



City Council Special Meeting and Worksession Meeting Minutes – Council Chambers – 2nd Floor

April 28, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Philip E. Cromer, Mayor

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem, Michael McFee.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rob Cahill (written comments attached), Gloria Kurtz (written comments attached), Jared Madison, Joe MacDermant, Victoria Leddy, Dave Russell.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. An ordinance amending Part 7 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Beaufort, South Carolina and Section 3.6.2.C.2 of the Development Code to adopt provisions regarding Short-Term Rentals -Second Reading.

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Lipsitz and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, made a motion to amend Sec 7-18002 - Requirements for Licensure of STRs - (a) Limitation on Number of STRs (1) no more than four percent of the allowable parcels within designated neighborhoods in the City of Beaufort outside of the National Landmark District zoned T3-S, T3-N, T4-HN, T4-N, and T5-UC may be STRs. The motion was seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

All were in favor of the amended motion.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, made a motion to amend by adding Section S - Special Exceptions, (1) Abandoned and Dilapidated Property Purchaser Incentive - Notwithstanding the caps established in this section, a Short-Term Rental permit may be issued to a purchaser of a property that:

- (i) Was identified by the City of Beaufort on an official abandoned and/or dilapidated property list any time between September 1, 2025, and May 12, 2026; and
- (ii) Was acquired by the current owner during that same time period; and
- (iii) Has been brought into full compliance with all applicable building, safety, and zoning requirements following acquisition; and
- (iv) Has received a certificate of occupancy or final inspection approval.

- (v) The exemption provided herein shall apply only to the initial purchaser who rehabilitated the property and shall not run with the land. Any subsequent conveyance of the property shall subject the Short-Term Rental to all applicable caps and regulations in effect at the time.
- (vi) Permits issued under this subsection shall not count toward the caps established herein.
- (2) Inheritance Exception:
 - (i) A transfer of interest in property by an inheritance has a one-time exemption of conveyance . The party inheriting a licensed STR property may continue operating as an STR as long as all rules and regulations herein required are maintained. Any subsequent transfer through inheritance would have to meet requirements of a new STR license. There would be no grandfathering beyond the first inheritance.
- (3) Grandfathered multiple STR exceptions:
 - (1) Special Exception for Multiple STR's per parcel. The appropriate designated review body may grant a special exception to allow more than one STR per parcel upon application and public hearing provided the applicant demonstrates:
 - (i) That the multiple STR's were lawfully established and operating (or permitted) prior to the effective date of this amendment.
 - (ii) The property was purchased or developed with reasonable reliance on the ability to maintain multiple STR's (e.g., based on prior approvals, site plans, or vested rights).
 - (iii) Granting the exception will not materially undermine the purposes of the city-wide cap, adjacency requirements, or neighborhood character. The special exception shall be subject to such conditions as the reviewing body deems necessary to mitigate impacts.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Lipsitz.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, amended his previous amended motion to change September 1, 2025, through May 12, 2026, to January 1, 2025, through April 28, 2026, with a one year period to complete the renovations from the adoption of this ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor of the amended motions.

All were in favor of the main motion.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. Boards, Commissions and Committees applicant interviews.

Council held a question and answer session with the following applicants for the various Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Mary Lurry, Mitzi McClure, Kevin Cuppia, Jared Madison, George Oehlert, Chris Ramm, Peggy Simmer, Brenda Litchfield, Richard Drake, Bill Bardenwerper, Bill Suter, Lily Moss, Randy Novick, Suzanne Ramm, Allen Theridge, and Zachary Graber.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Department Directors Presentation and Capital Projects for the Draft Recommended Fiscal Year 2027 Consolidated Budget.

Department Heads went over their individual department's recommended budgets as they relate to the Strategic Plan. The budgets showed current Strategic Plan initiatives along with what will be needed to help achieve these goals. The expenditure report showed a comparison between FY 2025 Actual, FY 2026 Original and Revised, and the FY 2027 Recommended Budget figures. Each department presentation concluded with the reasons for any requested increases. The Department Heads answered Council's questions and addressed their concerns.

Members of Council provided their feedback on items they were supportive and not supportive of.

Councilman Scallate expressed concerns about raising taxes through the proposed TAG fee. He said he reviewed this year's budget with a focus on identifying non-essential, deferrable expenditures that could offset the need for a new tax. He advocated deferring the \$80,000 expense for pay meter replacement, noting that many constituents have requested free parking in the marina parking lot be continued through the construction projects. This public feedback, he suggested, provides a justifiable reason to postpone the expenditure. He encouraged the City Manager to recalibrate the proposed budget prior to First Reading.

Public comment was made by Jared Madison.

You can visit the City's Financial Transparency Portal by using this link:

<https://www.cityofbeaufort.org/161/Financial-Transparency>

B. Discussion on an ordinance to amend Part 9, Chapter 1, Section 9-1008, Loud and Unseemly Noise, of the City of Beaufort Code of Ordinances.

Stephanie Price, Police Chief, went over the changes that came out of First Reading on March 10, 2026. Second Reading was postponed at the April 14, 2026, Regular Meeting to be discussed again in this Worksession.

Mayor Pro Tem, McFee, stated in reviewing the changes that have been made, he went back to the original Noise Ordinance, and looked at the elements that were initially built into different areas within the City. He feels the streamlining we are trying to do is mudding the intent of the ordinance. He read from a report which showed our decibel levels are the highest of any other City in South Carolina.

Councilman Lipsitz pointed out our decibel levels are being measured from the property line where in other locations within the state, they are measured from distances like 500 and 100 feet.

Mayor Cromer does not want to make too many changes, but wants it tweaked to be able to include loud automobile noises. The Night Time Quiet Hours needs to be reinserted.

Councilman Scallate feels that under Sec 9-1008, (a) numbers 1 and 2 can be combined. This could be where the Night Time Quiet Hours could be worked in.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 70 (a) (1) of the South Carolina Code of Law: Discussion regarding personnel appointed by City Council, Boards, Commissions and Committees - Downtown Advisory Board.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to go into Executive Session and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem, McFee.

All were in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to come out of Executive Session and seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

No actions from Executive Session.

VIII. ADJOURN

8:59 PM

Councilman Lipsitz made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Councilman Mitchell.

All were in favor, motion carried.

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: May 12, 2024
Traci Guldner



I am Rob Cahill [REDACTED]

I have three (3) comments tonight under Headings of:

1. Council Meeting Productivity;
2. New Fencing / Swings @ Waterfront Park; and
3. Parking @ the Marina Parking Lot

1. Council Meeting Productivity

First, a quick civics tutorial: the primary purpose of governmental meetings is 2b "Effective." A secondary factor is 2b "Efficient." We are NOT the Private Sector, where the metric of Efficiency seeks to reign supreme, but I digress.

Like many of you, I have sat through two 4-hour Council meetings already this month of April.

That's two too many.

- Regardless, for optimal productivity + to sustain higher energy levels, one "Best Practice" that research has proven + codified for decades:
- You should NOT conduct a meeting for more than 60-90 minutes b4 taking a BREAK.
- I propose a three (3) minute stay-in-place BREAK after every eighty (80) minutes of every meeting where ppl can s-t-r-e-t-c-h... and perhaps even talk w/a neighbor.

2. New Fencing / Swings @ Waterfront Park

- Massive Kudos 4 the new fencing AND swinging benches! I played "cub-reporter" and interviewed numerous visitors + locals this last week — and ppl were uniformly effusive in their praise.

— Related... regarding the frequency and placement of the "NO TRESPASSING" signs, I beseech the city to use better judgment: Specifically:

- (Ask Traci to put pix of fencing and signs on monitors 4 everyone 2c)

— 25 signs, placed 8-15 yards apart, is w-a-a-y too many. I believe half would be more than sufficient to achieve the purpose.

— In addition, I believe the current height of the signs are ill advised. They are a visual eyesore that hinders + obstructs the natural sight-lines of the waterfront.

- I propose that the City secures the "NO TRESPASSING" signs 6" from the ground.

- On each sign appears "SC Code 16-11-600 (A)."
- I looked it up... (and I quote): "While SC Code §16-11-600 requires traditional signs to be 'conspicuous,' it does NOT — I repeat "NOT" — specify exact height or size dimensions for them."



- Last, bring the swinging benches back to the Promenade.
- They are a significant, iconic part of the charm, character + vibe of the waterfront experience. (The City could even save storage costs by returning them).

3. Marina Parking Lot

- The City has announced that starting next month that parking in the Marina Parking Lot will NO longer be FREE.
- I think this decision too is ill-advised.
- I propose that the City reconsider this decision... AND return it to FREE Parking for the duration of the work on the waterfront.
- Currently, it is my understanding every boat slip covered by the current lease w/Safe Harbor includes a window tag 4 FREE Parking in accord with their length of stay.
- A monthly parking pass is valued @ \$250!
- To make this request revenue-neutral, amend the current lease w/Safe Harbor by revoking this sweetheart perk and charge slip owners the \$8 daily fee commensurate to their stay — or allow them to park FREE too, subject to availability.

April 28, 2026

BY HAND & VIA EMAIL

Beaufort City Council
1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort SC 29902

Attention:

Mayor Phil Cromer
Mayor Pro Tem Mike McFee
City Councilman Neil Lipsitz
City Councilman Mitch Mitchell
City Councilman Josh Scallate

Cc: Traci Guldner, City Clerk

RE: Proposed Amendments to Short-Term Rental Ordinances

Dear Mayor Cromer, Mayor Pro Tem McFee, and Councilmen Lipsitz, Mitchell and Scallate,

My husband, Harry F. ("Rick") Kurz, and I own abutting properties at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in *The Point* historic district ("*The Point*").

At the March 24th work session, I submitted a letter expressing our firm opposition to the motion to remove the existing zoning exemption prohibiting short-term rentals ("STRs") in *The Point* historic district. A copy of my prior letter is attached for your reference to avoid being redundant.

In my opinion, the Council's position relative to *The Point* vs. its position relative to purchasers of abandoned and dilapidated properties raises fundamental issues of equity and fairness. This Council has acknowledged the perceived unfairness to a limited number of purchasers of abandoned and dilapidated properties who relied on existing regulations when they purchased. However, the Council has effectively remained silent as to all the individuals who have purchased in *The Point* since the exemption was in effect and who detrimentally relied on the exemption against STRs in as part of their decision-making process. Removing a long-standing exemption is unfair and inequitable. The closest analogy would be the removal of HOA covenants and restrictions in a gated community after residents purchased in reliance on those protections.

If the Council proceeds in its efforts to remove the exemption for *The Point*, any allowance for STRs in *The Point* should be narrowly drawn, e.g., limit STRs to core commercial areas along Carteret and restrict the introduction of STRs into the residential core of *The Point* for all the reasons set forth during prior hearings and work sessions.

Further, the proposed Abandoned and Dilapidated Property Purchaser Incentive set forth in Section 7-18002 (s) fails to specify a timetable for bringing a property into full compliance and receiving a Certificate of Occupancy. It should be modified to provide a specific time frame so properties don't continue to languish. I strongly recommend a 12-month time frame, which should be more than sufficient. Additionally, current subsection (11) is confusing. Since the exemption won't run with the land, a permit issued to a future owner would count towards the cap. As such, I recommend that the positions of (10) and (11) be reversed in this section. For illustrative purposes, see the following which reflects my recommendations on changes in bold:

(s) Abandoned and Dilapidated Property Purchaser Incentive.

(9) Notwithstanding the caps established in this section, a Short-Term Rental permit may be issued to a purchaser of a property that:

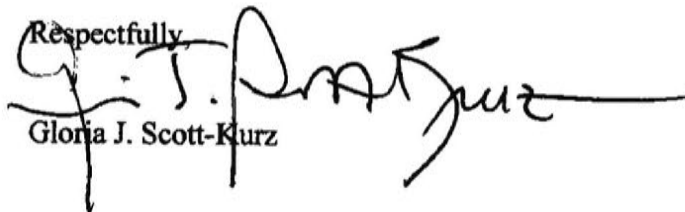
- i. Was identified by the City of Beaufort on an official abandoned and/or dilapidated property list at any time between September 1, 2025, and May 12, 2026 and
- ii. Was acquired by the current owner during that same time period; and
- iii. Has been brought into full compliance with all applicable building, safety, and zoning requirements **within 12 months** following acquisition; and,
- iv. Has received a certificate of occupancy or final inspection approval **within 12 months of acquisition**

(10) Permits issued under this subsection (9) shall not count toward the caps

(11) The exemption provided herein shall apply only to the initial purchaser who rehabilitated the property and shall not run with the land. Any subsequent conveyance of the property shall subject the Short-Term Rental to all applicable caps and regulations in effect at that time.

The conversation about STRs is important and requires a deliberate, thoughtful and thorough approach before adopting a new Chapter 18. Substantial progress has been made but several issues remain unresolved. I respectfully urge you to address these before making a final decision.

Respectfully,



Gloria J. Scott-Kurz