

Aiken City Council MinutesWORK SESSIONFebruary 14, 2005

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

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Gary Smith, Bill Huggins, Larry Morris, Richard Pearce, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Sara Ridout, Phillip Lord of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelinas of the Augusta Chronicle, and about 6 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M. He stated Council had two items to discuss in the worksession.

NEILSON STREET/PAWNEE DRIVE CONNECTOR

Neilson Street
Pawnee Drive
Hitchcock Plaza
Connector
Road

Mr. LeDuc stated last fall, City Council approved the East-West Fabian Drive connector from Whiskey Road to Silver Bluff. At that time, Council asked staff to do a feasibility study to determine what the cost would be for a north/south connector from Dougherty Road to Pine Log Road along Neilson Street to Pawnee Drive and to give some possible routes for the road. It is estimated that 7,000 – 8,000 trips per day would utilize this roadway. Larry Morris asked the consulting firm of Cranston, Robinson, and Whitehurst to analyze the feasibility of this connector, and they have developed five alternatives that can link Neilson Street with Pawnee Drive. Each of these would utilize the current property that is occupied by the detention pond behind Wal-Mart and the former Kmart store. They have estimated the right-of-way cost for each alternative, along with their estimated construction cost. Alternate 1 could have an entrance to Wal-Mart and Hitchcock Plaza with some additional construction costs. Alternate 2 would require additional right-of-way and a higher construction cost to enter into the rear of the Wal-Mart parking lot, whereas Alternate 3 and 4, with a few modifications, could allow access into both centers. Alternate 5 allows an entrance into both of the developments. City Council, at our recent Horizons retreat, asked that this project move forward as quickly as possible to help relieve the traffic in these areas and to provide an alternate access to the Wal-Mart Shopping Center. Larry Morris and the consultant are present to provide any further information that Council may desire to allow City staff to move forward with a final solution for the location of this roadway.

Mr. Larry Morris, Public Works Director, introduced Bobby Usry, of Cranston, Robertson & Whitehurst, and then reviewed the five alternates recommended by the consultant showing the proposed routes with overhead slides. The alternates were as follows:

Alternate 1 – Two lane connector between Detention ponds. This route connects Neilson Street to Pawnee Drive using a two lane, two directional roadway. Cost \$867,528.

Alternate 2 – Two lane connector aligned on the south side of the detention facility. This route connects Neilson Street to Pawnee Drive using a two lane, two directional roadway. Cost \$799,727.

Alternate 3 – Pair of one-directional single lane routes around larger detention facility. This route connects the two roadways using two, single lane roads that route around the largest detention pond on the Aiken tract. Cost \$1,023,509.

Alternate 4 – Pair of one-directional single lane routes around entire detention facility. Similar to Alternate 3, this route connects the two roadways using two, single lane roads

that route around the entire detention facility on the City of Aiken and Wal-Mart tract. Cost \$1,311,217.

Alternate 5 – Roundabout. – This route provides a unique alignment in the form of a roundabout. The roundabout will travel in a single direction with turning lanes provided at each intersection. The roundabout will form a concentric circular route around the largest detention pond on the City of Aiken tract. Cost \$809,444.

The conclusion was that Alternatives 1, 3, and 4 do not appear to be cost effective. The estimated construction cost for No. 2 is the lowest at \$799,727. However, Alternate 2 does not provide direct connections to both Wal-Mart and the Hitchcock Plaza Shopping Center. Alternate No. 5 provides a direct connection to these two areas at a cost within 1% of Alternate No. 2. The additional right of way and construction cost required to provide the connections for Alternate No. 2 would push its cost above that for Alternate 5. Alternate 5 is the best choice for the project from the standpoint of service with the two connections and cost.

Council briefly discussed the alternates. Councilman Cuning pointed out that if the connector is constructed it will enhance the property values in the area. Mr. LeDuc pointed out there is \$750,000 in the 1 cent sales tax money for a connection off Dougherty Road to the back of Wal-Mart. He said Alternate 5 would accomplish that, but would accomplish more by going all the way to Pawnee and giving a north/south connector. It was pointed out by Council that Neilson would need to be paved all the way to Dougherty Road. Council discussed whether a traffic signal would be needed at Neilson and Dougherty Road. They also discussed a turn lane on Dougherty Road.

Council asked that staff proceed with the study for Alternate 5 and study whether turn lanes are needed on Dougherty Road when the connector road is constructed.

ARTS COMMISSION

Establishment Appointment

Mr. LeDuc stated the second item for discussion is formation of an Arts Commission. He pointed out an ordinance to establish an Arts Commission is on the agenda for first reading. The proposal is to develop an Arts Commission, which will help foster coordination among the cultural arts organizations in Aiken. The purpose of this discussion is to determine what the make up of the commission should be. When the committee was formed to review the possibility of forming an Arts Commission, it was made up of an artist/performer, individual from an arts organization, art patron, someone representing K-12 education, higher education, government, large business, small business, and the religious community. These nine individuals collectively reviewed the entire process in recommending this committee.

Mr. LeDuc stated after discussing the make up of the commission, it was felt that the commission should not be dominated by any one group or it will not be successful. He said the Commission has got to represent the Aiken arts community at large. He said Bill Reynolds, Chairman of the original Arts Committee, felt that the most important criteria for each member are their knowledge of and passion for the "Arts." By selecting members representing different venues, it is unlikely that more than one or two members will represent any one existing organization. He said staff felt there should be some guidance, as Council members will each be selecting a person to serve on the Commission independent of each other. Without a list of specific representation, Council may select several members from one organization. Staff suggested that Council consider the following permanent members on the commission:

1. Visual Arts Artist
2. Arts organization
3. Education
4. Business Community
5. Performing Arts Artist
6. At-Large
7. At-Large

Mr. LeDuc stated prior to first reading of the ordinance, he would like Council to consider how they will select the initial commission members—who will appoint which representative and the length of terms for the Commission appointees. He stated the list was a suggestion to Council for representation, and Council could make any changes they wished. He stated the Commission will meet monthly.

Mayor Cavanaugh suggested that for determining the term lengths that Council each draw a number from a box for the term length for their appointee as Council has done in the past. He also suggested that the list of representatives be defined, so everyone knows what kind of person to appoint. He pointed out he felt Visual Arts Artist and Performing Arts Artist should be defined. He also asked what organizations would be covered in Arts Organization.

Councilwoman Clyburn stated that a Visual Artist is someone who either paints, sculpts, or does some type of visual work. Visual art is more of a passive art—something someone looks at. A Performing Artist is someone who does a live performance like a concert pianist, a vocalist, a dancer, or an actor.

Glenn Parker, Recreation Director, stated the Arts Organization could be anyone that is a Board member from an Arts Organizations, someone who works with an Arts Organization, or even volunteers who give of their time to an Arts Organization. Mr. Bill Reynolds stated the Task Force identified at least 13 Arts Organizations.

Councilwoman Price suggested that Council may want to consider nine Commission members rather than just seven and have four at large positions rather than two. She said this would give more people an opportunity to serve.

Council discussed the pros and cons of nine members. It was pointed out seven members gives each Councilmember an appointee. It was suggested that if Council appoints nine members to one committee, other committees may want nine members also, plus Council would have to determine who would appoint the additional members. It was also pointed out that it takes more members of a nine Commission panel to be present to have a quorum.

Mr. Parker pointed out that the City Manager and the Recreation Director would serve as ex-officio, non-voting members and the Recreation Superintendent and Tourism Supervisor will serve as staff liaisons to the Commission. He pointed out that also serving as ex-officio in a non-voting capacity would be representatives from the Aiken Center for the Arts, Etheredge Center, and the Aiken Community Playhouse. He said there would be 10 people providing comments.

Council discussed the duties of the Commission and some of the activities in which they would be involved.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out that the by-laws state the Commission may establish task groups for certain projects and programs as necessary, so a number of other people may be involved. He also pointed out that there would be three ex-officio representatives from the arts organizations listed, so he felt there was no need to appoint more than seven members at this time.

Mr. LeDuc stated if Councilmembers have some appointees in mind they could choose a category for their appointment. Representatives chosen were as follows: Councilman Smith – Visual Arts; Councilwoman Clyburn – Education; Councilman Sprawls – Arts

Organization; Councilwoman Price – Performing Arts Artist; Mayor Cavanaugh – Business Community; Councilman Cuning – At Large; and Councilwoman Vaughters – At Large.

Mr. LeDuc asked the Councilmembers to draw for terms for their appointments. Terms drawn were as follows: Mayor Cavanaugh 2 years; Councilmembers Clyburn, Cuning and Price 1 year terms; and Councilmembers Smith, Sprawls and Vaughters 2 years.

OLD AIKEN MASTER PLAN

Mr. LeDuc stated Council needed to set a date for the next work session on the Old Aiken Master Plan. After discussion Council chose February 23, 2005, at 5 P.M. for the next meeting.

Aiken City Council Minutes

REGULAR MEETING

February 14, 2005

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

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Gary Smith, Bill Huggins, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Anita Lilly, Richard Pearce, Sara Ridout, Philip Lord of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelinas of the Augusta Chronicle, and about 12 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. Mayor Cavanaugh led in prayer, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to approve the agenda. Councilwoman Clyburn moved, seconded by Councilman Sprawls and unanimously approved, that the agenda be approved as submitted.

MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of January 24, 2005, and the Horizons meetings of February 4 and 5, 2005, were considered for approval. Councilwoman Price moved that the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously approved.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointments

Accommodations Tax Committee

Shah, Neel

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to make one appointment to the boards and commissions of the city.

Mr. LeDuc stated there are 9 pending appointments to boards and committees of the city and 1 appointment is presented for Council's consideration.

Councilwoman Vaughters has recommended reappointment of Neel Shah to the Accommodations Tax Committee. If reappointed his term would expire March 25, 2007.

Councilwoman Vaughters moved, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously approved, that Council reappoint Neel Shah to the Accommodations Tax Committee, with the term to expire March 25, 2007.