



CITY OF BEAUFORT
1911 Boundary Street
Council Chambers
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29902
(843) 525-7070
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA
April 3, 2014

PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM – 1ST FLOOR
1911 BOUNDARY STREET

5:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

March 6, 2014

III. REPORTS

- A. Baptist Church of Beaufort Property
- B. LaFayette Street
- C. Housing Position
- D. Marina
- E. Review of Parking Project

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Discussion Regarding the Old Jail Property

Proposed Mission Statement

The City of Beaufort Redevelopment Commission has been established to renovate, revitalize, and regenerate distressed areas of Beaufort.

BRC's mission is to lead a coordinated strategy of redevelopment and design strengthening the City of Beaufort as:

- The heart of economic development for Northern Beaufort County
- A prosperous place for business and institutions; and
- An attractive urban environment for residents and visitors

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 March 6, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Jon Verity and Commissioners Mike McNally, Keith Waldrop, Wendy Zara, Stephen Murray, Alan Dechovitz, Henrietta Goode, and Mike McFee.

Martin Goodman 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.

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

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Zara made a motion, second by Commissioner Murray, to accept the minutes of the February 6, 2014 Redevelopment Commission as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Zara made a motion, second by Commissioner McFee to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting February 25, 2014 as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON BRIDGES PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

Charlie Calvert, volunteer board vice chair of Bridges Preparatory Charter School, described the origins of the school. They applied for federal funding to get started and received it for funding and implementation. They opened at the Boys & Girls Club building and the Charles Lind Brown Center. They wanted students to be able to walk to the school from their neighborhoods and to involve the community, Mr. Calvert said. The charter is for grades K-12, but they are K-6 now. Every year they are adding a grade.

Mr. Calvert said they get about \$6000 per student from the state. The budget is \$2.7 million. At build out, they “will be a \$6 million school.” They want to stay downtown. They are proposing through a development company and a real estate investment trust to build a facility to be leased, then bought in 5 years, for a K-8 facility. They have met with the city for a pre-development meeting. They want to have a high school somewhere nearby. Lowcountry Montessori and the virtual school attendees are also future attendees at Bridges School.

There are 20 students per class, Mr. Calvert said, and each grade maxes out at 80. Commissioner Murray asked how many students currently live in the city. Commissioner Dechovitz wondered how many of the children in the city in the next 5 years would be in non-traditional school settings. Mr. Calvert said that Beaufort Elementary has good options, but the Bridges School will offer more grades.

They want to work with the existing infrastructure in the area: Washington Park, the library,

USCB's Center for the Arts. They want the students to be involved in the community as a project-based school.

Mr. Calvert said a lot of the students' families have said they would like to move downtown now, and they hope it will spur that when they expand. Commissioner Murray asked about athletic fields. Mr. Calvert said they would like to use fields the county already has within the city; they want to use what already exists, maybe through leasing time there. Commissioner Waldrop asked if they will use the existing building, and then build up. Mr. Calvert said they won't be adding up, they will just renovate the interior and connect it through "a breezeway or something like that" to the new building.

The Boys & Girls Club runs the after-school program for BCPS, and while it's their building, they take over after 3:30 p.m. **John Payne** said they use the classrooms for different sessions like karate and basketball. The Boys & Girls Club wants to change their business model to go out into the community instead of having kids come to the Club. There are 12 rooms at the Boys & Girls Club for classes, and 7 rooms at the Charles Lind Brown Center. Next year, they will be adding 4 new classes and will need classrooms for that. Mr. Payne said part of the build-out for the new facility would be technology infrastructure.

The organization couldn't get a conventional bank loan without a financial track record, so they are working with Highmark, which will help with financing for five years until they have a record. Commissioner Zara asked about after-school programs for kids who are not at the school. Mr. Calvert explained how the Boys & Girls Club will go to other schools to serve the students where they are, on-site, instead of bussing the kids into the space, which is a "huge drain on their finances," and selling it will allow them the overhead to hire more staff.

Mr. Calvert said they would also like to offer dual enrollment as partners with TCL and USCB to make it an "education corridor." Chairman Verity suggested, because this is in the Historic District, that they also talk to **Maxine Lutz** and Historic Beaufort Foundation.

Commissioner Murray said he is excited that they are making this investment in the city and he expects more demand for workforce housing in the area. Mr. Calvert said he knows the teachers will want to live close by, and two already do and walk to school. Chairman Verity said there are vacant sites in the area (on Harrington) they see and are working on what they can do about putting housing there. Commissioner Dechovitz complimented them "on taking (their) fate in (their) hands with this project" and helping the city, too.

REPORTS

BAPTIST CHURCH OF BEAUFORT PROPERTY

Commissioner McNally said the property closings took place last week; the church owns the Prince Street block. The 811 King Street lot was sold from the Baptist Church of Beaufort to the Redevelopment Commission and simultaneously sold to the redeveloper, so the Commission

has \$45,000 from **Steve Tully**. The work on the house has already started. On the other 3 lots, the church is in an agreement with Mr. Tully to develop those, and two are already sold and under contract to be designed. One was sold to a retired judge and another to a resident of Spring Island. Mr. Tully told Commissioner McNally that as soon as 811 is more fixed up, the third church lot should sell easily, he believes.

Commissioner Waldrop asked if there has been speculation as to how the rehab unit will be priced. Mr. Tully had told Commissioner McNally that “there would be considerable costs” to rehab it. It had no foundation, was from 1890, and it has to have a lot done to straighten it, provide floors, and put porches on it now. **John Trask’s** intent is not to finish the whole renovation but to get it to the point where someone will want to buy it and finish it, Commissioner McNally said. Plumbing, electric, and sewer will all be brought over from the developer, so someone can move in, insulate it, and finish the inside.

LAFAYETTE STREET

Chairman Verity said **Eric Brown** was looking to get permits next week. **Libby Anderson** said she hadn’t heard from him recently. Chairman Verity said he wanted to get started next week. Ms. Anderson said it’s not platted, but the concept is for the alley with two access points.

HOUSING POSITION

Commissioner Zara said they are waiting for **Van Willis**, who recommended that they make a presentation at the Town of Port Royal council retreat. Chairman Verity said the idea is to create a new position that would be funded by the Town of Port Royal and City of Beaufort with the SC Community Loan Fund (CLF) to work on renovation in the city and loans for those who want to come in and build houses with the Housing Authority as partners, and that would be funded so that the Housing Authority doesn’t have a financial burden on it. Commissioner Zara said the Housing Authority would provide benefits but not salary. Chairman Verity said the City of Beaufort has responded positively, but “groups need to be brought together to make this work.”

MARINA

Chairman Verity said the developers would like to have a public meeting on March 26 in the council chambers upstairs at 6:00 PM to review what they have found and what their thoughts are, going forward. They wouldn’t have drawings, just a handout about what they see happening for the site. The developers are excited, Chairman Verity said, and they want community feedback to give them input they need to make drawings to be submitted 30 to 60 days after that to city council.

REVIEW OF PARKING PROJECT

Chairman Verity said **Greg Darden** from Structured Parking was in town and met with a number of people including downtown merchants, and there was a very good turn-out. Chairman Verity said it seemed that most people were in favor of a garage, but they are in the preliminary

stages and have made no decisions. They have requested that Structured Parking come back with more ideas about size, cost, how it would look on the lot, etc. They are looking for options, and Chairman Verity described two, one possibility “on each end of the spectrum.” They will come back in perhaps the next 30 days to begin more discussions. The process is anticipated to engage the public throughout, Chairman Verity said. There appears to be room for something that they will need for the parking that they perceive they will need, but there are many players and this is not necessarily a city-sponsored project.

Commissioner Dechovitz said “one of the things people are having trouble understanding” is that if nothing changes, there’s no need for a garage, but if there’s marina development, there’s ALSO a need for downtown to have more economic development, according to the study about marketing downtown from **Seth Harry**. More people need to live downtown, there’s a need for more development downtown, and if nothing changes, there “will still be a downtown that is economically challenged.”

Commissioner McNally said he questions if anyone is planning to do a parking study to determine real needs. There are a lot of vacant stores downtown, and if they fill up and come back, what will the parking needs be: for the marina, stores that might fill up, events? He feels they need a study “before we build the biggest garage that will fit in there.” He feels there needs to be a study or an evaluation. Chairman Verity said the 2007 parking study by Walker was still relevant, and they had a bond study done, and things haven’t changed a lot since then, though 303 Associates is looking to further develop their block, and merchants have said they will need more parking if they fill up the empty spaces downtown. They have a sense of a finite number that **Dick Stewart** needs and for the marina, Chairman Verity said.

Commissioner McNally said it would be helpful for people to know that there is a parking study, which he didn’t know about. He feels there needs to be more publicity about this. Commissioner Dechovitz said as the plans for a garage progress, more analysis will be available. He said people aren’t educated enough at this point to understand why it’s important. Chairman Verity said this is an incremental process; they need to determine needs, who will pay for it, and to make sure it fits in. Whatever it is, and the need is shown, it’s still not a big city (with just 9 developable blocks).

Commissioner Murray said the Leadership Beaufort Alumni Association is hosting a workshop on the Beaufort Marina Project, March 20, 6 PM at the Holiday Inn.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: REVIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION RETREAT 2014

Chairman Verity said there wasn’t a lot of material, but they are moving to an implementation phase, now that the Civic Master Plan has been approved. At the same time as the retreat was held, there was a staff retreat for the city, and they are planning to use the capital improvements plan (CIP) in all its decisions. The Civic Master Plan’s role was emphasized as non-regulating but as the first source to look at for what might fit in a redevelopment scenario.

They also determined that, as they put projects together, they fund them through a project form that would be filled out. A draft has been made that is a 1-page checklist to have the city to potentially fund projects.

The Redevelopment Commission doesn't have a committed budget, Chairman Verity said, so they can't spend anything without the CFO approving it. If they find developable land in the Northwest Quadrant, for example, they can go to the city to see if there's money available to be used by the Redevelopment Commission to make a project more feasible. It would work similarly to how it did in the Baptist Church of Beaufort project: as partners with the property owner to find a way to develop housing in the city

Chairman Verity reviewed who was chairing which Redevelopment Commission projects. Boundary Street right-of-ways are procured, and they have discussed meeting with Boundary Street stakeholders to identify those who have a stake in the development to be sure their concerns are clear. There was discussion about reconstituting the Finance Committee.

Chairman Verity said Commissioner Goode had made an important comment about helping to find ways to help the people who live in the Northwest Quadrant to take care of their homes to keep them there and maintain the character of the city. Commissioner Zara said they could especially do this if they have a housing person. Chairman Verity said they also need to understand those people who are committed to their homes but aren't able to do anything with them.

Commissioner McNally suggested that there be at least one work session "to identify those folks," and he would have a lot of ideas he would like to put down on paper. Commissioner Zara said between Commissioner Goode and Ms. Anderson, they have a good handle on the people in that neighborhood. Commissioner Zara said they know who needs help. Commissioner McNally said he would like to brainstorm some creative ideas at a work session, and he's sure others have some, so they can move in that direction, and when the housing person comes on board, they will be ready for them and have momentum. Ms. Anderson said she could set that up. Commissioner Zara invited Ms. Lutz.

Commissioner Goode said Ms. Anderson and Ms. Lutz both have archives about the housing in the Northwest Quadrant. Chairman Verity said in regard to the housing position, once the position is established, there will be money available in conjunction with projects, so the city and Lowcountry Housing Trust money would be seed money. Commissioner Zara said they think it would be self-sustaining after 3 years. Commissioner Waldrop said there are multiple sources of grant money, but "they all carry with them the burden of paperwork" for the grants. Commissioner Zara said they should also invite **Brenda Dooley** from Habitat for Humanity. Commissioner Goode said she thinks that the Northwest Quadrant "would be a good starting point."

Commissioner McNally asked about the budget discussion at the retreat. Chairman Verity said there's currently "an allocation for the consultants that will go away." Commissioner McNally asked where the check that they got from Mr. Tully would go. Commissioner Zara said the form they are making would be modified for use for such requests. Commissioner McNally said he would like to be better informed about what money is available. Commissioner Zara said the Lawrence Group is spending the money that would be the Redevelopment Commission's, and Chairman Verity said they continue to work on the form-based code and Boundary Street. The Boundary Street portion is not paid through the Redevelopment Commission, Commissioner McFee said.

Any money that was originally designated from the Redevelopment Commission, like parking revenue, is for the Redevelopment Commission; it's not absorbed into the General Fund. Commissioner McFee said they are realigning the way accounting is done, and the Redevelopment Commission hasn't been a cost-center up to now because of the consultants, so now they're pinpointing what the Redevelopment Commission can go forward with doing. There are cost-centers that are specific to the Redevelopment Commission; the consultants and what they are doing are the Redevelopment Commission's because the Redevelopment Commission contracted with the consultants. Chairman Verity said there's money available for the Redevelopment Commission's use, and they "will apply for it in the proper way." Commissioner Zara said the incentives would be an important use of funds in the future.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McNally, to adjourn the special meeting. The motion passed unanimously**, and the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.