

**Minutes
Council Workshop
Yvonne C. Butler Council Chambers, 700 Paris Avenue**

November 7, 2007

Members Present: Mayor Samuel Murray and Councilmembers Vernon DeLoach, Mary Beth Heyward, Joe Lee and Henry Robinson

Staff Present: Town Manager Van Willis, Planning Administrator Linda Bridges, Police Chief Jim Cadien, Assistant Fire Chief Jim Colwell and Municipal Clerk Tanya Payne

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Murray called the workshop to order at 6:35 pm.

II. Presentation:

A. School Development Fees – Jim Bequette

Jim Bequette from the Beaufort County School District briefed Council on School Development Fees. He explained that currently school impact fees are not allowed in South Carolina but asked for Council's assistance in getting a law that would allow the fee. Mr. Bequette reviewed a study of county schools and the need for more schools. He explained that with the fast growth in the county funds would be needed to build new schools. Mr. Bequette explained that municipalities could collect impact fees on Planned Unit Developments and Development Agreements and urged Council to do so. He presented Council with a report and reviewed statistics based on county schools and expected growth. Mr. Bequette explained he was working with new House of Representatives member Shannon Erickson and was hoping to have a bill ready for introduction at the next legislative session.

George Wilson, Board of Education member, explained developer fees could be collected but not impact fees. He said these fees would be paid by newcomers thus keeping taxes down for area citizens. Mr. Wilson stated that having new people moving would cause the need for more schools and explained this would allow the newcomers to fund these schools. He also said charging these fees on PUD's and Development Agreements was a start toward this system. He encouraged Council to support legislation for the impact fees.

Valerie Truesdale, Beaufort County Superintendent of Schools answered questions concerning the possibility of building "green" schools. She explained this would be an extremely expensive endeavor.

III. REVIEW AGENDA FOR THE NOVEMBER 14, 2007 COUNCIL MEETING

Town Manager Willis reviewed the agenda for the November 14th Council Meeting. He told them Ordinances 2007-63 and 2007-64 had been removed from the agenda by the property owners. Mr. Willis added a presentation by Dean Moss, General Manager of BJWSA concerning the drought situation.

Town Manager Willis told Council the shrimp docks were open and that the retail portion of that business would be open within the next few days. He said fuel and ice were on site for the shrimpers to purchase. Mr. Willis further said he was working to remove the abandoned boats from the dock.

Town Manager Willis briefed Council concerning the Shed, the Northern Regional Plan and the Visioning Retreat. He stated that progress was being made with the Casablanca project, work had begun on the West Paris Avenue sidewalk, still working on the Venus Lane lawsuit, he said an interested group would be creating a landscaping plan for the median at the Midtown signal, Ports Authority Board Meeting tomorrow to discuss sale of property, progress being made on Dockside parking lot issue, Portrait Homes drainage modified to twenty-five year standards and Bluffton fire district contract on hold until they chose a new fire chief.

Town Manager Willis reviewed second reading Ordinance 2007-62 to rezone 1.16 acres on Savannah Highway from MU-2 to MU-1 with the Shell Point Overlay.

Planning Administrator Bridges stated that final plans had received approval from the Design Review Board. She said there would be five commercial buildings at the site.

Mark Sutton, representing the owner, explained the owner would use two of the spaces for his business and the other three would be rented. He said the zoning change request was to allow for an eat-in restaurant.

Town Manager Willis reviewed Ordinance 2007-65 to allow for construction of sidewalk on 16th Street. He explained this section would join existing sidewalk.

Town Manager Willis reviewed first reading Ordinance 2007-66 which would allow for an Historic Preservation District in the Town. He said buildings seventy-five years or older would be protected and that Historic Foundation was working toward developing this district.

Councilmember Joe Lee explained the district would encompass all buildings that qualify if the owners chose to be included. He explained owners would be given the option to opt out if they so desired. Mr. Lee said the first step was to develop and adopt an ordinance then appoint a commission.

Town Manager Willis explained a Memorandum of Understanding with the Estuarium was being developed as previously authorized by Council. He said this MOU would formalize a partnership between the Estuarium and the Town.

Estuarium Curator Bob Bender explained this MOU would allow the Estuarium board to apply for grant funding to build a permanent facility. He said it would cost six to seven million dollars to complete the project. Mr. Bender further explained the initial marketing, research and design elements would cost approximately two hundred fifty thousand dollars

Town Manager Willis explained the Estuarium would be located on .24 acres located at the end of London Avenue.

Town Manager Willis explained Council would need to award contracts for auditing and accounting services for the Town. He also said a mediation settlement for the 7th Street Terraces project was on the agenda and would be discussed during today's Executive Session.

IV. IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION:

A. Wednesday, November 14, 2007, 6:30 pm - Council Meeting, Yvonne Butler Council Chambers, 700 Paris Avenue

Town Manager Willis reviewed the list of important dates and information.

Council decided to cancel the December Workshop in order to hold "Christmas in the Park" with this year's Tree Lighting Ceremony and a visit from Santa on December 5th. The December Public Hearing was rescheduled for December 12th prior to the Council Meeting.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A. Legal matter regarding on going litigation

Councilmember Lee moved to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss an ongoing legal litigation. Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

Council adjourned to Executive Session at 7:40 pm.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:30 pm.

No action was taken.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya L. Payne
Municipal Clerk

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, notification of the Workshop was posted on the Town bulletin board two weeks in advance of the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and at the meeting location twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.