

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on January 19, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Jon Verity, commissioners Billy Keyserling, Mike McFee, Phil Cromer, Mike Sutton, George O'Kelley, Steven Green, and Stephen Murray, and Bill Prokop, city manager. Frank Lesense was 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.

Councilman O'Kelley made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to adjourn the council Executive Session and resume the work session. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before council, the council work session adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

MINUTES

Chairman Verity called the Redevelopment Commission meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

Commissioner McFee made a motion, second by Commissioner Murray, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015 Redevelopment Commission meeting. Commissioner Murray abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting. **The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed, 7-0.**

ARTS OVERLAY DISTRICT PROPOSAL

Dick Stewart said this proposal was for those portions of the city where a home was not habitable or where "could use an accessory building." The idea had emerged from the popularity of tiny houses around the country. They could be put up as accessory dwelling units on a vacant lot or one where the primary dwelling is not habitable. The tiny houses come in a number of designs, Mr. Stewart said, and the Historic District Review Board could approve four or five designs in advance that were suitable for the district, then they would have to ensure that the siting on the lots met the requirements of an accessory building.

Some of these are already in place in Beaufort, Mr. Stewart said. For "about \$43,000, we could have (a home with) one bedroom, one bath, a living room and a kitchen delivered here," and for \$5000 more, it could be connected to electrical, plumbing, and HVAC and landscaped. "We find that folks that want to move in these areas oftentimes are artists," he said, and they want to work in their studios and then sell their work from their homes. There's "a long history of people selling their art on the premises" of their homes, which is why they are calling this an arts overlay district, Mr. Stewart said.

A house that needs extensive work and "is very difficult to restore" might not be invested in because of expenses, time and "the uncertainty," Mr. Stewart said, but building these accessory dwelling units near such houses would create "an energy . . . that's going to boil into the beginnings of (resuscitating) those houses" that need to be restored. This would "streamline

the permitting process,” put in houses that are “consistent with HRB approval,” and allow investment “without some of the regulatory risks and delays that come with designing a custom product.”

Mr. Stewart’s firm would introduce bankers and others to this program. They have heard of interest by property owners in having their children or “in one case an elderly parent” move into such an accessory dwelling unit on their property. The Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Beaufort, the Arts Council, and the Black Chamber of Commerce have all expressed support, he said. If four or five designs are approved in advance, they could be used in the district.

John Trask named property owners and their families in the proposed district with whom he had met. Even for a developer or someone in real estate, the process is “very front-end loaded,” he said, “in terms of money, time and knowledge.” They hope “the quality and character of the district will remain, but the process will be streamlined.” Mr. Stewart said the “overriding objective is to restore confidence” in those who want to invest in their property that they can do so with minimal risk. He said they will also “create circumstances where funding is available through banks and other sources.” Energy will go up, crime will down, and schoolchildren can visit the artist’s studios in the district.

Mr. Stewart described “Project Shelter,” a project run by United Way about 15 years ago, which was “intended to revitalize homes that were in trouble.” He and **Fred Washington** collaborated, and he purchased a home and a lot that were donated to United Way, which was working “in partnership with the HRB and the City of Beaufort.” Allison Ramsey Architects donated architectural services, and the project was given discounted materials and labor, but the property was still “more expensive than the market would bear,” so the house was never restored and was eventually taken down.

Chairman Verity said this presentation had been made to the RDC's infill committee last week. Mr. Prokop is meeting tomorrow with the developers to “figure out some of the issues.” Commissioner McFee said, “the presentation was well received” by the infill committee, which “is very much in favor of moving forward” with the project. The committee feels that there is “a need for a redevelopment plan to be associated with it,” but this will not be a burden to the developers, he said. It can be done concurrently as they develop the project. Responding to a query, Commissioner McFee said this would go through city council, rather than through the RDC.

Commissioner Keyserling said there’s already an accessory unit ordinance, and “the code will do nothing but reinforce that.” He asked how Habitat for Humanity had handled preapproval of structures, which he sees as the main “issue” with an arts overlay district. Commissioner Keyserling said he’s “done modular homes, and “many of them are much better constructed . . . and much stronger (than stick-built homes) . . . but the secret to them . . . is the elevations” of the different porches and rooflines, and “spread(ing) them out,” rather than putting three of these houses “in a row.”

Mr. Stewart responded that they “intend to work with the people who own the properties” and let them “do what they want to with their property . . . (to) keep it in the family’s hands.” Commissioner Keyserling said he thinks “it’s a great idea.” The challenge, he feels, is to ensure that it doesn’t look like a “cookie cutter overlay” is a diverse neighborhood. He said they’ll want to be assured “it will enhance what is there, not detract from” it. Mr. Trask said if the Historic District Review Board approves five or six plans, “you’ll know you can do that in the district,” but staff will have to approve it to ensure that there aren’t two or three of the same design in a row. Mr. Stewart explained how accessory dwelling units of the same design could each be situated differently from one another on their lots. He added that he’s fine with a proviso that there won’t be two identical designs next to each other.

Henrietta Goode said there have been “many different fights” about historic properties. While she thinks the project is “interesting,” she said she “can’t decide if it’s good or bad,” and wants to learn more.

Maxine Lutz reiterated what Ms. Goode had said, and said she had talked about this project with Chairman Verity and Mr. Stewart. Historic Beaufort Foundation would be very concerned about the materials that would be allowed, if they are materials that aren’t allowed on historic houses. Ms. Lutz said she doesn’t like the idea of manufactured housing. If a neighbor of an accessory dwelling unit has to use a certain kind of window, for example, then these kinds of houses would need to use it, too. Mr. Stewart said the idea is to protect the district, not cheapen it. For many years, he said, it has seemed that every year, for every three houses that are restored, three “fall into disarray.” This manufactured housing, as the mayor had said, is “a better quality of construction in a controlled environment,” Mr. Stewart said, noting that there is a 4700 square foot house on Daufuskie Island that was manufactured the same way. This is being done in Europe and around the United States. Mr. Trask said “what’s built” is more important than “how it’s built.” The end product is the most important thing.

Mr. Trask said that there would be preapproval of the accessory dwelling units’ designs, so builders won’t have to continually go to the HRB. Ms. Goode said \$50,000 would be a good price for many people. She has concerns about the costs of upkeep, though; she has to replace windows one at a time on her own house, for example. Chairman Verity said the idea is to make it easier to move forward, and this is new construction, so the rules aren’t being bent.

Commissioner Sutton said this doesn’t need to be “on the Redevelopment Commission agenda, at the level that’s being presented”; it’s an HRB issue, and there are other aspects (e.g., setbacks and placement on the lot) that will be hashed out after it’s “out of the HRB.” Although these houses are built off-site, Commissioner Sutton said, international building codes and permitting ensure that modular homes “are actually built better than a stick-built company, including mine, can build on a site in Beaufort” because they’re made “in a controlled environment.” They’re “much stronger” and “code compliant,” he said.

The actions that need to happen, Commissioner Sutton said, are city council “direct(ing) staff to start the design process” and getting the designs on the HRB agenda; “the city or the private

side” would do the design presentation. That group would vet the designs, determine the number of them that are needed, and then choose the “end product.” He said staff would need the ability to do the permitting process smoothly.

Commissioner Sutton said this would be a commercial use in a residential neighborhood, so they need to consider the idea of having a business there, which he’s not opposed to, he said, but it could be a concern that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. Mr. Stewart said, “That’s part of it.” Then city council will have to debate how to change zoning to allow “home occupation use,” in any part of the city, Commissioner Sutton said.

Mr. Stewart said they are “not promoting opening the door to *any* commercial use.” They are referring to it as an “arts overlay district” because if the freedman’s cottages and others were renovated, “who’s going to move in?” He said “family members who have a tie to the land” and artists would live in the Arts Overlay District because artists “are typically the pioneers.” This has happened in Grant Park in Atlanta. “The objective is not to change the nature of the neighborhood,” Mr. Stewart concluded, because this is what used to happen in neighborhoods, “and we’d like to return to that.”

Chairman Verity said the infill committee would like to “move this private initiative along through city council. The Redevelopment Commission will continue to move forward with the redevelopment plan, to help attain funding that can’t be obtained through the private sector. The plan is for the Arts Overlay District to be only partly in the Historic District, Chairman Verity noted; parts of Higginsonville and parts of Pigeon Point are being considered for inclusion in it. Mr. Prokop and staff will look at what issues need to be addressed, Chairman Verity said; they wanted the developers to make this presentation because they wanted the commission to know about this opportunity, but there is more to be done, and questions will need to be answered.

Commissioner Green said he has a concern about the district itself. If an owner says, “One of those houses would be good on my property,” what language would ensure that? Chairman Verity reiterated that such questions will be raised and answered, but he doesn't have the answer now. Mr. Stewart said accessory dwelling units are allowed in most zoning areas of the city. They want to do this project in these areas “where folks are discouraged” and “encourage (them) to make that next step.” As he understands it, he said, there are few places in the city that the setbacks would be a prohibition.

Commissioner Sutton said, “There’s no ‘district,’ first of all, unless . . . you are alluding to the quadrant or the historic district.” The area the developers have targeted is all available, blighted, and in need of infill: it is land that needs the catalyst of redevelopment. These tiny houses could be put anywhere, as long as they meet the current accessory dwelling unit guidelines that are already in place. The minimum size of an accessory dwelling unit is 420 square feet; Commissioner Sutton said this “has to be washed out.” If the Arts Overlay District happens, council and staff “will have to wrestle” with someone from outside the neighborhood. Mr. Trask and Mr. Stewart are working in who wants to do the same thing they are doing. Mr.

Trask said they have defined the boundaries they want for the district, though council will have final determination of that.

Chairman Verity said that these details would come out in the work as this happens; the Redevelopment Commission is “not really chartered to solve this particular issue.” There is no government funding or other programs involved, he said, so it would be simpler to work with city council on this.

Commissioner Murray asked if this works against the Redevelopment Commission’s goals: rehabbing a historic house is costly, burdensome, and difficult. Instead, someone could get a loan, build an accessory dwelling unit, and live in it, abandoning the primary structure on the property. Mr. Stewart replied, “A historic building in the Historic District may not be allowed to just deteriorate and be abandoned. The city has ordinances . . . to stabilize those.” He believes that, given opportunity to “generate life and people and eyes on the street and income from your property, the likelihood of you restoring that house, in my opinion, goes up significantly” when these accessory dwelling units are built around them. In addition, Mr. Stewart said, “The people who live in the district, getting together and restoring those homes, so they can return (the neighborhood) to what (it) used to be . . . is much more likely.” There are a lot of abandoned houses now, Mr. Stewart said, and putting an accessory house next to them raises the chances that they will be “resuscitated. I hope so. That’s the plan.”

Commissioner Keyserling said they would need to consider if these homes would be owner-occupied, rented, or short-term rentals. Council is currently faced with some people’s concerns about a proliferation of short-term rentals, how they are spread out, and how they affect the neighborhood. If the owners do the financing, they have some control over that, but this matter will come up as the project proceeds. Mr. Trask said the plan for this project is “ultimately for long-term folks.”

PRESENTATION: CITY OF BEAUFORT CULTURAL DISTRICT

The cultural district is a project of the South Carolina Arts Commission, **Bonnie Hargrove** said. She described what a cultural district is. Representatives from Main Street Beaufort, Historic Beaufort Foundation, and the Chamber of Commerce formed a “cultural district committee,” chose a walkable district, and came up with goals, including increasing tourism, fostering a supportive environment for the arts, and celebrating, developing, and strengthening local culture. The designation has been approved, and Beaufort is the fifth South Carolina city to receive it,” Ms. Hargrove said.

Now, the cultural district committee’s “home” has to be determined, Ms. Hargrove said. It would develop different ways to strengthen what’s already downtown. She proposed some possible outcomes, including temporary outdoor art installations and a cultural festival.

Commissioner Keyserling said council had “passed a resolution supporting the application.” The state requires the cultural district committee to have a home with a city entity: city council, a citizen board, etc. Because the committee is “about leveraging the arts for economic

development,” he feels “it fits in with infill and redevelopment,” so being a part of the Redevelopment Commission makes more sense than starting another entity to be the committee’s home.

Chairman Verity said he agrees with that, as long as the Redevelopment Commission can “add some value” to the cultural district committee. He asked if the boundaries of the district as shown were set. Ms. Hargrove said they were. Commissioner McFee asked if the cultural district committee would become “an adjunct” to the Redevelopment Commission. “When the group tells the state it has a sponsor,” Commissioner Keyserling replied, it would be the Redevelopment Commission. He also feels that it “would be nice to have someone from the RDC sitting on the committee.”

Ms. Hargrove said the committee would be reviewed in five years to assess generally the progress it makes on its goals. It “has to be a big part of the Chamber of Commerce” in order to track “the number of people who have moved into the area, what’s happening in our tourism,” etc. These districts are popping up all over South Carolina, she said; before this, they were primarily in the Northeast United States. Ms. Hargrove said it’s a city program; most cultural district committees are structured under tourism development.

Chairman Verity said a Redevelopment Commission goal could be to help the group find money. Commissioner Sutton asked what related actions of the Redevelopment Commission would be needed; for example, does the committee have to do any reports? Ms. Hargrove said whoever sits on the cultural district committee from the RDC would report back to the commission about what the committee is doing. Commissioner Sutton said he could see an annual or semi-annual report from the cultural district committee to the RDC.

Ms. Johnson asked, if there were a cultural district event, and money had to pass through someone, who would be accountable for it? The city? The RDC? Chairman Verity said he’d assume it would be a city account. They’d have to find out. This is brand new, but the Redevelopment Commission could give “being the umbrella organization” a try, and if a better home for the committee turns up, that could change.

Commissioner Keyserling said it’s not just about the arts: it’s a *cultural* district. The Santa Elena Foundation is involved, as is Historic Beaufort Foundation. Ms. Hargrove said churches in the designated area are involved, too.

Support for the idea was generally expressed, but no vote was taken because Ms. Johnson pointed out that there’s not been an official ordinance change concerning the Redevelopment Commission that would allow it to “take formal action.” They are waiting for an ordinance from **Bill Harvey**, the city attorney, she said, which council can approve, after which it has to be filed with the secretary of state. Until then, “real legal action that puts you as an RDC” cannot take place.

BOUNDARY STREET REDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVISION – GREENLAWN DRIVE

Libby Anderson said this revision was discussed at the earlier council meeting. The Greenlawn Drive project will probably cost \$1.2 – \$1.3 million. Staff feels the project would be eligible for CDBG funding under its Neighborhood Revitalization program, and it meets the criteria. It's within in the Boundary Street plan area and appeared in the original Boundary Street master plan and the Civic Master Plan.

Staff would like to amend the Boundary Street Plan, Ms. Anderson said, “to call out the Greenlawn Drive project” in a section about “specific capital projects,” such as the Boundary Street landscape median, a parallel street network, and intersection improvements at Boundary Street and Robert Smalls Parkway. The Greenlawn Drive streetscape is not addressed specifically in the plan, Ms. Anderson said. They would like the commission’s “endorsement of moving ahead with the Boundary Street redevelopment plan . . . specifically call(ing) out Greenlawn Drive as a streetscape project.” Ms. Anderson said they would only need to add the project as #8 to the 7 projects already specified in the plan. This could help lay the groundwork for the CDBG funding.

Commissioner McFee made a motion, second by Commissioner Green, for the Redevelopment Commission to endorse – not approve – the revision to the plan. The motion passed 7–0, Commissioner O’Kelley having left the meeting by the time of the vote.

SECTOR 1 REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Johnson said the outline of what needs to be in a redevelopment plan was given to the commissioners. She said the next step, according to Mr. Harvey, is for the powers given to the commissioners under the enabling legislation to fit within a redevelopment plan. Chairman Verity, Ms. Johnson, and staff will do the preliminary plan for Sector 1. The Civic Master Plan’s sectors will each have a plan, as a basis for the redevelopment plan. The infill committee will also provide a lot of input. Ms. Johnson asked if sector by sector is “the commission’s will,” and there was general agreement among the commissioners.

CODES ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Prokop introduced the codes enforcement team: the fire chief – Captain **Reece Bertholf** – and Capt. **Tim Ogden**, the fire marshal. Capt. Ogden is preparing the follow-up they want for codes enforcement, Mr. Prokop said; it will be presented to the Redevelopment Commission soon. Capt. Bertholf invited the commissioners to reach out to codes enforcement with their ideas. He said that Capt. Ogden works out of the fire station. They are reorganizing, Capt. Bertholf said, “but not pausing in the area of codes enforcement.”

500 CARTERET STREET PROPERTY – TENANT DECISION, MAKING PROGRESS

Mr. Prokop sought guidance from the commission on leasing the space in the building at 500 Carteret Street. He said two potential tenants had looked at space there today. What’s the role of the Redevelopment Commission in the leasing? he asked. Chairman Verity asked if there were any developers interested in the whole building; Mr. Prokop said yes, and one is supposed to be contacting staff.

Commissioner Murray asked if they should engage in an RFP process like they did with the Lowcountry Produce building when they decided it should be privately held. If they found a developer, the city could potentially get out of the commercial real estate business while retaining the parking lot. If there are no respondents to the RFP, Commissioner Murray said, then they “could get creative about the mix of tenants in the building,” or have more development interest in it.

Commissioner Keyserling said the city doesn’t want to manage real estate, but they have to take care of the building, which means having tenants; it is difficult to do both at the same time. Some tenants would add value to the building for a developer who wants to buy it, and some tenants could get space downtown who couldn't otherwise pay market rates, such as nonprofits. Commissioner Keyserling said, in his view, they would lease the building “to the point that it more than paid for itself,” and was on hold “until we decide about the (parking) garage, but eventually to get out of it.” Although it’s ultimately a council decision, he feels council “would look to the RDC” on matters such as “how long do (we) hold? What kind of tenants do we put in there?” They had shown space earlier that day to a public agency that couldn't otherwise rent space downtown, Commissioner Keyserling said. “Do we fill space with that tenant, and if so, for how long?” They don’t want to “tie it up” with tenants and then have a developer come in who’s interested.

Commissioner Murray said when it’s tied up with tenants, it’s “more complex to exit,” especially if “it’s encumbered by below-market leases” to nonprofits, for example, which would affect the value of the building. There may be no interest in it from the private sector at a market rate, he said, but he feels “we have an obligation” to try the RFP process. Chairman Verity asked what the timeframe should be to hold the building before they think about leasing. Commissioner Murray suggested 30 days. Commissioner McFee said it can’t languish.

Commissioner Sutton asked what the Redevelopment Commission’s role is in dealing with a building council bought. Council has taken no action to put it in the Redevelopment Commission’s hands. Chairman Verity said the commission’s role is “strictly advisory.” Commissioner Sutton said as a neighbor of the space, and as a member of the Redevelopment Commission, he’s scared at the prospect of “non-profit anything,” when what they want to do is infill that area with tax-paying entities.

Commissioner Keyserling said it’s set up so that the taxes are being paid on the property while the city does a lease-purchase for three years. Commissioner Sutton said it would be in private sector hands at some point. Council won’t want to manage it as a rental. The next step would be a parking opportunity and “a catalyst for more parking” in the future, Commissioner Sutton said. Commissioner McFee said they can’t do long-term leases; they can make it more advantageous to *not* have a long-term lease.

Chairman Verity said it seems to him that there’s nothing to lose by creating an RFP to see if there’s interest in the building. It has other possible uses, too, like an incubator site, and that

can be explored as well. The question is how formal an RFP process is needed. He feels it need not be too complicated. Commissioner Murray said it could be similar to the way the city handled the old city hall building. There were no proposals in response to the RFP, so they “let someone restore the building,” establish a business, and find financing; Lowcountry Produce is now 100% on the tax rolls. He said he’s proposing a similar model with this building. Mr. Prokop said four developers have shown interest; this “gets us past showing preference.”

Mr. Prokop said the parking kiosk should be in place at the end of the month; there will be at least 75 spaces, with long-term parking at a lower rate, and designated employee parking.

MILITARY INSTALLATION INNOVATION FORUM IN CHARLESTON

Mr. Prokop said there would be a military installation innovation forum in Charleston January 29 – February 2, and he wanted to know if commissioners were interested in participating. People have been invited from around the state. Commissioner Murray said he’d like to see some literature about the forum, then he’d send it out to the economic development subcommittee and get back to Mr. Prokop.

PRUITT’S STORE CONCEPT

Mr. Prokop wondered if Pruitt’s Grocery was a possible RDC opportunity: “to bring back this community store.” People in the neighborhood have said there’s nowhere nearby to shop. He suggested the commission consider what it could do with the store: e.g., fix up the building, institute mentoring and training programs, etc. Chairman Verity said it had been added to the CDBG list last week, but “it appears we may not have as much of an option there as we hoped.” Ms. Johnson said staff had considered applying for a CDBG grant in the business development category, which looked like a perfect fit, in that funding is dependent on the project serving an “important function in a low- to moderate-income neighborhood,” creating jobs, and saving a critical structure, but she spoke to **Michelle Knight**, community and economic development director at Lowcountry Council of Governments, about it, but “she pretty much nixed the idea altogether,” telling Ms. Johnson that “it would take two years to get this through,” and this grant is difficult to obtain, in Ms. Knight’s experience. Ms. Knight suggested there might be funding for this project from other sources, Ms. Johnson said, “if we knew exactly what we wanted to do,” because “it has a lot of pieces” that could be good to obtain funding, though not through CDBG. Chairman Verity said it’s been determined that it needs to be rezoned to be a store; “I gather it’s residential.” Ms. Anderson said, “It’s zoned Neighborhood Commercial.” Commissioner Keyserling said two investors had called him who wanted to save the store but not run it. Stores like this are challenging, he said, because they’re so small, and the product turnover is low, so there’s little money to be made. Commissioner Keyserling added, “The apartments may not even be salvageable.” Commissioner Sutton said the building needs to be restored, but it needs a tremendous amount of upfit to be a viable as a lease enterprise. For example, the foundation’s bad, and it needs a roof. Chairman Verity said, “I don’t think it can’t be done without grants”; the Redevelopment Commission might be able to help do some things to get funding. It would be “nice to maintain it, if it’s possible.”

Commissioner Keyserling suggested it might qualify for a rural development loan or grant; Ms. Johnson said it could if the city qualified for rural development, but Beaufort doesn't. However, there are other possible funding sources to be looked into, such as the state Preservation Office.

Commissioner Sutton said the RDC and the city could "seek opportunities for restoration," but he feels this is "a private sector function." Ms. Anderson confirmed that the structure could easily meet the Bailey Bill criteria. Chairman Verity said they could meet with **Michael Mark**, and see how the RDC can help. Commissioner McFee said the additional lot helps. Commissioner Sutton said if it were in great shape, a developer could buy it and lease it to a neighborhood group/non-profit.

INITIATIVE UPDATES

Economic Development

Commissioner Murray said the subcommittee had met that morning and talked about the ongoing dialogue with the municipalities and county council, which had voted not to join an alliance and had asked the municipalities for their input.

Commissioner Murray said the subcommittee also had outlined an aerospace recruitment initiative, and they hope to have more details in a month. TWEAC is a component, he said.

Infill

Commissioner McFee said the subcommittee had heard the Arts Overlay District presentation. "Stakeholders in the neighborhood" are also drafting "a personal letter" that will get to owners of vacant properties to see if they have interest in working with the Redevelopment Commission to "make some activity on those project properties." The letter should go out within the next few days, he said.

Boundary Street

Commissioner Keyserling said the Boundary Street project has started. Sea Eagle Market is looking for another space; Chairman Verity asked if there's a closing date on its purchase. Commissioner Keyserling said council has to have second reading. When that happens, all three purchases will close, and Rural and Critical Lands and the Open Land Trust will continue negotiating for the next two buildings.

Incentives, Codes and Regulations

Commissioner Cromer said he and Commissioner O'Kelley have been serving on the Beaufort Code committee, which is "about halfway through" with its review.

Mr. Prokop said TCL representatives will be meeting with Ms. Anderson and "the group," to show what they have laid out. The next step would be to invite developers and builders to review the process they have developed, and then staff would recommend what is needed. There are two or three systems "already established" in various municipalities, including Bluffton and Hilton Head, Mr. Prokop said. In the next couple months, the program will be fine-

tuned. TCL has had a lot of projects, but they are ready now, and will be in touch with staff next week.

Commissioner Cromer said the Municipal Association (MASC) is building an online portal for business licenses. He doesn't know if Beaufort has representation or what cities are involved, but he will find out more at a meeting February 3. They standardized the codes, Commissioner McFee said. "But they want to get new dates," for example, Commissioner Cromer replied. He added, "Everything's standardized."

Commissioner Murray said before he was on council, it had approved the MASC standard form application, and "their business license ordinance, I think we've already moved to."

Commissioner McFee said, "I know we did the code modules, and all of that is standardized, but the due dates would make a difference, obviously."

INITIATIVES IN PROGRESS – UPDATED REPORT

The commissioners had been given a report with the revisions that had been made since November 17, 2015, Chairman Verity said. He explained this list to the members of the public in attendance, and asked if the commissioners had any comments on any of the initiatives.

Mr. Prokop said the transient dock is out for bids, and they should have a contractor in the next 30 days, with construction beginning before the summer. The parking garage committee has been selected, and they will select the consultant. That process should be wrapped up within the next 30 days, Mr. Prokop said. FEMA is examining the city's request for underwater analysis, engineering, and mitigation money for the sea wall at Waterfront Park. All of the paperwork has been filed for permits, etc. for the day dock.

Balance Boutique Fitness' grand opening ribbon cutting is at 4:30 p.m. January 20, Commissioner Murray said, and he invited everyone to attend. He commented that the amount of activity throughout Beaufort is well-illustrated by the report's three-and-a-third pages.

The Hilton's access has changed, and now it will be off of Highway 21, Mr. Prokop said. Additionally, another hotel will be "on the property right next door," from the same developer. Though it has not yet gone through planning or other procedures, "this developer is willing to build a tunnel for the trail to go through, right off (Highway) 21," so the city is in the process of getting an agreement with the county, with the city being "responsible for the encroachment," Mr. Prokop said.

Chairman Verity asked if there's a date for the county to complete the trail. Mr. Prokop said last he had heard it was the end of last year. Commissioner Keyserling said the Cox family is starting to design the section of the trail that will go from Laurel Bay Road up to Gray's Hill.

Chairman Verity agreed with Commissioner Murray that it's "incredible what's going on in the city." Commissioner Murray said the projects in the initiatives report "represents millions of dollars worth of private investment in the city." Ms. Johnson said there are three or four new

residential construction projects, as well. Chairman Verity said three or four restaurants will open up by the end of February, too. Ms. Johnson noted the apartments on Greenlawn Drive.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Keyserling made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cromer, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.