Bladen Street residential properties were adjusted to Neighborhood Commercial, screening would be required *if* they convert to commercial. Ms. Anderson said that there will be another public hearing on this application because the meeting's location was different than what was advertised. It will be on the City Council agenda on July 14.

Mayor Keyserling closed the public hearing.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the regular City Council meeting of May 26, 2009 were reviewed by council. Councilman McFee noted that Larry Holman's name was incorrectly spelled as Holden. On motion by Councilman Fordham, second by Councilman Sutton, council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

### **Request from Baptist Church of Beaufort for Street Closure for a Community Patriotic Celebration**

Councilman Fordham moved and Councilwoman Beer seconded to approve the request. Councilman Sutton said the request appears to be exactly like last year's and has not expanded, so he supports it. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Request To Sell Alcohol at Waterfront Park for the Naval Hospital Corpsmen Birthday Celebration**

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman Sutton seconded approval of the request. Councilman Sutton noted that this is a new event and wanted to know about it. Councilman McFee said that it's not a new event but has never before been held in Waterfront Park; usually it's held at the Naval Hospital, but the group wants to be more involved in the community. The city manager noted that it's a private function. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Approval of Summer Council Meeting Schedule**

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman Sutton seconded approval of council's summer schedule. Councilwoman Beer said that the meetings will be on July 14 and August 25. Councilman McFee said that the A-Tax Committee had not yet resolved how this will affect A-Tax meetings. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Approval of Event Discounts**

Councilwoman Beer moved and Councilman McFee seconded approval. Councilman Fordham said that if discounts are approved this year, they will be expected next year. Though he feels the intention of the offer is good, he would vote against it. Councilman McFee said that the discounts are clearly stated to be for 2009 only. A brief discussion ensued. The motion was approved by a vote of 4-1 with Councilman Fordham in opposition.

### **Approval of Prioritization of CDBG Funds**

Councilwoman Beer moved approval and Councilman Sutton seconded for the purpose of discussion. He said that the city's priorities for CDBG funds were #1: Streetscape, #2: housing through Renaissance, #3: business. He feels that infrastructure is important but housing is more important. Mayor Keyserling said all would be weighted with equal value in the grant application. Councilman Sutton said he feels it sends a message about what civic leaders think is most important by placing Bladen St. funding first. The city manager replied that realigning the priorities would not hurt the application's ranking. Councilman Sutton made a motion to put housing through Renaissance in the forefront, and Councilwoman Beer seconded.

On the motion to change the order of priorities to housing through Renaissance, then Bladen Street, then business, approval was unanimous. On the motion to approve prioritization of CDBG funding, approval was unanimous.

### **Motion Directing the City Manager to Create an Agreement with Historic Beaufort Foundation for an Accounting of Beaufort Museum Items**

Councilwoman Beer moved approval, and Councilman Fordham seconded. Mayor Keyserling briefly reviewed the matter. Councilman Sutton said an inventory is necessary "in order to have a deeper discussion," not to give the items to anyone. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

The city manager asked who would attend the MASC in August; he and Shirley Hughes will not be attending. Mayor Keyserling and Councilman McFee said they will go.

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Clemson Master Gardeners program met with Mayor Keyserling about finding vacant lots to create community gardens. They will meet with the Task Force which will then have a community meeting. Councilman Sutton asked the mayor to "plant a seed" with ACE and Clemson to "introduce some synergy" and make farming in the Northwest Quadrant happen. He supports farming there and said there are timing issues.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilman Sutton said that the Carnegie Building still bears signs for Codes. The city manager said they'd be removed. Councilman Sutton said that, thanks to Block By Block, a family has moved into a house on Newcastle, the first time someone's lived there in 11 years.

Councilman McFee said that he'd been asked about adding parking spaces along West Street, near the Beaufort Inn, across from Nippy's.

There being no further business to come before City Council, Councilman Fordham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman McFee. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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BILLY KEYSERLING, MAYOR

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNIE ANN BEER

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COUNCILMAN GARY B. FORDHAM

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COUNCILMAN MIKE SUTTON

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COUNCILMAN MIKE McFEE

ATTEST:

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SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK