

Aiken City Council Minutes

February 24, 2003

WORKSESSION

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

Absent: Councilwoman Price

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Gary Smith, Larry Morris, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Pete Frommer, Richard Pearce, Sara Ridout, Karen Dailey of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelinas of the Augusta Chronicle and 12 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 6:20 P.M.

BICYCLE RACE

SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism

South Carolina Heritage Cycling Series

Chamber of Commerce

Downtown

Laurens Street

Richland Avenue

Park Avenue

Hayne Avenue

Lancaster Street

Mr. LeDuc stated the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, along with several community members, would like to discuss with City Council the possibility of a bicycle race in downtown Aiken. As part of the South Carolina Heritage Cycling Series, four communities in South Carolina have been selected as sites for a bicycle race. This event will bring in approximately 120 professional bike racers from the United States, Canada, South America and Europe. Representatives from the City, Chamber of Commerce, ADDA, the Aiken Bicycle Club, and the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism have been meeting to discuss where this event could take place and would like to present their plan to City Council. The evening race would be held on the same night as the Lobster Race, May 2, 2003, beginning at 6:30 P.M. with an event for children, followed at 7 P.M. by the professional racers. Public Safety would need to start closing the streets at approximately 6 P.M. that evening, and the main race would last from approximately 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. Aiken would be the last town featuring this race, which consists of approximately 50 miles on a loop starting in the southbound lane of Laurens Street between Richland and Park, then westbound along Hayne Avenue to Lancaster Street, Lancaster Street to Richland, and then eastbound on Richland Avenue to Laurens Street. Public Safety would make provisions for individuals to get to their homes or businesses during that time. They would like permission from City Council to hold this event in the downtown area and to close those streets from approximately 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. The complete funding for this event would be provided by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, and they are only asking the city to help with the closures and some assistance during the race itself.

Charlie Weiss, President of the Chamber of Commerce, was present representing the group. He stated they would like permission from Council to close the streets mentioned from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. He stated this event would bring in about 350 people, and with Aiken being the last race there is a good possibility many may spend the night. He felt this race would be a good event for the city. He stated arrangements had been worked out with Public Safety for closing the streets and for allowing individuals who live in the area to get to their homes. He also said the event had been discussed with the organizers of the Lobster Race, and it was felt there was no conflict for the two events.

Council discussed the request and felt the staff and representatives had worked out any potential problems. Council did not express any objections to the proposed race.

C. P. PROPERTIES

Whiskey Road
Elmwood Park
Nordahl Homes

Mr. LeDuc stated that on November 26, 2001, City Council approved providing utilities for 45.72 acres of land known as the C.P. Properties off of Whiskey Road south of Elmwood Park. This property is now being evaluated for residential construction on the back portion of the land. Prior to purchasing the property Nordahl Homes, a residential builder out of Augusta, Georgia, would like to present their proposed plan to City Council for comment. Based on Council's comments they plan to annex this property and to develop the residential portion of the property. They are not looking for Council's approval at this meeting, but would like to hear Council's comments before moving forward with the purchase and annexation. At the November, 2001, meeting Council included sixteen conditions with the approval and asked that the road be moved further south to jointly access both this property and the neighboring property. The road could then align with a future road from the vacant property across the street to provide better traffic control and safety. In addition, you wanted them to review possible acceleration and deceleration lanes for this intersection. A proposed plan shows the road being moved farther to the south, and they plan to build single family attached town homes in the rear portion at less density than was previously approved. At this time they have no plans for the front commercial portion and realize they would have to bring this back for further review at a later date. The sixteen conditions that were included with the motion in 2001 are as follows:

- (a) Immediate Annexation of property.
- (b) That subdivision of the proposed project would not disqualify it from mixed use approach being considered by the Planning Commission.
- (c) That the plan conforms with the concept plan presented.
- (d) That the residential use be a density not to exceed that allowed by RS-6 zone or 7.62 units per acre.
- (e) That buildings along Whiskey Road frontage would have a residential appearance and that their renderings be approved by City Council or staff.
- (f) That they comply with the Landscape and Tree provision and that a Tree Survey be completed locating all specimen and significant trees on the property.
- (g) That they comply with the recommendations of the Whiskey Road Corridor Study.
- (h) That they comply with the sign regulations, and that any free standing monument sign not exceed 50 square feet or 11 feet in height, therefore allowing them to be consistent in design.
- (i) That the city staff approve the design of all roadways and utilities.
- (j) That the road stubbed out to the southern boundary be paved to the property line.
- (k) That the off street parking be limited to no more than 25% over the minimum required by the Zoning Ordinance, thus allowing shared parking within the development.
- (l) That an untouched buffer of 30 feet in depth be located along the Powderhouse Road frontage.
- (m) That all vegetation in the 50 foot deep buffer along the northern boundary remain and,
where necessary, additional green shrubbery be planted no more than 10 feet on center and at least three feet in height at the time of planting to be able to reach 7 feet at maturity
- (n) That on the southern boundary behind the shopping center there be a 25 foot buffer and where necessary evergreen shrubbery be planted no more than 10 feet on center at least three feet in height at the time of planting to reach a 7 foot height at the time of maturity.
- (o) That no manufactured housing be allowed and that the deed restrictions state that no manufactured housing be allowed.
- (p) That at least 25% of the commercial and residential area be completed within three years.

Mr. LeDuc stated, if Council sees no particular problems with the proposed development, the next step is to go to the Planning Commission for annexation, and the matter would come back to Council. He pointed out a proposed plan had been approved for C.P. Properties, but another developer is now considering developing the property. If the developer wanted to move forward with the previous plans, they could. However, the plans are changing so the development will have to go through the process for approval. At this meeting the developer is only asking if Council has any particular comments about the new proposed development or any real objections before they proceed with the process. Mr. LeDuc stated he felt Council may want to look at the proposed development, since a plan had previously been approved.

Mark Graham, representing Nordahl Homes, Inc., was present, along with their representatives to answer any questions Council may have concerning this project. Mr. Graham stated the proposed developer still plans to abide by the 16 conditions that Council placed on the previously approved plan. He said the Nordahl company has never worked in Aiken before so he wanted the proposal to be presented to Council just for any particular comments before they go through the process. He said Nordahl only plans to develop the residential portion. The commercial area will be sold to another developer, and then that portion will have to be approved.

Councilman Cunning stated, in looking at Whiskey Road, he felt there needs to be parallel access to Whiskey Road. He stated, in looking at this property and the Centennial Office Building, there is a possibility that a parallel road could be put in from Powderhouse Road all the way to Centennial if it is designed properly. He felt such a road could help with the Whiskey Road traffic. He felt such a road could possibly work with this proposed plan. He asked if this could be studied, as he felt it would help with this proposed development. He suggested that the city planners look at such a road to tie in connector roads. He suggested that possibly an easement be obtained for such a road now or the matter considered.

Mr. Graham stated the last submittal gave approval for the residential development. The new proposal for residential development has less density. He also pointed out one of the conditions of the previous approval was annexation when the property became contiguous. He said it is now contiguous, so the property needs to be annexed. He said when the property is annexed it needs to have a zone, and he wanted to get any comments from Council about Planned Commercial zoning. He said he did not want to proceed if Council had some real objections.

Council discussed the proposal asking questions regarding the development. One of the concerns was open space and buffers. It was suggested that a playground area be provided if possible, and that a traffic study be done. It was also suggested that the matter regarding a parallel road to Whiskey Road be considered. The proposed development is to go to the Planning Commission for consideration.

AIKEN CORPORATION

Chesterfield Street N.

Land Plan

Blue House

Funds

Mr. LeDuc stated that, at the last Aiken Corporation meeting, the Housing Sub-Committee requested funding to develop a land use plan for a one-half block area along Chesterfield Street between Hampton and Edgefield. They would like City Council's approval of \$65,000 from the revenue received from the sale of the blue house on Chesterfield Street. The city received \$135,000 from this sale, and earlier Council asked Aiken Corporation to bring to City Council a specific plan before approving any funding. This money would allow them to develop a land plan for that area and to purchase several pieces of property. Also at this meeting, they approved \$15,000 to develop plans for the old theater and to use their funds to help develop a land use plan for the Toole Hill area. Wade Brodie from the Aiken Corporation is present to discuss this request, and, if Council desires, we could add this to the next agenda for formal approval.

Mr. Wade Brodie, of the Aiken Corporation, stated one of the goals of the Aiken Corporation is to increase housing density downtown. He said they had had success with their previous projects. He said the Chesterfield Street area was a proposed project of the Aiken Corporation. He said a land use plan is needed for the area to determine the feasibility of the project. Any remaining money after the land use plan, if favorable, would go towards purchasing property in the area.

Mr. LeDuc stated the discussion at the Housing Sub-Committee centered around the fact that this project would be similar to the Parker Project that the city worked with Aiken Corporation on several years ago. For that project, the city gave funds to the Aiken Corporation to buy the property, and then Aiken Corporation proceeded with the project and came up with a land use plan, found a developer, and the developer used their money to build townhomes.

Councilman Cuning pointed out there are about 17 vacant lots on Chesterfield Street. He said the plan would not only be streetscape, but also architectural plans on what to build. He said he felt in order to jump start the project the Aiken Corporation was going to have to build the houses. He said to move the project more than one house would have to be built. He said once the project is proven, then he felt a private developer would come in.

Mr. Brodie stated if the Aiken Corporation can be successful with the one-half block area, that will open up the opportunity for the other areas to be developed.

Council discussed the proposed project at length. It was pointed out the City will be moving forward on the Toole Hill project. At the same time, the Aiken Corporation would like to consider taking on the task of Chesterfield Street.

Councilwoman Clyburn stated she felt it was very important to consider the design of the homes for the area. She said Chesterfield Street might be a better area than Toole Hill. She felt Chesterfield Street was a good area for the Aiken Corporation to start. She asked that the people already in the area be considered, and that they not be priced out of their homes and have to spend \$40,000 to \$50,000 to upgrade their homes. She said she knew the Aiken Corporation had been working on this for some time, and she felt this was a good time to go ahead and start on the plan. She said she would like to see Council support the plan to get started on the project.

Councilman Smith stated in principle he felt the plan was good. He stated he would like to see more details before Council approves funds.

Mr. LeDuc stated if Council wished a cost for the land plan and an estimate of the cost of some of the properties in the area could be presented. After cost estimates are gathered the matter will be placed on the Council agenda for Council's consideration.

SEWER

Gem Lakes
Silver Bluff Road
Carolina Utilities

At this point Councilman Cuning left the Council Chambers. He stated he felt he had a potential conflict of interest on this matter, so he recused himself from any discussion. He stated a company which is owned by Regions Bank owns the approximately 19 acres in Gem Lakes which is currently being used as a spray field for the sewer system at Gem Lakes. He is the president of that subsidiary company, so he felt he should recuse himself from any discussion on the matter.

Mr. LeDuc stated last year the staff discussed with City Council the possibility of supplying bulk sewer service to Carolina Utilities, which operates the sewer system in Gem Lakes. To establish a price, we asked our auditing firm, Cherry, Bekaert and Holland, to determine the revenue needed to provide this type of service. They felt that a rate of \$2.82 per 100 cubic feet would compensate the city for their actual cost plus a

small profit. This compares to the current \$1.38 per 100 cubic feet which we currently charge inside city customers for sewage.

In 1990, when the sewer system was built, we added capacity to our pumping station and pipes, anticipating that we would be providing sewer service to this area at a future date. With approval of this bulk service agreement, Carolina Utilities would be paying the city approximately \$80,000 per year, plus an initial tap fee of \$30,624, for the capacity that is needed at the Aiken County Public Service Authority. The agreement allows the rate to be modified as the rates within the city are adjusted and would be reviewed on a periodic basis. If City Council is comfortable with the proposed agreement it would be placed on the next agenda for formal approval.

Council agreed to placing the matter on a future agenda for formal approval.

Aiken City Council Minutes

REGULAR MEETING

February 24, 2003

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

Absent: Councilwoman Price

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Gary Smith, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Anita Lilly, Pete Frommer, Larry Morris, Richard Pearce, Sara Ridout, Karen Dailey of the Aiken Standard, and 20 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.. Mr. LeDuc 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 presented.

MINUTES

The minutes of the work session and regular meeting of February 10, 2003, were considered for approval. Councilman Sprawls moved that the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Clyburn and unanimously approved.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointments

Reynolds, Leland

Johnson, Rosalee

Milledge, James

Historic Preservation Commission

Hammond, T. A.

Park Commission

Shah, Neel

Accommodations Tax Committee

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to make some appointments to the various boards and commissions.

Mr. LeDuc stated we have 7 pending appointments to boards and committees of the city and 5 appointments are presented for Council's consideration.