A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on March 7, 2013 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, Wendy Zara, Keith Waldrop, Alan Dechovitz, Mike McFee, Henrietta Goode and Martin Goodman.

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 5:04 p.m. by Chairman Verity.

MINUTES

Commissioner Goodman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Zara, to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2013 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS: UPDATE ON LAFAYETTE STREET PROCESS

Eric Brown said they had received the final vote from council in December. First they did a formal survey of the property; they met with city staff on the site, talked it through, and met with neighbors to let them know their intentions. Then they "redesigned a little bit." He passed out the land plan to the commissioners. The pocket park has increased in size a little bit, Mr. Brown said. They turned the alley and made it run down to Lafayette Street to avoid a tree's root ball. Two of the houses "front the park better now." There are two 2-bedroom and four 3-bedroom units. The due diligence began January 25, but they had already made formal submissions before then. They received full approvals on these "major milestones." They also met with the neighborhood association February 12 and gave a presentation and "received positive comments from everyone," Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown said the DRB granted a variance on the side setbacks and suggested they add as many front porches to these houses as possible. They had been thinking of a combination of porches and stoops and letting the market decide on a porch as an upgrade so they can keep the houses at market rate. They met with the Technical Review Commission on February 12 and received full approval. The next milestone is the end of due diligence on April 25. They are concentrating of fees now. Mr. Brown said they would like to come back to the Redevelopment Commission in a month to let the commission know what those fees are and see "what seems to make sense." Core samples "couldn't have come back much better," and they "are pleased with what (they) found and able to go forward," Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown said the repaving issue is unclear; Lafayette Street is to be repaved this spring by SCDOT. The city has expressed some interest in taking over the street. They are unclear about the interaction between SCDOT and the City of Beaufort and how it relates to this project. Commissioner McFee said the plan originally was to look at the area around the park for parking on and off-street for the park. The state required that they take Rodgers, Nairne, and Lafayette Street. They proposed to take the roads if they're brought to a standard by the time the city takes them, but SCDOT "all but laughed." They are trying to work some better deals,

but funding and budget cuts for SCDOT are not good, so Commissioner McFee thinks it will be in Mr. Brown's project requirements. There may be adjustments made with the understanding of limitations.

Libby Anderson said they may revisit the issue of the streets because of the park funding, and if council doesn't make a decision they could lose funding; there's county funding involved as well, Ms. Anderson said. Lafayette Street will be repaved but not necessarily with reference to the off-Street parking. This can be discussed at council's workshop. Mr. Brown said there's what the SCDOT will typically do and what the City of Beaufort has asked them to do. If that changes, it will upset the plans a little bit, as they have been doing what the City of Beaufort asked them to. Chairman Verity asked if they might pave it before Mr. Brown gets to that point in the project. Mr. Brown said they have kicked around strategies for this involving delaying part of the project until the paving happens, but that doesn't solve the whole problem. Mr. Brown said the standards of the turning radii out of the alley, for example, will be smaller than want the City of Beaufort had asked them to do.

Commissioner McFee said Rodgers "would be a million dollar project immediately" for example, if the city took it over. Highway Transportation money is paving Lafayette, Commissioner McFee said, and he believes it's slated for April.

Mr. Brown said before the contractual closing date, they have the design package, part of which was approved by city staff and needs to be resubmitted to the city and the Redevelopment Commission, which will happen in a week or two. Commissioner Zara asked if they could vote today. Commissioner McFee said they could approve it conceptually.

Commissioner McFee made a motion to accept the plan as submitted to go forward to staff for review, and if there are major modifications, it would have to come back to Redevelopment Commission as a consent agenda amendment. Commissioner Zara seconded the motion.

Commissioner McNally asked if Mr. Brown had developed any elevation views. Mr. Brown said they have sketches, "but that's really the next step." The graphic they provided to Redevelopment Commission, he said, is not entirely accurate; some of the roof forms are different, and they have a "kit," so each house can take a porch or stoop or bay window. Commissioner McNally said it's not possible to see what the windows and shutters, etc. look like now, and Mr. Brown said that's what they are working on.

Commissioner McNally said the DRB required the slab 24-30" above the sidewalk. Mr. Brown agreed. **The motion passed unanimously.**

HOUSING / REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TASK FORCE

Chairman Verity said the there was a meeting that created a starting point. Commissioner Zara said Commissioner Waldrop is the main author of business plans. Commissioner Waldrop said the meeting was to explore conceptually the marriage of the not-for-profit subsidiary of the Housing Authority, which has pretty broad powers as a redevelopment entity. They can house warm bodies there. The staff would coordinate the housing initiatives they want to see in the city. They will create a business plan, and when they agree on it, they will create a budget that goes out 2-3 years. They will look for a funding support agreement from the city to bring staff forward to make all this happen.

Angela Childers is communicating with the not-for-profit board and then will get back to the Redevelopment Commission members: Commissioner Waldrop, Commissioner Goode, and Commissioner Zara. They want to create a two page business plan and a budget to present to **Scott Dadson** and council to get at least a conditional commitment to funding to put people in place and make this happen. Commissioner Zara said it should be self-sustaining after a couple of years. Chairman Verity asked for an example of what the new group would do.

Commissioner Zara said they could take a project like Lafayette Street, and if the numbers were relevant to the types of funding available, the organization could orchestrate funding with the Lowcountry Housing Trust and other pieces of funding that help make these kinds of projects work, the capacity of which they are currently missing, Commissioner Zara said. They could be doing projects at 80% of median income, rather than 120% of median. Commissioner Waldrop said the Lowcountry Housing Trust conducted a housing fair and invited people with an interest in rehabbing a house or renting an affordable house, etc. The turn-out was about 60 people. But the Lowcountry Housing Trust doesn't work with individuals, so there was no one to follow up with those 60 people so they could actually buy a unit. The fair was successful, but there was no one there to further it by working with the participants one-on-one.

Commissioner Zara said **Shirley Wilkins** was putting together some homebuyer assistance classes. The requirement might be a minimum credit score of "X," so people can qualify for a loan and the others can be introduced to a credit counselor.

Commissioner Waldrop described a rental program on units on formally vacant lots in the city. Commissioner Zara said they would ideally make home ownership opportunities available to people earning more than 60% of median income, but they need funding to be coordinated as it must come from multiple sources.

Commissioner Goodman asked if the organization will focus on residential housing for buyers rather than renters. Commissioner Waldrop said they would do both. Housing Authority already owns, operates, and manages a lot of rental property in Beaufort. He said the units belong to the not-for-profit, not the Housing Authority. The only thing that imposes the 60% of income level is the involvement of one of their major sources of funding. Commissioner Zara said they

need a housing needs assessment study for the city. Commissioner Waldrop said this is a funding requirement for some funding sources. Commissioner Waldrop said they have the ability because of the work done to create the database for each sector; they have information not available to any other community. They should be able to do a useful housing needs assessment.

Commissioner McFee asked what organization would do the housing needs assessment. Commissioner Zara said the COG would cover four counties and the jurisdictions within them. They will look at housing stock, jobs, and income levels. Commissioner McFee asked if the city would be able to generate it. Commissioner Zara said it has recommended that an independent entity do it. Commissioner Goodman asked about the Lawrence Group doing it, and Commissioner Zara said she didn't know.

Commissioner Waldrop said the initiative they foresee is just within the city, and Commissioner Zara said it could potentially expand. Commissioner McFee said he feels this is the direction they should be going in. Commissioner Zara said the Housing Authority seems to be open on the 501c3 side to expand their horizon, but they need another staff person.

BOUNDARY STREET UPDATE

Julie Franklin said the right-of-way acquisition for Boundary Street has begun. The project is in 2 phases: they are focusing on everything west of Hogarth on the first phase. They have started staking 7' behind the exiting sidewalk, but some property owners are taking stakes up.

Ms. Franklin said SCE&G is not yet resolved but will be handled by the city manager but all the other utilities are on board. Chairman Verity asked if they need to wait for that before construction begins. Ms. Franklin said they do. The appraisals are being done in phases, Ms. Franklin said, which "is required by the feds for right-of-way acquisition." This is why they broke Boundary Street into two sections. They intend to put out the construction contact for bid this summer.

Commissioner Goodman asked if this first phase included the Highway 170 realignment, and Commissioner McFee said yes. Commissioner McNally said on Bladen they got to a point where they knew what was going to happen with the right-of-way, and asked if it were possible to get plans out to bid before the right-of-way was entirely finished; Ms. Franklin said that's why they broke it into phases. Commissioner McFee said he meant that in phase one, they could try to avoid the "slips" that happen in construction jobs. He feels they "should be clever" and "get one foot out as soon as possible." Commissioner McFee said the project can't be permitted until they have approval, so they can't let a contract. Commissioner McNally said he meant getting the bids begun, which will take time, and then the bidders can make adjustments when they have approval. Ms. Franklin said the bottom line is probably no. Commissioner McFee agreed. Ms. Franklin said they have to have approved drawings before they can go public and say "this is what we are going to do."

Commissioner McFee said anything that goes public would show a right-of-way that the city didn't yet own. Commissioner McNally said on Bladen, they had right-of-way holdouts in regard to a big or little sidewalk as a right-of-way issue; the Redevelopment Commission decided to take the worst case – no wide sidewalk – but they put them out for bid. They had firm bids, and the contract allowed the property owner to change his mind and add on to the sidewalk up to the last minute. He said it was strategic planning. Commissioner McFee said it also submitted the city to a lawsuit. In regard to this project, there are legal ramifications due to the TIGER fund granting. There are no variances from their guidelines in order to get that funding. Other cities would take this money if the City of Beaufort doesn't meet its September 30 deadline. Ms. Franklin said most of the project is being coordinated through the county, and the city is providing support. She said she would bring Commissioner McNally's idea to the coordination committee.

Commissioner McFee said the committee is run by the same people from the one cent sales tax, so they are knowledgeable about meeting deadlines within legal confines.

MARINA RLOI PROGRESS REPORT

Ms. Franklin said there is a preliminary environmental / geotechnical study which looks at soil conditions, and she and Commissioner Dechovitz are looking at it and "talking to the engineers as to how this translates into vertical." They got the environmental recommendation today, and were told that "there are no further issues to address." Commissioner Dechovitz said the site is "challenging," but "there are no insurmountable barriers to development, which is exactly what we expected," so there should be no delay for the project.

Commissioner Dechovitz asked Ms. Franklin for a date for the draft of the request for the letters of interest. Ms. Franklin said it will be in the next couple days and said it's an advertisement for the letter of interest. They intend to submit it to as broad an audience as possible. They will assume some parties know nothing about Beaufort. The notification will say where Beaufort is, information about the site, what's happening in the way of projects in the community, etc. as well as specific information about the goals of the site. The master plan will be attached as well as other information.

Commissioner Zara asked if they have talked to Historic Beaufort Foundation. Ms. Franklin said she "had chatted with **Maxine Lutz**." The document will indicate that the site is in a historic downtown and will be "sensitive" and require a project that will relate well to the historic aspect of downtown. They are working on getting more specifics about current regulations. Commissioner Zara said they will have a better project if everybody – including Historic Beaufort Foundation – is at the table. Ms. Franklin said this is just to determine interest, and those who are interested can submit projects they've done for Redevelopment Commission review. Commissioner Zara said Ms. Lutz's input would be invaluable.

Commissioner Dechovitz said they are happy to talk with anybody at any time about the project. They have talked to The Point association. Commissioner McFee said "it's important that the developers understand that it's a historically sensitive community." There's no specification that anyone can sign off on a project. Commissioner Goodman said if they say it's a national historic district, people will call and visit to determine what the permitting process might entail. Commissioner Zara said things that would be suitable in Charleston's historic district would be different than in Beaufort's. Commissioner Goodman said that will come when the Redevelopment Commission meets with the developers. Chairman Verity said the goal is to get people interested and to make it as broad as possible. Down the road, they "hope a lot of people will be involved."

Commissioner McNally said that, as a former developer, on receipt of a letter of interest, it's appreciated to have as much information as possible. Also, utilities in the area and capacity are important to know. They can make statements about where the utilities are. It's good to know permit fees if they have the information ahead of time, Commissioner McNally said, and if a developer sees it, they recognize that the city is sensitive to costs.

Ms. Franklin said she could send the soil report to anyone on the Redevelopment Commission. Ms. Franklin said the release will be concise but provide as much information as possible to let developers make as informed a decision as possible and to get as much possible information from them but without them "spending a lot of time and money to submit when the city is just checking for interest right now."

Commissioner Dechovitz said in regard to the marina, another issue is the OCRM permit that came out today. Commissioner Dechovitz said that's an old permit that was updated to expedite the mooring field and electrical upgrades, and another will be coming for the day dock. He clarified that it's an old permit to allow them to move forward as quickly as possible on the mooring field. An RFP is out for contractors for engineering and design of the day dock. **Isaiah Smalls** will select someone.

Commissioner Dechovitz said he hopes that when the commissioners represent the Redevelopment Commission on these developments, whether they agree with them or not, they discuss that the reason they are doing these things is that the city needs to increase the amount of property that contributes to the city's economics, particularly in downtown, which costs more to deliver services to than the money that comes from downtown. Putting more property into the taxable base is necessary, and the city will get money from property taxes or from increasing the taxable base, "which is the least painful way and supports jobs and opportunities for those in the community." He said "people need to understand why this is important."

Ms. Franklin said a public review copy of the master plan will be available March 15. She encouraged Redevelopment Commission members to make comments and give feedback. The neighborhood meetings and public forums will be scheduled throughout the spring.

In regard to the Beaufort code, Ms. Franklin said there's been frustration about the lack of progress. Council is making changes to the process; the mayor and all of the council attended the meeting and reiterated their support for the project. They have appointed **David Tedder** and **Terry Hussey** as co-chairs. Commissioner McFee said it was a very positive meeting. They will have a revised schedule in two weeks. The chairs will make the revised schedule.

Commissioner McFee said the former way of approaching it had put the Lawrence Group in "an untenable situation as to the re-shaping of the resource, and this focuses the commission more." Commissioner Zara said she agreed with that. Ms. Franklin said all available chapters and maps have been posted to the web site posted with "huge disclaimers" that they are pre-release copies and haven't been reviewed and approved by the committee. The committee wanted to be as transparent as possible.

Commissioner McFee asked if the budget alignment the Redevelopment Commission was sent was for January and February was to date and Ms. Franklin said through the month of February.

Chairman Verity asked Ms. Anderson if Duke Street was moving forward, and she said it was and had been submitted to the state. They don't expect final approval until mid-April, but she feels positive. She said the RFP for engineering can be released before the approval of the grant, so when they get the grant, they "can move forward with that." Commissioner McNally asked the parameters of the project and Ms. Anderson said it's from Harington to Charles.

RETREAT

Chairman Verity said the structure of the Redevelopment Commission has changed and told who is working on which committees. Chairman Verity said council is looking for a ninth member "who will have a strong interest in the Commerce Park."

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Waldrop asked where they are on the building swap with Habitat for Humanity. Commissioner McNally said they talked to **Brenda Dooley** and her officers, and they have looked at the building on Prince Street which was a maintenance center. He said it's "a terrible building and should be torn down." The property, when cleaned up, would be an asset to the neighborhood and allow several housing units. He and Commissioner Waldrop looked at it, but how they start the process of recommendations to have it torn down, he's not sure. Commissioner McFee said the building has been discussed with Open Land Trust acquisitions and de-acquisitions. If there's tangible interest from Habitat for Humanity, he would bring it to council. Commissioner McNally said Habitat for Humanity would be interested if the building were torn down. Commissioner McNally went on to discuss what Habitat for Humanity is

interested in and not interested in. They are working on getting out of the Public Works facility. Commissioner Dechovitz suggested that across the street from them is a metal building that was an antique store, an office building, and an Asian grocery. Commissioner Waldrop said the Parris Island Gateway property is large enough that they could sell off their office and use part of the funds to create a new workshop. They funded the Quonset hut, he said, and described other possible funding sources.

Chairman Verity recognized Ms. Lutz for her appointment as the Executive Director for the Historic Beaufort Foundation.

Commissioner Goodman said that Lindsey Graham was sponsoring a procurement workshop. He told the dates and locations and said business owners who want to work with the government should be invited.

Commissioner Goodman asked about the potholes in the road around USCB on Duke and New Streets. Commissioner McFee said that's the Highway Department's purview, but the city has a relationship with them, and Mr. Smalls can look at them.

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 6:24 p.m.