

**MINUTES
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

January 22, 2019

Executive Conference Room, Administration Building,
Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex,
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina 29902

The electronic and print media duly notified in
accordance with the State Freedom of Information Act.

Attendance

Present: Committee Chairman Lawrence McElynn, Committee Vice Chairman Michael Covert, and members Gerald Dawson, York Glover and Chris Hervochon

Absent: Stewart Rodman, Mark Lawson

Ex-officio: Brian Flewelling, Alice Howard, Joseph Passiment and Paul Sommerville (Non-committee members of Council serve as *ex-officio* members and are entitled to vote.)

Staff: Jim Beckert, County Auditor; Chris Inglese, Assistant County Attorney; Eric Larson, Stormwater Manager; Fred Leyda, Executive Director of Human Services; Wanda Mayse, Disabilities and Special Needs Deputy Director; Monica Spells, Assistant County Administrator, Civic Engagement and Outreach; Mark Sutton, Facilities Management

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Michael Covert called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m. Committee Chairman Larry McElynn arrived shortly after the meeting was called to order. Committee Vice Chairman Mr. Covert passed the gavel to the Mr. McElynn. Mr. McElynn chaired the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Flewelling, seconded by Mr. Glover, to approve the agenda. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 7:0.

Citizen Comments

Mr. Andy Allen, a resident of Battery Point, stated that he is concerned with the drainage around 1 Bostick Circle. Mr. Allen said the drainage problem at 1 Bostick Circle cannot be dealt with simply by putting dirt on the property. Mr. Allen expressed to the committee that he is willing to purchase the lot (1 Bostick Circle) from the county. He also stated that he desires to develop the property into something that looks much better for the neighborhood.

Mr. James Pickard, Chairman of the Battery Point Architectural Review Committee, stated that the application to build on 1 Bostick Circle was received in June 2018, and was denied because the property does not meet the architectural guidelines. Mr. Pickard said the application was also incomplete, and lacked the required drainage plan. He opposes the architectural plan because of the drainage, and design of the proposed home.

Mrs. Kelly Lamb, a resident of Lady's Island, spoke about her concerns with fiscal responsibility of taxpayers, pertaining to the purchase of 1 Bostick Circle. Ms. Lamb questions why 1 Bostick Circle should be purchased by the county since it requires an HOA fee. She also questions the safety of the residents in Battery Point because of a high turnover rate of Disability and Special Needs (DSN) training specialists in Beaufort County.

ACTION ITEMS

Item: Purchase of 1 Bostick Circle for the Construction of a Home to Serve Disability and Special Needs Citizens

Discussion: Mr. Christopher Inglese, Assistant County Staff Attorney, explained that the Beaufort County Code of Ordinances, Section 2-5.14 states the prior council approval is necessary for the purchases of real property. Mr. Inglese explained to the committee that in the case of this DSN purchase (1 Bostick Circle), outside agents handle the transactions.

Chairman McElynn asked Mr. Inglese if the purchase binding of the property is legal and if the county owns the land. Mr. Inglese answered yes to both questions.

Mr. Hervochon asked if the line of legality was crossed by former county administrator, Josh Gruber. Mr. Inglese answered no, and said there's no evidence that Mr. Gruber benefited personally from the purchase of 1 Bostick Circle. Mr. Inglese added that he believes that the purchase of 1 Bostick Circle was what Mr. Gruber thought was in the best interest of the county.

Mr. Hervochon questioned how the county heard about the property. Mr. Inglese explained the property was discovered through the assistance of a realtor.

Mr. Flewelling stated that the real estate agent that represented the county was the prior owner of the property about a year prior to the county purchasing the land.

Mr. Inglese explained the agent sold the property to a county citizen. The county purchased the land from the citizen for \$4,000 dollars more than what the agent sold it for. However, Mr. Inglese explained that he is unaware of any other way the agent could have financially gained from the purchase, besides commission.

Mr. Sutton, County Architect and Deputy Director of Facilities, explained to the committee that the lot (1 Bostick Circle) was purchased with the entitlement of a drainage permit from the city of Beaufort. Mr. Sutton explained that a new drainage plan would be developed if there is council's approval to proceed with building arrangements for the property. The stormwater will drain to the

side streets and wetlands in the back of the property. Mr. Sutton said there were no red flags or signs that would prohibit the county from building on the lot.

Mr. Flewelling asked Mr. Sutton if the drainage plan is allowable under the covenants of Battery Point. Mr. Sutton said the neighborhood is laid out without any storm drainage. Mr. Inglese explained that there were no existing covenants that say there is a problem with draining into the streets.

Mr. Larson, Stormwater Management Director, said the proposal to drain to the streets will drain the property properly. Mr. Larson explained to the committee that the subdivision was designed for all of the lots to be developed. He said he does not anticipate a problem with drainage once the home is built.

Mr. Sutton approached the committee once more to provide details about the building plans for the home on the property. Mr. Sutton says the home will not be large. The submittal of HOA was received, but the county said not to move forward. The resubmittal was not sent. The new proposal will include a wrap-around porch, possibly a relocation of the entry door. Mr. Sutton said their intent is to resubmit the proposal, and move forward.

The house will be 1,600 square feet, elevated on piers with a handicap ramp and railings. The wooden-framed ramp will be on the right side of the home and made as subtle as possible. The home will consist of four bedrooms with flex space for training or conferences. Only four residents will occupy the home.

The home will also consist of a residential level fire sprinkler, which is also a requirement of DSN. The estimated cost bid out \$300,000 within a budget of \$350,000.

For clarity, Mr. Sommerville asked Mr. Sutton to confirm that the home will comply with HOA covenants.

Ms. Wanda Mayse, Disabilities and Special Needs Deputy Director, approached the committee to speak about the due diligence of the property. Ms. Mayse said although water is near the property, it's not in the immediate proximity of the home. She explained that 1 Bostick Circle would be a safe choice for the individuals that will be occupying the home.

DSN has 24-hour staffing. Staffing needs depend on the levels of care needs that DSN consumers require. Ms. Mayse addressed Mrs. Lamb's concern about the DSN training specialist turnover rate, and explained that DSN is not in a staffing crisis and has enough staff members to adequately meet the needs of DSN individuals.

Ms. Mayse said the DSN staff members are well-trained. She added that there are hardly any existing reports of any DSN individuals being a threat of any sort.

DSN primarily works with adults 18 and older. All DSN homes are built strictly for four residents in each home. There are no more than 2 staff members working on a 24-hour basis.

Mr. Flewelling asked if any of the DSN consumers that will be residing in the home have any drug addictions or have any psychological issues.

Ms. Mayse replied by stating the only major difference in the DSN communities is the DSN consumers have intellectual disabilities, and some don't have the ability to care for themselves yet.

Mr. Sommerville reiterated that Beaufort County is the only county in the state that gives funding support to DSN.

Assistant County Administrator of Civic Outreach and Engagement, Monica Spells explained to the committee that all of the DSN residences have county cameras that can be monitored remotely.

Ms. Beth Cody, DSN Finance Director, stood before the committee to discuss how the organization is funded. All DSN consumers receive Medicaid and/or Medicare. The funding from the federal government comes to South Carolina as a 3:1 match.

DSN also receives general funding from the county. This fiscal year, DSN received over \$3,000,000 dollars from the county for its operations.

Mr. McElynn asked where the does the county get those funds.

Ms. Cody explained to the committee that the county receives that money from ad valorem tax dollars. The greatest portion of that \$3,000,000 goes toward the salaries of DSN employees. DSN also receives funds from its consumers for their room and board.

DSN receives almost \$7,000,000 dollars from the South Carolina DSN, which is federal, state conglomeration money for the construction of DSN homes. If DSN does not spend all of its funding within the fiscal year, the organization saves the remaining funds. Those remaining funds are also used toward constructing homes. The funds are in a fund balance to buy capital, so the cost of construction is not recurring.

Ms. Cody stated that DSN currently has three different homes in subdivisions that pay HOA fees.

Mr. Flewelling said that his objection to the DSN facility being built on 1 Bostick Circle has nothing to do with the DSN consumers or clients. He encourages the support of the DSN program and all citizens that have special needs.

Mr. Flewelling restated that the lot is inappropriate for this type of facility, because of drainage issues. Mr. Flewelling thinks the county should take up Mr. Allen's offer to purchase the lot, and find another lot for construction of the DSN home.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Sommerville, that Community Services Committee refer the purchase of 1 Bostick Circle for construction of a home to serve Disability and Special Needs citizens to the entire Council for their further consideration and any action that they deem appropriate. The vote: YEAS – Mr. Dawson, Mrs. Howard, Mr. McElynn, Mr. Passiment, Mr. Sommerville. NAYS – Mr. Covert, Mr. Flewelling and Mr. Hervochoon. The motion passed 5-3.

Status: Council will discuss the purchase of 1 Bostick Circle for construction of a home to serve Disability and Special Needs citizens for their further consideration and any action that they deem appropriate.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Item: Consideration of Appointments and Reappointments

Discussion: Mr. McElynn asked all new liaisons to discover who the new appointments were and return to the next committee meeting with their recommendations. Mr. McElynn stated that he didn't think it was fair to vote for anyone, since the new council members and liaisons did not know who the appointments and reappointments were.

Status: Committee members will return with their recommendations at the next committee meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Covert, seconded by Mr. Passiment to adjourn at 5:47 p.m.

Ratified by Committee: February 18, 2019