

A special meeting of the Beaufort City Council was held on August 15, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in The Friends Room of the Arsenal, 703 Craven Street. In attendance were Mayor Bill Rauch, Mayor Pro Tem Frank Glover, Council members Donnie Ann Beer, Gary B. Fordham, George H. O'Kelley, Jr., City Manager John F. McDonough. 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 mayor called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

DISCUSSION

Councilman Glover inquired as to whether sufficient notice was given for the meeting. Several Council members were concerned that notice of the meeting did not appear in the newspaper until this morning. The Gazette reporter commented that possibly two notices can be published on different days. The City Manager noted that a minimum of 24 hours is required for all public meetings by posting the agenda on the bulletin board and notifying a newspaper of general circulation. The agenda of this meeting was distributed Thursday. The Mayor listed the ways that meeting notices are circulated and stated it appears the requirements have been met and are actually being exceeded by placing the agenda on the City's website and forwarding a copy to the library in advance of the meetings. The City Manager added that the Chamber of Commerce also notifies their members when the meetings are held.

Comments were made by Peter White and Dan Denton that notice was not sufficient and no action should be taken this morning. Comment could be received from the public and heard at a regular meeting. A lady noted that the Mayor announced the meeting on WJWJ TV Thursday night. Councilman O'Kelley agreed with Mr. Denton. Councilwoman Beer disagreed with delaying the vote pointing out the numerous delays cost money. Councilman Fordham asked the necessity of having the architects at the meeting when Council is discussing the location of the building.

LANDSWAP ORDINANCE

The ordinance authorizing the exchange of property between the City and William T. Jones, owner of the BB&T bank building on Bay Street, was presented to Council for first reading at the July 26, 2005 Council meeting. Second reading was tabled until further research could be conducted on the title to determine the actual ownership of the parcel on the corner of Bay and Carteret Streets.

Attorney Derek Gilbert who researched the title of the property said in reviewing correspondence from the original construction of the Waterfront Park, he found the South Carolina Department of Transportation was not able to locate a document for a right-of-way either. He spoke to the Director of Rights-of-Way for the State Department of Transportation who agreed to check their records but a written request is required. Mr. Gilbert said his opinion is that the City owns the property but there is still the question as to the extent to which that property may be subject to a right-of-way. He provided a plat from 1965 showing the Carteret Street right-of-way running next to the building and to the water. He will request a Quit Claim deed from SCDOT or a letter stating they have no claim

on the property.

SITE PLAN OPTIONS FOR THE MUNICIPAL COMPLEX SITE

Sherrie Liollo, Liollo Architects, presented schemes showing the property with the testing wells. She added that DHEC will not dictate where the buildings are to be located; however, there would be mitigation issues to consider. The designs proposed a non-public entrance on the Sycamore Street side of City Hall for prisoners, jurors, etc. and a separate building for the police department. One sketch showed City Hall facing Ribaut Road with a landscaped wall treatment to camouflage the parking area, with an entry feature centered on a symmetrical building with the police department on the back corner of the site. Scheme two showed Lovejoy Street as a public access with the non-public access on the side and placing the police building on the front of the property. Scheme three was more A symmetrical with the police department connected. Ms. Liollo pointed out many entry points are needed for City Hall to function properly. To provide examples of the designs and suggestions made, several pictures of buildings in Charleston were shown. Booklets were distributed to Council showing the schemes.

Discussion/comments:

Councilman O'Kelley expressed his concerns with the ingress/egress to the site as shown and anticipates problems with the schemes presented today. He said he prefers the design presented originally placing City Hall further east on the site. Ms. Liollo said the functionality of the building is such that a restricted entry is necessary and Sycamore Street would not be encouraged as a public entrance. Mr. O'Kelley said this is not what he thought was planned and he is opposed to the plans presented today because of the difficulty of trying to approach City Hall and because it would make Sycamore Street a dead end. Councilman Fordham questioned the need for a separate entrance for prisoners and asked Mr. O'Kelley's opinion. Police Chief Dowling replied it is not recommended to bring a handcuffed prisoner through a public lobby. Councilman O'Kelley agreed it is necessary to have a separate entrance for safety. Councilman Glover said if Sycamore Street is not to be used by the public to get to City Hall, how will people access City Hall. Ms. Liollo explained the access points and that moving City Hall would affect the use of the building. Mr. Glover said he does not support the three designs presented either and it appears the access to City Hall for the public is becoming more convoluted. Councilman O'Kelley asked again about the plan he received during the meeting in Charleston. The City Manager stated that design predated the decision to close Ribaut Road Extension. Mr. O'Kelley said he prefers the connectivity from National Street to Sycamore Street to Lovejoy Street. According to Ms. Liollo, that design would split the site. Mr. O'Kelley said he thought closing Ribaut Road Extension was to avoid traffic problems and grid lock, not to place the building. The City Manager said that is why the decision was made. Mr. Glover said the traffic engineer for the project said by closing Ribaut Road Extension, the widening of north bound Ribaut Road can be delayed approximately ten years. He asked how that cost would compare to the right-of-way acquisition and construction of an extension of Marsh Drive through the Ramada Inn property back to National Street. If Ribaut Road has to be widened to accommodate traffic, it would be better to use the Transportation Impact Fee to make that widening and let the extension of Marsh Drive back to an extended National Street be funded by the private developer.

Peter White referring to an access for prisoners, suggested a connecting tunnel or secured breezeway to City Hall.

Dick Stewart commented that Traffic Impact fees may not be available for a pre-existing need. He suggested Council consider purchasing the property for sale in front of the Ramada Inn.

Dan Denton said he missed the last meeting but understood that one of the main entrances to City Hall would be on Sycamore Street. In his opinion, the proposed access to City Hall is bizarre.

Ed Gay, owner of property on Lovejoy and Palmetto streets, said he agrees with Mr. Denton that the convoluted entrance will be confusing to people. Additionally, he is concerned with how it affects the access to his property. The Mayor noted no action has been taken regarding the no left turn onto Palmetto Street. Mr. Gay commented that he is not in favor of the no left turn.

Jason Ryan, Beaufort Gazette reporter, asked if Mr. Denton's law office would be acquired by the City for an entrance into City Hall. The Mayor stated it appears in order to come to an agreement, Mr. Salvagin, the traffic engineer, should return to clarify the concerns about traffic and site access. Councilman O'Kelley disagreed. He said he thought the plan distributed during the July meeting in Charleston would be presented instead of the plans shown today. In his opinion, the traffic engineer is not needed but instead a decision on where to place the building.

The City Manager suggested that because of the numerous options presented, several of the schemes be submitted to the Corridor Review Board by Liollo Architects since the Board will decide whether the plan will work or not. This is the same process any developer would have to follow. Then their recommendations can be presented to Council for further review and discussion. Council concurred.

Councilman Fordham commenting on space requirements, said in his opinion, Municipal Court and Council Chambers can utilize the same room instead of having two separate rooms. The Mayor and the City Manager pointed out several reasons for having a separate court room and Council chambers. In reply, Ms. Liollo stated the court room would be used and abused more than the chambers; however, it can be designed to accommodate both functions. Mr. Glover agreeing with Mr. Fordham's concerns about the additional cost of a room that would only be used by Council 24 times a year, added that the meetings can be scheduled so as not to interfere with the court. Visiting the County's courtroom, the furnishings did not appear to be abused but they can be replaced as needed instead of spending money for two large rooms, he said. Referring to other issues of concern, he said he doesn't like the exterior wall surrounding the complex and he prefers the police department to be combined with City Hall which would require less property. Councilwoman Beer pointed out the need for expansion and stated the structures should be built for the future. The Mayor remarked that he thought the number of buildings had been decided. Councilman Fordham said he, too, would prefer one building; however, Councilman O'Kelley favored two buildings to accommodate future space needs. Councilwoman Beer agreed. Therefore, since the majority of Council prefers two buildings, the Mayor considered the matter settled.

Ms. Liollo asked questions concerning the designs. Councilman O'Kelley still favored the scheme presented at the meeting in Charleston. The consensus of Council was to submit four options to the Design Review Board in September for their recommendations. The Planning Administrator explained the process the Board follows. Mr. Liollo discussed Scheme 3, with City Hall diagonally on the site, which poses problems as one to be eliminated. Mr. Glover withdrew his support for that

design. The Mayor listed Schemes 1 and 2 from the book presented and the design (1-b) referred to by Councilman O'Kelley to be submitted to the Design Review Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

BILL RAUCH, MAYOR

COUNCILWOMAN DONNIE ANN BEER

COUNCILMAN FRANK GLOVER

COUNCILMAN GARY B. FORDHAM

COUNCILMAN GEORGE H. O'KELLEY, JR.

ATTEST:

BEVERLY W. GAY, CITY CLERK