



City Council Worksession  
Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

October 12, 2021

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**5:00PM**

Mayor Stephen D. Murray III

Members of Council in attendance - Neil Lipsitz, Mike McFee, Mitch Mitchell, and Mayor Murray.

Absent - Phil Cromer.

**II. PRESENTATIONS**

A. Regional Housing Trust Fund, Eric Greenway, Beaufort County Administrator.

**Eric Greenway, Beaufort County Administrator**, gave a presentation of the Regional Housing Trust Fund. This is a joint effort between eight jurisdictions in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. The purpose of the study was to make recommendations for the process of forming, funding, and staffing the Housing Trust Fund. He said that a Housing Trust Fund is established to support the production and/or preservation of affordable housing. He then went over the five priorities they established. Number 1 is to provide accessible, affordable housing to the region to support the workforce in the service economy, as well as others with high housing cost burdens.

One of the objectives is to create new housing units, or remodel existing housing, with a strong focus on households that are at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. In Beaufort County, the Annual Mean Wage is \$48,080. Jasper County is \$37,160.00. Another objective is to increase awareness of existing and new financial products that serve the Beaufort-Jasper community.

Step 1 is to fund the Housing Trust. In year one they are asking each jurisdiction that participates in the Housing Trust Fund to allocate 3% of their individual American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocations. He stated that, if possible, this would come from State and Local Recovery pool funds, which are the most flexible. In year two and moving forward, the contribution would be \$500,000 based on population shares per jurisdiction. This figure would rise slightly each year because of inflation. Other funding sources could be Banks and Corporations.

**Mr. Greenway** stated that we must also be able to balance affordable housing with transportation and infrastructure, or we will not see any progress being made.

**Councilman Mitchell**, inquired about how it will be determined where these affordable homes will be built.

**Mr. Greenway** said that has not been established at this time. A Board and By-Laws will need to be established first. Land availability will also be a determining factor.

**Mayor Murray** stated that a developer will go where the land is the cheapest and wants those that work in Beaufort County to be able to live in the County. He also realizes that transportation is a major factor as well.

**Councilman Lipsitz** asked how we can make sure that this stays affordable housing long term.

**Mr. Greenway**, responded by stating it will need to be Deed Restricted.

**Bill Prokop, City Manager**, asked who would be responsible for paying the Impact Fees. The city/town where the development is being built, or the Housing Trust.

**Mr. Greenway**, replied by saying that once the Housing Trust is set up, it should come from there. They could offer a program to cover Impact Fee waivers for developers from a jurisdictional, and water and sewer fee standpoint.

**Mayor Murray** said that the challenge is keeping the housing affordable once built. An affordable home can be built at a lower cost due to local incentives given to a entities like a charitable organization. Then when that homeowner is able to sell the house, it is then sold at current market value. This no longer makes the house affordable. We need to figure out how to keep these homes in the affordable range for eternity.

### **III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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#### **A. Proposed changes to the Parks and Tree Advisory Committee Ordinance.**

**Bill Prokop**, started off by stating that there are only 3 certified Arborists in the region. He stated that one of the requirements as stated in the Ordinance is to have a certified Arborist on the Board. Due to the fact that we have not been able to get any applicants, he has consulted with Barbara Farris, who has been on the Board for many years. In their talks, she mentioned the use of Master Gardeners. Instead of having a certified Arborist, we could replace that with two Master Gardeners. We would change the two Design Professionals/Landscape Architects/Landscapers to one and keep the two citizen representatives. He stated if a Design Professional was not available, the commission may utilize the services of a city approved certified Arborist. We would also add that all terms will expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and terms will be staggered.

Council recommended that we move the word Landscaper up to the area with Master Gardener.

**Mayor Murray** also stated that in section 3-3006 that the sentence (The commission shall make its own rules and regulations) be removed.

### **IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

#### **A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section (70) (a) (2) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding Contractual Services.**

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee made a motion to come out of Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

No actions from Executive Session.

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