

A meeting of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission was held on May 5, 2011 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, Martin Goodman, Ed Barnhart, Keith Waldrop, Pat Kase, Mike McFee, Wendy Zara, and Scott Dadson, City Manager.

Henrietta Goode was 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.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by the chairman.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Goodman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McNally, to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2011 meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

REPORTS

Finance Committee

Commissioner Zara said that according to Shirley Hughes, money for the Redevelopment Commission would come from the General Fund. The profits were never large, Mr. Dadson said, and the city will determine where the funding comes from. He added that staff is "attempting to remove certain responsibilities from the Redevelopment Commission."

Commissioner Zara said Josh Martin and his colleagues in the Office of Civic Investment have been helping them look at incentives and also to look at lowering capacity fees based on average uses. A city-owned lot is being put together as a prototype model, and they will determine how it could be financed.

Commissioner Zara had received an e-mail from Lowcountry Housing Trust about putting together an affordable housing seminar.

Commercial Committee

Commissioner Goodman said they have been meeting with people interested in the old City Hall.

The committee was asked by Libby Anderson to look at an issue with an easement on the side of the Jean Ribaut shopping center that is with the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority is open to removing the easement if they are guaranteed access to their property. They have reported to Ms. Anderson that Greenlawn is a state road. Ed Boyd said if he always would have access, and that was promised in writing, he is willing to take the matter to his board, where he felt their determination would be positive.

Residential Committee

In regard to the project at 1407 Duke Street, Commissioner McNally said he had met with **Alan Patterson**, and they are “trying to come up with ways to overcome costs.” The best way to do that, they feel, is to have the city donate “a vacant, unproductive lot and put that in for the builder.” The city would buy it and donate the city lot to make up the project financial deficit. The RFP would require the builder to finance the projects and to pay back the land cost to the city at the time of its sale. The RFP is still awaiting input from the Builders Association. The evaluation of the RFPs would include experience, financial credentials, and the design / development approach for the city lot *and* the Duke Street property. Mr. Patterson is determining which city lot would be best.

Commissioner McNally and Chairman Verity met with Ed Boyd and George Post at Beaufort Housing Authority. They have created a 501c3 to obtain home grant money from the LCOG and the South Carolina Housing Finance Development Authority. They have applied for money for 4 properties to be developed for affordable rental. They are interested in possible joint projects with the Redevelopment Commission.

The committee is also working with Jim Moss, Eric Brown, and Greg Huddy.

Commissioner Zara asked if the Housing Authority owns the land they’re going to build on, and Commissioner McNally said yes.

Bladen Street Project

Ms. Anderson said Bladen Street is being funded by an \$800,000 CDBG enrichment grant. The encroachment permit should be submitted mid-month. They will begin the bidding process about the same time.

The Prince Street streetscape is 60’ right-of-way, and they need no more room. The engineering is complete, and the review and bidding will be at the same time as Bladen Street.

Duke Street is funded by a \$500,000 CDBG Village Renaissance grant. 85% of the drawings will be complete by mid-May. There’s potential for renewal if the project is completed by the end of the year, Chairman Verity said.

North Street / Horse Trough Park has a \$200,000 DOT enhancement grant. SCDOT will do 100% of engineering and construction, etc. They are working on 2 alternative designs: making North Street one-way to the west, or closing that section of North Street altogether and expanding the park. They are working out the shared access to the rear of the lots. Chairman Verity asked if the property owners are aware that this is under consideration Ms. Anderson said some of them may be because they have seen city and SCDOT people outside their houses.

Commissioner Waldrop asked about the dimensions of the Bladen Street project. Chairman Verity asked if the Redevelopment Commission needed to get involved in talking with the property owners.

John Dickerson asked about the “double poles SCE&G is leaving.” Mr. Dadson said the city had negotiated with SCE&G; the city had negotiated that the distribution lines would be buried underground. The second part to be negotiated is to get the other low-voltage providers off the poles that have rents on them. If they get them to go underground, the first part of the work has begun. It’s supposed to take 18 months to finish. Mr. Dadson said the distribution system off the transmission system is only a block deep. Mr. Dickerson said the low-voltage lines aren’t being moved because there are many vendors who are no longer in business, etc. Mr. Dadson said they can’t make the low-voltage businesses get off the poles; SCE&G must make those negotiations, and he is unaware of where they are in SCE&G’s franchise agreements with those providers.

Boundary Street Redevelopment Update

Craig Lewis said it’s “in design.” Mr. Dadson agreed.

PRESENTATION: REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Eric Brown said he would be discussing “tactical urbanism.” In Beaufort, “there’s been a large strategic push,” he said, and the next phase is to make the planning happen. He showed a visual of an infill plan of block designs developed for Bladen Street. They’re dependent on scale, size, and “whether there’s a market for these things.” This is an exploration of what’s appropriate for Beaufort. They want to give people some preferred unit types. Many developers don’t want to do infill “because it’s less return for more work,” he said. Bringing “units they know are in the vicinity of approvable helps,” Mr. Brown said. He showed a book of known unit types, all of which he described as “small and tactical.”

Some things are special about Beaufort and important to the city’s uniqueness, Mr. Brown said; the important design principles are public realm, diversity, accessibility, context, flexibility of use, formal typologies, etc. Commissioner Zara asked if the block he showed in his visual could be done with current zoning, and Mr. Brown said some of it could but not all. Parking is always an issue, he added, but most of it could be done by-right. During the process, the first projects will show the landmines and what needs to be changed. Mr. Brown said the Redevelopment Commission is responsible for educating people about what they can do with their land.

Chairman Verity asked Commissioner McNally if this helped the residential committee. Commissioner McNally said yes, and they had met with Mr. Brown and local architects. Commissioner McNally added that current zoning can be a big problem. They are trying to work through that, “first with good planning and creativity.” An old zoning code shouldn’t squelch the deal. They want to also facilitate what’s needed in the zoning to make what they want to happen, happen.

A discussion ensued about how form-based code would work in this context. Mr. Brown said it will be a major tool, and Bladen Street is where it will be implemented first. Commissioner McNally said “form-based code includes use and will list what absolutely can’t be done.”

Commissioner Zara said it will be at least a year until form-based code is in place; it's a slow public process, she said. Commissioner McNally said that is historically true, and the interaction between groups will help everyone overcome past bureaucratic hurdles.

Mr. Lewis said efforts are being made to get the bigger code project on track and also to identify "key little tweaks that can be done in the interim." They hope to have a package put together soon, not just for Bladen Street. He'd like it to be adaptable to the whole Sector 1 area, he said. Zoning in place now is not just in one area, so they have to put a little thought into it.

Dick Stewart offered a vacant lot in the area for a demo project. Commissioner Kase said as an owner or developer, he would want to know what is possible on that lot; maybe there should be a notation that says "will absolutely qualify," or "will never qualify." He added that "sequencing is important...Maybe a handshake and a promise isn't enough for someone who might be at risk." Mr. Lewis said they want to get the code changes in the hopper for that reason. **Demetri Baches** said Sector 1 is already the most form-based part of the city. The timing issue has to do with the county's involvement.

PILOT PROJECT

Mr. Baches distributed a draft of a Redevelopment Commission Projects Book which he said is still incomplete, but it's a portfolio of the Redevelopment Commission's objectives for Sector 1. As each sector is completed, the Redevelopment Commission will get a similar book. The committees can use the booklets for information, as a record for that they want to implement, and as a marketing tool to explain what they want to do. The Office of Civic Investment will send it to other key individuals on the state and federal level, too, so they'll know what is going on with the Office of Civic Investment to help them get projects going with other entities.

The draft will be revised, including the agencies that need to be worked with, the tools available, funding sources, etc. This sets the Redevelopment Commission's parameters for the next 20 years, Mr. Baches said. This is the vision that the workshops produced and that the public is going to be expecting. Every year there could be an addendum for what has been completed or new things added so that the goals are always there.

Mr. Lewis said this is a working document and "a more robust plan piece will outline the larger vision." They will further qualify and quantify things like timelines in the future, Mr. Lewis said. For the city to accept and use form-based code, "they had to get their house in order." This document is an off-shoot of the master plan.

Mr. Patterson asked Mr. Baches to expand on how this would work if someone wants to build something different than what is in "the picture" for the area in which they want to build. He's confused as to how it happens when people go to implement the vision. He doesn't know how it interacts going forward. Mr. Baches said these are specific sites "that can show a vision based on the zoning code envisioned to be adopted as to how to flesh out a particular lot." The zoning

code will determine what the person can do. These are the projects large and important enough for the Redevelopment Commission to “set a tone.”

The master planning process isn’t tied to the exact drawing in the projects book, Mr. Baches said. The form-based code will determine massing, height, use, parking, etc. This is not a Redevelopment Commission issue, he said; it’s a zoning issue. Mr. Patterson said he’s “concerned about definitive images for people who could build,” if they are being told that they have to build a certain way. Mr. Baches said Milner has weight because there’s no defined zoning to protect what Milner protects that also allows development. Form-based code will do that. This document just says this block needs to be developed, he said, not “houses on this block need to look like this.”

Mr. Stewart said many had had issues with the 1998 comp plan because “there was not a defined appeals process,” so staff was left in the position of “if the plan didn’t permit it, all was denied.” He encouraged that provisions be made for such a thing in the new plans.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion of Commissioner Zara, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, the Redevelopment Commission voted to move into Executive Session pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70(a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Laws for a discussion of property sales. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Zara, seconded by Commissioner Waldrop, made a motion to come out of Executive Session and resume the regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the commission, Commissioner Zara made a motion to adjourn, second by Commissioner Waldrop. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

ATTEST: _____

IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK