

## **BEAUFORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 -- January 8, 1998**

Ron Huffman, Robert and Company

Lee Walton, Robert and Company

Jeff Walker, Robert and Company

### Attendees:

Gary Cannon, Beaufort City Manager

Libby Anderson, Beaufort City Planner

7 members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee

12 additional citizens of Beaufort

### **Summary Minutes of Public Workshop #2**

#### Introductions:

Opening of the meeting by Libby Anderson.

City Planner Libby Anderson introduced other city representatives including the City Manager and director of Public Works and introduced Ron Huffman, Lee Walton and Jeff Walker of Robert and Company.

#### Presentations:

Robert and Company made brief presentations of information related to housing and community facilities. Maps of Housing and Existing Land Use in Beaufort were presented and examined by workshop attendees.

#### Working Sessions: Housing and Community Facilities

Instructions were given to the Workshop participants to divide into three groups for working discussions of Housing and Community Facilities in Beaufort. Comments and ideas from the working groups were as follows:

#### Housing:

In general, the Historic housing in Beaufort is an asset to the city. There are, however, problems with the way in which historic preservation measures adversely effect neighborhoods where there are not ample resources for historic renovation. There is doubt as to whether the Northwest Quadrant neighborhood benefits from being in the Historic District. There are significant barriers to rehabilitation of houses in this area due to the expense of materials and labor required by the Board of Architectural Review for historic building renovations. Solutions such as more flexibility in what is allowed for renovation and identification of funding for lower income

residents desiring to rehabilitate structures should be sought. Consideration should also be given to different categories within the historic district in accordance with the needs of different areas.

Affordable housing, where available, does not meet the standards sought by young families in need of such housing. As mobile homes are not permitted in the city, families seeking to live in the city can only choose from multifamily or single family rental housing. In general, the quality of this housing does not match up to the rental rates being charged.

Home ownership should be encouraged in the affordable housing price range of \$40,000 to \$80,000. Families that move to the county for mobile homes could have the option of this type of housing. There needs to be an education effort to show those desiring to be homeowners how funding is available. Tax incentives for historic renovations that increase the stock of affordable housing could enhance the historic district and meet needs for affordable housing.

The City should encourage the development of Community Development Corporations with the purpose of developing and redeveloping properties into viable and affordable housing and economic development. Such a non-profit organization should receive full cooperation from the City and other related departments.

Housing Code Enforcement should be enhanced in the City. Solutions should be offered to maintenance code violators.

Certain houses that need to be demolished should receive more attention from the city. Also, substandard lots often result from demolitions and are undevelopable. Concessions should be given to allow rebuilding within the original envelop of the building, for example, on lots that are of substandard size. Individual consideration should be given to ensure safety and quality of development, not simply the application of a zoning standard.

Complications from the system of heirs rights may need to be solved at the State level before anything can be done in the City. The City can assist in the process of title clearance, however, by encouraging an ombudsman program for property owners information.

More flexibility should be allowed for housing options: mixed use housing and accessory units should be permitted. Multi-family housing development standards should be higher to encourage the developer contribution to infrastructure needs and design standards should be consistent with neighborhood areas.

Rezoning within residential neighborhoods should be kept to a minimum in order to preserve the integrity of those neighborhoods.

Community Facilities

## Transportation:

The system of roads in Beaufort is becoming increasingly congested. The frequent closings of the bridge and accidents are causing traffic delays.

Movement around Beaufort is restricted due to a lack of major arteries. More arterial roads should be developed that are capable of moving larger volumes of traffic.

More traffic signals are needed to prevent delays. Signals should be coordinated with computer systems in order to avoid gridlock.

Additional bridges at strategic points could improve the whole transportation system. Either an additional bridge or a replacement of the existing bridge to Lady's Island must be considered. The BEAUTS plan recommends a bridge at Brickyard Point to cross the Beaufort River. A crossing of Battery Creek should also be considered, perhaps along the existing railroad trestle.

The City's pedestrian network needs to be improved in several respects. Existing sidewalks should be widened. Pedestrianization should serve the special needs of children and allow walking to and from school and recreation facilities. The Greenway program should be thoroughly implemented to help in this regard. Any future development or redevelopment should be designed so as to restore a quality of traditional small town life. Any newly built roads should be designed for connectivity with the existing road network.

Improvements should be made to the various entrances to Beaufort: Ribaut Road, Hwy 170, etc.

Alternative transportation options should be explored. A themed train or trolley could serve to transport tourists and residents in the downtown. A shuttle bus system could connect important points that are spread through the city. The existing stock of church vans and vehicles used by other organizations could be organized into a small mass-transit fleet...

Parking solutions need to be found for downtown and especially for event and festival parking needs.

## Water and Sewer Services:

All land amenable to septic tanks has been developed. Sewerage needs to be extended to any areas that are to receive new development.

The Boundary area of Hermitage Road and Ribaut Road east of the Railroad are the only city areas not served by city sewerage.

Sewer pump stations should continue to be built as necessary in a fashion that is amenable to

neighborhood conditions. The policy of constructing high quality and attractive stations should be continued.

Stormwater drainage: there is a need for more stringent regulations concerning impervious surfaces in development. The city should cooperate with the County and its planning efforts to coordinate a regional stormwater oversight committee.

Underground wiring in Historic District areas could greatly enhance the streetscape.

Community Services:

EMS service needs added local ambulance service. Currently ambulance service is for emergency situations only.

An increased level of animal control is needed in the city.

There is a great need for elderly housing and community care centers that are accessible to some type of transportation services.