

Aiken City Council MinutesWORK SESSIONApril 13, 2005

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Clyburn, Price, Sprawls, Smith, and Vaughters.

Absent: Councilman Cunning

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Pete Frommer, Ed Evans, Sandra Korbelik, Sara Ridout, Aiken Standard representative, and about 7 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 4:06 P.M. He stated Council wanted to review some proposed road improvements for widening Silver Bluff Road. He stated Michelle Peterson from SCDOT was present to present the plans.

SILVER BLUFF ROADIndian Creek RoadRichardsons Lake Road

Mayor Cavanaugh stated previous plans for Silver Bluff Road called for widening Silver Bluff to five lanes. He said after meeting with Woodside Plantation and studying the area further, it was felt that Silver Bluff did not need to be widened to five lanes at this time, but the improvements would concentrate on the intersections, because they do need to be improved. He said staff had met with SCDOT, and the Highway Department had gone back and analyzed the area and would like to present some proposals on what could be done on Silver Bluff Road.

Mr. LeDuc stated one of the purposes of the meeting was for the Highway Department to present some schematics of what could be done on Silver Bluff Road and get Council's feeling so plans could proceed for Silver Bluff Road.

In answer to a citizen's comment regarding sidewalks, Ms. Michelle Peterson, Assistant Program Manager of SCDOT stated it has been the policy of SCDOT not only to consider vehicular traffic but also pedestrian traffic for all projects and make some kind of accommodations where feasible.

Ms. Peterson stated there had been a meeting on March 3, 2005, to discuss the Silver Bluff Project. She said initially Silver Bluff was to be widened to five lanes, but after studying the area it has been determined that a five lane section may not be the best use for the community. She said presently SCDOT is looking at three lanes. She said currently there is a two lane section, and there are backups along Silver Bluff as cars try to make left hand turns. She said a three lane section would accommodate the left turns. She said the center turn lane would allow left turns, while traffic continued on the thru lanes. She said one question was whether designated turn lanes were needed with storage, or a continuous third lane where a turn can be made anywhere along the road. She showed some conceptual pictures of areas along Silver Bluff Road from Indian Creek Trail Road to Richardsons Lake Road. Some pictures showed a sidewalk along one side of the road, sidewalks along both sides of the road, sidewalks with a grass strip between the road and the sidewalk, and curb and gutter with no sidewalk but a grass area for walking. A picture near Richardsons Lake Road showed a planting area and a roundabout area. Ms. Peterson pointed out that if sidewalks are provided on both sides of Silver Bluff, additional right of way will have to be obtained. She stated there had been concerns about widening the road and having to remove trees along the road.

Ms. Peterson stated what she would like for Council to determine today is what type section the city wants, three lanes with the center lane being a turn lane, sidewalks on one side or both sides, and any other amenities that the city would like. She pointed out that the pictures which she had shown were conceptual, and SCDOT needs some direction from the city so they can proceed with the design for the road.

Council and the citizens present then discussed the conceptual plans, asking questions of Ms. Peterson. Some of the questions involved whether additional right of way would be needed to provide the improvements, and if trees would have to be removed.

Ms. Peterson stated that typically a three lane section could be just inside the right of way. She stated, however, because of construction slope and erosion control, some right of way may be needed. That will be determined when doing the drainage design for the improvements. She stated SCDOT works with the communities in leaving as many trees as possible along the road. She did point out that anything added outside of the roadway would probably require additional right of way.

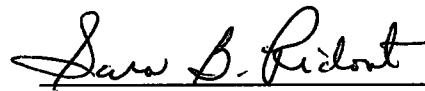
The general consensus of those present was that they would like the project to include two through lanes, a center turn lane, curb and gutter, and a narrow grass strip between sidewalks on both sides of the road. They were concerned about the removal of trees to accommodate these amenities, and stated they would like to know SCDOT's projections on the impact on trees and how much additional right of way might be needed to complete the project. It was stated that if a lot of trees have to be removed, they would then determine what to do about sidewalks on one side or both sides, and whether to have the grass strip between the sidewalk and the road.

Ms. Peterson said a project team would be formed, and they would determine the timeline for each stage of the project. The project would be designed, and construction could begin in a year to 18 months. Funding for the project has been appropriated through the Augusta Regional Transportation Study. She said SCDOT would be back with preliminary plans in several months. She said with the information she has she would estimate a preliminary cost and have that information for the city in several weeks.

Mayor Cavanaugh thanked Ms. Peterson for coming and explaining the proposed improvements on Silver Bluff Road.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 P.M.



Sara B. Ridout  
City Clerk