

Aiken City Council Minutes

April 22, 2002

WORKSESSION

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

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Gary Smith, Larry Morris, Ed Evans, Sandra Korbelik, Sara Ridout, Karen Daily of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelinis of the Augusta Chronicle, and 25 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

TRAFFIC IMPACT AND MANAGEMENT STUDY

ARCADIS

Traffic Ordinance

Engineering Study

Mr. LeDuc stated that City Council in a joint meeting with the Planning Commission approved as their number 4 priority the development of a Traffic Impact and Management Study and a traffic ordinance. We asked ARCADIS, our traffic consultants, to explain to City Council what their engineering study will analyze before they begin the traffic project. Roger Dyar is present to explain how they plan to develop a traffic ordinance which will take into account existing and future traffic concerns relative to the current traffic flow of the existing roadways. The ordinance will require different levels of analysis for new development based on where the development is located, what new traffic volumes it will generate, and its relationship to the existing roadway conditions. We would also like to discuss with Council moving forward with a cost analysis of the future roadway improvements needed in the Aiken area. This would help the staff to determine whether a traffic impact fee is necessary in our community.

Mr. LeDuc stated ARCADIS will come back to Council probably in June and present preliminary results of their study, and Mr. Dyar would present what he feels would be a recommendation on the traffic ordinance the first meeting in August.

Mr. Roger Dyar, of ARCADIS, stated his firm had been retained by the city to help develop a usable and implementable traffic ordinance. He stated he would review the direction that ARCADIS would recommend to proceed with the study and with the development of a traffic ordinance. He said at this particular stage they would establish the base line traffic conditions, which include traffic flow and traffic safety throughout the city. He showed a map which had the preliminary list of the streets which need to be studied and included in the plan and the ordinance. He said his firm will be looking at traffic data, traffic flow and safety on the network established. He said they expect to have the traffic count data to be completed by June 1, 2002. He said then it would take a couple of weeks to get a good idea of the findings from the traffic analysis. Further along they will determine which streets will have to have a deeper study. He said they should come back to Council with their preliminary findings at the end of June. He said there would be a base line study that will include the network and detailed studies of the areas that show up as hot spots as a result of traffic congestion, or the rate of growth of traffic or traffic safety problems. He said they would give the city a 5 year history of traffic volume growth from 1998 up to and including traffic counts in 2002. He said when they come back to Council they will come back with a three-tier system. One color will show the streets, which have a very good level of service and anticipated low growth rate in commercial or residential development. Another color will show streets with a higher level of congestion and/or a higher level of expected traffic growth and/or safety problems. He said the maps will be coded green, yellow and red with red being areas with problems or anticipated problems. He said they would look at a five year horizon with the data available and try to project what the traffic volumes will be over the next five years, or 2007. He said when he comes back in June he will have information on what other cities and counties around the state, southeast and other parts of the country

are doing with their traffic ordinances. He said the conditions of the locale where a development may be planned will determine what level of study needs to be done and also determine what remedy would need to be done so a development could go forward. He said levels of study may vary from a brief review of the conditions to a full-blown traffic impact study. He said they will come back with a concept with different levels and degrees for a traffic impact study. The ordinance will address the mechanics of when and where a study is required and remedies a developer may need to provide.

Council briefly asked questions concerning the proposed study.

Mr. LeDuc pointed out some areas will require a brief study while some areas may require a 20 to 30 page study. The study will depend on the size of the development, how much traffic is generated, and the safety factors involved. He said every development will require some type of study. He said the cost of the study will increase depending on the complexity of the study. He said Council needs the information to make the best decision possible as developments come before Council. He said it should not be a static study. Once the traffic counts are done, within two years they need to be reevaluated as the conditions may change.

Mr. LeDuc stated he would like to have some direction from Council. He said he would like to ask ARCADIS beyond the traffic ordinance to do an analysis of what the future roadway improvements will cost the City of Aiken. He said not knowing what future costs may be makes it difficult to project what the need will be and how much future developments should contribute towards future improvements. He said the city needs to know what future costs may be for traffic improvements. He said the cost would be around \$10,000 for a cost analysis. He said there had been some talk about an impact fee. He said if the city doesn't know what costs will be involved in the future there is no way to assess an impact fee. He said he would like to have Council's permission to authorize ARCADIS to do a cost analysis of roadway improvements that will be needed in the next 10 to 20 years. He pointed out Council had authorized the staff to go forward with developing a traffic ordinance and this is being done by developing a traffic impact study. In order to complete the study there needs to be an analysis of the cost for the transportation improvements. After discussion Council gave permission to ask ARCADIS to do a cost analysis of roadway improvements that may be needed in the next 10 to 20 years.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING REMOVAL

Demolition

Cagle, John

Williamsburg Street NE 157

Quick Shop

Mr. LeDuc stated several months ago Council discussed in a work session the possible demolition of commercial structures. At that time Council instructed the staff to come back with any proposals concerning this work. We recently received our first written request from Mr. John Cagle concerning the commercial building located at 157 Williamsburg Street NE. This formerly was occupied by a Quick Shop which has been abandoned for several years. The building is in poor condition, and Mr. Cagle would like to work with the city to remove it and has asked us to consider it under our \$200 demolition program. This building would be a simple structure to remove, and we feel it could qualify under the existing program once we have determined if there is any asbestos in the building. With Council's approval we would begin this inspection and then work out any final details and costs with the owner. We have also been in contact with two other commercial property owners whose property we may want to look at in the near future as part of this program.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he had questions regarding the city's manpower, equipment and costs involved in such a project. He felt the city should be recouping most of the cost involved.

Mr. LeDuc stated manpower is used between other jobs and when time is available. He said the cost could be considered several ways. He pointed out the city has the

equipment on hand so the cost involved is gas for the vehicle and the manpower. He said, however, if you consider cost of rental of a backhoe and charge an hourly fee, then the city would not recoup its costs. The \$200 is a nominal fee which basically pays for the fuel. He stated Aiken County has agreed that they will accept the rubbish and debris from these demolitions at no cost for landfill charges. He said if asbestos is involved the costs could be several hundred dollars. He said on commercial buildings the staff felt the city should get the \$200 fee plus any asbestos removal costs involved. He said, depending on the size of the commercial building and how much Council would like to encourage the removal of some of these structures, the city may ask the owner to pay more for the removal or accept the fact that the city will get rid of the structure because it would be good to get rid of the blight. He said this is the first request for removal of a commercial building so there are no set of policies for commercial buildings.

Councilwoman Clyburn pointed out this building is a fairly small structure. She said if the city wants to get into removing commercial structures we need to look at the size, what the structure is build of, and maybe adjust the cost. She said she had watched this particular property and seen people working on it, but it looks very blighted. She said removing the building will probably increase the value of the lot.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he felt this was a good program and helps blighted areas and safety situations, but he felt the city should look at the costs involved so the cost is fair to the city and the building owner. He said he could not see all demolitions being \$200.

Mr. LeDuc stated this was the reason for bringing each case to Council for approval. He said depending on how much the city wants to get rid of a building will determine the cost in some cases. He said the ultimate goal in removing the buildings is to get something rebuilt that will have some tax value.

Council had no objections to the city proceeding with the removal of the building as requested by Mr. Cagle.

AIKEN COUNTY

Demolition

Morgan Street

Williams, John

Mr. LeDuc stated he had also received a letter from Aiken County Administrator J. Clay Killian asking the city's assistance in removal of a home on Morgan Street just outside the city limits. The request from Aiken County is that the city tear down the house and load the material into County trucks. The County will haul and dispose of the debris. The United Way under its Home Repair Volunteer Initiative Program has agreed to replace the structure with a refurbished mobile home. He said the County had talked with the City regarding dilapidated housing which may be within a few blocks of the city limits and the fact that it also affects the City. He said this particular house is in a donut hole. He said the County is asking the City's assistance in tearing down the building. He said this would be a way to help the County and the City as it is a blight just outside the city limits. It was pointed out a blighted area near the city tends to attract undesirable things and affects nearby areas.

Council agreed to the City cooperating with the County in this matter.

SEWER SYSTEM

Gem Lakes

Sewer, Sanitary

Mr. LeDuc stated a few months ago the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) approached the city about sewer concerns just south and west of the Gem Lakes area. Part of the problem was due to the city's lift station and the remaining portion was due to problems that Carolina Water Service was having with their sewage lagoon and spray system. DHEC has asked Carolina Water Services to seek alternative methods to eliminate their sewer problem, and they have asked the city to consider accepting this sewage flow and have submitted an agreement for consideration. Currently the City of Aiken does not receive bulk sewer from any other source, and this contract would be the

first for the city if Council approves it. The proposal before Council is to accept the Gem Lakes sewage only with the sewer distribution system remaining with Carolina Water Services. There are approximately 311 homes tied onto the sewer system and the flow would be approximately 59,000 gallons per day. The city has the necessary lift stations and force main capacity to transport this sewage flow to the Aiken County Public Service Authority (PSA). Should Council decide to give them a bulk sewage contract it should include a capacity charge and treatment at the PSA, cost for the use of the lift stations and sewer mains, and a service charge for acceptance of their sewage. If the City of Aiken accepts this sewage it would also resolve a long standing problem concerning the Gem Lakes lagoon and spray fields. Larry Morris will answer any questions that Council may have concerning this proposed agreement by Carolina Water Services.

Mr. LeDuc stated if Council approves this request it would be a bulk system with a fee per gallon. The City would have to buy some capacity with PSA and the city would request that Carolina Water Service pay those fees. He said he wanted to know Council's feelings before the city went through any negotiations to see if Council was willing to accept the sewer from Gem Lakes. He said he was not asking for approval of an agreement, only opinions and comments and whether Council is interested in the city negotiating with Carolina Water Service.

Council discussed the request and felt that as long as Carolina Water Service would cover the city's operating costs and future maintenance costs and the cost of purchase of any future capacity from PSA that the city could negotiate with Carolina Water Service.

A question was raised regarding annexation of the area for receiving city service. It was pointed out this would be a bulk sewer service only. The city furnishes water to Gem Lakes but does not provide sewer service. The bulk sewer service would be with Carolina Water Service, not the residents of Gem Lakes.

Councilman Cunning stated he felt the charge should not just be cost, but cost plus a percentage. He said they would be able to tie into a present lift station which the Aiken citizens paid for. He felt the City of Aiken should have some benefit from providing the service. He also stated if other land is developed that a certain percentage of the tap fee that Carolina Water Service would get should come to the City of Aiken for providing this service. He felt the city should make some money on the service.

The consensus of Council was that the staff go ahead with negotiations for an agreement and bring it back to Council for approval.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointments

Building Code of Appeals

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he would like to place an appointment on the next Council agenda. He said he would like to suggest the reappointment of the Sidney Ballentine to the Building Code Appeals Committee.

REGULAR MEETING

April 22, 2002

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

Others Present: Roger LeDuc, Bill Huggins, Gary Smith, Ed Evans, Glenn Parker, Pete Frommer, Larry Morris, Sara Ridout, Karen Daily of the Aiken Standard, Josh Gelin of the Augusta Chronicle, and about 85 citizens.

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:40 P.M. Mr. LeDuc led in prayer, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.