

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on December 1, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference room, 302 Carteret Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Council members Gary Fordham, Donnie Ann Beer, Mike Sutton, and 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 5:14 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF 2009 VISION BEAUFORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Libby Anderson handed out a listing that the Planning Commission had made of changes to the city's comp plan. Mayor Keyserling asked her about the Beaufort population and the median family income. Ms. Anderson replied that a note was added about this on page 264 that explained where the demographics came from. Ms. Anderson said on page 51 the Planning Commission had asked that a sentence be added about the framework map and the future land use plan.

On page 71, a change was inspired by the fire districts' response to the plan. The current language is on page 73 in the first paragraph. Mayor Keyserling said the language was fine, but he wants to ensure that, regarding debate about areas to be served, the Northern Beaufort County Implementation Committee has spent 3 years establishing boundaries, and annexations will be considered based on where services can be provided, if there's a way to pay for them. Mr. Dadson said that language was cleared up; staff clarified it before it went to the Planning Commission for approval. Mayor Keyserling said the "hang up" is that an annexation request will happen, but the set of conditions may change that will be applied in the future if it's outside the growth boundaries. Mr. Dadson said it's not contradictory; this plan tells them HOW they're going to grow – sequentially – and that the concentration needs to be on the inside, within the current boundaries. There's a different sort of criteria to consider. Joe DeVito said the idea of the plan is to focus on the core first. Councilman Sutton said the regional growth boundaries need to remain, and that needs to be clear. Mr. Dadson said neither the Northern Regional Plan nor the comp plans restrict anyone's right to do things but they say that it will be planned together and the urban and rural boundaries will be respected. Councilman Sutton asked if he was comfortable that the cities' and county's rights are protected, and Mr. Dadson said yes.

Harley Laing said in reference to the change on page 144, that the Planning Commission was concerned about the incorporation and adoption of a broad list of transportation projects covering all of Northern Beaufort County without much control over them and without much input from the Planning Commission. They felt as if they were being dictated to by others, so they asked for a statement that said that it is their intent to protect the city's character and quality of life and not just to use roads as through highways.

Mayor Keyserling asked about page 149, the second paragraph, concerning the new connector road: that is something that's a holdover from the last comp plan, and he feels it should be deleted. It's clear to him that a road there isn't appropriate. Mr. DeVito said they didn't want to remove one project without looking at them all, but that's the project that brought about the conversation. The Planning

Commission would support the council in striking that one, but they didn't feel they had the authority, so they changed the title. Ms. Anderson said all the projects came from the Northern Regional Plan, not the previous comp plan. The trestle is recommended to be used for emergency access only. Councilman Sutton said it's politically a "hot potato," but from a planning perspective it makes sense. Mayor Keyserling said when the second bridge was put in, it was on people's minds; neighborhoods are too established for it to happen. Councilman Sutton doesn't see the community supporting that concept, even though it could be a good idea. Ms. Anderson said now it's called a "potential" solution. Councilman Fordham and Councilman McFee had no objection to having it removed. Mr. Dadson said it will be removed for the vote next week.

Ms. Anderson said the fire station map was made clear to show who manages which one. On page 177, a new item was added for the Planning Commission saying that "The City should take a leadership role in institutional development." She said there are changes re: Southside Park and its redevelopment scenario. The recommendation is to provide a neighborhood action plan in the neighborhood. On the next page, there was a conceptual plan and two sentences have been added to that. It will be studied more with no commitment made yet.

On page 235, the title of PI 1.0 was changed from "Regional Partners" to "Plan Implementation." The second paragraph that begins, "In that plan . . ." was deleted, and item PI 1.1 was deleted and replaced with "...Monitor and report on plan implementation. In January of each year, the planning commission will work with the city council and staff and will list annual priorities for implementation of this plan. In February of each year, the commission will report on the progress made in implementing the annual priorities list for the prior year and will also report on any other matters relating to implementation of the plan." Councilman McFee asked if it wouldn't make more sense to evaluate the past year before they plan the future year. They should be flipped. Councilman Sutton asked about the 10 year capital plan's timing. Mr. Dadson said the discussion will begin in the spring and would happen before the budget/CIP cycle. Mr. Dadson said staff should be directed to make the flip. Ms. Anderson said another change to this section was that "this plan shall be updated every five years."

Lisa Bryan asked about the maps relation to current road work, and Councilman Sutton said that map was generated based on regional planning, not any specific project. That was long-term planning, not a DOT requirement.

Mr. Dadson said that these changes will be on the web site. The next full meeting will be a second reading with amendments on December 8. Mr. DeVito said thanks to the council for dealing with this project the way they did. They were able "to talk to lots of people about lots of different ideas."

Debra Johnson asked if the council was committed to the plan the way it is worded with the reference to the Northwest Quadrant. Mayor Keyserling said the plan says that neighborhood planning is done in the neighborhoods. It happens that Northwest Quadrant is ahead of other neighborhoods in their planning, but this comp plan doesn't make any of their recommendations concrete; there was some communication issues. The Northwest Quadrant plan will be added to the comp plan as an addendum. Ms. Johnson said there's a place in the plan that focuses on the Northwest Quadrant (this has nothing to do with the task force's 100 points) and the conceptual drawing shows how the neighborhood

should be changed. Councilman Sutton said it's similar to Southside Park's conceptual plans. Councilman McFee said it had pictures of how it would become a central commercial district. Ms. Johnson said as a neighborhood association, their concerns are not the commercial but the dense townhouse style development on 4 or 5 blocks in the neighborhood. There's concern that the traditional style wouldn't be followed. Her question is whether council heard any of that at various hearings which residents attended. Mayor Keyserling said he heard it and he has a hope that the county will fund a county-wide unified ordinance, which is a neighborhood by neighborhood approach. In the existing neighborhoods, the form is there. Like Lafayette and Southside, they're illustrations for the sake of illustration. Councilman Sutton said the picture shows empty lots that are out there today. With form-based code, no one knows what's going to happen yet. Councilman Sutton said the Milner book that was generated is a form-based code.

Mayor Keyserling asked if Ms. Johnson would feel more comfortable with a paragraph saying that it was conceptual. Ms. Johnson said concerns have been expressed, and she feels that when the comp plan is approved, there's no idea what's going to be approved. The comp plan should be the guiding document. Mayor Keyserling feels that the 3 major principles are about 1) infill; 2) no one planning a neighborhood without engaging the neighborhood in that process; and 3) everything not over-extending management of the neighborhoods. He doesn't see this as specific. Ms. Anderson said the plan already says the illustration is conceptual and only represents one possible way it could be over the next decades. She read aloud from the present wording.

John Gadsden said he would like mention that the historic preservation principle would be applied. Councilman Sutton said it's a constant process of reevaluation of the current guidelines and noted, "Maybe the guidelines are what are killing it." Mayor Keyserling said nothing in the comp plan abandons their commitment to historic preservation. It's for ten years, and there are so many variables in each piece. He reiterated that the Northwest Quadrant has a head start on other neighborhoods that haven't been thinking about it for 6 months.

Ms. Johnson said she feels like there hasn't been a response to the neighborhood coming out to 3 meetings as they were asked to. The perception / fear is that when a plan is adopted, it can be used to justify doing what the neighborhood doesn't necessarily want them to do. Councilwoman Beer said the ordinance should be looked at, not the plan. Councilman Sutton said there were townhomes all over the Northwest Quadrant. Mr. Laing said the process discussed earlier for an annual look at the plan and its implementation was the Planning Commission's response to these sorts of issues. A document this size can't be set in stone. It has to be kept alive for many reasons. Councilman McFee said he understands the Northwest Quadrant concerns but he feels there's enough verbiage to make it clear that this is conceptual. Councilwoman Beer stressed the importance of watchdogs and said no one on the Historic Review Board is going to allow anything to destroy the character of the neighborhoods. Mr. Gadsden said this will come up again when form-based code is discussed. There are different perceptions of what it is. Councilman Sutton said there needs to be that discussion in the future. In the Northwest Quadrant, he looked to see if the document would stand as a form-based code document in a neighborhood like the Northwest Quadrant. Mayor Keyserling said he's been waiting for the county money. Councilman Sutton said there could be a discussion of applying form-based code to see if it fits. Mr. Gadsden said Beaufort may have an opportunity to do something creative with a modified,

“hybrid” form-based code. Ms. Anderson said the county is in the process of selecting a consultant to develop a form-based code. When that consultant’s on board, the information will be more accurate and in a good position to educate about form-based code and its application to the historic district.

Dwayne Smalley, Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood association president, said that they’ve tried to discuss these issues with the organization as much as possible. Initially, there’s a lot of apprehension about change in general. There’s a sense that the ideas being talked about in the plan may represent a change in character in the neighborhood. They’re in favor of reinvestment in the community and making it a nice place to live, but they’re concerned about increased density. He’d like to see as many people as possible included in the effort. Mayor Keyserling said the message of the comp plan is that they need more density, more neighborhood planning, more efficient services and management. But it says before there’s a plan for a neighborhood, there’s going to be neighborhood participation in the plan. This plan doesn’t do anything specific to any neighborhood.

Mr. DeVito added that quality of life is VERY important in the plan. Councilman Sutton said in that neighborhood 46-48% is vacant and if all the houses that used to be there were there, it would be a huge change in density and quality of life. Something will happen to those lots, but it’s a question of doing it right. Mayor Keyserling said there needs to be a system of incentives. Mr. Gadsden said the neighborhood isn’t against a building on every vacant lot at all. They’re scared of getting a Habersham-looking building. Mr. Dadson briefly explained how form-based code might work in a neighborhood, which would allow the character to exist. Ms. Johnson encouraged council to look at new buildings: Habitat houses on Hamar and Prince Streets and at King Street between Adventure and Bladen streets where a new house was built. Mr. Smalley said he’d like to see those blocks with commercial corridors developed in a way that’s relevant for the Northwest Quadrant.

DISCUSSION WITH CHUCK TALBERT OF MCABEE, TALBERT, HALLIDAY & CO. REGARDING AUDIT COMMITTEE

Ms. Hughes said Mr. Talbert would present a program so that the city might add greater transparency and closer attention to detail. Staff would like to be in a position that council can tell its constituents that all books are open and clear. The process staff wants shows that they’re good stewards.

Mr. Talbert made a presentation on the M.A.P. (Management Assurance Program). He explained what a financial statement audit does and said that they don’t get to ground level. Data mining is a component of a more holistic program. Government workers are not known for taking risks, so taking on a MAP is “courageous.” Having a governing board to provide for that is important, too. Mr. Talbert showed stories of area financial fraud.

Ms. Hughes said they’ll be looking at including employees and department heads to see that it’s a city-wide, all-employee effort and that they all have responsibility for the business of the city. Mr. Talbert said the city administration wants to ensure pro-activity. Cornerstones of a good MAP are

- Creating an ethical culture in the organization, including a fraud hotline, a Code of Organizational Conduct, ethics training, etc.

- Designing, documenting, implementing anti-fraud processes and controls, i.e., helping identify relevant transaction cycles, interviewing various personnel, etc.
- Developing an effective monitoring and oversight process with internal and external tests (leveraging technology, i.e., data mining)

Mr. Talbert and Betsy Vanover showed a 15-minute video about data mining. Following the video, Mr. Talbert said that a MAP will show that the management team are being good stewards, documenting compliance, providing tangible reporting, and creates a deterrent through communication on a company-wide basis.

Mayor Keyserling asked if the city carries insurance. Mr. Dadson said yes. Mayor Keyserling asked if this helps with insurance rates. Mr. Cook said he didn't think so. Ms. Hughes said it's a good point and they should get credit for it. Mr. Dadson said that the good credit comes from constituents and also that bond rating agencies will see that there are good internal controls. Mr. Talbert said if it's communicated externally, it sets the city apart.

Ms. Vanover provided an "Assurance Services Report" to council and explained what it contained. Mr. Talbert said they would typically meet with management on a quarterly basis after management has checked out any anomalies discovered.

DISCUSSION REGARDING APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Mayor Keyserling discussed with Mr. Dadson those volunteers he and Councilwoman Beer had attained for the Census 2010 Count Committee, and Councilman McFee said he was working on getting a Pigeon Point volunteer. There are 5 slots to fill on the Redevelopment Commission, replacing the council. Council will invite 3 or 4 candidates to be interviewed before next week's regular meeting and the following week's work session.

DISCUSSION REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF A LINEAR PARK/PATHWAY AS THE OFFICIAL OBJECTIVE FOR USE OF THE SURFACE PORTION OF THE PORT ROYAL TO YEMASSEE RAIL BED

Mr. Dadson said they'd received a letter that BJWSA had obtained the rail bed. The Northern Beaufort County Implementation Committee has voted unanimously to recommend the official public use as a park and pathway. A TIGER grant has been applied for which will cover this and other projects. The county is supporting developing a plan about use of the rail bed. Mayor Keyserling explained what the Northern Beaufort County Implementation Committee does. Before the TIGER grant, the committee had begun interviewing consultants before issues arose about acquisition of the land. Mr. Dadson said it's a public planning process, and he's been asked to be a part of it, unless council doesn't want him to. Mayor Keyserling said if TIGER doesn't happen for the whole stretch, there are wellness projects involved with it, too. Councilman Sutton said council has supported this for years, and he asked if there needed to be some more formal support, like a resolution. Mr. Dadson said it might need that, but they should at least support the public process. Councilman Sutton asked what the city's next piece would be if the TIGER grant came through. Mr. Dadson replied that it would involve planning and public input processes as well as a letter of support. He said he'd ask others involved about what formal action they'd like council to take, if they need to take any at this time. Mr. Dadson said the city

has tried to get access from the BES property to Depot Road. The new owner is open to making that happen. **Ms. Pierce** said she'd called Mr. Lawrence in Charleston to ask if he would open it back up and it has been. Mr. Dadson said the right-of-way to go over it can be blocked. This may be the chance to clear that issue up. Ms. Pierce said a BIG stop sign might help. Mayor Keyserling said this may be an opportunity to finally fix all that.

REPORTS

Mayor Keyserling said the city of Beaufort and all municipalities in Beaufort County, the school district and county council are right to be concerned about the inefficient management of the collection of revenues by the auditor and assessor. He'd like support to bring together mayors, the school board, and county council finance committee. 40% of city revenue comes in in an unpredictable fashion. 68% of that is for personnel, and they need to be able to predict payroll. He asked for council's support and all generally assented. Mr. Dadson said that of the money that flows through, the ability to bill and collect correctly needs to be as predictable and credible as can be because of the dependence on those cash flows.

Mayor Keyserling said "John Keith is back" and has asked the Mayor to help make Pickpocket a destination, so Mayor Keyserling has organized a meeting of interested parties to discuss and collaborate. Councilwoman Beer said she was on council when it was zoned.

Councilman Sutton observed that property on Prince and Charles – a water facility – sits empty and he thinks it should be put to use more efficiently but not for a non-profit or parking lot. He feels it's a perfect location for a design center / community meeting facility. Mr. Dadson said the city held back the facility from transfer to Beaufort-Jasper. Councilman Sutton said it looks structurally as if it would be a great asset to the city. Councilwoman Beer asked about the little piece of land in Pigeon Point the city owns, and Councilman Sutton said he believed it was too small to build a house on and the last appraisal of it was "astronomical."

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before city council, Councilman McFee made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Sutton. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
SHIRLEY HUGHES, ACTING CITY CLERK