

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on July 11, 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 Alan Dechovitz, Martin Goodman, Wendy Zara, and Mike McFee.

Commissioners Henrietta Goode, Stephen Murray, Mike McNally, and Keith Waldrop 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 5:02 p.m. by Chairman Verity.

MINUTES

Commissioner McFee noted that “WG,” who the minutes said seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting, should have been “WZ” for Commissioner Zara. **Commissioner Goodman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McFee, to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2013 meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Verity said that he had arranged for a meeting at the Lipsitz Building with the USCB arts teachers and the building owners to look at the upstairs gallery space. He said the teaching staff has little connection with the city, but they were very interested in the studio and in having students do internships. “Students are coming here to make a life in the arts,” Chairman Verity said, and on parents’ weekends, their parents can come to visit the studio spaces.

Commissioner McFee said they have opened the university’s Center for the Arts to more people for the gallery openings and “have surprised people with all that goes on there.” There was a general discussion about other downtown galleries and times that students’ parents could take a self-guided tour. Commissioner Goodman said August 17 was move-in day for USCB students.

REPORTS

UPDATE FROM HOUSING / REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TASK FORCE

Commissioner Zara said **Shirley Wilkins** had hosted her second informational workshop, and the turn-out was “pretty good.” She is doing a first-time homebuyers seminar on July 20.

In regard to the Housing Authority, “it all depends on money,” Commissioner Zara said. Chairman Verity said they need a dedicated stream of income so that they can hire someone. Commissioner Zara said that Commissioner McNally is working with the Baptist Church, and she believes “they are at the point of getting something signed.” Commissioner McFee said he would be talking to people from Columbia’s CDC at the Municipal Conference.

Commissioner Zara said she “would like to work in a more coordinated way with the county and the Town of Port Royal” regarding housing. She said the Housing Authority board “has a hang-

up” because they serve the county and feel that they can’t have preference toward one specific area. She thinks that they could have a “trial” and see if it works, then get others on board. She plans to contact county council representative **Paul Sommerville**.

BOUNDARY STREET UPDATE

Chairman Verity said **Craig Lewis** said there are a couple of more weeks to go on the right-of-way acquisitions.

MARINA RLOI PROGRESS REPORT

Chairman Verity said they have had four responses to their request for letters of interest, and they will be interviewing those responders over the next few weeks. Commissioner Goodman asked if the deadline for submissions had passed, and he was told it had. Chairman Verity said the four they have are highly qualified and have done projects in the area. Commissioner Dechovitz said anyone that they choose to partner with “will cause the public to be excited about the company, their resources, and what they would bring to Beaufort.”

Chairman Verity said he feels it’s important to keep the names confidential at this point, but “it will be a very public process when the time comes.” Commissioner McFee said this is just fact-finding at this point, not really interviews.

Commissioner Goodman asked if the Redevelopment Commission “would make it an open bid for marina development.” Commissioner McFee said the RLOI was asking for interested parties. Chairman Verity said they hope to find a team that would work well together and in the community. Commissioner McFee said they are looking at this point at who might qualify. Chairman Verity and Commissioner Dechovitz agreed that all the companies are capable, and Commissioner Dechovitz said “the process will expose whether (the developers’) market is like that which Beaufort is trying to attract.”

LAFAYETTE STREET UPDATE

Chairman Verity said **Libby Anderson** and **Lauren Kelly** had said **Eric Brown** is moving forward on this housing project but still slowly, and he hasn’t broken ground yet. Commissioner Zara said she’s concerned that the city gave them land, essentially, and they need to have sensitivity to workforce housing, as they said they would in their RFP. Chairman Verity said they could talk with Mr. Brown to ensure that. Commissioner Dechovitz asked what workforce housing is. Commissioner Zara explained the determination of price for workforce housing. The cost of the house is 120% of the median income as established by Beaufort County. The frequently quoted number is for a family of 4 and is usually in the mid-\$100’s, she said, and Commissioner McFee agreed.

Commissioner Zara said she’s concerned Mr. Brown’s “price points are changing.” Commissioner McFee said porches, etc. add costs. Commissioner Zara said that the houses in that area of Pigeon Point don’t all have porches. Commissioner McFee said that wasn’t the only

issue Mr. Brown was dealing with. Chairman Verity said repaving had slowed Mr. Brown down. Commissioner McFee said if he's waiting on paving before he breaks ground, it's federal work, and "he may be waiting a long time." Chairman Verity said he'd contact Mr. Brown.

BEAUFORT CODE UPDATE

All meetings have been cancelled until further notice, Commissioner Zara said. Chairman Verity said that they "are going to re-group." Commissioner Zara said "they don't need to cancel meetings to accomplish that."

CIVIC MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Chairman Verity said he had spoken with Mr. Lewis and **Julie Franklin**, and it looks like the plan will be updated within the next 10 days, reviewed by the Redevelopment Commission, and then if the Redevelopment Commission is in agreement, it will be uploaded to the website. There will then be a public hearing, then it will go to the Metropolitan Planning Commission and then city council. Chairman Verity asked for more Redevelopment Commission attendance. Commissioner Dechovitz said he would go if he's given notice.

Commissioner Dechovitz said he "still gets a lot of questions about why the city isn't moving forward on the marina" since people have heard about it, but he doesn't know if those people will show up for this process, necessarily. Chairman Verity said the public hearing will be for people to express their concerns about the Civic Master Plan. If things in it need to be corrected, they will be. This is for all the sectors and additional input will be done before it goes to the Metropolitan Planning Commission. Commissioner McFee said it will be on the website as soon as the Redevelopment Commission gets it. The public will have time to read it.

Commissioner Zara said that they need to get together to discuss the commission's budget. Commissioner McFee said until the numbers come from the county, which will be in mid-August, they won't really know what they have in the way of money. The Redevelopment Commission is currently budgeted at \$30,000, and the parking money included should equal \$100,000 to work with in this coming year. Commissioner McFee said he doesn't know how long the parking money has been accumulated for the Redevelopment Commission.

Commissioner McFee said the roll-forward and roll-back will be determined by mid-August. The \$30,000 in the budget is a line item, Commissioner McFee said. If in the next fiscal year things are better, they can bump that back up. Chairman Verity said he and Commissioner Zara should meet with **Scott Dadson** and **Kathy Todd**. Commissioner McFee said they may be able to contract assistance for some specific projects.

Commissioner Dechovitz asked, "If there's \$70,000 more out there, why isn't it in the budget?" Commissioner McFee said it's in a restricted fund budget, not in the General Fund. Commissioner Goodman said they "probably need to sit down and think about funding streams (they) can tap into." Commissioner Zara said a good example of that is housing; they will come

with the need for administration, and they need a person with the knowledge to coordinate those funding streams. Commissioner Goodman said “a grant is part of a pot to pay someone with,” but “they need enough recurring funds to pay a salary.” Commissioner McFee said in a lot of cases, especially state housing funds, “the PJ has to be a COG.” Commissioner Zara said if they got money from the COG, that money is required to be administered. Commissioner McFee said it’s population-based, and the Redevelopment Commission isn’t large enough.

Commissioner Zara said Lowcountry Housing Trust has funds, “but they need someone to bring all of those pieces together and know what to do when.” Commissioner Goodman said it should be a shared expense for Beaufort Housing Authority, Lowcountry Housing Trust, and the Redevelopment Commission. Chairman Verity said the funding of the position was to be seed money for the salary, not an on-going expense. Chairman Verity said he doesn’t want to hire anyone until they have a guaranteed stream of income.

In regard to the qualifications listing that Mr. Dadson sent out, Commissioner Goodman thinks it’s appropriate to visit those communities that have executive directors for their housing commissions. Chairman Verity said in the development group he was part of in Dayton, 50% of it was housing. Commissioner Zara said this Redevelopment Commission is not big enough. Commissioner Goodman said they could look at Myrtle Beach, for example. Commissioner McFee said “Columbia created some mandates.”

Commissioner Dechovitz said they “can work on the cause or the effect.” If they work on the cause to bring more businesses here, the effect of not being able to afford housing goes away because workers have an income stream. The way to redevelop Beaufort is to bring in private sector businesses that have been turned away in the past, Commissioner Dechovitz said. Commissioner Zara said housing is included in that. Commissioner Goodman said it will be difficult to target city residents to go in those residences because Beaufort is bigger than its city limits.

Commissioner McFee said the Civic Master Plan is part of the strategy, but implementation of it is another matter. Commissioner Dechovitz said “the plan is a plan, not a strategy.”

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 5:49 p.m.