



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2015

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Beaufort leaders agree to sell former Post Office to Lowcountry Produce Could be the first of several city-owned properties to be sold

As part of an effort to put public property back on the city tax rolls, Beaufort city leaders are preparing to sell several properties – starting with the former U.S. Post Office and City Hall on Carteret Street that now houses Lowcountry Produce Market & Deli.

Lowcountry Produce owners Noel and Dwight Garrett and Seabury Thorp had leased the property since they opened in 2010. Their agreement with the city provided them with first right of refusal should the city decide to sell.

“We decided to sell, and they decided to use their option to buy it,” Beaufort City Manager Bill Prokop said. “It’s really a win-win. They become owners and the net proceeds will go into further redevelopment in the City of Beaufort. This gives the City the opportunity to reinvest in other economic opportunities.

“We are very pleased that an historic building was renovated appropriately for our historic district, that it has become a thriving business, and that it will soon be in private hands,” he said.

The Beaufort City Council voted in October to enter the contract selling the 302 Carteret Street property “as-is” for \$725,000. Both parties acknowledged there are repairs needed to the property’s air conditioning system and to the roof. The price is in line with an extensive appraisal conducted for the City by a certified appraiser in mid-September.

Prokop said the sale of the former City Hall could be the first of several publicly-owned properties sold to private interests. In coming weeks, several more parcels likely will be put up for offers including the Beaufort Fire Station on Mossy Oaks Road. The new fire station will be opening soon on Ribaut Road.

“Whatever money we make from selling these properties will be used to stimulate economic development within the city,” Prokop said. “We are seeking ways to encourage private development and private investment, and our job is to provide the infrastructure and the opportunity.”

The Beaufort Civic Master Plan encourages infill redevelopment and adaptive re-use of existing properties. Lowcountry Produce Market & Deli helps fill a niche with its restaurant but also with its retail sales of food items.

The Beaufort Redevelopment Commission worked hard to recruit the Lowcountry Produce owners downtown. Now, revenue from the property sale will help the Redevelopment Commission – which includes all five members of the Beaufort City Council plus four area residents – to encourage additional private investment in the city, Prokop said.

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