

Aiken City Council Minutes

March 23, 1998

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Anaclerio, Clyburn, Papouchado, Perry, Price and Radford.

Others Present: Steve Thompson, Gary Smith, Bill Huggins, Roger LeDuc, and Sara Ridout.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. City Council received comments from Mr. Howard Duvall, Executive Director of the Municipal Association of S.C. Mr. Duvall updated Council on the issue of electric industry deregulation and franchise negotiations in the state. Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved that Council go into executive session for a legal briefing and to discuss a contractual matter. After discussion, Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved, that the executive session end. The executive session ended at 6:45 P.M. Council then held a work session with a presentation by Chris Verenes on economic development/site missions at Westinghouse Savannah River Company. A pre-Council session was held for discussion of items on the Council agenda.

REGULAR MEETING

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Anaclerio, Clyburn, Papouchado, Perry, Price, and Radford.

Others Present: Steve Thompson, Gary Smith, Bill Huggins, Roger LeDuc, Ed Evans, Carrol Busbee, Anita Lilly, Stanley Quarles, Terry Rhinehart, Sara Ridout, Tom Smith of the Aiken Standard, Kathy Steele of the Augusta Chronicle, and 20 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:40 P.M. and announced that an executive session had been held prior to the meeting for discussion of a contractual matter. Mayor Cavanaugh led in prayer which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag. The minutes of the regular meeting of March 9, 1998, were considered for approval. Councilwoman Papouchado moved that the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Councilman Radford and unanimously approved.

PRESENTATION

Thoroughbreds
South Aiken High School
Basketball Team

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council wanted to recognize the basketball team of South Aiken High School with a presentation. He stated that South Aiken High School won a stunning 45 to 44 come-from-behind victory over Socastee High School to win the school's first ever Class AAAA State Basketball Championship. He stated a plaque had been prepared for the presentation and read the wording on the plaque. Mayor Cavanaugh asked that the team members come forward and that Coach Holland introduce the team members. Also present was Mr. Gassman, Principal of South Aiken High School. Council commended the team for their victory and Class AAAA Championship.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointments
Annexation Study Committee
Graham, Mark

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council need to make an appointment to the Annexation Study Committee.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council appoints volunteers to the Boards and Committees of the City, and Mr. Anaclerio has nominated Mr. Mark Graham for reappointment to the Annexation Study Committee.

Members of the Annexation Study Committee conduct annexation drives and advise City Council on annexation issues facing the City. Members of the committee

serve two year terms, and Mark Graham is completing his first term on the committee.

Under the process adopted by City Council, each member of City Council provides nominations to the Boards and Committees, and these nominations are confirmed by the members of City Council. Councilman Anaclerio's appointment was presented at the work session of March 9, 1998, and this is presented for Council's confirmation and approval.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved, that Council reappoint Mark Graham to the Annexation Study Committee for a two year term with the term expiring May 20, 2000.

AIKEN CORPORATION

Appointments

Industrial Development Committee

Downtown Development Association

Perry, Robert S.

Anaclerio, Michael

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider two appointments to the Aiken Corporation to represent the city.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council has two appointments to the Aiken Corporation. These members of City Council serve two year terms, and these appointments are presented for City Council consideration.

The members of City Council that serve on the Aiken Corporation simultaneously serve on the Industrial Development Committee, which is the Executive Committee of the Aiken Corporation, and on the Downtown Development Association Committee of the Aiken Corporation. Mayor Pro Tem Perry originally started service with the Downtown Association in March of 1990 and Councilman Anaclerio joined the Association in February of 1996.

Councilman Perry and Councilman Anaclerio are willing to continue to serve on the Aiken Corporation.

Councilwoman Clyburn moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado, that Councilmen Perry and Anaclerio be reappointed to the Aiken Corporation representing the Aiken City Council on the Aiken Corporation and on the committees of the Corporation for a two year term with the terms expiring February, 2000.

WELL - ROBIN ROAD

Water

Murrell, Jean Seigler

Robin Road

Resolution

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider a resolution to purchase land for a well site near Robin Road.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the resolution.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF 2.261 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, FROM JEAN W. MURRELL FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A WELL FOR THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM.

Mr. Thompson stated the city needs to move forward with the purchase of land for an additional well site to increase the availability of water in Aiken.

Last year the city reached its maximum treatment capacity on the city's water system, and the result when you "top out" is that the water level in the elevated tanks start to drop. The city needs an additional well site to help increase the water capacity to serve the new growth areas on the south side of town.

This is also an economic development issue as well. Roger LeDuc and his staff have been analyzing how to further reduce the expenses of the utility system through a re-engineering program, and the group has found that we save \$.20 per 1,000 gallons on treatment in the well system, instead of through the Shaws Creek surface treatment plant. We save an additional \$.10 per 1,000 gallons for labor, bringing our total cost to \$.30 per 1,000 gallons.

Decreased reliance on the Shaws Creek facility also allows us to decrease the number of employees at the treatment plant, and by shifting to more use of the wells, we are now staffing the Shaws Creek facility with only three employees during the winter, as opposed to seven during the summer and in previous years. We also hope to move to 8 hour shifts, instead of 12 hour shifts, and with all of these savings, we hope to reduce our expenses by at least \$100,000 per year. To purchase the land and develop the new well at this site will cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. You can see that the savings are significant, and we have fairly rapid pay back as we shift to the use of more well water, as opposed to surface water.

We have contacted the owner, Mrs. Jean Seigler Murrell. The property is appraised at a total value of \$52,500, and the owner requested a higher price on the property. We have settled on a compromise of \$57,500, and the owners have accepted this compromise. We recommend acceptance of this compromise to City Council, and this is submitted for Council's approval.

The sale is for a total acreage of 2.261 acres. We only need approximately .5 acres for the development of the well site, and our suggestion is that we purchase the entire tract, subdivide the well site from the tract, and sell off the remaining property to help off set the city expense on this purchase.

Council briefly discussed the proposed purchase.

Councilman Perry moved, seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved, that the city purchase a 2.261 acre site on Robin Road for the development of a new well site at a price of \$57,500.

ZONING ORDINANCE

Amendment

Buildings

Building Inspection

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding the separation between buildings.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PARAGRAPH III.L OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING SEPARATION BETWEEN BUILDINGS ON ONE (1) LOT.

Mr. Thompson stated the Building Inspections Division in the Department of Public Safety has asked that the Planning Commission consider changes to the Zoning Ordinance to prevent buildings on the same lot from being too close together. The Inspectors in Public Safety note that only the Planned Unit Development (PUD) governs the distance between buildings within the same lot. The proposed ordinance will adopt changes to the Zoning Ordinance requiring a separation of at least 15 feet between one story structures and 20 feet between two story structures on the same lot.

The city emphasizes the separation between buildings as a fire safety requirement. Buildings must have a setback from the property line if the buildings are located on an individual lot, but if there are two or more buildings on the same lot this is not addressed in the Zoning Ordinance. If you do not have enough space between the buildings, a fire in one building will spread to the other buildings on the lot.

The Planning Commission reviewed this and discussed it with the representatives from the Department of Public Safety and recommend that the city require minimum separation between buildings on the lot zoned other than single family residential. Single Family Residential lots are already limited as to the type and number of structures on the lot.

The ordinance before Council will require at least 15 feet between one-story structures and 20 feet between two-story structures on the same lot for any zone outside of the Single Family Residential zone of the city.

Councilman Radford moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved, that Council pass on first reading the ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance approving a separation between buildings on the same lot in any zone outside the single family residential zone and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of City Council.

ZONING ORDINANCEFlagsFlags, CorporateAmendment

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration to restrict the number of flags allowed on buildings.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF AIKEN ZONING ORDINANCE TO ALLOW THE USE OF CORPORATE FLAGS.

Mr. Thompson stated the Building Inspections Office has recommended that the Planning Commission consider recommending restrictions to the number of corporate, national, and state flags allowed on buildings in Aiken. The Planning Commission has reviewed this, and recommended limiting the number of flags in Aiken.

The Inspections Office in the Department of Public Safety has received many requests and complaints about the number of flags. We have received requests from some of the mobile home dealerships, asking to display a number of flags, and some of the apartment developments in Aiken have also asked to place a number of flags across the front of the property. Most of us think of flags as a single corporate flag, or the national or state flag, but some businesses use flags as more of a banner to attract attention and to advertise their product. The Planning Commission has reviewed the issue, and recommends that the city restrict flags to a maximum of one American flag, one state flag, and one corporate flag. This limit would be applied to each lot within the zoning districts of the city, other than the single family residential zone.

Mr. Thompson stated Council had discussed flags during the review of the sign ordinance and felt that flags should not be regulated but were thinking of state, national and corporate flags. He said, however, the Inspections Department had noticed places with 20 to 30 flags, which is more of an advertisement.

Council discussed the matter of flags and pointed out that a company might want to display the American flag, state flag, a corporate flag, and the company's national flag if from another country. Council felt the purpose of the proposed ordinance was to limit the number of flags and not to specifically specify the flags which can be flown. After discussion Council decided to allow display of the American flag, state flag, corporate flag and another flag of the company's choice. Council also discussed whether the ordinance should regulate the size of the flags allowed. After discussion Council decided to allow the three flags specified and add the wording that "One additional flag of the property owner's choice may be displayed."

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilman Radford and unanimously approved, that Council amend the proposed ordinance to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the American flag, state flag, a corporate flag and one additional flag of the property owner's choice.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved, that Council pass on first reading the proposed ordinance as amended to limit the number of flags displayed on lots in the city to four flags and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of Council.

ZONING ORDINANCERibbons, FlutteringStreamers, FlutteringAmendmentBanners

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider an ordinance to amend the Zoning ordinance to prohibit the use of ribbons, streamers, and similar materials in Aiken.

Mr. Thompson read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF AIKEN ZONING ORDINANCE TO RESTRICT THE USE OF FLUTTERING RIBBONS, STREAMERS, PENNANTS AND SIMILAR OBJECTS.

Mr. Thompson stated the Planning Commission has also reviewed the recommendation from the Department of Public Safety to limit the use of fluttering ribbons and streamers in Aiken. The proposed ordinance will amend the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit the use of ribbons, streamers, and similar materials or devices in Aiken.

This issue is very similar to the discussion on flags for the different properties in Aiken. We have received many requests for flags and streamers to be displayed around the city, and quite often flags and streamers are very similar in nature. The Public Safety Department has felt that fluttering and streaming ribbons and signs are distracting to motorists, and in the past we did not allow these types of banners and ribbons in the city. During the last update of the Zoning Ordinance, City Council did allow limited use of banners in Aiken, and under the present wording this also allows the use of multiple ribbons and streamers.

The Planning Commission reviewed this, and has recommended that City Council prohibit the use of ribbons, streamers, and other materials.

Councilwoman Price moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved, that Council pass on first reading an ordinance prohibiting the use of ribbons, streamers, and other materials or devices and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of City Council.

AIKEN CORPORATION

Grant

Parker Property

Downtown Parking

Housing

Richland Avenue

Laurens Street

Newberry Street

Parking

Streetscape

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider the request for a grant from the Aiken Corporation.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council has discussed the need to purchase property located in the block bounded by Richland Avenue, Laurens Street, Barnwell Avenue, and Newberry Street. This discussion has been active with City Council for the past twelve months, and at the March 9 meeting of City Council, City Council met with the members of the Aiken Corporation to discuss how best to move this project forward. The Aiken Corporation has asked that City Council consider approving a grant of \$350,000 to the Aiken Corporation to develop a parking and apartment project on this site.

The Aiken Corporation has submitted a land management plan to City Council that incorporates both parking spaces and a site for new multi-family homes or apartments. The intent of the Aiken Corporation is to acquire this property and to find a private developer to develop an apartment or townhouse complex with between eight and forty-two units, and in doing so to improve the quality of the development on this property and along Newberry Street. The Aiken Corporation has asked the city to provide a grant of up to \$350,000 to make the land acquisition possible for the project. In addition the City's responsibility under this program would be to demolish the buildings, and to install landscaping components and parking spaces on the balance of the property not proposed for the housing development.

The project proposed by the Aiken Corporation is much more than the parking lot project that was originally discussed. Under this plan an unattractive use in the downtown would be removed and there would be an opportunity for a much greater development in Aiken's business district. In addition to the large tract of property presently owned by Mr. C. E. Parker, twelve or more individual property owners have been identified that we will have to work with to make the project possible. The Aiken Corporation has asked for a grant of \$350,000 to make land acquisition possible under this project. In addition to land acquisition, we estimate the cost of site cleanup to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and up to \$200,000 for streetscape work and improvements on the site. The Aiken Corporation is suggesting that the City immediately move forward with the demolition of the existing buildings on the property under study and with beautification of the area with installation of parking and streetscape components. To some degree, we will be able to phase these

expenses in over the next few years, and this cost would be necessary, whether at this site or another site, for parking and beautification. Overall, you can expect the project to cost at least a half million dollars, but this project is fully compatible with the goals and the objectives of the Tax Increment Finance District. Funds for this project would be taken from the TIF district and repaid through the development of new taxes in the area with greater development.

Council discussed the request. Councilman Anaclerio asked for clarification on the request. He said he understood the amount of money requested is not to develop real estate, but the intent is to find someone who is willing to buy the property and develop the property to reduce the cost to the Aiken Corporation. He said Councilmembers also had questions about the other property owners along Laurens Street and whether those properties would be purchased. He asked if the property owners of the 12 other properties involved had been contacted.

Mr. Wade Brodie, Chairman of the Aiken Corporation, stated the Corporation would be dealing with about 12 property owners. He said all the owners had been contacted, but there were no commitments yet. He said the Corporation would not be buying other lands but would be asking the property owners to give a perpetual easement or the Corporation could give the property owners a tax letter.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out in looking at the project he felt it would have to be a well coordinated effort in approaching the individual property owners and in purchasing any property. He said a concern of his was that if Council approves the grant and the Corporation does not get the cooperation needed to complete the project then what would happen.

Mr. Brodie stated the project would be a major project for downtown. He said all of the project may not work out. He stated the project included the area from Richland Avenue up to Barnwell Avenue. He said the Corporation was not only asking the city to participate, but also asking property owners and the First Presbyterian Church to participate. He said if all the property owners did not cooperate that the Corporation could still develop part of the property.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out the city had been talking about the need for additional parking in Aiken for some time, and it was felt more parking will be needed in the downtown. He said he felt the proposed project was a wonderful step forward in further developing the downtown area. He said the proposed project would manage change in the downtown to meet the needs in the future. He pointed out apartments in the area would return tax money to the city over the years.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado, that Council approve the grant for \$350,000 to the Aiken Corporation for development of an off-street parking area and housing development in the block between Barnwell and Richland Avenues.

Councilwoman Papouchado pointed out the transformation of The Alley area. She stated the proposed project is the last piece of the downtown core that can undergo a similar type of transformation and in addition will provide residential infill. She pointed out the success of Aiken Corporation's project with the three houses on Richland Avenue.

Councilman Perry pointed out the transformation of The Alley was done with private money. He pointed out that the proposed project would provide 21 parking spaces. He also pointed out that the plans show the number of parking spaces on the lot on Richland Avenue already purchased by the city to be only 15 parking spaces. He was concerned about spending \$650,000 for 21 parking spaces.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out the project is proposed for an area that the city wants to be sure is developed in the right manner. He pointed out part of the cost is streetscape with additional housing to get people downtown. He stated if the Corporation does not develop the area the property may set for some time and then may be developed in a way that may not be the best for the city and may not bring people downtown.

Councilman Radford pointed out he would like to see Community Development monies used in the project if possible.

Mayor Cavanaugh called for a vote on the motion to approve the grant of \$350,000 to the Aiken Corporation. The motion was approved by a vote of 5 in favor and 2 opposed, with Councilmembers Perry and Price opposed to the motion.

BID

Pump Station
Lift Station
Sewer Lift Station
Sewer, Sanitary
Public Works Department

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider the bids for the purchase of a sewer lift station.

Mr. Thompson stated the city needs to replace a pump station on Colleton Avenue, and has accepted bids on this purchase. The staff is recommending acceptance of the low bid of Pete Duty and Associates, of Columbia, South Carolina, with a total bid of \$20,984.

Mr. Thompson stated the staff is recommending this purchase as a sole source bid. The city has standardized all of the equipment in our pump station system, and now use 14 Smith & Loveless pump stations. We standardized in 1987 to allow us to reduce the amount of training necessary for these stations, and to limit the number of spare parts that we need for these pump stations. A pump station repair is critical, and generally we try not to wait until the parts can be shipped. Therefore, we have to maintain an inventory of parts, and to maintain an inventory for several different types of pumps would be both expensive and inefficient for our operation.

Smith & Loveless uses a regional sales system, and there is only one price available for the station.

Funds are available for this purchase, and the staff is recommending acceptance of the price of \$20,984 for the purchase of a pump station from Pete Duty & Associates.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved, that Council approve the purchase of a sewer pump station from Pete Duty & Associates in the amount of \$20,984.

BID

Canopy
Citizens Field
Concessions Area
Recreation Department
Augusta Canvas

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider bids for the purchase of a canopy for the concessions area for Citizens Park.

Mr. Thompson stated when the city originally constructed the concession area at Citizens Park we were not able to afford the canopy that covers the concessions area and picnic tables. We have tried to find a way to make this project move forward, and the Recreation Department has obtained a grant for 80% of the cost of the canopy and bids have been received for the purchase of a canopy over this area. The staff is recommending acceptance of the low bid of Augusta Canvas with a total price of \$8,665. The other bid received was from Canvas Works of Aiken in the amount of \$10,886.

The canopy will allow us to provide shelter to visitors to Citizens Park during hot or inclement weather, and will make the concession area much more pleasant for these visitors and guests. The staff at the Recreation Department has been working with the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department to find a way to provide funding for the canopy, and we have obtained a grant for up to 80% of the cost of this canopy. We hope to be able to save enough in our current budget to pay the difference between the grant amount and the full contract, and recommend acceptance of this bid.

Councilman Radford moved, seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved, that Council approve acceptance of the low bid of Augusta Canvas, with a bid price of \$8,665, for the purchase of a canopy for Citizens Park.

UTILITY REQUESTUniversity Parkway, 1938
Utility Extension
Water Service

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider a request for water service on University Parkway.

Mr. Thompson stated the city has received a request for city water services for a building located next to the Phelon Corporation on University Parkway.

This request is for water service to serve a new building located adjacent to the Phelon property. The property is not presently contiguous to the city, and the owners have submitted an annexation agreement. We have also provided temporary water service to help the owners through the construction phase, pending final approval by City Council. The owners understand that permanent water is not guaranteed for the site, and is an issue requiring approval by City Council.

The Planning Commission has reviewed the request and recommends approval on the conditions:

1. that the existing sign remain until annexation, at which time the sign would be brought into compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. that the project comply with the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance except that credit be given for the berm on the eastern boundary and the existing trees on the adjacent property to the north so that no trees have to be planted along those property lines.

The property owners do agree with these measures.

This request will be to provide water service to a business that will be providing fire protection planning and merchandise for businesses and buildings in the Aiken area.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Papouchado and unanimously approved that Council approve the request for extension of water service to serve property at 1938 University Parkway with the conditions recommended by the Planning Commission.

BUS SERVICEBus
Dial-A-Ride
Transportation System
Best Friend Express
Funding Request
Aiken County Transit System

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needs to consider a request for support of the Aiken County Transit System.

Mr. Thompson stated City Council has again received a request from the Aiken Area Council on Aging, Inc. for support of the Aiken County Transit System.

The Aiken Area Council on Aging is requesting that the city continue funding at the level of \$15,000 for the upcoming year to support transportation for the elderly and disabled.

Mr. George Alexander, of the Council on Aging, was present representing the Council on Aging. He stated the ridership of the bus service has been steadily increasing, especially for the elderly and the disabled. He said this reflects the great need in the city and the county for this type of transportation. He stated in the past the city has designated the funds allocated from the city for use in the Dial-A-Ride service.

Mr. Thompson stated one matter discussed with Mr. Alexander was the possibility of using the bus service as an opportunity to bring more kids to the recreation programs during the summer time. He said some cities offset the cost of bus fare with the city paying the difference in the rate. He said some cities offer a very low rate such as a 10 cent rate with the city paying the difference in rates.

Mr. Thompson stated Aiken County is preparing to bid the transit service operation, and if Council approves funding Council may wish to stipulate that funding is available for either the Council on Aging or to Aiken County.

If approved by City Council, this will be placed in the budget for the Fiscal Year 1999.

Mayor Cavanaugh moved, seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn, that Council approve the funding request for \$15,000 for the Aiken County Transit Service, designating the funds for the Dial-A-Ride Program. The motion was approved by a 5 to 2 vote, with Councilmembers Perry and Radford opposed to the motion.

Council agreed to discuss the suggestion for use of the bus service for transporting kids to the Recreation Department for the summer programs during the budget discussions.

ACCREDITATION

Public Safety Department

Mayor Cavanaugh and Council commended the Public Safety Department for achieving Accreditation for the department. Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out Aiken was one of fourteen in South Carolina accredited and one of two Public Safety Departments accredited in the United States.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to meet in executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Councilman Anaclerio moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved, that Council go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Council went into executive session at 8:35 P.M.

After discussion Mayor Cavanaugh moved, seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved, that the executive session end.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk