

Update: Building Beaufort's Future

Written by CNU-Carolinas Chapter
Monday, 12 September 2011 14:17

Building Beaufort's future continues through September with the latest series of public workshops, planning charrettes and almost round-the-clock efforts to bring it all together.

On the table: Sectors 2 and 3 of the Civic Master Plan, which includes the neighborhoods west of Ribaut Road and south of Duke Street - West End, Depot, Hundred Pines, Royal Oaks, Cottage Farm, Jericho Woods, Spanish Point and Mossy Oaks, as well as Beaufort Memorial Hospital and the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

Last spring, more than 400 people shared their concerns and opportunities for Sector 1, which is largely the downtown Beaufort area and Whitehall on Lady's Island.

Two immediate success stories coming from those springtime sessions are the pedestrian crosswalk at Carteret and Port Republic and the pending opening of Lowcountry Produce in the former City Hall building on Carteret Street. The fresh market, in a completely rehabbed facility that helps anchor downtown, is expected to open this fall.

This is one of many steps toward creating not just a vision, but a reality for what our future can be and will be, Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling said. "Two years ago we created our 10-year comprehensive plan called 'Vision Beaufort' and now is the time to be implementing the plan on a block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood basis. This is about improving the future for all of Beaufort, not just particular neighborhoods or business districts," he said.

Jon Verity, chairman of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission, pointed to the extensive and intensive planning process as just one indicator the City is taking the right approach. With continued public interest and involvement, he said, the resulting plans and policies truly will reflect what Beaufort wants – and needs – for a successful fourth century.

This month's workshops are led by the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission through the Office of Civic Investment. Preceded by interviews and meetings with neighborhood groups, designers, property owners, real estate developers, TCL and Beaufort Memorial leadership and other professionals, the "slow charrette" process began in August and will run through the end of the year. "The Sept. 27-Oct 4 charrette will give the design team a chance to work with the

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public to present and refine the work to date,” said Josh Martin, who leads the process for the Office of Civic Investment.

During the process, designers will be sketching potential options for housing concepts, neighborhood improvements, stormwater infrastructure, sidewalks, streetscapes, public open spaces and parks and appropriate commercial spaces for the City. With the Redevelopment Commission, they will be also developing policies and programs, and seeking out partnerships to start needed infrastructure, infill and redevelopment projects.

“The goal over the next year to 18 months is to develop individual design plans for every neighborhood in the City, at the block and site level, and to recommend policy and infrastructure recommendations for Beaufort City Council,” said Demetri Baches, who directs the overall effort for the Office of Civic Investment along with Craig Lewis.

“The Civic Master Plan will establish principles and standards which will lead to a roadmap for all public and private development in Beaufort. The Office of Civic Investment, working with the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission and City Council, will identify and promote investment and reinvestment opportunities throughout the City - not just in one or two neighborhoods,” Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson said.

For frequent updates on the planning process for Beaufort's fourth century, visit www.cityofbeaufort.org and www.BeaufortCivicInvestment.org

WORKSHOP & CHARRETTE SCHEDULE

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Charrette

September 27 - October 4: Sectors 2 and 3 Charrette

Location: City Hall, 2nd Floor | 1911 Boundary St.

Public Open Houses: Wednesday & Thursday at 5pm and Saturday at 11am during the week of the charrette. Final presentation will be on the evening of October 4th – time TBD but will be posted at www.BeaufortCivicInvestment.org

This article was written for Lowcountry Weekly by the Congress for the New Urbanism – Carolinas Chapter. For more information, visit www.cnu.org