



City Council Worksession

Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

November 18, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip Cromer, Mayor

Members of Council in attendance - Philip Cromer, Neil Lipsitz, Michael McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate.

II. EMPLOYEE NEW HIRE RECOGNITION

A. Fire Department.

Tim Ogden, Fire Chief, introduced Dorian Day and Mitchell Mallory.

B. Police Department.

Stephenie Price, Police Chief, introduced Michael Chutjian, and Agustin Zuniga.

C. Public Works.

Nate Farrow, Public Works Director, introduced Kyle Looney, and Brian Ranger.

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Beaufort County Single-Use Plastic Survey Results.

Juliana Zadik, Environmental Long Range Planner with the Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department addressed Council about how Beaufort County Council asked them to explore whether Beaufort County should improve and expand its 2018 Plastic Bag Ordinance. There was a survey conducted to test community and business support. She went over the results of the survey. The survey revealed there is support to strengthen the regulations when it comes to Plastic Bags, Styrofoam Containers, Styrofoam Cups, Plastic Utensils and Plastic Straws.

Councilman Mitchell is supportive of this effort and hopes others will be as well.

Councilman Lipsitz does not want to see too many regulations placed on residents and businesses when it comes to things like the straws and utensils. Does not want to overly tell people what they can and cannot do.

Councilman Scallate would lean more into incentivizing businesses to opt into something instead of enforcement.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

A. Short Term Rental Discussion.

Curt Freese, Community Development Director, stated proposed changes to the Short Term Rental Ordinance had been updated based on Council's direction from the Worksession on August 19, 2025, and they have also received an official recommendation from the Planning Commission. He then proceeded to go over some other recommendations that were made by the Planning Commission concerning an Owner-Occupied requirement and ADU limitations. Some of the major changes included clustering, an equitable waitlist and simplified licensing. He stated existing Short Term Rentals would be grandfathered, but the status would be lost if the property was sold, or the business license was revoked or expired. He spoke about the GIS Analysis results with 100, 150, 200, and 300 foot spacing. The 300 foot spacing is the closest to mimicking the 6 percent neighborhood cap. Since short term rental licenses will be tied to property ownership and forfeit in the case of a change in ownership, it is anticipated that clusters will eventually be reduced with the introduction of a spacing requirement. He then went over some of the other eligibility requirements and addressed the zones where they are prohibited to operate. Also discussed were the Operating Standards, Violations, and Penalties.

Members of Council commented on the various topics and maps presented by **Mr. Freese**, and he addressed their questions and concerns. They provided their recommendations of what they would like to see moving forward.

B. Participation in CNBC's Television Educational Documentary Series, "Now We Know".

Mayor Cromer, spoke about participating in CNBC's television educational documentary series called "Now We Know." The program is hosted by Steve Guttenburg. There are costs to the city involved which total approximately \$25,000.00 to help produce the segment. In return, the City retains full rights to rebroadcast or share the video segment as we see fit. Funding is available via Accommodations Tax Revenue in the City's Parks and Tourism Revenue Fund. Should Council desire to take advantage of this opportunity, staff recommends working with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to request funding through an ATAX grant from the City.

C. Park and Tree Advisory Committee (PTAC) Duties and Responsibilities.

Michael Andersen and other members addressed Council regarding some proposed changes they would like to see that would strengthen the committee's coordination between PTAC and the Planning Commission along with other departments. They would like to see the committee be included in the planning stages of any new development and infrastructure projects where trees might be affected.

Mayor Cromer inquired about an assessment of City Parks and creating an Urban Forestry Plan.

Councilman Scallate appreciates the committee's passion and inquired about resources they might need to fulfill their directives.

Councilman Lipsitz does not feel the committee should have binding authority.

Nate Farrow, Public Works Director, stated one of the changes requested was for the Urban Forestry Plan to fall under the purview of Public works and have the committee assist. He wants the committee to be clear on what changes to the duties and responsibilities they would like to see since this is not the same group that was working on the previous recommendations.

The following addressed Council with their comments and concerns on topics discussed:

Martha Spears, 1201 King Street
Frances Ackerman, 2407 Pigeon Point Road
Kay Parkerson, 706 Church Street
Tom Rubin, 2001 Lafayette Street

V. ADJOURN

7:07 PM

Disclaimer: This document is a summary. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Any questions, please contact the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the City's bulletin board and website www.cityofbeaufort.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.

Approved: December 9, 2025
Traci Guldner

