A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on January 9, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Jon Verity, Commissioners Martin Goodman, Mike McNally, Keith Waldrop, Alan Dechovitz, Wendy Zara, and Mike McFee.

Henrietta Goode and Stephen Murray were absent.

In accordance with 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.

Chairman Verity called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioner Zara made a motion, second by Commissioner McFee, to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2013 Redevelopment Commission meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

LAFAYETTE STREET UPDATE

Commissioner McNally said he had spoken to **Eric Brown**, and the plan was revised with DOT to take the L-shaped access road and make it a temporary one connected with Von Harten. So DOT has signed off on their plan. In regard to OCRM, the latest news is that they will be fine with the project if they get a letter from the city that says the project conforms to the Master Plan. Commissioner McNally said **Libby Anderson** is drafting that.

Commissioner Waldrop asked if this compromise on the access road would create a cul de sac, and Commissioner McNally said it will be a K-turn, and then when construction gets going, Mr. Brown will finish the application. Commissioner Waldrop asked if the L-shape was critical. Commissioner McNally said the project could live with the K-turn, but Mr. Brown's going to make one more try with DOT. Commissioner McNally said it was just bureaucracy that has delayed matters.

On King Street, Commissioner McNally said that **Lauren Kelly** drew up the initial program. It showed 4 very tight lots; there were a lot of side yard variances to make it work, so **Steve Tully** has revised the plan to 3 lots; Ms. Anderson and Ms. Kelly agree that it's much better, and the Baptist Church of Beaufort likes it, too. Nothing changes in the amount the church will get, and the city's lot is a little wider. The subdivision has been reviewed by Planning and will be filed next week.

There will need to be a second reading of the ordinance by council, Commissioner McNally said. The first reading was in late 2013. They will end up with 4 houses. Chairman Verity said Mr. Tully won't build a house on the city lot, and Commissioner McNally said that's right. He will be rehabbing the old house that's there. In terms of design, Chairman Verity asked where Mr. Tully

is. Commissioner McNally said Mr. Tully would run all designs by **Maxine Lutz** and Historic Beaufort Foundation. Ms. Lutz said each house would be designed individually.

MARINA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE – HISTORIC MARINA PARTNERS, LLC

Chairman Verity said **Steve Navarro** and **Jim Chaffin** had been here twice to do visits; he reviewed the groups they had met with and some private individuals. He estimated that they have spoken to 300+ people. **Peter White** was in attendance. He said he and his wife own the carriage tours, and they're the only business that utilizes the marina parking lot for business.

Mr. Chaffin said they had met with many stakeholder groups such as the neighborhood associations, merchants, the Open Land Trust, and the Chamber of Commerce for thoughts and ideas. The property "psychologically and legally belongs to the citizens of Beaufort," Mr. Chaffin said, so they were interested in positive ideas *and* people's concerns. All of the meetings have been productive, he said. They have been conducted positively to determine the best outcome for the community. The bottom line question, Mr. Chaffin said, is "Can we collectively come up with a plan for roughly 5 acres … Is there a better use of that acreage on the Intracoastal Waterway in a 300-year-old historic jewel than a paved parking lot?"

Mr. Chaffin said people have been "candid and honest" about their concerns about the views, access to the water, and the size and mass of what might be constructed there. Mr. Chaffin and Mr. Navarro have appreciated the supportive mood of all of the groups they have talked to. The word that comes up repeatedly is "parking." The best solution seems unanimously to be that there should be a structure on Port Republic Street and Craven, Scott and Charles Streets. In the next 90 days, if they don't get to a point where the community embraces a new idea for the parking lot, Mr. Chaffin said, parking is an issue that must be looked at, regardless, so something will come out of this that's positive, in any case. He reiterated that he feels that he and Mr. Navarro have listened and heard good ideas and concerns.

Mr. Chaffin said that, assuming the parking lot is taken up with something new, the activities that take place there should have a real focus on where people can go that is not distant from that area.

Mr. Chaffin said their next steps are to take the information they have gotten and present "a written program that will have a sense of market research as well." The solution has to be economically viable for the city and the developers. They are putting this vision statement together and then will have a round of meetings about it. If they "get thumbs up or massaging," they'll spend the next 60 days on schematic designs of land use and "maybe a little bit of eyewash architecture." They need to do a full analysis of what the site will hold, which will be constrained by the small amount of acreage that's there. For this to work, Mr. Chaffin said, the public space that is part of the project is as important as the architecture of any building that might go there. They envision an interactive public space. Right now, except for the sidewalk,

the asphalt goes right up to the waterfront, Mr. Chaffin said. They want a space that connects people to the marina and the waterfront.

Commissioner McNally asked about parking: they know about the possibilities of Port Republic Square, and he asked if they would work with **Dick Stewart** on that because it seems to be the only reasonable place to supplant the existing parking and meet their parking needs. He asked if anyone has looked at how many spaces could fit in that lot. Mr. Chaffin said they have been doing an analysis of what's needed "for whatever product we put on the site." They have had talks with **Lundy Baker** about the number of surface spaces and private lots. Mr. Stewart has a need for expanded parking for lodging and event needs. They have been clear with Mr. Stewart about the number that they feel they will need for what goes on that site, Mr. Chaffin said. Commissioner McNally said, "The number could get very large, very fast."

Mr. Chaffin said they have met twice with a parking specialist, had 2 meetings with Mr. Stewart and his team, and they all agree that unless the Redevelopment Commission and council are comfortable that there is plenty of parking, the project won't be approved.

Mr. Chaffin said there are 500 employees downtown, and they learned that some of the restaurant people get to the spaces in the afternoons "and then they're gone." **LaNelle Fabian** said they needed to remember to include affordable employee parking.

Chairman Verity asked Mr. Chaffin if Lundy had said 500 people work downtown, and Commissioner Dechovitz said yes. Commissioner Goodman said they're not all there at the same time. Mr. Chaffin said yes, and there are only 400 parking spaces. Commissioner Goodman said that parking has been on a lot of tables for 10 – 20 years. He's optimistic that there can be some agreement on how to make that happen. Mr. Chaffin said there are conversations with the parking consultant and others, i.e., if the parking structure on the end at Charles Street between Craven and Port Republic also served as a transportation center and a welcome and information center with restrooms, that could all be there within a block of Bay Street and the Marina.

Scott Meyers said he spent two years travelling and saw "a different breakout"; tourist parking spots were in a different area. The people who lived downtown wanted to park downtown. He's concerned that they need to put a mass structure off the street and with reduced size. They have considered, Mr. Chaffin said, a structure where the post office is, but there's a question of whether people will walk 3 blocks to downtown. Mr. Meyers said his point is that they can't solve this matter with one parking area.

Mr. White said they deal with most of the buses, and the clientele are mostly not capable of walking 3+ blocks necessarily. Chairman Verity said they agree that 1400' is the maximum distance it should be, which is why Port Republic Square is attractive.

Mr. White said that in the last design for the area, there was a building with a bus drop-off, but when it was built, it didn't take into account the busses' size and was unusable. It seemed like a good idea, though, for getting information and doing pick up and drop off. Chairman Verity said they think it's a good idea to include restrooms in the welcome center. Chairman Verity said ideally they "would feel welcome and not just dropped off."

Commissioner Zara asked if the city would ask to rezone the parcel until there's a plan. Chairman Verity said the city would rezone in advance. Commissioner Zara said she assumes Freedom Park would not be rezoned. Chairman Verity said it would all be rezoned as Core Commercial and the matter would be discussed Monday night at the Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Zara said, "There are legal issues involved in that piece of property," and since Historic Marine Partners has spoken to many groups, she wondered why they "would pick that fight." Commissioner Dechovitz said the rezoning wouldn't change its use. Commissioner Zara said, if it doesn't need to be rezoned, why they would rezone it; they could just rezone the property that would be used for the other- than-current zoning to avoid complications. Chairman Verity said that's possible. The Planning Commission has a proposal for rezoning, but that "doesn't give any permission to change the use." Chairman Verity agreed that what Commissioner Zara suggested might be best.

Commissioner McNally asked Mr. Chaffin about their discussions with Open Land Trust, and asked if the developer would "have flexibility to move the Open Land Trust acreage around" or to use "a different piece that might be more effective." He said he thinks something could be done to take that size parcel of land elsewhere "that would make Open Land Trust happier." Commissioner Zara said they would have to talk to Open Land Trust. Mr. Chaffin said that they had indicated to Open Land Trust that they don't have a plan, but when they do, it is to include open, public space in front of whatever is built but also wrapping around the side. People would need to feel like there was open space, Mr. Chaffin said. Open Land Trust was very clear that there's a strong sentiment about the property, and the whole open space along the Bluff has been the Open Land Trust's from the beginning. Historic Marine Partners asked if Open Land Trust would be open to considering another location, and OLT said yes. Commissioner McNally said it's important for that process to happen and for that to be known publically "to avoid public unhappiness." Commissioner Zara said that's her concern with the zoning.

Mr. Chaffin said **Beek Webb** has said that the answer is "neither yes nor no but maybe." Chairman Verity said it's a "'Show me' kinda thing." He feels Open Land Trust will need substantial convincing to make changes; it's no more than a possibly at this point. Commissioner Goodman said at least the conversation has been positive. Until they have a design, they can't really say. Commissioner Zara said maybe they should wait for the rezoning until there's a design.

Ms. Lutz said it's not a matter that Open Land Trust can decide one way or the other: they have a legal document – an easement – that states that they will protect that property, and they

have to decide if they want to violate that. Ms. Lutz asked what the memorandum of understanding said about rezoning, and Chairman Verity and Commissioner Dechovitz said it said that it would be rezoned. She asked Mr. Chaffin if they needed Core Commercial or they could do something else. He said changing the zoning doesn't mean the project will be approved. They have assumed Core Commercial, but if another zoning gives them flexibility, they would consider that. Commissioner Zara asked again why they don't rezone it when it's designed. Mr. Chaffin said if they don't know permitted uses, they don't want to make a plan that could be turned down because it doesn't fit the zoning. Chairman Verity said an extension of downtown's Core Commercial made sense; they didn't want a developer to come in and think they could make exceptions to height, mass, etc.

Ms. Lutz said she had heard that there is a law in SC that precludes a city changing zoning for a specific developer. Ms. Anderson said developers are the main driver for zoning changes. It doesn't lock in a specific plan, just allows a variety of uses. Mr. Chaffin said it's understandable how people could be concerned and misunderstand that they are changing the zoning to get something approved. According to Mr. Chaffin, "It's saying if this is to be a part of downtown, what's the best zoning for it, and that's Core Commercial, and it's not in response to a particular plan at all."

Mr. Chaffin said he'd be surprised if within this community the passions weren't strong. They have helped preserve what is here and people have been clear about concerns but positive.

Commissioner McNally asked Mr. Chaffin what his guesstimate would be about when a plan might be forthcoming. Mr. Chaffin said they would spend the next 2 weeks-plus on a vision statement and a written program and get feedback while they work on early schematics. They hope within the next 45-60 days they will have buy-in on what it is and what it looks and feels like.

Commissioner Waldrop asked if there has been movement or thoughts on the annual retreat. Chairman Verity said he hadn't thought or heard about it, and he would see if the city had plans in mind.

Commissioner McNally said he, Commissioner Waldrop, and Commissioner Zara had been trying to get a Finance Committee meeting with **Kathy Todd** and **Scott Dadson** about rumored money that is in the till. Chairman Verity said he would see what he could do. Commissioner Waldrop said part of the discussion was that it was unlikely they could move ahead with funding housing-related initiatives until the zoning was finally adopted, so he asked where that stands. Chairman Verity said the Civic Master Plan comes before council for a public hearing Tuesday.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dechovitz, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.