



CITY OF BEAUFORT
1911 Boundary Street
Council Chambers
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29902
(843) 525-7070
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA

November 17, 2015

PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM – 1ST FLOOR
1911 BOUNDARY STREET

7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

August 18, 2015
September 29, 2015
October 20, 2015

III. CIVIC MASTER PLAN

Cooter Ramsey

IV. REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Jon Verity

V. INITIATIVE UPDATES

Economic Development – Stephen Murray
Infill – Mike McFee
Downtown – George O’Kelley
Boundary Street – Billy Keyserling
Codes and Regulations – Phil Cromer

VI. CITY PROJECTS IN PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT

William Prokop and Deborah Johnson

VII. ADJOURMENT

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS DUE TO A PHYSICAL CHALLENGE, PLEASE CALL IVETTE BURGESS 525-7070 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF MEDIA NOTIFICATION

"In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all local media was duly notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting".

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on August 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Bill Keyserling, councilmen/commissioners Mike McFee and Phil Cromer, commissioners Steven Green, Mike Sutton, and Jon Verity, city attorney Bill Harvey, and city manager Bill Prokop.

Frank Lesense, George O’Kelley, and Stephen Murray were absent.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Mayor Keyserling called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ORGANIZATION

Mayor Keyserling said council has realized it needs to be more hands-on and more aggressive regarding the work to be done on the Redevelopment Commission. He described some of the problems that had happened in the past. Council is “not prepared to let go . . . and to be more involved with the other four members.”

The idea is to have four general areas of focus (though these could change, Mayor Keyserling said):

- (1) Infill and redevelopment in the greater downtown area – a major focus of the Civic Master Plan
- (2) Boundary Street – looking for opportunities and “hand holding,” enabling business owners there
- (3) Economic development to bring better jobs – The City of Beaufort can’t rely on the county for marketing or meeting with prospects.
- (4) Form-based code and improving processes – making “everything more predictable and easier to navigate through”

A councilman and a commissioner would go out and recruit volunteers, building a committee from among those who have shown interest in working with the city, Mayor Keyserling said. The monthly redevelopment meetings, then, would be people on these committees bringing projects and issues to the table, and “cross-fertilizing them” with those “who are looking at the bigger picture.”

Commissioner Verity said that in the past, the RDC had learned from the marina site project that “when you’re making major changes,” the Redevelopment Commission and council “need to be in lock step” in order to provide answers to the community. He thinks this new structure will provide that and also give the RDC the ability to do some things that council alone can’t do. They now need to get organized and find the people who can help them.

Commissioner Sutton said he didn’t want to serve on the commission “unless there was full

disclosure” from the beginning of the process. He said he felt the marina project caused damage to the city and to the RDC because the elected officials and the commission were not following the same plan. There should not have been surprises, but there were, as a result of communication problems, especially about the marina project. Commissioner Sutton feels that now they need not to propose anything unless “we are very committed to that process.” They will set plans and stick with them, Commissioner Sutton said, “until there’s a reason not to. And if it’s politics, that’s the wrong answer.” Given the 2-year election cycle, membership change “shouldn’t have that much impact” on “a very deeply debated project.”

Mayor Keyserling addressed Mr. Prokop, saying that another difference in the commission this time is that there is a budget for the Redevelopment Commission to be staffed. Mr. Prokop said he and Commissioner Murray have talked, and they have a question: right now, there are a half-dozen “companies that are interested in moving people here, etc.,” and the county is saying it’s going to start an economic development group. So, should “we go out and hire a director now that can come in and will have to go through the whole learning process, or do we hire an administrative person, who could come in and follow up with all the little different things that we have?”

Mr. Prokop said there are “a lot of leads coming in” from councilmen. He knows they need staffing, but might they want to use the director’s salary for marketing and other things that need to be done for economic development? Right now, Mr. Prokop feels they may just need administrative help. Mayor Keyserling said Commissioner Murray is focused on jobs and the commerce park. There needs to be someone to be the “hands” for that group, with a background in real estate. He gave an example of something he can see a staff person doing, in which they would wear 2 hats. Commissioner Murray has someone interested in real estate downtown, for example. Mayor Keyserling feels that there should be a central go-to person who knows what each of the committees is doing and can give support. On infill and redevelopment, they need “a seasoned dealmaker, real estate guy with some construction experience.”

Commissioner Verity asked about **Libby Anderson’s** role. Mayor Keyserling said that, having gone through the budget, he feels that there were 3 or 4 people who had served on the old RDC “who were calling staff all the time,” but that slows Ms. Anderson and **Lauren Kelly** down “from doing what they need to be doing.”

Mr. Prokop said he agreed about that and noted that the job description that had been drafted “did not have the real estate requirement in it” that Mayor Keyserling had mentioned. Commissioner McFee said, “I think you have that on the (RDC).”

Commissioner Cromer said he doesn't think they'll “find anybody good for (a \$75,000) salary” to serve as a development director. Commissioner Verity said this person could bring people to the table who can give prospects what they need: drawings, research, or code, for example.

Mr. Prokop said he'll be involved, but he has no one on the staff to go to for the administrative

needs the commissioners and their committees will have, such as researching properties. If they had a really good administrative person who knows the community, Mr. Prokop said, maybe they could do that for a year, and then maybe the Redevelopment Commission could look for “more of an economic development director.”

As to the county’s economic development effort, Mayor Keyserling said there was a resolution passed, but “it’s pretty much non-binding.” He feels “nobody is going to stop doing what they’re doing, expecting that the county is going to do it.”

Mayor Keyserling said TWEAC was founded “to transition military people,” and it has gotten funding by the state, “but because there are not jobs here, it’s kind of hard to transition them.” He and **Kim Statler** are meeting with the mayors of Charleston, North Charleston, Columbia and Sumter to ask them to join with the City of Beaufort “in making TWEAC a statewide organization.” This will enable them to “have the strength to get corporate partners . . . If you have someone on . . . the principle military bases in the state, who is out there recruiting, that would certainly be a benefit to these corporations that can’t find workers.” The other piece, Mayor Keyserling said, is the technology.

Commissioner Verity said the biggest need, as he sees it, is people who will come to town looking to develop or rehabilitate properties, or there may be locals who want to do that, so there should be “a person at the city who coordinates those activities, instead of taking up Libby’s and Lauren’s time.” This person could tell an interested party about 5–6 lots on Duke Street, for example, Commissioner Verity said, or if there were a serious offer on the area around the DHEC building and the old jail, they could work on how to get that property “moved over into a development space.” Commissioner Verity said they have an opportunity to put together a team to welcome people who want to invest in the city, and a staff person should be able to answer questions about water, police and fire, codes, etc. They would be in an administrative role, but they need to know the city, to be “plugged in,” and to “know what we can and cannot do.”

Mayor Keyserling said there are 23 builders who want to do work in the city, but they need someone to put them together. Commissioner Sutton knows what’s under every house, and Commissioner McFee has a real estate background. The staff person doesn’t have to be a realtor or a broker, the mayor said, but it should be someone who knows about it.

Commissioner Sutton said people call him weekly about dead houses, and they don’t know anything about the Bailey Bill, how to contact the houses’ owners, etc. The person they hire should be someone he could call to have them follow-through with a lead, and whom Commissioner Sutton could call and ask to do some basic real estate research: What are the taxes on this property? What does the county assessor think it’s worth? Is it contributing or not? Is there sewer/ water? Are there other issues with it? etc.

Commissioner Sutton said if he had a sheet of “all the truly available lots” downtown, “it would be the hottest ticket in town.” There are two houses next door to each other, 2 blocks off Bay

Street, he said, that have been dead for 15 years, and they are both under contract now. If they make it to closing, he said, “this would be remarkable.” Commissioner Sutton said they also need a person to do mapping at the ground level, block-by-block, and “to make meetings happen.” Commissioner Sutton added, “A lot of the families are transitioning,” and they may want to sell or may want to move back into the city.

Mr. Harvey said he has been involved with the Redevelopment Commission since city council reconstituted it – when city council *was* the Redevelopment Commission. When functions overlapped, they reconstituted it to that last iteration, which was comprised of one council member, and the rest of the commission was appointed. This configuration is different now, and he thinks it’s a great opportunity, but the state law gives the Redevelopment Commission powers and opportunities that city council does not have. There needs to be a clear line dividing the Redevelopment Commission from council, and they need to *keep* that line clear.

Commissioner Cromer said he was initially opposed to council involvement on the Redevelopment Commission for the reasons that Mr. Harvey had pointed out. Mr. Harvey said logistically it might be a concern, as it was when council *was* the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner McFee said, about procedure, the Redevelopment Commission has its own makeup and action. Mr. Harvey said the Redevelopment Commission has the ability to contract and to borrow money, and has “all sorts of powers and opportunities” that council doesn’t have “unless council goes through various procedures.”

Commissioner Sutton said that was the problem: council had too much control over the Redevelopment Commission’s actions. He sees “a cut and dried difference” between the RDC and council. Council can stop a project by cutting off funding, and now he can see that more clearly. The commission is a different entity than council is. If council doesn’t want to give power to the Redevelopment Commission, then they shouldn’t have a Redevelopment Commission. Mayor Keyserling said all council members will still remember their council responsibilities, but for three years, they have said that they spent a huge amount of money on a plan, and they are ready for it to go.

Commissioner Green asked for information on the commission’s statutes and responsibilities vs. council’s. Mr. Harvey said the Redevelopment Commission has the ability to contract directly with people, banks, and contractors. Council can’t do those things directly – they have to do RFPs and RFQs – but Redevelopment Commission can bypass that. State law allows “council to be reconstituted as the RDC, if they so choose.”

Mayor Keyserling said, “Separate meeting, separate leadership, separate agenda is the line.” Council has said that the city needs to grow, and they “handed over to the public a comprehensive plan with a Civic Master Plan, which is more specific.” There’s “more flexibility” as the Redevelopment Commission than as a city council. Mr. Harvey said a section of the code spells out what the Redevelopment Commission is and does. It’s “much more progressive than (what) a council has because you can move quicker” than council can.

Commissioner Sutton in the last 12–15 years, the city has learned “a lot about the city that prior councils didn’t know”; management, leadership, and state laws have changed. He feels it’s important to seize the moment and to try to get people back into the city core, to get the groceries to come back to town, etc. “We are about 500 houses short in the city,” Commissioner Sutton said. He explained some of the issues with transient owners and vacant houses and the effects of that on neighborhoods.

Commissioner Verity said things are improving slowly: There will be 48 new single-family residences at City Walk, and apartments are being built behind Bi-Lo. Mayor Keyserling said behind Barbara Jean’s, more apartments are being built. There also might be a development at Whitehall, if they can work out the deal.

Commissioner Green spoke about what Commissioner Sutton had said about the ownership of vacant and abandoned properties, whose owners (or heirs) “had left and not come back.” He would like to see people reinvesting in the city and coming back to Beaufort to live. He asked what the problems with this have been. Commissioner McFee said that they have had heirs’ issues in the core, and they have identified “most of the areas that have true heirs’ issues,” but a lot of the vacant and abandoned properties do not have heirs, and “there’s a lot of raw land.” Commissioner Sutton explained that the owners are in their 80s and may not live here. An owner may pass on, and someone inherits it, then they get a tax bill and a notice from the city to take care of weeds, and they come down to Beaufort to find there’s no roof on the place. And these people – the heirs – are in their 60s.

Commissioner McFee said there’s a strong sense culturally among heirs’ property owners of not wanting to let go of their properties because they fear gentrification, so there’s a delicate balance between infill development and “building and retaining the cultural reality of the city.” These two philosophies can coexist, Commissioner McFee said. Those families Commissioner Sutton was talking about, if they want to be here, can reinvest. Commissioner Sutton said a lot of families aren’t able to afford to rebuild their grandma’s house. The low-income loan programs to borrow money to fix a place up so it can be rented at least puts someone in the house. They want people to keep their houses livable. Many of these houses can no longer be lived in, so in those cases, they want to clear the lots.

This issue “hasn’t gotten the attention (of the public) because it’s complicated,” Mayor Keyserling said. Each property has its own story. He suggested that “someone like **Scott Gibbs**, who grew up in the neighborhood,” could try to track down families and “work with them directly” to determine who knows the property and to convince them to deal with it. The only solution, Mayor Keyserling feels, is to have one person “working 2 or 3 families at a time . . . to break through some of these problems.”

Commissioner Verity said they know who all the owners are. Mayor Keyserling said he’d like to get 1 or 2 people who grew up in the Northwest Quadrant to help in this effort. The black middle class all lives on Lady’s Island now, he said, and he has tried to convince the commission “to go back to those roots.” Some of those Lady’s Island residents have lots in Beaufort, for

example, but they don't live on them.

Mayor Keyserling said this all "takes a lot of handholding," and he can see Commissioner Green in that role. Commissioner Green said he grew up in Burton and spent his summers here; he'd like to help with this process, but he's concerned that sitting on the board might hurt his ability to help. "Heirs' property is going to be a problem," he feels. Mayor Keyserling said he understands that, but if they can create 2 or 3 success stories, those people "become the advocates for doing this." Commissioner Sutton said that's been his experience, too: "It's doable . . . Some people just don't want to go the distance," and deal with all the many complex issues. "It's not as bad as it sounds," however, he said. There are also people who have the ability to better their situation, but "they speculated" on their property and are waiting to make more money from it.

Commissioner Cromer said they hadn't yet discussed that the RDC is looking to write the code but also to assess city processes to "make Beaufort more business-friendly," such as by streamlining the building permit and business license processes.

Mayor Keyserling suggested that the commissioners present elect a chairman and come to the next meeting after thinking about what they would like to do with reference to "this administrative assistant." Mayor Keyserling said they should also pick a meeting day that works for everyone on the commission. He said prefers to have the meeting on a night council has a work session. Commissioner McFee said that would be the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Commissioner Sutton said some of council's business might be handled when the Redevelopment Commission is working.

Mayor Keyserling nominated Commissioner Verity to serve as chairman, and Commissioner McFee seconded the motion. Commissioner Verity asked the chair's role "in this new environment." Commissioner McFee said council wants "the chair to control council in this meeting"; they need direction to be successful. Mayor Keyserling said the chair would need to remind council members that they had said they wanted to invest time in this and to hold them accountable. Commissioner McFee said, as a liaison, he had worked in many areas of the Redevelopment Commission, such as economic and infill development, and had worked with many groups of people. The commission allows crossover, he said, but if you are working on infill development, when there's a meeting, those members and the subcommittee need to report on what has happened with their issue. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Green asked those present to identify who is on city council and who isn't. There was a general conversation about who was serving on the commission and what the commission might do. Commissioner McFee explained what the city and the commission had done in terms of getting grants and using them to build infrastructure for neighborhoods. Commissioner Sutton said they spent "multiple millions on one neighborhood" – a necessity to turn around the blighted Northwest Quadrant, which was a "long-ignored neighborhood." It had the highest density of blight in the county, while also being "ground zero in the Historic District."

Mr. Prokop said, right now, there are at least six different companies who are looking for a building, etc., and they seem to have attracted lot of interest. This seems to fit into the vision of the city that they all have.

Commissioner Verity said he's flattered to be nominated, but he will be gone on third Tuesdays because he didn't know when the RDC meetings would be. He said he'd like to meet for an organizational meeting, but they could meet without him. He is anxious to serve, he said, and he feels that he's "learned a lot and can get out the whip when necessary."

Mr. Prokop offered a different date for the next meeting: September 29 at 5 p.m. Commissioner Verity said he and Commissioner Green would meet next week, and Commissioner Verity will show him all of the information he has about the commission.

Commissioner McFee said he's been asked to serve on the Municipal Association to develop a grant program. He will be helping to set the guidelines for what that could be used for.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Cromer made a motion, second by Mayor Keyserling, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on September 29, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Bill Keyserling, Chairman Jon Verity, commissioners Mike McFee, Phil Cromer, Frank Lesense, Mike Sutton, and Stephen Murray, city attorney Bill Harvey, and CFO Kathy Todd.

Steven Green and George O'Kelley and were absent.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Mayor Keyserling called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Keyserling nominated Commissioner Sutton to be the Redevelopment Commission Vice Chairman, second by Commissioner McFee. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Verity thanked the former commissioners who had served: **Mike McNally, Keith Waldrop, Alan Dehovitz, Wendy Zara, Martin Goodman, Henrietta Goode.**

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ENABLING LEGISLATION

Chairman Verity reviewed the legislation in regard to blighted and conservation areas. He had given the commissioners excerpts and directed them to a section of notes on community development law. He read an excerpt from state law and said that what the city has approved for the Redevelopment Commission, and what is in these notes, creates "a bit of a disconnect."

- Chairman Verity recommended changes to revise the Redevelopment Commission's oversight to "the entire city of Beaufort."
- The composition of the commission would change to include council and at-large members, and 2-year terms would begin July 1.
- Council may remove *appointed* members, but presumably would not want to remove the elected members.
- Since council sits on the Redevelopment Commission, it only reports formally to council once a year, rather than every 3 months.

Chairman Verity said, if the commission approves these revisions, they would recommend them to the council at their next meeting. **Commissioner Sutton made a motion, second by Commissioner Lesense, to approve these changes.**

VISION, GOALS AND PURPOSE

Chairman Verity passed out and read from a handout, which he said he had "amended a bit."

OPERATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Chairman Verity read the various committees and who would serve on them from the handout. The agreed to meeting time was the third Tuesday of each month after the council's work session.

Chairman Verity explained how the committee/initiative structure would work, and who would serve on which committee. Commissioner Keyserling said Commissioner Green is part of a group that wants to buy and restore homes in the Northwest Quadrant.

Under the auspices of the RDC, commission members or the commission itself could involve members of the community in their initiative. Chairman Verity explained why the committees were being called initiatives. Commissioner Murray said he liked the idea of a "task force" getting things done, rather than just coming to meetings every month.

Commissioner McFee spoke about potential infill development, and said he wants to be careful not to be too specific, so he suggested calling it "infill development," not just Northwest Quadrant.

Commissioner Keyserling said Port Royal, Bluffton, and Hilton Head have their own initiatives apart from the county's, but the mayors all want to be a part of something with the county. **Stu Rodman** has gotten the county to create an entity that will include each of the municipalities and two members of county council with the authority to hire a director and set a program. Commissioner Keyserling has been sitting in on the planning among the mayors, but as it's developed, he would like Commissioner Murray to be involved on the economic development side, and Commissioner Keyserling would be, too. Commissioner Murray said the county has given the Chamber of Commerce and **Blakely Williams**, specifically, as the new point of contact for commerce in all of Beaufort County. Chairman Verity suggested that, to be inclusive, anyone who might be interested in these topics should be invited to these meetings, as long as sufficient public notice is made when that's called for.

Deborah Johnson is working on grants for the city until the end of the year, and Chairman Verity introduced her.

Commissioner Keyserling said he plans to walk Boundary Street and look for properties that, as a realtor, he knows have value; he'll also "look for developers to work with." The commission can encourage collaboration with staff, but the law prohibits council member from doing that as council. They can set up meetings, but they need to be careful, Commissioner Keyserling said, because as the Redevelopment Commission, they are talking about money, government, competition, etc.

In regard to finishing the Beaufort Code and reviewing the regulatory processes, Commissioner Keyserling said these are important jobs because, in the last weeks, there have been cases where it was clear that, for people who came to the city, it's not as user-friendly as they would like it to be, and while that is under the city manager's purview, the Redevelopment Commission should also be advocates for projects that they want to advocate. Chairman Verity

said if they hear in the community that someone has had a bad experience, or something wasn't followed up on, the commission should follow up on it. Commissioner Keyserling said that Chairman Verity could follow up with the city manager, whereas council can't.

Commissioner Murray said he hopes if codes, incentives, and regulations are successful, and staff is educated about them, then council won't have to quarterback to the extent that they have had to in the past. The process should be easy enough that no one needs to be shepherded through it.

Commissioner Cromer said he's attending a meeting tomorrow from 2-5 p.m. at TCL about streamlining the building process. He thinks being a facilitator – changing the culture of that – is key. Chairman Verity said **Bill Prokop** is very responsive, and he thinks they can get things done "without a lot of conflict." Commissioner Sutton asked if the TCL meeting was open. **Kathy Todd** said it's "business license folks," Commissioner Cromer, herself, and planning staff. Commissioner Sutton said that he had received a call from them; Ms. Todd said she believes some commercial businesses are being involved. TCL is "facilitating the process"; Commissioner Cromer said that the city had contracted with TCL.

Commissioner Sutton said Beaufort's landmark district was the #1 blighted area in the county at one point and federal grants helped with some of that, but to have blight in the core of downtown is why this commission is important. The city needs to focus on redevelopment, Commissioner Sutton feels. By ordinance, the Northwest Quadrant, he thinks, is still a conservation district. If other areas are designated that way, there's potential for using federal grants for those areas, too. Ms. Johnson said the feds are doing loans now, not grants. Ms. Todd said, "They are forgivable loans," if the work is done and people stay in the house. There were CDBG grants obtained for streetscape work, and LoCOG facilitates the grants and gets a "statement of needs from council every year." The mission statement extends citywide now.

Ms. Johnson said fair housing rules are able to change dramatically and will affect municipalities more than anyone else. The idea is to not create low-income districts. Chairman Verity said there was interest in the last incarnation of the Redevelopment Commission in doing low-income housing loans.

Commissioner Cromer said at the last LoCOG meeting, and they said 8 or 9 of the last round of 20 CDBG grants statewide went to the Lowcountry. Surrounding counties are "loading up." Ms. Todd said the city manager had decided to hold on the CDBG this year because of Boundary Street development, but it is in the pipeline for next year for Greenlawn.

Commissioner Lesense said he knows little about the residential end, but on the commercial side, the incentives are not very well publicized, but very important. He has applied for historic tax credits for the renovations at the Anchorage and for abandoned building credits. He discussed historic tax credits for historic renovations, state tax credits, and "the abandoned buildings incentive." In his own project, Commissioner Lesense said, he had spent money on some things that he didn't notify the state about that won't qualify, so it would be good, when

someone is considering developing in Beaufort, to tell them about these incentives, and “shepherd this process.”

Maxine Lutz said the review board and **Lauren Kelly** work with people, and every Bailey Bill request goes to the review board. Commissioner Lesense said Ms. Kelly and the city website were big helps. He did all his own research, and now a group in Greenville is helping him with the tax credits. He said it should be part of the marketing of Beaufort to pull people in: show abandoned properties and tell them that they can get back their investment. Commissioner Lesense said there are a lot of financial incentives there to “get someone to pull the trigger.”

Commissioner Sutton said there is a small building stock; two started work this week. There needs to be a shift in attention, he feels, to the part of the Historic District that isn't being focused on. He doesn't know if there are other commercial corridors that will be absorbed into that district outside of some on Boundary Street.

Commissioner Lesense said **Martin Goodman** is a great resource, too.

Commissioner McFee said he feels they are targeting the areas that they said were their highest goals. Chairman Verity said they need to always be making progress on these initiatives, and the role of the RDC meetings is to ensure that they stay on task and don't let the work slip through the cracks. Regular meetings will mean they need to be ready to report on their work every month.

INITIATIVES IN PROGRESS IN THE CITY

Chairman Verity read from a list of current initiatives and commented, as did other members of the commission, who added initiatives that weren't on the list.

- Chairman Verity discussed Boundary Street East and said there are questions about what is going to happen to the Bridges School on Boundary Street. They have a local board in place, interesting co-chairs, and it's becoming more active.
- The Lafayette Street project has 3 houses completed, and one's sold, but they have had water issues, and they will discuss that with the city.
- Wayback Burgers is going in next door to Starbucks.
- Ashley Pointe apartments
- Greenlawn – The streetscape and 137 units are still in the planning stages.
- There was no Old Commons report
- The City Walk development off Oaklawn is progressing.
- Commissioner McFee said there's a ribbon cutting for 711 Charles Street in the Old Commons.
- Southside Boulevard includes the drainage improvement on a mile-long stretch in that neighborhood. Commissioner Keyserling said the Allison Road work should also be included.
- Commissioner McFee said the new fire department building should be included, too.

- Ms. Lutz asked if there was any movement on the Olive Garden/Red Lobster building. Chairman Verity said **Dick Stewart** owns that building now, and he has said there are “no nibbles yet.”
- Commissioner Cromer said Joe Love’s Lobster Rolls is going into where Burlap was.
- It was suggested that the Spanish Moss Trail rezoning to enable the bike shop should be added to the list.
- On Lady’s Island, the Sea Pointe apartments are being built behind Publix/Barbara Jean’s, which is now going to be a sports bar.
- Wal-Mart and the surrounding shops
- There was a question about building along Meridian Road.
- Meridian Assisted Living facility on Factory Creek in the Hamilton Village Shoppes
- Harris Teeter may be moving into the old Publix location, which seems “exciting,” Chairman Verity said.
- The Taco Bell on Highway 170
- Nissan car dealership – Commissioner Keyserling said it might go in front of Lowes. They came to council to change the zoning to allow a dealership, but there’s been a covenant that wouldn’t allow it between Lowes and the highway. Ms. Johnson said it’s still in the pre-conference stage.
- Parker’s convenience store – Commissioner McFee asked about the brownfield issues on the site. There was no response.
- There was discussion of the initiative to have unused or unneeded city property appraised.
- Solar farm – Ms. Johnson said the RFP went out from the county, and they will have bids from people for a feasibility study. This is a collaborative effort with the city and county. Commissioner Murray said there has been interest in partnerships.

Chairman Verity said a lot of the activity is as a result of the Civic Master Plan. Commissioner Murray asked Chairman Verity if they will get such a sheet on a monthly basis, and if it would be used to track projects. These are primarily commercial and larger residential projects, he said, but there is also single-family residential going on, and they might want a cumulative number on that monthly.

Ms. Johnson said she is an independent contractor for grant writing half of her time and the other half is to do what the RDC needs her to do. This list was a start on that. She will do research for the initiative groups, if they see an abandoned building, and she will track people who might want to come to the city and offer potential sites.

Chairman Verity said he’d like to see residential construction tracked. Commissioner Sutton said they can do it, but they need to be careful about how they do that. About the codes enforcement report, he said if the fire marshal is monitoring blighted buildings, he’d like to know where they are, and they might be able to talk to the owners and “see what it would take.” The economy is getting stronger, and people are willing to reinvest, so they need to take advantage of that.

Ms. Todd said she knows planning has a list of properties pulled together. Commissioner McFee said that **Libby Anderson** also has a list that has been updated fairly recently. Ms. Lutz said building codes, the fire department, and planning are having a meeting to review those properties that have been identified. Commissioner Sutton said it would be good to measure the change. He would like to see maps up, so they can see the changes that are happening. They can use those to show people the changes being made; he sees it as a sort of “war room.” Commissioner Keyserling said he’d like a scale model of downtown. He’s heard that a drone company can take a photo, turn it in to a CAD, and then use a 3-D printer to build a model.

Ms. Lutz said she thinks Ms. Kelly has kept lists updated. Ms. Johnson said it is updated, and she has a copy. They can put maps upstairs in the old offices. Commissioner Sutton said he would like the war room to be in the planning conference room, instead. Commissioner McFee said it’s got good public access. Commissioner Keyserling said it’s the most used room.

Commissioner Murray asked if they need to approve the goals and purposes, and Chairman Verity suggested they take it home and study it.

Commissioner Keyserling said that at the next meeting, they should have an executive session – council and new members should be brought up to date on projects and problems that can’t be talked about in public “because they’re people’s projects.” Also, he feels they need to all leave this meeting with an assignment. Chairman Verity said those listed as committee chairs need to “put some meat around the bones” of the assignments that are on the list. Ms. Johnson said she would ensure that she knows that follow-up is being done.

Commissioner Cromer said there are “developers around here” who have contributed to his and others’ campaigns, so councilmembers will need to recuse themselves when those developers’ projects come up. There was a general discussion, and Commissioner Keyserling said they could disclose, and then they wouldn’t need to recuse: If you disclose your involvement, and the rest of the council agrees you can act impartially, you do not need to recuse yourself. Commissioner Cromer said he will disclose, and if he has to recuse, he will. Commissioner Keyserling explained that recusal is for when you could have a financial gain were something to go through. Commissioner Murray said **Bill Harvey** had given a good definition of “arm’s length and where the grey areas are.” He suggested it be added to the next agenda.

Commissioner Sutton said executive sessions should only be to protect a private citizen’s negotiating right. All the Redevelopment Commission does is facilitate and open doors. The conflict is only when contracts are being negotiated. Commissioner Keyserling said executive sessions would be updates on upcoming projects. Commissioner McFee said they are for discussions of contractual and proprietary matters. Commissioner Murray said economic development might involve confidential information. Chairman Verity said the commission will report on projects that have been reported to the public, and those others might be developed and made public later on, too, hopefully.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Murray made a motion, second by Commissioner Lesense, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on October 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Bill Keyserling, commissioners Mike McFee, Phil Cromer, Mike Sutton, George O’Kelley, Frank Lesense and Stephen Murray, and city attorney Bill Harvey.

Commissioner Steven Green and Chairman Verity were absent.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

MINUTES

Vice-Chair Commissioner Sutton called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Commissioner McFee made a motion, second by Commissioner Keyserling, to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2015 Redevelopment Commission meeting. Commissioner O’Kelley abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting. Commissioner Murray said on page 2, where it states that **Blakely Williams** is “the new point of contact for commerce in all of Beaufort County,” “commerce” refers to the SC Department of Commerce. **The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

Deborah Johnson said she had asked **Bill Harvey**, city attorney, to speak in regard to conflict of interest, recusal, and quorums: questions that have arisen because of city council being part of the Redevelopment Commission.

Mr. Harvey said the Redevelopment Commission is a public body and operates under the same laws as council or any other. The same rules and restrictions for executive sessions apply to the Redevelopment Commission as they do for the city council. Ms. Johnson said the RDC might want to have one executive session about all of the various projects that are in the works. A commissioner had asked if they could do that, she said. Mr. Harvey said only certain things can be talked about in executive session, i.e., pending contracts. The commission could go into executive session for that, but they have to specify what they are doing. Ms. Johnson said the question was whether they could talk about three different projects at once. Commissioner McFee said they could say, for example, “We’re having a discussion on economic development prospects.” Mr. Harvey said the fine line they must walk is being as specific as possible without divulging confidential information.

As to conflict of interest, Mr. Harvey said, Section 31-10-70 of the state statute specifically addresses what can happen with the commission and a redevelopment property: a commissioner cannot acquire or have direct or indirect interest in property that the Redevelopment Commission has an interest in. Commissioner Cromer said he had received money for his campaign for council from a developer, and he asked if that puts him “in a difficult spot.” Mr. Harvey said the statute says the commissioner “can have no interest, direct or indirect” in a redevelopment project. Commissioner Sutton said the RDC’s target is citywide, and Commissioner Cromer is fine if he’s not participating in that donor’s development of a

piece of property. The contribution has been disclosed already, Commissioner Sutton said, via an Ethics Commission document. Mr. Harvey said you couldn't act upon a service contract by a campaign donor.

Mr. Harvey recommended that the commissioners read the prohibitions. Commissioner O'Kelley said, "It's all about whether you (have) *any interest in*" a project. Commissioner Cromer said he gets that, but he's concerned that it will be a problem of appearing to have "influence" if he doesn't recuse himself. Commissioner McFee said if something prejudices them from making a clear decision about the business of the city, they should recuse themselves, but when doing so, you have to state the reason you think it's necessary to recuse yourself. It needs to be in writing and be part of the minutes.

Mr. Harvey said the purpose of the statute in this case is to prevent the Redevelopment Commission from declaring a project that involves their own properties, or declaring a project, and then a commissioner acquires that property. It's acceptable to buy residential property in a redevelopment area, Mr. Harvey said. You don't want to be called out for violating the statute as an elected official while serving on the Redevelopment Commission.

Mr. Harvey said the development of a redevelopment *plan* is a big part of the statute. It has to be adopted by council. It has to contain certain statements and findings, he said, and urged the commission to do that. You don't want to act as a Redevelopment Commission member, then get called on the carpet because you have no plan, Mr. Harvey said. Ms. Johnson said Chairman Verity had suggested that they use the Civic Master Plan as an overview plan.

Ms. Johnson asked, if someone has an interest in a project, and it's agreed that they'll recuse themselves, what is the process? Mr. Harvey recommended that they withdraw from the discussion. Commissioner O'Kelley said they are not obliged to leave the room, but they should not talk during that discussion.

Mr. Harvey said recusal doesn't mean you don't have a quorum, just that recused people don't vote. Five commissioners is a quorum, four can meet in public, but there can only be two council members among them. Commissioner Murray restated for clarification: if they meet with a developer, four commissioners can attend, but only two can be council members.

Commissioner Sutton said they are going to a lot of meetings. Two council members and no more than four commission members total in the same meeting should be a guideline or policy for the commission. Commissioner O'Kelley said it doesn't apply at a social event/party. Commissioner Sutton said if it's not a planned commission meeting, but a Rotary meeting, for example, and seven of them walk in, that's not a conflict.

Commissioner Lesense asked Mr. Harvey which of the statements he had said the plan needed to include. Mr. Harvey said they're in Section 100, subsection C of the state law. Mr. Harvey said they "need to be a little more attentive to what the statements say with regard to the plan," because the whole city is mandated as a redevelopment area. Ms. Johnson reviewed

what the criteria are from the lists that determine if an area is distressed, blighted, or a conservation area. There was general agreement that these covered the whole city.

MISSION AND GOALS APPROVAL

Commissioner McFee made a motion to approve the documents. Commissioner Lesense seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY AND COUNTY ACCESS

Ms. Johnson said that **Libby Anderson** would show online tools that the committees could use.

The Beaufort County mapping website – Ms. Anderson demonstrated how to look up a property by address. You can inquire about who owns it, and it will show who lives there, taxes, etc. Then they can find out if it's 4% or 6% property, and a further tax breakdown (how much to the city, the county, the school board, etc.) Other important information it provides includes an aerial map, which shows if there are encroachments and can help determine if it's located in a flood zone. Google maps can then show what the property looks like.

The city's website – Here, Ms. Anderson said, you can see projects under review by all of the boards and commissions: the application and everything the applicants have submitted, including the site plan. You can get digital or hard copy maps that show building footprints and addresses; Ms. Anderson said she will be giving Ms. Johnson a monthly report about this, as it's relevant to the commission, but commissioners can also look at this. Ms. Johnson said Ms. Anderson would work to keep this up-to-date for the commission. If they see something on the monthly document and want to know more about it, this is where they can go for details.

Ms. Johnson said that they had thought that the address and footprint maps would be appropriate for the maps in the Planning Conference room, but the print will be very small. Commissioner Sutton said he would like to see the maps broken down by neighborhoods. They could be in a flip chart, and anyone who is talking about a neighborhood can pull up a hard copy of a map, or when committees are talking to a prospect, they could be brought in to the conference room; it could help them sell the bigger picture.

Ms. Anderson continued that the zoning map and ordinance are on the website. She pointed out a link to the Historic District that can be used to determine whether a property is contributing or not. There is a link about tax credits that are available – local, state and federal, and the assessment freeze available in the Bailey Bill – and necessary forms to apply for these. Also available are older documents, plans and reports, and a vacant and abandoned buildings list.

Commissioner Lesense asked Ms. Anderson if she had a way to find out how long a property has been vacant and abandoned. Ms. Anderson said that this is for public review; for more detailed information, they could call the planning department: "We know a lot about the vacant and abandoned properties." They need help getting people to sell the city's vacant and abandoned properties, she said, and the map also shows vacant lots. Few historic districts have

empty lots where you can build the house you want, Ms. Anderson said. That opportunity is available in Beaufort, in a walkable downtown neighborhood, so they need to get the word out about it.

Commissioner Keyserling discussed the possibilities available in dependencies. A general conversation followed about the taxes on dependencies. Ms. Anderson said accessory dwelling units can be a tool for affordable housing. Commissioner Keyserling said the income from an accessory dwelling unit can be a great way to sustain a historic structure.

INITIATIVE UPDATES

Economic Development

Commissioner Murray said the Economic Development committee – Commissioner Cromer, Commissioner Lesense, Mr. Prokop and he – had met. They had a “great discussion” and chose the group’s focus points:

- Incubation – They want to give a tour of the city to representatives of Charleston’s Digital Corridor and discuss partnering “to extend the brand,” Commissioner Murray said.
- Aerospace accelerator – There might be an opportunity through partnering with USC’s McNAIR School of Aerospace, Commissioner Murray said. They want to “reach out . . . more aggressively.”
- Retention and expansion – What tools can keep existing businesses healthy, get them to stay in the area, and enable them to expand?
- Recruitment – To bring in businesses that they would like to relocate here, Commissioner Murray said, they need
 - a specific, targeted strategy and
 - wide net marketing – aligning the development and tourism messages – how to plant the seed of “Have you thought about bringing your business here?”
- Membership on the committee – names were given, Commissioner Murray said, and they will be invited to the next (as yet unscheduled) meeting.

In regard to courting the film industry, Savannah offers good local incentives, so it can compete with Atlanta, Commissioner Cromer said, but Beaufort presents a different kind of “set,” so they may be able to bring movie business here again. Commissioner O’Kelley said the key is incentives. Commissioner Murray said the state had authorized a film incentive bill two years ago, and it’s more aggressive than the one before it, but not as good as those offered by surrounding states. He feels people interested in filmmaking, the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Beaufort should get together and talk about how to make it easier for filmmakers to do business here. Commissioner Keyserling said it’s a complicated business that has changed since the days when films were shot in Beaufort, particularly in terms of the technology. Many films can be shot in an acre-sized building. Commissioner Keyserling said industrial films are smaller and can be very lucrative. Commissioner Keyserling added that SCETV is going to reopen the WJWJ station, so a small, equipped studio can be available.

Commissioner Keyserling said Mr. Prokop had attended a meeting that day (10/20/15) in regard to the county's economic development efforts. Mr. Prokop said it was to include **Steve Riley** (Hilton Head town manager), **Marc Orlando**, (Bluffton town manager), **Don Kirkman** (economic development director, Hilton Head), **Blakely Williams**, and **Jason Ruhf**, the business development manager for the Chamber of Commerce. "The growth manager for Bluffton was there," Mr. Prokop said; Mr. Orlando was not present. They laid out the requirements of an executive director and discussed membership, donations, and their not-for-profit status.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Prokop said, he and Commissioner Keyserling had been to the quarterly mayors' meeting. All mayors and city managers had received a memo from **Stu Rodman** that said, "We're looking to join the Southern Alliance." It also said that Ms. Williams is to be the only contact with Commerce, and no one else was to contact them. The mayors had asked what that was about, Mr. Prokop said.

They decided to meet with Mr. Rodman to tell him they felt this was "going around in circles": There is neither funding for this economic development effort from the county, nor a direction; Bluffton said the town is dealing directly with Commerce on its economic development projects, for example. Then the meeting Commissioner Keyserling had referred to took place today, Mr. Prokop said, and as the only person who'd been at the mayors' meeting, he'd told them that none of the municipalities' mayors are in favor of this. He said he'd asked why they are developing rules, getting not-for-profit status, etc. before "everyone's on the same page?" The county administrator had told Mr. Kirkman he "wants nothing to do with it." In the bylaws, Mr. Prokop said, the group had proposed the board selecting a director, for example, who may report to the county administrator or to the board of directors, but when the director is hired, the staff is to report to the board of directors, not to the director.

They discussed the things that didn't make sense, Mr. Prokop said; they agreed they need to stop putting the cart before the horse. Bluffton, Hilton Head and Beaufort want to stop this until the group knows what it is doing, and what funding and administration support they have from the county. Mr. Rodman knew about the meeting but did not attend it, Mr. Prokop said. Commissioner Keyserling said that he doesn't want anyone to have any false hope about county support.

Mr. Prokop said Mr. Kirkman had said that before the mayors' meeting, there was a meeting of the county's Government Committee, at which "this subcommittee somehow got put together." At that meeting, Mr. Rodman had given his "idea of what we're going to do," and asked for comments; when there were none, he had assumed agreement. "It seemed like we were going nowhere," Mr. Prokop concluded, "and the county hadn't made any steps to pull anything together."

Commissioner Murray said previously, efforts and hope had been put before into a county-led effort. Now, ten months after the LEA collapse, there's still no clear plan, he said, so they know they need to figure out "our own course of action."

Infill

Commissioner McFee said Commissioner Green, Commissioner Sutton, Commissioner Cromer, and he had met and reviewed the history of the Civic Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, specifically as they address blight.

The group discussed some of the issues they have encountered; some, Commissioner McFee said, are related to “the complete unwillingness for some cultural segments of our community to let go of property, or to actually acknowledge that there are issues with reference to them falling into total disrepair, and then complete abandonment.” They also discussed CDBG money and how those projects had or had not worked. The discussion made them realize they have to be able to “get into a certain level of the communities . . . and turn the tide” in areas where properties are neglected and “hit hard.”

At the meeting, Commissioner McFee said, Commissioner Green had said, because he had grown up in the Northwest Quadrant and knew the difficulties of dealing with property ownership there, they should make a grassroots effort – involving churches and other stakeholders in the community to discuss the ideas the committee has, but more “to get their buy-in,” to let them know that the city wants to tackle gentrification, cultural diversity, and other issues where there has been “push-back.” This will benefit everyone, Commissioner McFee said. They need to discuss the city’s infrastructure investments – for example, what has worked on Duke and Prince Street, and what hasn’t worked. They hope to have a meeting soon for stakeholders, Commissioner McFee said; Ms. Johnson said it might be as soon as next week.

Mr. Prokop said, with some of the homes the city has repaired, no one’s done anything to them since then, and the owners are now asking when they will get the next grant. Commissioner McFee said the committee had discussed that – getting property owners vested in their properties. Commissioner Sutton said this shows how important codes enforcement is. He said what he had taken away from the experience is that people feel that if it’s free, it’s not necessarily good. There’s a lack of understanding and conversation, and that needs to happen at a neighborhood level, which is where a church or civic group could help.

Ms. Johnson said the committee will have codes enforcement people in to talk with them. Mr. Prokop said that they will present a report within two weeks.

Commissioner Murray said the infill group could have a plan or project book with plans that are already approved, so people could pick plans from it, and thereby save money and time. Bluffton pays you \$5000 if you use one of their small house plans. Commissioner Murray said there’s a perception that it is difficult to do projects in the Historic District; they should address that perception – and the reality – of doing that, and if they do, he thinks many young families would want to live within walking distance of Bay Street.

Commissioner Murray said the form-based code is going to essentially do this citywide. Commissioner Sutton said there are staff-level approvals now that can be done that people may not know about, but that’s not for new construction, which is a long process with multiple

levels of approval to be gone through. Commissioner Lesense said, in the Historic District, if you want to develop a property, you don't know "what was there before." Redevelopment may lead to a surprise archeological dig.

Downtown

Commissioner O'Kelley said he, Ms. Johnson, Commissioner Cromer and Commissioner Sutton had met, and discussed what the "big issues" are in downtown Beaufort:

- Parking – e.g., the BOA (Bank of America) building, the old Trask lot, Bay Street
- Waterfront Park – repairs, upkeep, etc. – The Brantley Construction case is over, Commissioner O'Kelley said; "they did a lousy job," so the city needs to have "an eye to the future" of the park. The West Street Extension had to be done again, and the marina needs an overhaul.
- Seed money to help businesses downtown, possibly through grants – The new wayfinding signs have emphasized the need to refurbish the facades.
- Infill and residential – These aspects of the committees overlap and are "aiming in the same direction."

Commissioner Cromer said they had talked about the Port Republic corridor and developing it better; alcohol in a cup is allowed by ordinance. An outdoor café could be encouraged there, in the spirit of Tabby Place. There are "a bunch of things you could probably do," to encourage activity downtown, such as closing off West Street some nights, to "make it more pedestrian." They discussed the same things on Charles Street, he said.

Commissioner Sutton said the RDC's focus is on city-building, and while it's happening on Carteret and Charles Streets, they have seen people who want to develop there encountering hurdles "through existing zoning contexts." For instance, when he was on council, someone wanted to open a shop in a residential building in an area that is zoned commercial, but he was unable to because of zoning. Council wants these things to happen, but this "complaint never made it to council." Commissioner Sutton feels "staff is enforcing regulations and laws that council (wants) to change." He said this committee needs to take a closer look at streets like Charles, and determine, with staff, "what is working (and) what is not working." They need staff to make a presentation on the current zoning from Boundary Street to Bay, for example.

Commissioner Sutton said the city doesn't want anyone else to buy the BOA lot before it does, so they need to take action, not "talk about it for another five years." It's the only opportunity to buy land that is large enough to make an impact. Commissioner Murray said that lot would give the city a 25% increase in parking capacity. Mr. Prokop said if they do buy the BOA lot, they should extend paid parking down Carteret, too, then, and that's 25–30 more spaces.

Commissioner Sutton said these are examples of city-building topics and proactive steps that they can take: addressing zoning problems and businesses' need for parking. He said in regard to this committee, he also has thought about the need to revisit the noise ordinance in the core commercial area. He knows what it says, but they can't increase downtown vitality without having the kinds of businesses that bring people downtown "to enjoy entertainment," which is

the businesses the noise ordinance applies to: restaurants and bars. The drug stores, dry cleaners and hardware stores probably won't come back downtown, Commissioner Sutton said, but "the artsy environment, entertainment things that are working now" will bring the downtown back, so they must "embrace the whole concept that those things are going to be loud." Old Bull Tavern, for example, is breaking the law, he said, even though they're not in the nighttime music district, by having music on their back patio, outside of the walls of the restaurant.

Any development on Port Republic now will have problems similar to those that will occur at the residential building that will be built next to Old Bull, Commissioner Sutton said. No one seems to know about the sidewalk café dining ordinance, but it's in place because "that's the widest sidewalks we have." Now there has been city-building activity there, and they could dust off that ordinance and use it as a selling point. There are "several thousand feet of retail space" that could be developed where Merrill Lynch is: enough for three restaurants. This is what they should be championing, he feels.

Commissioner Lesense asked if there were plans to build a parking garage. Commissioner Murray said they are putting together an RFQ to get feedback from parking garage developers. Beaufort would request funding for a parking structure if the capital sales tax becomes a reality. Mr. Prokop said that's another reason to acquire the BOA lot – for parking while the parking garage is being built.

Boundary Street

- Commissioner Keyserling said **Paul Trask** has had some problems with SCDOT, which he elaborated on.
- They are looking at a site for a hotel.
- Commissioner Keyserling said, if the county will partner with the City of Beaufort, they will acquire land to make 4/5ths of a park.
- In regard to next steps, a year ago, **Dick Stewart** had invited every property owner on Boundary Street to meet, and Commissioner Keyserling feels the City of Beaufort ought to be doing that. He said he will talk to **David Coleman** about meeting with every Boundary Street property owner to brief them and also to "smoke out opportunities."
- Commissioner Keyserling knows people are looking for property for affordable housing. Starting at Taylor Motors and going west, there are 15 acres, he said, and he knows someone who needs 10 acres for 40 townhouses.
- Property owners in Polk Village know that Boundary Street will have an impact on their property, Commissioner Keyserling said, and they want to know if they should annex into the city. He doesn't feel that annexation of that area will be driven by the city. A large percentage of the property there is rental property (so its residents are transient), and Polk Village has law enforcement issues, so, Commissioner Keyserling said, "no one has wanted it," meaning the county or the city, which provides it with services. Commissioner Murray said, "It's Pigeon Point 20 years ago": he believes, like Pigeon Point, it will probably redevelop in the long term. Commissioner Murray said it would be

interesting to look at the cost-benefit of annexing it. Commissioner Keyserling said if it were in the city, it would have codes issues, but when Boundary Street redevelopment happens, the property owners might come to the city, and if those with multiple properties would agree to redevelop them, the city could “lay a TIF over it” and could improve it – he said he feels sure it is “CDBG eligible” – but then there’s a question of where the renters would go.

- Sea Eagle Market – Council is prepared to purchase the property, Commissioner Keyserling said, and the Open Land Trust is prepared to purchase the United Way building. The county match would pay for Huddle House and the old fire station. The city has a restricted fund for land acquisition, Commissioner Keyserling said, which is enough to purchase Sea Eagle, and the city has a contract, but it’s triggered by partnership with the county. Before the City of Beaufort had talked to the Sea Eagle owner (**Craig Reaves**) for the last year, for two or three years, the “Open Land Trust and/or Rural and Critical (Lands)” committee had talked to him. Mr. Reaves is anxious because a location he would have liked to move to has been lost. Commissioner Keyserling said, “It’s very important we try to keep him on Boundary Street.” Commissioner Murray said Mr. Reaves’ wholesale operation would be on St. Helena, and he would like to keep his retail operation in the city.
- Mr. Prokop said the Boundary Street contractors and subcontractors would meet within three weeks. They will take down the Butler building first. Digging in the streets will not happen until after January 1, but engineering, “marking what they have to do,” and taking down buildings should start by the end of November. The deed hasn’t been signed over on the Butler building yet, Mr. Prokop said.

Incentives, Codes and Regulations

Commissioner Cromer said he, Ms. Johnson, and Commissioner O’Kelley had met. They have incentives for new businesses, but for existing businesses, they could offer the following:

- a progressive credit for longevity
- a percentage credit for early payment of business license fee
- a cap on the business license fee in each rate class

They also discussed low-interest loans or guarantees for a portion of a loan for business expansion or for start-up businesses, as well as façade improvement loans or matching grants. Seed money for this could come out of the Redevelopment Commission’s share of parking revenues before the need arises for their use for the parking garage .

Other discussion points for the committee:

- They are awaiting **Lauren Kelly**’s draft of the Beaufort Code, Commissioner Cromer said. They plan to have “affinity groups” look at it before a public hearing.
- Staff is working with TCL on building permitting; “they’re trying to get them to shrink down the bureaucracy a little bit,” Commissioner Cromer said, and they’re looking for the points where things slow down. On Hilton Head, getting a permit takes one month, but in Beaufort it takes four months. Mr. Prokop is looking at processing software to

determine what the best program is for Beaufort. Commissioner Cromer said business licensing could also be online.

In regard to regulations, changing the tree ordinance “to be a mirror image of the county’s,” Commissioner Cromer said, “is not being looked at favorably,” because “it’s pretty stringent.” Having listened to points raised by developers like **Merritt Patterson** and Mr. Stewart, he doesn’t “want to create any more impediments” to development. Commissioner O’Kelley agreed and said the landscaping of the Family Dollar, which “staff has continually brought up” (as an example of how the ordinance changes would work) “is ugly.”

Commissioner Cromer said the Civic Master Plan calls for buildings to be near the street, and to have landscaping between them and the street, but when he is getting in and out of the Holiday Inn, a palm tree in front of Firehouse Subs causes a dangerous traffic hazard, he feels. Commissioner Keyserling said, “That’s why we want rear access.”

Commissioner Sutton said there need to be updates made to old regulations, which were made when Beaufort was different.

Commissioner Cromer said that Greenville’s website shows links to loans for people who want to start businesses; the Beaufort website has a link to the Small Business Association, but when he clicked it, he got an error message.

In regard to loans, Commissioner Keyserling said the Black Chamber of Commerce has funding, and it has made three or four loans. Ms. Johnson said that she has a lot of information on incentives from the old Redevelopment Commission, and she will try to figure out what is useful and relevant and make it all easy to get to. They can offer other incentives besides the “straight incentives.”

Commissioner Sutton said the next RDC meeting is November 17. Ms. Johnson said she has notes on all of the committee meetings she has attended.

Commissioner Sutton said it’s important to find those areas where something can be accomplished. They want to create “achievable goals” in their committees and meet them, bringing matters to a level where they can then give them to staff, either to solve a problem or to take on to council. He gave the example of the existing ordinance permitting outdoor drinking on Port Republic Street: the Redevelopment Commission needs to know about things like that – it addresses an issue, as an *incentive* for a business to open there. Another example would be a compatible noise ordinance for areas not in the nighttime music district.

Ms. Johnson said that for all of the committees, Chairman Verity had asked that she come back with “a takeaway,” and she would like the chairs to do that: determine their committees’ first and second priority issues.

Commissioner Lesense said Mr. Harvey had said something about statements in the plan. Ms. Johnson said that's "an action item" for her. The enabling legislation is clear about what the plan is, but other things need to be involved in it.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Murray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McFee, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.