

BLUFFTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 9, 2014

Mayor Sulka called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council members present were Mayor Pro Tempore Huffman, Lavery, Hamilton, and Toomer.

Town Manager/Executive Director of the Bluffton Public Development Corporation Orlando, Director of Finance Frreman, Director of Public Works/Engineering Jones, Human Resources Director Robinson, Don Ryan Center for Innovation Executive Director Nelems, Public Information Officer Szpanka, Lieutenant Gannon, and Town Attorney Finger were also in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation was given by Mayor Sulka.

Adoption of Agenda:

Huffman moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Lavery seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes:

- a. November 10, 2014 Special Meeting/Workshop:
- b. November 18, 2014 Regular Meeting:

Huffman moved to adopt the minutes of November 10, 2014 and the November 18, 2014 as presented.

Lavery seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Communications from Mayor and Town Council:

Lavery stated the Christmas Parade was wonderful and thanked Staff for their participation.

Huffman also stated that the Christmas Parade was wonderful. He said to cherish moments and love them while you can.

Hamilton also stated the Christmas Parade was wonderful. This is the season for peace, hope and love. Merry Christmas.

Mayor Sulka stated she attended the Flyover Tour with Beaufort County Engineer Colin Kinton. Environmental impacts were discussed. She recommended everyone to stop and look at the Flyover.

Presentations, Celebrations and Recognitions:

Mayor Sulka recognized the Rotary Club of Bluffton Volunteers and Margie Fox of Garden Gate for the winter replanting of the May River Road Flower pots. On behalf of the Town of Bluffton, Mayor thanked Margie Fox and Bluffton Rotary members Steve Miller and Debra Burt for their continuing efforts in continuing to improve the community.

Public Comments:

Margie Fox, 2 State of Mind, stated her concerns on vehicles using the parking spaces for the right turning lane on Bluffton Road onto May River Road. She has seen many close calls. She also announced that the Bluffton Middle School's Robotics Team will hold their qualifications on Saturday.

Public Hearing and Final Reading:

An Ordinance Approving Various Updates to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as Recommended by the 2-14 Audit of the Comprehensive Plan:

Lelie stated there were no changes since first reading held on November 18, 2014. In accordance with State Comprehensive Planning Enabling Legislation, an audit of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was accepted by the Town Council on June 10, 2014. The Audit analyzed whether changes in the character of development in Bluffton required additions and/or amendments to the Plan. While the Audit showed the Town has made significant progress implementing the 2007 Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, it also provided of synopsis of recommended revisions to fulfill the goals of the State Comprehensive Planning Enabling Legislation and the Priority Investment Act (PIA) and reflect the demographic data from the 2010 Census.

Town Staff prepared the recommended revisions to the Comprehensive Plan. A synopsis of the recommended amendments is provided below. The full plan elements or excerpts and pertinent mapping are provided as attachments to this report. Due to the volume of revisions, Staff did not include the tracked changes for the Population, Housing and Economic Development Plans and the Technical Data A Chapter. However, if Council members would like to review the tracked changes, Staff can provide the documents upon request.

1. **Demographic Data:** The Population, Housing and Economic Development Plan Elements were updated in their entirety to reflect 2010 Census data. While the decade between 2000 and 2010 brought tremendous growth to Bluffton, the following highlights provide a snapshot of interesting demographic trends in Bluffton which were documented in the Census 2010 and the American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates:
(Continued)

An Ordinance Approving Various Updates to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as Recommended by the 2-14 Audit of the Comprehensive Plan - Continued:

- a. Rate of Growth: 883% increase in population growth between 2000 and 2010;
 - b. Population Estimate: Estimated population as of July 2013 was 13,606;
 - c. Build-Out Population: Estimated build-out population of approximately 63,000 to occur near 2120;
 - d. Future Population: Average estimated population by 2030 is just over 30,000;
 - e. Age: Higher proportion of people under 14 and in the age group between 25-44;
 - f. Median age: Decreased from 35.7 to 32.7;
 - g. Race: Increase in the Hispanic/Latino population from 11% to 19%;
 - h. Non-English Speaking Population: 20.1% and 28% for school-aged population;
 - i. Household Income: 47% increase between 1999 and 2012 (compared to the County and State which was approximately 20%);
 - j. Per Capita Income: 67% increase between 1999 and 2012 (compared to the County at 29% and the State at 27%); and
 - k. Poverty: Increase of the population below the poverty line from 12.6% to 14.1%.
2. **Cultural Resources**: This plan element required an update that included a description of archaeological resources. The Historic Structures Map (Map 3.1) was also updated to reflect the most recent list of contributing structures.
3. **Natural Resources**: The Water Resources section of this plan element was updated to include a section focused on coastal resources. In addition, language was added that provided additional detail regarding prime agricultural and forest land. Finally, a short description of parks and recreation, with a reference to the Community Facilities Plan Element was added to this plan element. Maps for Agricultural Land (Map 4.2) and Slope Characteristics (Map 4.3) were also added to the Comprehensive Plan.
4. **Housing**: In addition to the demographic update, this plan element was updated to provide an analysis of any barriers to affordable housing that may be present in the Town’s ordinances. Additionally, there was an additional review of market based incentives available to encourage the development of affordable housing.
- (Continued)

An Ordinance Approving Various Updates to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as Recommended by the 2-14 Audit of the Comprehensive Plan - Continued:

5. **Community Facilities:** This plan element was updated to include a short description of the Town's cultural facilities with a reference to the Cultural Resources Plan Element for a more detailed description.
6. **Land Use:** The Future Annexation Map and Growth Framework Map were updated to reflect a revised northern annexation boundary. The northern boundary of the annexation area is proposed to relocate from the Colleton River to a location just north of US 278 that includes non-residential property only. Incorporating these areas allows for continuity of the community and more efficient and effective delivery of services, particularly from a public safety perspective. Further, the proposed relocation and refinement of the annexation boundary allows the Town to concentrate its attention on enclave parcels south of US 278 while expanding the commercial tax base.
7. **Priority Investment:** A list of capital improvement projects was added to this plan element describing recommended public infrastructure and facilities including water, sewer, parks and roads.
8. **Appendix A (Technical Data):** This plan element was updated to include a comprehensive list of capital improvement projects which were copied from the 2015 Town Budget. The Appendix was also updated to include the necessary demographic updates from the 2010 Census.

Mayor Sulka opened the Public Hearing at 6:16 p.m.

Public Comments:

There were none.

Public Hearing closed at 6:16 p.m.

Huffman moved to have final reading on the Ordinance Approving Various Updates to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as Recommended by the 2014 Audit of the Comprehensive Plan. Lavery seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Calhoun Street and Adjacent Area Study Update:

Jarrett stated our study of Calhoun Street and Old Town has been ongoing for several months. With the growth of businesses in Old Town and along Calhoun Street, issues regarding parking accessibility and pedestrian safety have become more pressing. To address these issues, the Town has hired Thomas & Hutton to research the issues and propose solutions to the concerns.

Staff has worked closely with Thomas & Hutton to collect data for the study. This data includes:

Physical data collected on the existing infrastructure in the study area

- A survey of visitors, businesses and residents in the area
- A field investigation with staff and Thomas & Hutton in Old Town looking at opportunities and constraints. This visit also gave an opportunity for us to discuss strengths and weaknesses.
- A public meeting in which many attendees participated in a preferences exercise. There was much input from the public at this meeting.
- A public workshop in which issues were discussed and sketches were produced to illustrate solutions.
- A staff level presentation of findings and review of same. Feedback was provided to the consultant.
- These are some of the highlights of the study to date. There has been much more technical effort involved but these bullets indicate major activities.

Master Plan Recommendations:

Bruce Boysen of Thomas and Hutton gave an overview of the following:

- Implement streetscape improvements on Calhoun Street and adjacent streets including increased on street parking, ADA accessible sidewalks and crossings, signage, lighting, rain garden, plantings, trees, and bicycle parking:
 - Calhoun, Bridge (East of Calhoun), Green, Church, Lawton, Lawrence, Mellichamp
 - Implement pedestrian circulation improvements on adjacent street including ADA accessible sidewalks and crossings, signage, and lighting:
 - Bridge (West of Calhoun), Lawrence, Goethe, Dubois, Wharf, Pritchard
- (Continued)

Calhoun Street and Adjacent Area Study Update – Continued:

- Establish new policies for parking:
 - Implement 2 hour time restrictions on Calhoun
 - Implement bicycle share program
 - Initiate reduced speed limits on May River Road and create vision for future
 - improvements to maximize parking and walkability
 - Limit guest parking in residential areas after 6 pm
- Promote shared parking agreements with private lots for employee parking or public parking during peak hours:
 - Churches
 - Dollar General
- Provide trolley/shuttle service and signage and wayfinding to remote, existing publicly owned lots:
 - Bluffton Town Hall, MC Riley Elementary School, MC Riley Sports Complex, Bluffton Pool Parking Lot, Oyster Factory parking, Calhoun Street Dock Parking
- Consider restricting required parking for development to not allow adjacent on-street parking to be counted to fulfill requirement
- Consider amending the current parking requirements for high intensity uses as restaurants

Conclusion Recommendations:

- There is ample parking available throughout Old Town at the 1 space per 1,000 SF parking ratio
- There is a perceived lack of parking, however, existing parking is being underutilized due to lack of signage and awareness that additional parking exists
- It is recommended to create new policies, programs and projects to support the parking needs of Old Town
- As new policies, programs and projects are implemented, additional existing parking spaces can be made available to fill the perceived lack of parking

Council stated their concerns as follows:

- **Residential Parking**
- **Wide parking spaces on May River Road**
- **Speed limits reductions**

Garvin House Preservation Plan Update:

Hutchinson and Schumacher gave an overview. The preservation of the Garvin House was included in the goals of the Strategic Plan. Through the Town's Request for Proposal process, Meadors, Inc. was identified as the consultant that was most qualified to guide us through our preservation efforts and to develop a preservation plan and reuse strategy for the building.

After their preliminary condition assessment of the house, staff held the first public meeting where Meadors presented their preliminary findings and attendees were invited to share their insights, memories, and future visions for the structure. Meadors recorded, summarized, and analyzed the input and began researching both locally and nationally successful reuse strategies. The goal of this meeting was to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the viability of these options. Meadors presented three of the most feasible adaptive reuse strategies at the second public meeting as follows:

- 1) **Interpretive space and short-term rental** – Structure would be open at certain times allowing for the interpretation of space, and at other times, it could be utilized for over-night rentals for a weekend or other defined short period of time.
- 2) **Artists-in-Residence** – Is a tool that has been successfully employed by the National Parks Service for more than four decades in various picture/unique locations across the country.
- 3) **Gullah Geechee Bookstore & Gallery** – Allows the building to be interpreted and presents an opportunity for our well known Gullah Geechee artists and craftspersons to display and sell their products in a culturally significant location where books and other information materials would also be available for purchase.

The general consensus of the group was:

- Concurrence that the option of the book/gallery was the most preferable with some reservations on staffing and initial costs.
- To keep the structure as true to its historic fabric as possible.
- That whatever option is chosen, the building must be open for some portion of the week to the public as an interpreted site.
- That although there was some lukewarm support of the Artist-in-Residence program, most felt it was not feasible.
- That they did not support short-term overnight rental.

Meadors is working on the construction plans for the permanent stabilization and rehabilitation of the building and a primary set should be ready by mid-January. Our available funds will determine what we will be able to accomplish in our first phase.

FY 2015 Budget Amendment Ordinance Amending All Funds for Encumbrances and Carry Forwards from Prior Year and Appropriations as Needed – Final Reading:

Freeman stated there have been no changes since first reading was held on November 18, 2014. The proposed ordinance is amending the current year Stormwater Fund and Capital Improvements Program Fund to add the prior year encumbrances. Annually each year after the audit, we make adjustments required by project and contractual commitments. This is a housekeeping matter which rolls forward the committed amounts to the current year.

The effect of this amendment will be to increase the Stormwater Fund to \$2,349,207 and to increase the Capital Improvements Program Fund to \$7,721,073. The General Fund remains at \$1,733,940 for a total Consolidated Budget of \$24,246,425.

Lavery moved to have final reading of the FY 2015 Budget Amendment Ordinance Amending All Funds for Encumbrances and Carry Forwards from Prior Year and Appropriations as Needed. Huffman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

An Ordinance to Amend the SCE&G Franchise Agreement to Repeal Ordinance No. 2013-05 – First Reading:

Terry stated Ordinance No. 2013-05 amended the SCE&G Franchise Agreement to increase the franchise fee to five (5) percent of the gross revenue. The Town of Bluffton and SCE&G disagreed about the effective date of the increase but now have settled their differences by means of a settle agreement. The proposed Ordinance will repeal Ordinance No. 2013-05 and to enact this Ordinance in its place, with the same effective date as Ordinance No. 2013-05.

Huffman moved to have first reading to amend the SCE&G Franchise Agreement to Repeal Ordinance No. 2-13-5. Lavery seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Staff Reports: Police, Administrative/Finance, Engineering/Public Works, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management
- b. Town Manager's Report
- c. Approval of Town Council 2015 Meeting Dates

Lavery moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Lavery seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

There were none.

Executive Session:

- a. Discussion of Matters Relating to the Proposed Location, Expansion, or the Provision of Services Encouraging Location or Expansion of Industries or other Businesses within the Town (Pursuant to SC FOIA Act Section 30-4-70(a)(5))
- b. Legal Advice from Town Attorney on Pending Matters (Pursuant to SC FOIA Act Section 30-4-70(a)(2))

Hamilton moved for Council to go into Executive Session to discuss the above mentioned items. Toomer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Council entered into Executive Session at 7:08 p.m.

Actions from the Result of Executive Session:

Mayor Sulka called the meeting back to order at 9:08 p.m. and announced no votes were taken.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Mayor

Town Clerk