



## **Town of Beaufort, NC**

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### **Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners Special Called Meeting: Redevelopment of former Beaufort Elementary School 4:00 PM Wednesday, December 16, 2020 - Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19 Minutes**

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#### **Call To Order**

Mayor Newton called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

#### **Roll Call**

##### **PRESENT**

Mayor Everette Newton  
Commissioner Sharon Harker  
Commissioner Ann Carter  
Commissioner Marianna Hollinshed  
Commissioner John Hagle

##### **ABSENT**

Commissioner Charles McDonald

#### **Agenda Approval**

*Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously (4-0)*

*Voting Yea: Commissioner Hagle, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Carter*

#### **Items for Discussion and Consideration**

1. Redevelopment of former Beaufort Elementary School

Kyle Garner, Planning and Inspections Director, addressed the Board regarding the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Garner explained that the old Beaufort Elementary School is under new ownership and is looking to redevelop the property. He said that the new property owners have reviewed several Town documents, to include the Small Area Plan (2018) which identifies the subject property as prime for redevelopment. Mr. Garner said that the new owners wanted to hold an open discussion with the Board in order to gain an understanding of the Board's vision and potential concerns with redeveloping the property. Mr. Garner explained that this meeting

would provide the property owners and their engineer, Ron Cullipher, with a baseline of what the Town does/does not want in order to create a design. He emphasized that formal plans and design have not been completed at this time. Once the owners and their design team create a formal plan, it will have to go through the normal approval process – Technical Review Committee, Planning Board, and the Board of Commissioners.

Mayor Newton asked the Board if there were any questions about Mr. Garner's presentation. Commissioner Hollinshed asked Mr. Garner to confirm that the Town has never owned this particular property. Mr. Garner confirmed. Commissioner Carter asked Mr. Garner to confirm that the Boys and Girls Club property is not included in the subject property. Mr. Garner confirmed. Mayor Newton asked Mr. Garner to introduce the owners and their representative. Mr. Garner introduced Mr. Phil Lewis (owner) and Ron Cullipher (Cullipher Group, PA).

Mr. Phil Lewis, property owner, thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss the property and clarified that he and Mr. Sammy Ballou are 50/50 partners in this project. He explained that they enjoy working with historic buildings. Mr. Lewis then asked Mr. Ron Cullipher to address the Board.

Mr. Cullipher thanked Mayor Newton and the Board for the opportunity to discuss the project. He explained that Mr. Lewis and Mr. Ballou are going to try to work with the existing buildings on the property. He said that the intent is to develop a little neighborhood in the heart of Beaufort. He explained that at this point, they have little more than a bubble sheet of ideas for the property. It shows the existing school building converted into condominiums, the existing gym and cafeteria as a potential event space with a catering kitchen, and potentially a commercial venue on Live Oak Street, as well as a residential component. He reiterated that this is a very preliminary sketch and told the Board that they are looking for guidance and direction with the property.

Mayor Newton thanked Mr. Cullipher and asked the Board for any questions. Commissioner Hagle said that he is excited about the retrofit aspect of the buildings. He said that he has seen several that look quite nice. Commissioner Hagle also voiced concerns about stormwater and emphasized the need for a thorough stormwater management plan. He added that he likes the mixed use aspect of the concept.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked if the owners have identified a marketing strategy at this point. Mr. Cullipher said that they have not as they are quite early in the planning process. He added that Mr. Lewis and Mr. Ballou want to invest in something that the community supports.

Commissioner Hagle said that he would like the owners to consider the cost of housing with the project, noting high real estate prices in the area which are out of many resident's budget. Mr. Cullipher referenced discussions with Mr. Garner the week prior regarding housing prices in the area and asked what price point the Board considers work-force housing. Commissioner Hollinshed agreed that affordable housing is needed in the area and noted concerns of neighboring property owners and potential tax increases.

Commissioner Harker thanked the developers for being proactive and having this conversation early in the process. She said that she will have plenty of questions as the project progresses but would like the developers to consider stormwater management and emphasized the need for a comprehensive plan. She added that workforce housing is a concern in the community, but that there is time to figure out exactly what the price range should be. She also emphasized the need to be sensitive to the existing community surrounding the property.

Commissioner Carter echoed concerns about workforce housing, but said that she understands that this particular property is going to be a very costly undertaking. She said that she is delighted to see that the developers are hoping to retain the historic structures.

Mayor Newton thanked the commissioners for their comments. He explained that protection of the marsh areas to the north and northwest is critical, citing both aesthetic and natural function. He said that Beaufort does want to attract young professionals and their family, and an area like that would be ideal. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Day if he would like to speak. John Day, Town Manager, said that he believes this would be an interesting place to see a mixture of housing types and price points. He

said that kind of mix can achieve a variety of different things socially and probably would have a more positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Lewis and Mr. Ballou if they would like to speak. They explained that the intent is to maintain the historic structures to the extent possible. Discussion ensued.

**Adjourn**

*Commissioner Hagle made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously (4-0)*

*Voting Yea: Commissioner Hagle, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Carter*

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Mayor

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Deputy Clerk