

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on February 7, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Vice Chairman Mike McNally and Commissioners Mike McFee, Martin Goodman, Alan Dechovitz, and Wendy Zara.

Jon Verity, Keith Waldrop, Henrietta Goode and Pat Kase were absent.

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice Chairman McNally.

### **MINUTES**

**Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2013 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **REPORTS**

#### **FINANCE & RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

Vice Chairman McNally said that these two committees have merged. Their “latest issue is getting all the housing players together.” He said that Historic Beaufort Foundation, Habitat For Humanity, Lowcountry Housing Trust, the city and BJWSA are among the players they are trying to meet with as stakeholders because they all want to create more housing in Beaufort. They are attempting a two-pronged approach: first, they will be serving as “the hub” while organizing these groups to work together more, rather than having separate projects in each organization. The second prong is “the project plan,” he said. They are talking about a block project: looking at the master plan, and seeing where all the Habitat For Humanity potentials are; where the Historic Beaufort Foundation hot points are that have good potential; where Beaufort Housing Authority projects could fit into that plan; where Lowcountry Housing Trust could get involved with builders; seeing where there are vacant properties and where there’s “a cluster of these together that when completed would have more impact.” Commissioner Zara said this would include the private sector. Vice Chairman McNally said he, **Julie Franklin**, and **Lauren Kelly** have looked at a map and found many projects where this would work.

Commissioner Zara said the coalition will try to find a way to improve administration; as it is now, “everyone is challenged in that realm,” and it’s “keeping them from getting things done effectively.” They would like commercial to be involved, she added. They are still talking about incentives. They “may target certain areas, and they are starting with a plan.”

There’s a DRB meeting in the upcoming week, and Vice Chairman McNally said he would attend “to lend support to Eric Brown and his team.”

#### **COMMERCIAL / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Goodman said the committee will meet as needed when there are projects.

### **BOUNDARY STREET UPDATE**

Ms. Franklin said they are “a little behind schedule.” They’re working through issues with SCDOT; they need a final release on documents SCDOT has been given. There is a right-of-way agent on board, Ms. Franklin said, and when they are released by DOT, he will begin talking to property owners. Until the parcels are defined, she said, they can’t officially approach anyone. “The right-of-way agent will approach the property owners and appraisals will be part of that process,” she said. They are working on construction drawings while waiting on the DOT release.

Ms. Franklin said they are looking at alternatives to the Boundary Street boardwalk design, which may have “safety and access concerns.” They “want to meet the intent but be safe.” The boardwalk has “a long piece on Boundary Street,” she said. It may not be entirely implemented as indicated, or they may look at alternatives as to how it is placed. As it is designed now, it’s not easy to access, and once one gets on it, it’s hard to get off. They “want it to be multi-modal transportation with marsh and water views,” but it needs to be safe and, Vice Chairman McNally added, accessible at more places than the ends.

### **DEPOT ROAD UPDATE**

The rail trail path is being used and the building stabilized, and as that goes on, there should be generation of greater interest, Ms. Franklin said. Commissioner Zara said that they “need more sections of the trail completed before (they) will see much.”

**Maxine Lutz** said that SCE& G wants to demolish a building it owns along the trail which is from around 1915 and was the original power plant for Beaufort. The Historic Beaufort Foundation says it’s one of only a couple buildings from this era that are still in Beaufort. Ms. Lutz asked the Redevelopment Commission to consider taking a position on this building and the requested demolition. It’s near the Depot Building along the rail trail. Commissioner Dechovitz described where the building is located. The civic master plan hasn’t been approved for this area, Ms. Lutz said, but it would include keeping this building. It could be used the same way the Depot Building is used.

Ms. Franklin said the master plan talks about general use of this building. SCE&G will be going before the HDRB next Wednesday (2-13) at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Zara asked if SCE&G would sell the property. Ms. Lutz said “there seems not to be interest there”; the initiative is coming from wherever their headquarters are. Ms. Lutz said the building is “not a structural hazard at this time.” **Libby Anderson** said the HDRB meeting is on Wednesday at 2 pm and the DRB meeting is Thursday (2-14) at 2 pm.

**Merritt Patterson** said he had inquired about acquiring the building to remodel it. SCE&G representatives said that they need to expand the power lines, want clearance from the high

voltage power lines, and “don’t want to sell it to anyone.” They have a legitimate liability concern, Mr. Patterson said. The building also may contain asbestos.

**Tommy Logan** said the building was built in 1906 or 1907. “The Kinghorn building and this one complement each other ... for all of the area along the trail,” he said. Mr. Logan also said the building acts as a manmade buffer to screen the substation. Also, Mr. Logan said, the class action attorneys in Kansas City in the railroad suit determined that the footprint is partly in the railroad land, “and they may not be able to take out but half of it.” The SCE&G representatives didn’t mention this when the building was discussed before. “The cloudy title to the Kinghorn Building might be a bargaining chip to sell it to the city,” Mr. Logan said, because at least half of it has a clear title. Then the city could get involved with those who want to lease it for shops, he concluded.

### **MARINA UPDATE – NEXT STEPS**

Commissioner Dechovitz said they are getting a contract for geotechnical studies to provide soil sample analysis in the marina area. This “very phase one environmental study” can give a potential developer a sense of what the site is. Ms. Franklin is drafting a letter so that when they have the study completed, they can send it out to interested parties.

Ms. Franklin said Whitaker Laboratories will be on site next week and will coordinate through the Public Works department. History files on the site have been pulled, and she will use them to help with Phase One. She’s awaiting “a schedule of when work should be converted.”

Commissioner Goodman asked about tanks. Ms. Franklin said the old gas station is now the park, and there was some release from the tanks and a lot of correspondence and monitoring by South Carolina DHEC. They’ve asked for review of that as part of the work. She said she didn’t know “if it was Superfund or not.”

Vice Chairman McNally asked Commissioner Dechovitz what the next step after this will be: a letter of interest or an RFP. Commissioner Dechovitz said his committee has informed council that they “will send a letter to local, regional, and national development groups,” and when they get responses in late March or April, they “will evaluate the responses and see who they want to talk to first.”

Vice Chairman McNally said there is an issue of parking and of a development supplanting existing parking and asked how that would fit into development questionnaires. Commissioner Dechovitz said the master plan envisions parking in the Port Republic Square area. They will be talking to a developer who may be interested in parking development next week. “Any substantial development on the site of the marina will be part of the project,” he said. To develop the marina, they “will have to do something about the parking lot.” Commissioner Dechovitz said they have been approached, and they think more than one company will be interested in the parking lot.

Ms. Franklin said they are looking at under-structure parking. They will see what kind of interest is present in the development community. Commissioner Zara asked about FEMA and if it's in a flood zone. Ms. Franklin said "there will be a lot of moving pieces," so Commissioner Zara is correct. It was "a fill site." Commissioner Dechovitz explained where it was originally filled. Everything is potentially in a flood zone, he said, but that doesn't preclude development. In St. Augustine, Commissioner Dechovitz said, the Hilton is on a similar historic bay front, and "you can't tell it's a Hilton hotel." The new buildings all have different fronts and link together with parking a level below. Behind the building there is other parking.

Commissioner Zara asked about the water sports center. Commissioner Dechovitz said "council wanted them to pursue that" because others had approached them about the water sports center in the west end. Commissioner Dechovitz said he "encourage(s) people to think about that"; the master plan "considers the site for multiple types of uses," and "one would be a commercial building that would include water sports retailers and improve access to the water." In the 1960s, this site was the location of the Beaufort Yacht and Sailing Club, he continued; it provided local access to the water for sailing. The buildings there now encompass 3500 square feet. They "think more will go on that site." Ms. Franklin explained the variety of information that would be available to the developers so that "they can see all the moving parts."

Ms. Franklin distributed the Office of Civic Investment's monthly report. She said that last time they met, they had talked about *what* they were reporting. To provide more information, the report has been changed "to include the milestones (they) made this month." Vice Chairman McNally said the commissioners "can digest it," and "they will pick up on the discussion at the next regular meeting." Ms. Franklin said in the future she would be sure to get the report out ahead of time.

Ms. Franklin said the master plan is being circulated among staff and the commissioners. All sectors are finalized, and the commissioners should have gotten hard copies. **James Nelson** can make copies of the plan for any commissioners who didn't, she said. They also have received positive feedback on the online process for form-based code.

Ms. Franklin said the Office of Civic Investment has updated Sectors 4 and 5 and "made changes based on uses and conditions." They "have made significant changes" from the Beaufort code zoning. It "fixes some translation errors" that were originally made. They hope these will address the many concerns heard in the meetings. Nothing has been finalized. The goal, Ms. Franklin said, is a public adoption process in September – December of this year for the Beaufort code. She said "it's an aggressive schedule but will keep people on task."

The city manager met with the Lowcountry Housing Trust board chair and staff members and had a three-hour meeting that Ms. Franklin described as "a very good meeting." The plan is to

meet again in March after the retreats to sit down and develop the 2013 work plan, based on the retreats.

In regard to business and development assistance, Ms. Franklin said she and Ms. Kelly are working on collaborating what each of them has been working on, and “how to pull it together and move forward with a final product on that.”

Mr. Patterson asked if the proposed zoning map and Beaufort code are available online for the public to review. Ms. Franklin said not yet. They are calling it the Beaufort Code, she said, “to indicate that it’s unique to Beaufort.” But the form-based code committee members are the only ones reviewing it now. The committee members are talking to people in their neighborhoods for feedback, but once it’s through the committee review process, it will be made available to the public. The maps, Ms. Franklin said, are like the ones in the civic master plan. They “will look at code issues and then go back to the maps to make sure it’s all consistent.” There will be substantial opportunity for the public to review it all, Ms. Franklin said, and the public’s opinions will be taken into account.

The Redevelopment Commission retreat will be February 19 from about 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the commission, **Commissioner Zara made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.