

Aiken City Council Minutes

WORK SESSION

October 12, 2020

Present: Mayor Osbon, Councilmembers Brohl, Diggs, Girardeau, Gregory, and Price.

Absent: Councilman Woltz

Others Present: Stuart Bedenbaugh, Gary Smith, Kim Abney, Sara Ridout, Charles Barranco, Gary Meadows, Brian Brazier, Colin Demarest of the Aiken Standard, and 15 citizens.

The work session was held in the Council Chambers at 214 Park Avenue SW; however, the number of citizens that could attend at one time was limited because of the COVID-19 virus and social distancing.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Osbon called the work session of October 12, 2020, to order at 5:04 p.m. He stated there were two items on the work session to discuss: suburban fire fees and the Demo 200 Program.

FIRE FEES

Mayor Osbon stated the first item for discussion was the suburban fire fees. He said this discussion was asked for as soon as they saw the first bills that went out because it was realized people got bills that were 400 times what they had been paying. He said he did not think it was the intention of Council to charge anyone a 300% to 400% increase on the fire fee. He said they want to do something equitable. He said they asked staff to have this work session so Council can discuss the matter and get information and give staff a guideline to come back to Council. To change the fee will take approval of an ordinance which requires two readings by Council and will be an amendment to the budget. There will be two public hearings on the matter. At this meeting Council wanted to make a statement that there would be no penalty or late fee on the bills that were sent out. If someone has paid the fee already, the amount will be credited to whatever the new fee is. He said the fees were discussed, but Council did not realize what the increase would look like.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated since 1994 the City had billed this type of rate structure. There are three types of fire customers—fire customers inside the city, fire customers outside the city and on city water service, and fire customers not in the city and not on city water, but within the City's fire district. He said there are about 6,316 parcels that are inside the city's fire district but outside the city limits. Of that number the ones outside the city and not on city water service number 1,873. Those customers are the ones Council is discussing at this meeting. He pointed out that staff had updated our customer list and used the GIS to help identify parcels that are within our service area. We identified a number of parcels that were not getting billed fire service. The number of new ones billed is about 473 parcels with a structure on the property.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated in June, City Council passed an ordinance adjusting suburban fire fees affecting property owners that own parcels that are located outside the City limits and are NOT on City water. For the average property with improvements, the rate was \$115.00, typically billed at \$28.75 per quarter.

However, staff recognized that all out-of-city fire fee customers were not billed equitably. Out-of-city fire customers who are on City water were paying \$41.00 per month, billed on the monthly water bill.

With the new ordinance, rates were standardized and all the outside the city residential customers are paying \$540 per year. Water customers not in the City have the fee paid

over 12 monthly payments of \$45, and customers not in the City and not on City water pay \$135 per quarter.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated based on comments from Council and from emails and phone calls with property owners, if Council wishes staff can go back and look to make some modifications downward to the rates. From a timing standpoint he felt staff could have this resolved next month. This would give staff time to look at some options for Council and public input. Any change would require an ordinance because the fee rate was approved by an ordinance with two readings, with the first reading in May and the second reading in June.

Mayor Osbon asked several questions. He stated there are homes on city water that pay their fire fee on the monthly water bill. He asked what rate those customers were paying. He said he hoped to accomplish equity for everyone who is outside the city limits, but within the fire district. Mr. Bedenbaugh stated the average residential owner on city water but not in the city limits pays \$45 per month maximum. The fee is based on the value of the residence. The billing structure has been in effect since 1994. There are 6,316 parcels out of the city, but which are inside the city's fire district that are billed for fire fees. Of those 1,873 are not on city water, and 4,443 are on city water. Mayor Osbon pointed out the outside city on city water service have been paying the fire fee monthly for some time on their water bill and are presently paying \$45 per month. Mr. Bedenbaugh pointed out that the \$45 per month went into effect on July 1, 2020. Prior to July 1, 2020, they were paying \$41 per month on their water bill for fire service or \$492 per year. In addition, they pay double water and sewer rates.

Mayor Osbon noted that in 2020 collections for suburban fire rates were \$200,000. Mr. Bedenbaugh stated \$197,500 was the amount billed, and we collected about \$170,000 because not all the bills were collected. There is an average of 16% uncollected.

Councilwoman Brohl stated she echoes what the Mayor has said. She said she apologizes to the citizens as it was not the intent to increase the fees 400%. She noted that the customers on water service increased from \$41 to \$45 per month which was not a huge jump. She said she was trying to figure out how we got to the 300% and 400% increases.

Mr. Bedenbaugh pointed out those with the big increases are property owners who are inside the fire district only. They receive no other city service. We have to bill them for the service, and it is more difficult to have payment rendered if they are hesitant about paying. He pointed out those were part of the fire rate increase which we talked about in May and June and talked about making the fee equitable because of the difference in the fees for the fire service. At the time we were talking about persons being billed but not paying. Parallel to that, staff was doing a review of property within our fire district, and discovered many properties that were not being billed even though they were in the fire district. They have received fire protection, but have not been billed for it. That number is the 473 that we called the "found" properties that fall in the category and had a structure on the property. Not billing them was our mistake and not the property owners mistake. We did not go back and retroactively bill a property owner on our mistake. We just started the billing going forward.

Council then discussed the various rates and categories of fire service and the minimum and maximum rates depending on the value of the property. The city uses the county value of the property to determine the rate of the fee. The maximum fee is capped at \$45 per month. A vacant property with no city services is capped at \$60 per year.

Mayor Osbon pointed out that there are 21 square miles in the City and 58 square miles is the total fire district. The fire district encompasses more area out of the city than what is inside the city. He asked what percentage are we trying to capture from the suburban area for the cost of providing fire service. He pointed out that he hoped we could do that without such a gross jump in the fee. He pointed out that staff presented the proposal to Council, but Council did not ask the right questions. He pointed out when the bills went out they can clearly see that there is an issue. He noted that Council feels this way not because of the phone calls, but because it is the right thing and the City wants to do

business the right way. He said he appreciates people giving us the opportunity, when we make a mistake, to fix it.

Mayor Osbon asked that staff look at the properties that should have been billed, but have never been billed for the fire service and see if that can provide some of the funding needed for the fire service. He asked that staff come forward with a plan that would be equitable and fair to the fire customers.

Councilwoman Brohl stated she agreed with the Mayor. She noted that when Council looked at the proposal it was presented to be equitable and that the customers be billed at the same rate. She pointed out the structure is a lot more complicated than what they originally thought with the different categories. She noted that Council never intended for the fee to be a 400% increase.

Mayor Osbon stated that a work session is not a public hearing, but he was going to give the citizens present a chance to speak if they would like to.

Ms. Carolyn Bazzle, Brookhaven, stated what had been recommended to City Council for increasing the fire service fees was wrong. She discussed the fees and the rates and the variation in the bills for various residents. She pointed out that her bill had gone up to \$540 per year for fire service, a \$425 increase in the fee. She noted that she is on a fixed income and can't afford the increase in the fee. She pointed out that she had checked with her insurance company and by law the City cannot make her pay the fire fee. She pointed out she is outside the city and does not have a vote or a voice because she is in the County. She said she was willing to pay the \$28.75 per quarter, but not the new increased fee. She pointed out those outside the city don't have to pay the fee.

Mayor Osbon pointed out to Ms. Bazzle that Council agreed with what she was saying is right. He said he was not trying to force her to pay the fire fee, but he was telling her not to pay it until she gets a notice of something more in line with what she was paying. He said he knows what Ms. Bazzle is saying, and he agrees with her.

Linda Blake, Sparkleberry Lane, stated she was happy to hear that Council is starting to rethink the matter. She noted that for years she did not pay anything for fire service, and then she started getting a bill for \$28.75 a quarter which she paid and felt was reasonable. She pointed out that the 400% increase really threw her. She said she appreciates what Council is doing to reconsider the amount of the fire fees.

Ms. Sondra Dunphy, Waldo Woods, thanked Council for realizing there is a problem with the fire fees. She said she had recently retired after 26 years and is on a limited budget. She asked when Council may have this matter resolved. Mayor Osbon responded that staff will gather information and come back to Council in early November. He pointed out there will be an ordinance with two public hearings so it will be publicized. He noted that those who had received a bill should not pay it at this time, but wait until the matter is resolved. There will be no late penalty. If a person has paid the fee, the payment will be credited to the customer.

Ms. Laura Slizewsk stated she had been receiving the \$28.75 bill for fire service, and the last bill had increased to \$135 per quarter. She pointed out that she had been told that the bill was based on the value of the house. She said she would like to know how the structure is set up and how the breakdown for the fee is set up. She was asked to leave her name and number with the Clerk so someone could get in touch with her regarding the rate structure.

Ms. Ivy Fogt, Wood Valley, thanked Council for coming to the table and asking people to speak on the matter. She pointed out she does not live in the city so does not vote for Council. She noted that any home over \$130,000 is getting hit with the \$540 per year fee. It is a large sum of money for many residents. She said she has some concerns as to who is doing the billing and the excessive cost for the fire fee. She pointed out that any home under \$217,000 is paying more for the fire fee than they would pay for city taxes.

Councilwoman Price pointed out that she had talked with several of the individuals who live in the County and have expressed concerns about the increase in fire rates. She noted that several comments came up that they can't vote for any of them, and they probably don't care. Councilwoman Price stated that is not the case. She said Council and City staff do care.

Ed Collins, who lives off of Chukker Creek, stated he used to have New Ellenton as their fire protection. Then the City of Aiken took over and did a great job. He wondered if this was a ploy to incorporate the areas into the city. He pointed out that the new rate is almost like paying city taxes as the fee increased a lot.

Mayor Osbon stated he was sorry the residents had to take their time to come to the meeting to express their opinions. He said there is a Council and a staff who will make it right. He pointed out there will be public meetings when a change is made to the ordinance and that will be publicized. He pointed out the Council meetings are posted on the city's website, and the Aiken Standard does a very good job of covering what will be on the Council agendas.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated the residents could also phone the City Manager's Office to inquire about the meetings.

DEMO 200 PROGRAM

Mayor Osbon stated the next item was discussion about the Demo 200 Program.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated the City of Aiken has had a Demolition 200 program for about 20 years. He stated the Demo 200 program has been suspended since April 2019 at the request of City Council. He said the intention was to look at the program. There were a lot of questions about the program. Staff presented an update to Council in September 2019 and convened a group of interested citizens on January 28, 2020 and February 25, 2020. Councilman Girardeau was the Council liaison with the committee. With the pandemic they met virtually for several months. The Committee was ready to come to Council, but the matter was delayed as it was felt this was a matter of public interest so staff delayed having the presentation until after Council started meeting again and moved through some other issues. Staff is ready to have the discussion with Council. Any modifications to the program could potentially require an ordinance change. Some matters could potentially be a separate program from the Demo 200 Program, such as commercial and non-profit structures. Historically the program has mostly been involved with single family, and in some limited cases multi-family structures. The Committee consisted of City staff from Building Inspections, Planning, as well Kim Abney, Assistant City Manager, and interested parties from the community. He said he would ask that Ms. Abney, Mr. Bland, and Councilman Girardeau discuss the recommendations going forward for Council consideration. He said this is a time to present the information. Should Council want to proceed, staff would bring an ordinance when appropriate if Council wants to go in that direction. He noted one matter that had been talked about before was the cost. He said there is not a recommendation to do that as there are certain properties where demolition is the best option, and we don't want to price it out where the property owners are disincentivized by cost to address the matter. Some structures are hazardous and close to falling down. The non-profit and commercial buildings are something new that Council might want to consider.

Ms. Abney, Assistant City Manager, stated Mr. Bland's memo summarized the Demo 200 Program well. The program has a very good place and purpose to allow people who have had property fall in disrepair and did not have the means to bring it up to code, to allow the City to help them to clean up a neighborhood and leave a green space there. In the time that we have not been meeting, staff did go back to about 12 years of history and did not find that there had been any cases of what people perceived as abuse or people taking advantage of the residential Demo 200 Program. What the committee would like to bring to Council, if there is interest, is to have a parallel program for commercial and non-profit owned properties because commercial properties would cost a lot more and the potential would exist that they would want to turn that over more quickly. To pull out

commercial use and have a separate program looking only at commercial properties might want to be considered.

Mr. Bland stated some of the issues brought up regarding the Demo 200 Program were the fact that someone could buy some property, use this program, and flip it. That was a concern that committee members had heard. He said that had not been the case. There have been some occasions when somebody bought property, and then maybe eight years later or so they sold the property. They may have purchased the property when it was close to substandard, and then it got worse. That has been rare. He pointed out that overall probably the easiest administrative thing for staff to look at is a cooling off period from owning the property to when it is eligible for demolition. Depending on the condition of the property, that may be an issue that would conflict with our property maintenance standards as well and possibly bring about some other form of remedy before the two years is up. There was thought about the back-in, like if one uses the Demo 200 Program to demolish the structure and then try to sell that property. It would rarely be a case where the seller is looking at the assessor records of residential property, that a property would escalate in value significantly by tearing down a structure on site. In that case one would probably be looking at the value of the land. But we could enter into an agreement with folks to try to have a recapture program. That recapture program administratively may cost more than we would recoup from it, because you have to enter agreements, have staff monitor those on a regular basis and then try to legally enforce those agreements to recapture funds, like a loan that is forgiven at 20% a year and in five years the 20% goes away. It has a higher administrative cost, but if that is a concern that is something we can put in the plan. There were some concerns looking at the potential of a committee to oversee this, but the way it is written in the ordinance currently, it is a technical assessment by the Building Official. Appealing to a committee kind of opens up a little bit of uncertainty in that process and the potential for inconsistency. We want to treat everybody fairly and equitably under the program, so while that is a possibility, it is something that probably opens up some scrutiny maybe legally about treating everybody in the same situation the same way. The same goes about whether the property is potentially historic or pseudo historic which is not a category. If we are concerned about that, we need to think about protecting those properties and putting them on the local register. For instance, in our Historic District, the Design Review Board oversees them, and they have to have a Certificate of Demolition. The same way in the Downtown Business or Old Aiken Overlay. Those already have some oversight to them. To treat something similarly, but outside of that also opens up the possibility of not necessarily treating equal properties and equal property owners consistently and fairly. If those are concerns, those do have avenues like expanding the Old Aiken Overlay District, etc.

He said we have to ask questions about the purpose of properties and have to confirm the property is residential. Non-profit owned properties are a big question. The program does not mention commercial properties. That is something that could be addressed. Commercial properties would likely be at a higher cost, and we may want to put a cap on the cost. There was discussion of a means test, about looking at the actual owner and whether they have income or the worth and make the assessment based on the person rather than the property. That starts to raise some legal concerns when you start looking at the person rather than the property. Also, the HUD assisted funds and CBDG funds have to meet a national objective. National objectives are slum and blight, low and moderate income persons or a state of emergency. Once you start looking at a person, then you also have to start looking at the potential of individuals throughout the program, who maintains the property, who is next on the property, etc. which has a higher administration cost. Presently we are doing this under slum and blight which is a fairly straight standard for HUDs purposes.

Mr. Bland stated that he was the person taking notes. Mike Jordan and his crew do the work on this program. Leigh Staggs, Staff Attorney, worked with the Committee on the process to make sure they knew the concerns legally in each of the individual decisions that applies to the program. It is ultimately what Council wants the program to be. Is it a program where you might be able to get rid of the issue of a slum or blight to a neighborhood and allow the property owners or heirs some time to figure out what they

want to do with the property. He said he had tried to enumerate the things the committee discussed for Council's information.

Councilman Girardeau stated the Demo 200 Program is a good program. It really does help some neighborhoods and helps some people get the older houses down. The program makes things go more quickly. He pointed out there are people who want to build on these vacant lots, and they don't know what to do with the house if they buy the house and it can't be restored. He pointed out we have staff who go out and look at every one of these houses and approves it. It is not that someone wants to tear a house down, and it is okay. Staff looks at the houses before they are torn down. Staff has a stringent test that they go through, and they have turned people down because the house really was not to the point where it needed to be torn down. There was a concern that possibly someone may be taking advantage of the situation. He said he did not see that as being the case. He noted that commercial properties are different. There are some commercial properties that people probably do need some help in tearing them down. He pointed out the land value would be a lot more for the commercial properties than for the land value for some of the houses. He pointed out that the County has every house on the northeast side with the lots assessed at \$25,000, and the vacant lot is not worth \$25,000 in most cases. He said vacant lots in the area sell for \$5,000 to \$10,000. He felt the County has the vacant lots over assessed in his opinion. He said residential is not a problem in the Demo 200 Program. He said some commercial buildings do need to be torn down, and the value of the lot would be worth more vacant than with the building on it. He said they discussed making the program the Demo 2,000 rather than Demo 200. He said the committee had some great discussions. He said there were some commercial buildings that were approved to be torn down, and there were some questions. He pointed out that the program was really designed for residential, not for commercial. He felt there should be a separate program for commercial.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated commercial demolition would be a separate ordinance and separate program. It would be run almost identically to the Demo 200 Program, but it would be treated separately.

Councilwoman Brohl stated in doing a non-residential parallel program, she felt two things should be done which would be very beneficial, with those being, having a program expense limit and a minimum ownership period requirement. That would give some protection for the commercial or non-residential properties and still be able to help them. The residential program is doing pretty well, and we don't want to change that too much. There have not really been any issues of abuse of the residential program. A commercial program would bring up other questions.

Mr. Bland stated he felt the residential and commercial programs would work differently. A commercial program would have some opportunity or some potential for somebody to buy a property in bad condition at a really good corner. That property may be a disincentive to that particular piece of property at that point, and then it may be worth a gain. Then maybe this is more of an economic development tool, and it is more of a loan and we get paid a certain amount over time and we recapture some of the benefit to the city. He noted there could be a cooling off period of time after purchasing property to give someone the opportunity to try do something with what's there first before coming to the City asking for help tearing the building down. He said it depends on how Council wants to view the program.

Councilwoman Gregory stated one thing she recalls from the conversations is that we were trying to make this program "fit all" for the various scenarios, and it was hard. One of the reasons we put it on hold was that we were trying to pull it all together with commercial and residential, which are really two completely separate entities. She said she likes the suggestion to have separate programs for commercial and residential so we don't try to encompass all of the scenarios in one program.

Councilman Girardeau pointed out one thing brought to his attention was that we had zoned a large area as DB, but because it is zoned DB does not mean that it is commercial. He said that needs to be recognized going forward.

Council continued to discuss the committee's finding and recommendations.

Councilwoman Price asked if there were an inventory of houses that have been vacant for decades. She also asked if a person was assigned to the task of vacant properties. Mr. Bland stated he was not sure there is a list. Mr. Mike Jordan, Building Inspector, stated they have a list they are working on, but it is not a timeframe, but is vacant structures that are not habitable. He said there are about 140 to 150 structures on the listing, but there is no timeframe as to how long they have been vacant. Mr. Bland stated the Building Code Division works on the vacant properties, which is primarily Teddy Umsted and Karl Odenthal at this time. He said in the past it has been monitored by anyone in the Building Inspections Division that goes out in the field on a daily basis. Councilwoman Price stated she asked the question for a reason. She pointed out the properties that have been left vacant for a long period of time are a threat to public health and public safety. Those properties need constant attention and constant monitoring. She said if we love our town, the vacant properties should be a priority. She pointed out that her district and Councilwoman Diggs' district have more abandoned properties than any other parts of the community, and they are a threat to public safety and public health.

In response to a question from Councilwoman Gregory regarding monitoring abandoned structures, Mr. Bland stated staff is primarily monitoring unoccupiable structures. That has to do with the ordinance changes which were made about a year and a half ago. That list consists of about 140 properties, and those properties do have a time limit in the Code before stepping up action. There have been some recently on which we have started pursuing some action. Councilwoman Gregory noted there are two groups—those that have completely abandoned the property and we can't find the owners, and people that have abandoned the property but there is still communication and contact but they cannot afford to do anything with the property. Mr. Bland responded that is accurate. He said sometimes there are heirs, and they can't get organized among themselves and they don't have the means to do something with the property. Then there are those who are absentee. They may have purchased the property at a tax sale or somewhere and have not done anything with the property, and they are somewhere else. Then the Inspectors have to work to try to find a means to get to the property owner after some period of time to be able to start the process of notification. The period of time depends on the situation, the condition of the property, how long it been that way, and how easy it is to track down a person. That can be a lengthy and expensive process.

Councilwoman Price asked why other towns are successful with their abandoned properties, and we can't become successful. She felt we need a dedicated person who will stay on top of the issue and pursue. She pointed out there are too many of these properties that are so close to our downtown area, and we need to be concerned about them. She felt we need to be more aggressive with the abandoned properties all over the city and focus on them. She said we may have to create a program and go after grants for the program to help families. She said there are houses that people have not lived in for 20 years.

Councilman Girardeau stated Councilwoman Price is right about the houses just being there. He said the program is a way and means to an end to try to get the program going. There may be some other ways of looking at it. The potential for development for having a vibrant downtown is in Councilwoman Price's and Diggs' districts. If we can get some of these blighted houses out of the way, people will come. He pointed out that there are people who are interested in houses you might think they would not be interested in. He pointed out that Bill McGhee has a lot to do with that. He has done a great job with rehabilitating some of the old houses.

Mayor Osbon asked what are the next steps and recommendations from staff.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated from the discussion it seems that Council may be interested in an ordinance for consideration for commercial and non-profit properties and some amendments to the existing Demo 200 Program. He stated staff could bring those matters to Council by the November 9 meeting.

Councilwoman Gregory stated she thought perhaps the commercial and non-profit properties should be separate programs. Mr. Bland stated staff would look at that.

Mayor Osbon stated Council would look forward to staff coming back with recommendations. He thanked Mandy Drummings for serving on the Committee and giving her input.

Ms. Mandy Drummings stated she is not against the program, but she would like to come out with a unique way to rebrand the northside if someone was willing to work with her. She pointed out the northside is branded in a negative connotation. She was not sure when that happened. She said she looks at the north-south – east-west Aiken and looks at all the historic districts that are under the Design Review Board and seem to be thriving. She wondered how the northside could get included in that because it is historic. It is part of the story of Aiken. She felt it kind of has been lost. She felt rebranding the northside has tremendous potential. She noted that some communities have become exciting because they draw upon their history and use it. She said there could be the one of a kind experience that you can't get anywhere else with the unique buildings, etc. She said rebranding is something to work on to get a new brand to the northside and having that go hand in hand with the Demo 200 Program. She felt the northside has a fantastic story and a unique one of a kind story. She also felt it should be included in the historic preservation. She felt it may be a different approach to bring up the area.

Councilwoman Price noted that the history is still there. She noted what has happened is the negative incidents that have taken place have become dominant. She pointed out that it all deals with public safety and public health. She said some of these folks are living within a certain wage range and they cannot afford to paint their house and do the things that make it look attractive. She said one thing she is going to propose in the budget is that we have some amount of money set aside for home improvements. She said perhaps there could be a review committee to determine how some houses could be improved through the program. She said it does take resources to help make some changes and improve the appearance and make the area safer to live in.

Councilwoman Brohl asked if what Councilwoman Price is talking about could be tied in with the Community Development Block Grant Program. She felt Ms. Drummings idea is wonderful to have a story or rebranding and use some of the history that we know is there.

Mayor Osbon stated he felt there may be a lot of interest for a Task Force to take on a rebranding project. He pointed out that we have had some companies that have done some marketing for us to have a great place to start. He pointed out that when Randy Wilson was here with his company, he talked a lot about those same measures. He said he had written Mandy Drummings name down as person number one on the Task Force. Councilwoman Gregory stated she would also like to do something like that.

Councilwoman Gregory thanked Ms. Drummings for coming. She said she personally appreciates Ms. Drummings' passion in the whole restoring, keeping the history, the buildings, etc. She said we need people like Ms. Drummings in the city. She said not every building falls under that realm, but she loves that Ms. Drummings feels that way. She said she could not agree with her more in what she has said about the sentiment of the northside--its history, what it used to be and the rebranding approach. She pointed out that we recently hired Bandwagon as a marketing firm for the City of Aiken. She felt the rebranding was a key conversation for Bandwagon to have with a constituent as Mandy. Councilwoman Gregory said she felt we need to revive, rebrand, reignite that part of town.

Councilman Girardeau stated what Ms. Drummings is saying is that she and Mr. McGhee want to save houses. He noted that some will not be saved, but that is okay too. He said if we get some of these blighted houses out, people will save some of the other houses.

Mayor Osbon stated Council will look for a recommendation from staff on the Demo 200 Program as well as possibly a new program addressing the commercial and the non-profit properties.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated staff will have something for Council by November 9, 2020. It will be a two reading ordinance. He noted that Leigh Staggs, Staff Attorney, had also worked with the committee on the Demo 200 Program. It was also pointed out that Sam Erb had also worked on the committee.

There being no further business, the work session ended at 6:20 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

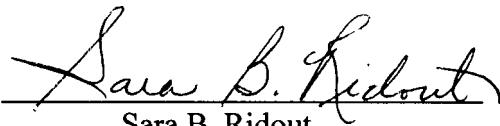
Mayor Osbon stated Council needed to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(2) of the South Carolina Code to discuss negotiations incident to a proposed contractual arrangement. Specifically, City Council will discuss a proposed contractual arrangement with a third party.

Councilwoman Brohl moved, seconded by Councilwoman Diggs, that Council go into executive session to discuss the matters noted by Mayor Osbon.

Council went into executive session at 6:22 p.m.

After discussion Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilwoman Gregory that Council come out of executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 6:50 p.m.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk