

Aiken City Council MinutesSeptember 27, 2004WORK SESSION

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

Absent: Councilman Smith

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Gary Smith, Larry Morris, Tim Coakley, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Sara Ridout, Philip Lord of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelinis of the Augusta Chronicle, and about 11 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M. He stated Council had three items that they would like to discuss in the work session.

TRASHYard Trash

Mr. LeDuc stated that several Councilmembers had given him some questions concerning the trash pickup and some changes that might be made, based on comments received from the citizens.

Mr. LeDuc stated that earlier this summer City Council passed a new trash ordinance. This allowed each resident to place at the curb yard waste up to 5 cubic yards. It also stated that any other items such as construction debris, white goods, furniture, or other non-compostable material would need a special pick up. Council set rates starting at \$25 for these special pickups. If material was placed out at the curb and the citizens did not schedule a special pickup, the owner would be given 48 hours to remove this material or the City would remove it at a minimum charge of \$150. Since that time we have been notifying residents that if the material wasn't removed this would be their future fine. Some Councilmembers have stated they felt the fine is excessive. Staff would suggest Council consider that non-yard waste items placed at the street would instead receive a fine set at twice the regular rate for special pick up, which is a minimum fee of \$25. Therefore, if it was a small item instead of a fine of \$25, it would be \$50 and for one-fourth of a trailer load, the \$50 fee would be increased to \$100, etc.

Another item a Councilmember mentioned was the fact that the landscapers should be able to dump their trash at the location where the homeowner has it collected. He said staff has no problem with this. Another suggestion was that landscapers have a designated spot within the city to deposit the yard trash. He said staff is not in favor of that because the landscapers don't just cut lawns, etc. inside the city, but outside the city as well. The deposit location would become a dumping ground for city and county at the designated locations.

Mr. LeDuc stated another question was about a quarterly pickup for white goods by the city. He pointed out when the ordinance was adopted, Council had voted not to include a quarterly pickup, but had adopted a special pickup for a fee for construction debris, white goods, furniture, etc. A suggestion was that the city provide a list of individuals who are permitted haulers at the County landfill to pick up non-yard waste material. These names could be available to all residents through our web site or could be sent to them through the mail. This would allow them to select an individual of their choice to pick up non-compostable items. We can also develop a map to show the drop off locations in the county. Another suggestion was to allow individuals to have items that are bagged or boxed placed adjacent to a roll cart or at the curb for us to pick up. Tyler Sanitation, who has a roll cart service in the county, allows their customers to place bagged or boxed items next to the roll cart for pick up at no additional cost. Also, any individual that places items within a roll cart would not be charged as long as it does not contain

asbestos or other environmentally hazardous material. He said the City could also pick up small amounts left by the roll cart.

Mr. LeDuc stated it has been suggested that the city consider having a free quarterly pick up of any and all materials. He said the City can make this change if Council concurs. However, since the ordinance went into effect, we have seen our overtime drop dramatically. Earlier this summer we were averaging around 200 hours of overtime per month to collect yard waste and trash. Our overtime over the last month has decreased to approximately 25 hours. In addition many of the neighborhoods appear to be much cleaner, and only occasionally are we now seeing trash piles containing non-permitted items.

Mr. LeDuc stated that for the last three months there have been several changes that our solid waste crews had to communicate to the citizens. However, we feel that we are now ready to fully implement this program with some of the previously mentioned changes. If Council would like to change some of the requirements within the current ordinance, our trash crews are ready and willing to make whatever adjustments are necessary. He said he feels that the City is starting to see cleaner neighborhoods and a reduction in the amount of trash that was formerly on our streets. Larry Morris and Tim Coakley are present to answer any questions that you may have concerning our current trash operation.

Council then discussed for about one hour the concerns and questions they had received from citizens about the new trash regulations.

Councilman Cunning stated his main concern was the basic pickup of yard trash and leaves and limbs. He said there is confusion concerning the amount of the pile only being 5 cubic yards. He stated he felt the regulations adopted for mixed piles and white goods should remain as adopted by Council. He said, however, a commercial operation clearing an area should be handled differently.

Councilman Sprawls stated the comments he had received also concerned the amount of yard debris allowed, with it being hard to measure 5 cubic yards. He felt the city should pick up the yard debris when a resident just works in his yard cleaning up leaves and limbs. He said he had concerns about a quarterly pickup for white goods by the city, because there would be a problem of where to put the goods until the pickup date.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he was in favor of a free quarterly pickup for white goods by the City. He said he had thought a quarterly pickup was in the ordinance that was passed. He said several people had told him that they felt a quarterly pickup for white goods would be a good idea. He felt it would be confusing to have a list of haulers for residents to call to pickup white goods. He also pointed out that there are several residents who have a common pickup area for yard trash, and, with the combination of several residents, the pile may be bigger than 5 cubic yards. He pointed out it is easier for the city to pick up in one common area rather than five different areas. He was concerned that someone would be charged for a large pile in this situation. He said residents were concerned about only being able to put out 5 cubic yards of trash at one time.

Councilmembers expressed concern about small things being put out, such as a few boards and the City not taking this as it is not yard trash. Council was also concerned about whether the information regarding the new regulations had been properly communicated to the citizens.

Mr. Morris, Public Works Director, explained that when the new ordinance was adopted the City used a door hanger to warn people. He said when they first started they had to put out about 200 door hangers for residents who had violated the regulations. Two days later only 10 piles remained that had not been corrected. This was city-wide. He stated the number has now been reduced to 100 hangers. There were only 3 piles that had not been corrected. He said these were only warnings, and no fines were charged yet. He felt the information was being communicated to the citizens. He also pointed out there had been several articles in the newspaper regarding the regulations. Mr. Morris commented regarding a few boards or a few small things in a pile. He said a line has to

be drawn somewhere, or we will have the same problem again. He did state that small items could be placed in a roll cart, and they would be picked up by the garbage truck and taken to the landfill. He stated even the small things would have to be separated out from yard trash as the material is not compostable and has to be separated to meet state regulations. Mr. Morris stated the city crews are aware of several common sites, and they will pick up piles at common sites when the material is more than 5 cubic yards. He stated the warnings that had been given had not been for piles that are too large, but for mixed piles. He stated he felt the door hanger had been a good means of communication to the residents.

Councilmembers continued to discuss providing a free special pickup for materials. The majority of Councilmembers felt a special pickup quarterly would be confusing to the citizens, and the citizens would have to hold the material for several months for the quarterly pickup, and they were not in favor of a free quarterly pickup by the City. Councilmembers felt that the problem was not the yard trash and the amount, but mixed piles. Council wanted to be sure the City did not go back to allowing mixed piles and have the unsightly piles as in the past.

Council also expressed concern about the door hanger that is used. It was pointed out there is a lot of information on it and it is in very small print and sometimes difficult to follow. Council asked that the staff try to clarify the information on the door hanger and made some suggestions for staff.

After much discussion Council felt that the City should delay implementing the fine or special fee for pickup when goods are placed at the curb that do not meet the regulations until some changes are made in the ordinance. They asked that the City continue to warn citizens when they do not follow the regulations until Council feels the information has been communicated to the citizens. Council asked that a list of permitted haulers be made available to the residents for special pickups of construction or white goods. Council also asked that the 5 cubic yard limit for yard trash be eliminated for residents. The majority of Council did not want to have a quarterly free pickup for white goods for residents. Council also asked that the fees for special pickups where people are warned and do not remove the material be double the approved called in special pickups. Currently the fine for not following the rules after being warned is \$150. It was suggested that the fees be double the special pickup fees, which would be \$50 for a single item, \$100 for 1/4 trailer load, \$200 for 1/2 trailer load, \$300 for 3/4 trailer load and \$400 for a full trailer load.

DEVELOPERS AGREEMENT

Hitchcock Plaza Silver Bluff Road

Mr. LeDuc stated we have been meeting with the developer representing Hitchcock Plaza over the last several months as Council has requested. As we are all aware, Kroger will be moving their operations sometime during the spring of 2005. The new owners of Hitchcock Plaza would like to be prepared to make several changes as they anticipate this future move. A copy of a proposed developer's agreement was given to Council for review. The agreement represents the changes they feel are necessary for the redevelopment of this center. As we discussed with Council last spring, they would like to develop Fabian Drive into a boulevard street from Silver Bluff Road to the entrance into Wal-Mart. They are willing to give the City the right of way to build the roadway and plant the necessary landscaping within this right of way. In turn they are asking the City to prepare the necessary engineering drawings for the roadway and to purchase the trees that would be planted along its right of way. Although the City does not normally get involved in these areas, we have in the past helped with the building of Centennial Parkway and the major roadway running alongside Hitchcock Healthcare. In addition, the developer may want to utilize some of the existing detention pond behind the former Kmart Building and is willing to extend the pond to meet the stormwater detention requirements. Cameron Zurbruegg is present to answer any questions concerning the proposed development. If Council is satisfied with this agreement, it would be placed on the agenda in October for Council approval.

Councilmembers stated they were very interested in interconnecting roads to help with traffic flow from Pine Log to Dougherty Road and from Whiskey Road to Silver Bluff Road and from Silver Bluff to the Mall. The general consensus of Council was in agreement with the developer's agreement and the matter is to be placed on the October 11, 2004 City Council agenda for first reading.

DEVELOPERS AGREEMENT

Northside

Charles, Samatha

Marion Street

Barnwell Avenue

Williamsburg Street

Mr. LeDuc stated Samatha Charles has purchased the wooded property off of Marion Street north of Barnwell and east to Williamsburg. She would like to build several cottages in this area. City Council has discussed on several occasions providing assistance to developers in the renewal of the northside. Ms. Charles has two requests for City Council. First, would the City extend the water and sewer to this area, with the City being paid back as each of the homes requests a building permit. Secondly, she would like to utilize the Marion Street right of way for a private driveway to these homes, or for the City to give her and her neighbor each one-half of the 150 foot Marion Street right of way. By placing a private driveway through the Marion Street right of way the majority of the trees in this area can be saved and the green space enhanced for these new homes. Council could stipulate as part of the Marion Street right of way agreement that only a limited number of trees can be removed as they develop and maintain this area. Once Council has discussed this development and the infrastructure needs, staff would then develop an agreement for Ms. Charles, and the City to enter into concerning this project.

Council then discussed the proposed development and Ms. Charles' requests. Councilmembers felt the proposed development would be a wonderful addition to the area. Council discussed the request regarding the right of way of Marion Street.

Mr. LeDuc pointed out that he has mixed feelings about the right of way of Marion Street. One feeling is to divide the 150 foot right of way and divide it between the two property owners. Then they have the liability and responsibility to maintain the 75 feet and it becomes part of their taxable property. He pointed out the right of way will probably never be used. He said the other side is that once the property is given away, the City will never get it back. He said the question is whether Marion Street will ever be opened up and go across the playing fields of Schofield so it connects with Marion Street on the other side of Abbeville. He said this probably will not happen, but it is difficult to know what might happen in 50 years. He said presently the City has no use for Marion Street.

Ms. Samatha Charles stated she lives in Florida presently, but spends a lot of time in Aiken. She said she had been coming to Aiken for years for polo. She said she really likes to restore old cottages. She said she found the wooded property on Marion Street and felt it would be nice to build new houses that look old in this area. She said the property has a lot of old trees. She said the number of cottages she puts on the property depends on the trees, but there will probably be 6 to 8 cottages. Originally the property was platted to have 13 houses. She said several of her friends had already bought in the two blocks of Marion Street.

Council discussed the requests and agreed to extend water and sewer to the area, with the city being paid back as each of the homes request a building permit. Council also agreed that the Marion Street right of way be divided between the two property owners, George Anderson and Samatha Charles, with conditions that there could be a driveway on the property, but they have to keep the property as green space. The development agreement will be prepared for Council's consideration at the October 11 meeting.