



Town of Beaufort, NC
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**Board of Commissioners
Work Session
4:00 PM Monday, March 25, 2024
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

Call To Order

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

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT:

Mayor Sharon Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Melvin Cooper
Commissioner Paula Gillikin
Commissioner Bucky Oliver
Commissioner Sarah Spiegler
Commissioner John LoPiccolo (joined the meeting remotely).

ABSENT: None.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

Items for Review and Discussion

1. Paid Parking Program

Tina Reid, Executive VP for Pivot Parking, made a presentation on their recommendations for Paid Parking season in Beaufort. She discussed the payment platforms and explained how customers would use each of them. She discussed necessary steps to ensure cohesive and informative signage. Ms. Reid also provided information regarding enforcement and staffing expectations. She shared several scenarios that compared different parking seasons, time frames, and prices. She asked the Board to consider these

options and provide directions on how they would like the upcoming parking season to function.

Commissioner Gillikin had questions regarding the Text2Park option.

Ms. Reid shared it was a cellular based platform and noted the parking ambassadors were there to assist customers.

Commissioner Spiegler suggested the Board's primary object was to turn over parking spaces in the busy season.

Ms. Reid shared it was up to the Board to set time limits in certain parking spaces, noting most options were flexible within their model.

Commissioner Spiegler asked if the options in year two could be modified based off the current parking season results.

Ms. Reid confirmed they could; she shared the data would be reviewed and provided to the Board at the conclusion of the upcoming parking season. She expressed there would be a time crunch this season, as they were behind schedule in getting the program up and running. She anticipated a start date of May 1-15, if they were able to start moving forward immediately.

Commissioner Cooper asked if the parking ambassadors would be wearing reflective gear.

Ms. Reid confirmed they would and shared they would also have an ID badge on to show they were Pivot employees.

Ms. Reid made note the paid parking season ranging from March-October was most popular in coastal towns. She said no matter what option was selected reading the parking season, the parking manager would need to be employed year-round.

Commissioner Cooper asked about parking enforcement and how Pivot would manage that portion of the contract.

Ms. Reid explained how the enforcement piece would function.

Commissioner Oliver asked who was responsible for funding any new parking signage.

Ms. Reid confirmed it would be the Town's expense.

Commissioner Oliver asked for clarification on the process in which customers would pay to park downtown.

Ms. Reid explained the options and shared it was secure and user friendly. She noted their staff would be there to educate and establish a good relationship with the local businesses.

Commissioner Oliver asked what cancellation period the Town of Beaufort would have.

Ms. Reid confirmed it was 60 days at any time.

Commissioner LoPiccolo also had questions regarding enforcement and employee retention.

Ms. Reid shared their company tried to promote within if possible. She explained how they typically scheduled their parking ambassadors, noting they prepared for callouts and other issues that might arise. She confirmed the Town would only be billed for hours worked.

Commissioner Oliver asked Ms. Reid to provide Town Staff with a projected breakdown of their expense budget.

Mayor Harker asked how the parking manager would be utilized in the off season.

Ms. Reid explained it was a year round job and when the manager was not dealing directly with parking issues, they would be available to help with special projects and/or daily operations as directed by Town of Beaufort staff.

Mayor Harker noted the current kiosk would be in the way but suggested with proper signage the Text2Park option and QR code should suffice as they work to phase out the kiosk system. She also asked for more information regarding parking passes.

Ms. Reid explained when a person purchased a parking pass, they would be required to provide a valid license plate which coincides with the parking pass for the season.

Mayor Harker asked if the contract would be annual, three, or five years.

Ms. Reid said they preferred a three year minimum with two additional years available if the Town so desired. She noted a draft contract had been sent to Town Staff for review.

Mayor Harker asked for direction from the Board in three specific areas: parking season; times of paid parking; and parking rates.

In regard to the desired parking season, it was the consensus of the Board to move forward with option "C", which notates March 1-October 31 as the parking season dates. The Board agreed year-round parking was not something they wanted to do.

In regard to the time frame associated with paid parking, Board member's votes are recorded below:

- Commissioner Gillikin, *8am-5pm*
- Commissioner Cooper, *8am-6pm*
- Commissioner Oliver, *8am-5pm*
- Commissioner Spiegler, *8am-5pm*
- Commissioner LoPiccolo, *8am-6pm*

Mayor Harker determined the 8 am- 5pm time frame was preferred, with a (3-2) vote.

In regard to the parking rates, Board member's votes are recorded below:

- Commissioner Gillikin, *\$1.50/hour standard; \$3/hour premium lots*
- Commissioner Cooper, *\$2.00/hour standard; \$3/hour premium lots*
- Commissioner Oliver, *\$1.50/hour standard; \$3/hour premium lots*
- Commissioner Spiegler, *\$1.50/hour standard; \$3/hour premium lots*
- Commissioner LoPiccolo, *\$2.00/hour standard; \$3/hour premium lots*

Mayor Harker determined the parking rate option of \$1.50/hour and \$3.00/hour was preferred, with a (3-2) vote. This action represents an increase from the current rates, \$1.00 to \$1.50 as the standard hourly rate, and \$2.00 to \$3.00 in the premium lots only, which are identified as the East and West parking lots; no changes were made to the zones. While there was considerable discussion regarding parking passes, no changes were made to the current fee schedule. It was noted that parking passes would not be allowed in the premium lots, and Pivot would be able to track parking passes through specific license plate numbers.

Ms. Reid added that the projected revenue numbers were based off the \$2/hour and \$3/hour rates, and those numbers would be expected to go down based off the newly recommended rates.

Commissioner Oliver requested to see those updated numbers as well as an expense breakdown.

Mayor Harker noted the Board would review the data at the end of the parking season to determine if any adjustments needed to be made in the following year.

Commissioner Oliver recommended the Board have a discussion regarding parking revenue and how it would be utilized by the Town going forward.

Mayor Harker suggested that the conversation take place at another meeting, with the potential creation of a parking revenue policy that addresses specific intentions for those funds.

Christi Wood confirmed the premium lots would not have a cap or limit per day, and the specific parking spaces that currently have a 4-hour time limit would remain the same.

Ms. Reid requested action from the Board engaging the services of Pivot Parking.

Arey Grady, Town Attorney, shared he reviewed the draft contract prior to the meeting. He explained the general framework of the contract, and noted the specific details set forth by the Board regarding times, rates, etc. would act as an addendum/exhibit. He explained the Board could approve the current contract, giving Pivot the authority to operate the Town's Parking Program, with the understanding the Board of Commissioners could amend any details found in the addendum/exhibit page at a future meeting. He also shared that Town staff and legal had reviewed the draft contract and found it to be acceptable.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve the proposed contract with Pivot Parking, subject to Board review of all financial details, which will be developed and presented by Pivot; and with the understanding that surplus funds will be restricted by the Town for future discretion of the current Board.

Mayor Harker took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Spiegler: Yea
Commissioner Oliver: Yea
Commissioner Cooper: Yea
Commissioner Gillikin: Yea
Commissioner LoPiccolo: Nay

Mayor Harker confirmed the motion carried with a (4-1) vote.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to recess the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to reconvene the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Stormwater Enterprise Fund

Greg Meshaw, Town Engineer, provided a presentation regarding the Town's Stormwater Enterprise Fund, noting it was necessary to have one because USDA requires it as part of the funding obligations. He discussed three potential stormwater fee structures and explained pros and cons with each option and how specific fees would be charged to property owners around Town.

Commissioner Gillikin recommended an option that provides incentives to the developers and homeowners when considering less pervious surface, such as using Low Impact Development (LID).

Mr. Meshaw responded by sharing the potential of implementing onsite stormwater management credits, for those property owners who put in stormwater ponds and other mechanisms to mitigate runoff.

Commissioner Spiegler asked if the residential fees were the same for every homeowner or if it was determined by lot size or tax value.

Mr. Meshaw replied that it would be the same flat fee for every residential homeowner.

Commissioner Spiegler asked questions regarding funding scenario 3 and the ability to incentivize property owners to save money on the monthly fee.

Mr. Meshaw shared that scenario could be reviewed further, and tonight, he was there to get direction on the rate structure moving forward. He noted the revenue collected could be used for specific CIP projects and/or personnel to complete stormwater needs throughout Town.

Commissioner Cooper commented that he understood the need for a rate structure and expressed a desire to determine a way to apply it fairly.

Commissioner Oliver suggested the rate structure should be designed in a way that property owners are incented to improve the stormwater system on their lots. He offered that some research needed to be done on the rates to see how it calculates over ten years, noting it was not inexpensive to take these types of preventive measures. He also suggested tax value should play a part in the rate structure. He supported Mr. Meshaw's budget estimate of \$270,000 in revenue.

Commissioner LoPiccolo agreed, noting the importance of incentivizing people to utilize and develop their properties responsibly to reduce runoff. He suggested the structure should be developed to meet certain objectives. He offered the idea of capping the fee at a certain point and suggested there be an option for low income families.

Mr. Meshaw shared that if the Board would like to see a fee structure based off the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), he would like to research the method more to ensure it is as accurate as possible.

Commissioner LoPiccolo asked about staff time, specifically whether the current staff would be able to take on the task of tracking these numbers and parcels.

Mr. Meshaw said it would be a stretch and a collaborative effort amongst departments. He noted the property specific option, based on an ERU, would be more time consuming for staff.

Commissioner LoPiccolo suggested funding scenario three was a better option, with the incorporation of an incentive program to reduce stormwater runoff.

Commissioner Gillikin said she liked scenario three as well, but shared concern about existing property owners who may fall into the low income category and have a high percentage of impervious surface.

Mr. Meshaw reminded the group that the residential charge would be a flat rate fee. He also noted that he was unsure staff could defend a stormwater fee associated with the property value verses a technical merit, like the amount of impervious surface.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus that the Board preferred the framework of scenario number three, which includes the tiered system. She added they would like for staff to research and identify potential credits for lower income property owners and incentives for providing onsite stormwater features. She also confirmed the Board was good with Mr. Meshaw's budget projections on the yearly revenue needed.

3. High-Rate Infiltration Basin (HRIB) Permitting Status Report

Mr. Meshaw provided background information on the HRIB, which dates back over ten years ago, when Beau Coast was developed. He noted that the permit for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) expansion and HRIB were never combined. He shared in February 2014, the HRIB permittee changed from the Beau Coast Developer to the Town of Beaufort. He noted in December 2016 the HRIB permit expired and in August 2017 the permit was rescinded. Mr. Meshaw discussed the current permitted WWTP capacity and potential future allowances. He explained Town Staff was directed to try and re-permit the HRIB, noting efforts began in May of 2020. He shared many challenges over the course of the re-permitting process, noting he was at somewhat of a standstill, as the Town faced a significant engineering expenditure of about \$660,000 in consultant fees. He discussed several potential capacity alternatives and noted the option of contacting staff at the North

Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for guidance. He touched on the 80 percent and 90 percent capacity rule, and what that would mean for the Town in terms of expansion. He asked the Board for direction regarding the future of the WWTP when considering HRIB and other related topics. He noted the development of a Wastewater Master Plan would be beneficial.

The Board strongly agreed it would be worthwhile to have a conversation with NCDEQ to discuss potential options for the Town. They also shared concerns with excess discharge into Taylors Creek, future capacity percentages, shellfish sanitation, and potential costs associated with HRIB permitting. The Board also agreed there was a need for a future strategic growth and wastewater master plan to address the issues discussed; it was suggested the Town formalize a system to track all permits to eliminate any lapses in the future.

4. 2024 Beaufort Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan

Rachel Johnson, Parks & Events Coordinator, highlighted the 2024 Beaufort Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan, as referenced in the meeting packet. She recognized the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members and others who were instrumental in the creation of the plan. She shared several future project priorities and noted the plan was a living document the Town was excited to implement.

The Mayor and Commissioners were very complimentary to Ms. Johnson and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for their hard work in constructing an updated and well-rounded document that is much needed in the community.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus to place the item on the Board's upcoming April 8th consent agenda for formal approval.

Commissioner Oliver suggested the demographic pages in the proposed document be updated if possible.

5. Staff Reports

Town Staff shared updates on several items, these highlighted topics are listed below:

- Unified Development Ordinance
- Beaufort Inn Development
- Dredging Schedule
- Economic Development Project through the Division of Commerce
- Golden Leaf Grant Application
- Trestle Walk Project; RAISE Grant Application; Property Acquisitions
- Mayor's Conservation Program
- Public Arts Commission
- Upcoming FY25 Budget Schedule

Closed Session

1. Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) and NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4)

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to go into closed session, in order for the Board to consult with the Town Attorney and for the purpose of discussing economic development incentives.

The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk