

Aiken City Council MinutesREGULAR MEETING

September 24, 2012

Present: Mayor Cavanaugh, Councilmembers Dewar, Diggs, Ebner, Homoki, and Wells.

Absent: Councilwoman Price.

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Gary Smith, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Larry Morris, Alicia Davis, Glenn Parker, Charles Barranco, Tim Coakley, Ed Evans, Kim Abney, Sara Ridout, Amy Banton of the Aiken Standard, Channel 12, and about 60 citizens.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Councilman Wells led in prayer, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

GUIDELINES

Mayor Cavanaugh reviewed the guidelines for speaking at the Council meeting. He asked that those who would like to speak raise their hand and be recognized and limit their comments to five minutes.

MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of September 10, 2012, were considered for approval. Councilman Wells moved, seconded by Councilman Diggs, that the minutes of the September 10, 2012, meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONPublic SafetySafe Communities ProgramHigh Point, NC

Mayor Cavanaugh stated a presentation would be made on the Safe Communities Program and visit to High Point, North Carolina.

Mr. Pearce stated in December we had the tragic loss of Public Safety Officer Scotty Richardson, and, in going through the various memorial services for Scotty, we met someone from North Carolina who worked with the High Point, North Carolina, Police Department. He shared with us about a program in which High Point is engaged to help address crime in their community. Before we could schedule a meeting in High Point we also lost Sandy Rogers. He said we have all grieved through these terribly tragic losses, and there has been other violence in the community that has caused us a great deal of concern. The question after the grieving and ceremonies was "What is our next step?" That is when we had our Food for Thoughts events in the spring to hear from our citizens. He pointed out that Public Safety has been so touched by the tremendous outpouring of care and concern for the Public Safety Officers who are on our streets every day. Over 235 surveys were turned in from the Food for Thoughts events. Over 300 people attended the two events. The community definitely wanted to help in the effort. He said he and Chief Barranco went to High Point, N.C. and met with Chief Sumner and staff and heard about their Safe Communities Initiative, a program that is nationwide. It has been very successful. He said he and Chief Barranco had discussed the possibilities for Aiken and what Aiken may be able to use from this national model to help Public Safety and our citizens combat crime in our community.

Mr. Pearce stated Aiken Department of Public Safety Chief Charles Barranco will be joined by Lieutenants Ben Harm and Karl Odenthal, as well as our Neighborhood

Coordinator Cynthia Mitchell, for a special presentation.

Cynthia, Ben, and Karl have recently traveled to High Point, NC to experience that Police Department's efforts to reduce crime rates in their city. In addition to meeting High Point Police Department Command Staff and officers on the beat, our Public Safety staffers have also had the opportunity to talk with High Point community members who spend their time working on their Safe Communities initiative. Our Chief and these staff members will share their stories from this visit.

Chief Barranco stated he and staff members were excited to be able to talk about the Safer Community. He said, as pointed out, he and Mr. Pearce had recently been to High Point, North Carolina, and talked with Chief Sumner and his staff about some healthy choices that are being made in their community. He said they were impressed. He said although there is a lot of hard work, it is a simple philosophy. In March the Aiken Public Safety Community patrols were placed back in some of the neighborhoods as a department wide community policing philosophy. This initiative, which they learned about in High Point, appears to be the next logical step in the community policing process. He said Lt. Ben Harm, Community Services Coordinator Cynthia Mitchell, and Lt. Karl Odenthal were sent to High Point to learn more about this initiative. He said they were present to tell a little bit about their trip.

Lt. Ben Harm discussed the data part of the process. He said the process they are talking about is data driven, which incorporates a lot of his personal experiences into the philosophy. One reason the philosophy is so interesting and exciting is because it relates basically to what he has seen over his many years in law enforcement. He said he had tried to solve crime in an area by arresting people. He said that might have solved the issue that night, but it does not solve the issue of crime long term, because we are not addressing the underlying issues that cause the criminal behavior. The process directly involves the community in the participants' selection process and the healing process for the community. The data part comes into the process by identifying a select number of offenders based on their criminal history and their documented contacts with law enforcement. These are based on identifiable contacts and history and based on those alone. The offenders are presented with a clear choice offered by both law enforcement and the community standing together in unison. The community is a very vital part of this process.

Ms. Cynthia Mitchell, Community Services Coordinator, stated the entire community, including faith groups, schools, businesses, civic groups, families, and the offenders themselves are a part of the process. Every bit of the community is actively and positively engaged throughout the entire process. This not only helps build the relationship with community and law enforcement, but it also helps with the accurate and timely distribution of information within the community. She said she was able to witness firsthand how well the community component of this model works. She said during the tour at High Point she was visiting their Community Advocate's Office and a prostitute walked in and asked for help. She said immediately she saw the process spring into action. The faith community, the substance abuse center, and the clothes closet immediately responded with help. Someone immediately began to pray with her. One person called the substance abuse center to alert them. Another person called the local clothes closet to help her find more appropriate attire. She said as she watched the process she realized Aiken has every single piece of that community component. Nothing has to be created. It all just needs to be tied together. She said she did not know how long the young lady had been on the street or if she would return to the street. However, she did know that when she decided to make a healthy choice the community was there to support and help her heal. She said the City of Aiken already has many of these community connections in place, for example, the partnership with USC-Aiken, friends in the business community, the series of Food for Thoughts, and the Citizens Public Safety Academy. She said the model is particularly exciting to her because it allows room to grow, and it affords the City of Aiken Public Safety and our community at large the opportunity to continue doing what we already do, which is working together to create and sustain safer communities.

Lt. Karl Odenthal stated like Ben and Cynthia he was pleased with his experience in High Point, North Carolina. He said he was pleased because he knew that the initiative that High Point began 15 years ago is very similar in nature to Public Safety's PACT Team. In 1994, when Public Safety began its PACT Team, he said he was fortunate to be able to work with Councilmembers Price and Diggs on different projects. He pointed out several members of Council are familiar with the process and how involved that can be with the community. He said while in High Point he asked the Assistant Chief to take him to some of the neighborhoods, as he wanted to see what they had. He said he was surprised to see a command level officer having the intimate knowledge of the neighborhoods they toured. He told of an incident of a prostitute approaching a customer while they were touring. He then showed a picture of the doorway at the back of the Municipal Building, which is the door for the old Police Department. He said he chose the visual image of the doorway to match his experience at High Point. He said the doorway and the brick reflect the progress and growth of the City of Aiken. He said each of the lines of brick indicate growth of the city. He pointed out 1884 City Hall; 1906 City Police. He said the dates go to 1938. He said the doorway reflects the growth of the city. He said Aiken started with the PACT Team of Community Policing in 1994. He said this process is the next logical step or progression where Aiken needs to go and incorporate the ideas from High Point, North Carolina. He pointed out the process is used across the country, and High Point was one of the areas close to Aiken that can mentor and model for Aiken. He said the challenge for many agencies is sustaining this process. He pointed out, as Cynthia had mentioned, the key lies in the community. In leaving, he showed a slide of water emptying into one stream. He said Aiken and its many components empty into the same stream. He said Aiken has many different groups and people that want to be involved. He said we all have the same goal and are going into the same stream. He felt the vested community of Aiken in partnership with Public Safety will sustain the initiative.

Chief Barranco pointed out the energy that Ben, Cynthia and Karl had experienced. He said they might not have all the details worked out, but they felt the model, with the support of Council and the community, can make a positive difference in Aiken. He said they had invited the High Point Police Chief, some of his staff members, and some community leaders to come to Aiken to share more about their proven methods that cut their crime rate 50% over a 15 year period. He pointed out that High Point's population doubled during that time. He said that meeting will be held October 11, 2012, at 1 p.m. at the Weeks Center. Also, that evening at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Baptist Church on Richland Avenue, another meeting will be held. He invited everyone to attend these meetings.

Mayor Cavanaugh thanked Chief Barranco and the staff members for sharing their experience at High Point. He said Council looks forward to working with Public Safety in this process.

Councilwoman Diggs stated when she first heard about the program she felt it sounded too good to be true. She said she contacted some people she knows in High Point, North Carolina, and asked them some questions. She stated the persons contacted made the same comments that Chief Barranco, Lt. Harm, Cynthia, and Lt. Odenthal had made. She said they stated the process had brought the community together. The community is now sharing the responsibility. They see it as the police and community working together every day. They also said it built trust between the police and the community. They said it was a holistic approach because they didn't just reach the person who may have been a criminal, but the entire family. The church was involved; the community and other non-profit organizations were involved, as well as the police. She thanked the staff members for going to High Point and gathering information and bringing it back to Aiken. She said she can't wait to hear more about the program at the scheduled meetings on October 11.

Councilman Dewar then asked several questions. He asked what kind of crime Aiken is trying to reduce other than just reducing all crime and what would be focused on in this program. Chief Barranco stated that recently Aiken has had some high profile violent crimes. He felt violent crimes should be the focus.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that some reports show that violent crime is down. He wondered if that was a reaction from what Aiken had been through several months ago.

Chief Barranco stated the improvement may be the community patrols making an impact in the neighborhoods already. He pointed out sometimes with a shooting call there may not be a suspect or a resolution. He felt with the holistic approach they would be able to focus on that and make a difference in the things that people at home are concerned about.

Mr. Pearce pointed out that one thing discussed with High Point staff and the volunteers is the fact that there is such a small population in a community that commits the majority of the crimes. About 3% of the offenders are doing about 75% of the crime. With a focused targeted effort on the persons that are committing the bulk of the crime, immediately the streets have gone quiet in other locations.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that High Point is a much larger city than Aiken, and they were focusing on violent crime, as were most of the communities in the book which he had read. He asked how specifically the Aiken staff would work with the program and how many people would be involved.

Chief Barranco stated it would be a department-wide philosophy. It would not have just one person dedicated to the process. It would help with the information sharing and bring the department together to try to work more efficiently to be able to identify people and monitor them. It would not take away from the job they are already doing, but would give them some resources and may give them some leads to crime in a neighborhood.

Councilman Dewar asked if the department would focus on specific crimes or breaking and entering.

Mr. Pearce responded that we would focus on specific offenders, whether they be property crimes or violent crimes. The focus is not a particular category of crime. The idea with Safe Communities is to find out who is committing the crimes and sending a message that the conduct will not be tolerated in the future. That is why it involves city officials, the court officials, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, and community volunteers in sending a clear message to the offenders that Aiken is not the place to commit crime.

Councilman Dewar pointed out the focus in the book which he had read was on major violent crimes. He said he would support the program, but he hoped it would not diminish response times or take away from activities that will close cases. He felt our closure rate needs improvement. He felt we were on the right track. He felt we might be cutting community service short. He said he had expressed concern about the increased response time from 4 minutes in the rest of the city to 6 minutes on the southside. He said he wanted to make sure we don't detract from that because we have a great reputation in the city. He said he would defend the city. He felt the City had always been behind Public Safety. He said he wished we had had more discussion beforehand.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the meeting on October 11 is a chance for the citizens and Council to hear a lot more detail about the Safe Communities approach. He said the concerns being expressed are concerns that staff had. Chief Sumner had said the reduction in crime frees up the officers to spend more time on each case to more thoroughly investigate and follow up leads because there is a manageable load of cases. The potential return is great. He pointed out their conversations with the staff and their offer to mentor Aiken. He pointed out High Point had offered to mentor Aiken. He said it seemed like a good opportunity to see how successful High Point was. Their metropolitan area is about 100,000. They were a community of about 50,000. He said Aiken is a community of about 29,000, but within about 5 miles there are about 60,000 to 70,000. He said there are some similarities and some differences. He felt the potential for a good return and a good result was something that staff wanted to bring to Council

and let the community know that on October 11 the community could hear directly from the people from High Point to see what is working for them.

Councilman Dewar asked if Aiken should expect improved solve rates and lesser crime even though we would be focusing on a small number of people.

Chief Barranco stated we would be focusing on the small number of people that are doing the majority of the crimes. He said High Point found that during their process in the focus on violent crime, it brought the overall crime rate down.

Councilman Homoki thanked Chief Barranco for the presentation and felt it was very good. He said the only skepticism he had was whether the process may need additional resources. He said in case additional resources are needed he encouraged Chief Barranco not to hesitate to call on Council. He felt everyone is backing the program.

Councilman Ebner stated he thought High Point was a confluence of three cities that meet at the county line.

Mr. Pearce stated High Point is in four counties.

Councilman Ebner asked if they traveled in the four counties and if they saw similar neighborhoods in the four counties similar to what we have in our area with North Augusta and Aiken County.

Chief Barranco stated he was not sure they had visited every county. However, he and Mr. Pearce had spent a lot of time driving around and they saw communities similar to those in Aiken.

Councilman Ebner pointed out High Point had four counties to pull together. He said Aiken has one county and several cities to pull together. He pointed out Chief Barranco has worked in the Sheriff's Department for a number of years. He wondered if the Sheriff's Department would be involved in the process. He also wondered about Interstate 20 and the State police. He pointed out that is a corridor that runs from Atlanta and the coast.

Chief Barranco stated he had had several conversations with Sheriff Hunt, and he was very supportive of the program and interested in hearing about High Point on October 11. He said Aiken is already doing some things with the local and state jurisdictions around Aiken, and they want that to grow.

Chief Barranco stated the meeting with High Point staff would be on October 11, 2012, at 1 p.m. at the Weeks Center and at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Baptist Church.

Mayor Cavanaugh thanked Chief Barranco and the team for their presentation and what Public Safety does every day. He pointed out the Public Safety Department had been reaccredited for the fifth time a few months ago and also been designated as an Agency of Excellence for the third time since 2006. This designation has only been awarded to two other departments in the state and only 47 in the nation. He felt that was quite an honor. He pointed out that Aiken had gone through a rash of car break-ins. He stated this is something that citizens can help with. We can keep our eyes and ears open when we are out in the public, and if we see anything that looks suspicious, we can call Public Safety. He pointed out we already have a start in the process with the six community groups that have been established for several years. He stated Council will work with the Department in any way they can.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Appointments

Community Development Committee

Eugene McKie

Judy Sennett

Alton Johnson

General Aviation Commission

Don Barnes

Stephen Peterson

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider appointments to various boards and commissions.

Mr. Pearce stated Council has 12 pending appointments to fill vacancies on different City boards, commissions, and committees. Five appointments are presented for Council's consideration.

Mayor Cavanaugh has recommended the reappointment of Eugene McKie to the Community Development Committee. If reappointed Mr. McKie's term would expire September 2, 2014.

Councilmember Ebner has recommended the reappointment of Judy Sennett to the Community Development Committee, and if reappointed her term would expire September 2, 2014.

Councilmember Dewar has recommended the reappointment of Don Barnes to the General Aviation Commission. If reappointed Mr. Barnes' term would expire September 1, 2014.

Councilmember Homoki has recommended that Alton Johnson be reappointed to the Community Development Committee with the new term to expire September 2, 2014. He has also recommended that Stephen Peterson be reappointed to the General Aviation Commission. If reappointed Mr. Peterson's term would expire September 1, 2014.

For City Council consideration is approval of five appointments to various boards and commissions as recommended.

Councilman Dewar moved, seconded by Councilwoman Diggs, that Council reappoint Eugene McKie, Judy Sennett and Alton Johnson to the Community Development Committee with the terms to expire September 2, 2014, and that Don Barnes and Stephen Peterson be reappointed to the General Aviation Commission with their terms to expire September 1, 2014. The motion was unanimously approved.

Councilman Wells recommended that Suzanne Haslup be reappointed to the Recreation Commission. This recommendation will be on the October 8, 2012, Council agenda for Council consideration.

ZONING ORDINANCE – ORDINANCE 09242012

Amendment

Indoor Shooting Ranges

Special Exception

Commercial Districts

Mayor Cavanaugh stated this was the time advertised for second reading and public hearing on an ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding indoor shooting ranges to require special exception approval in the commercial districts.

Mr. Pearce read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING INDOOR SHOOTING RANGES.

Mr. Pearce stated the only issue for determination by City Council is the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. This is the ordinance in general as it would apply to the different commercial zones to include Office, General Business, Planned Commercial, Downtown Business, Limited Industrial, and Limited Manufacturing. In those zones it would require a Special Exception review of any application to place an indoor firing range at a location in that district. Mr. Pearce stated that on Tuesday, September 25, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. the Board of Zoning Appeals will consider a firing range at a particular location within the city. At this meeting, however, the issue is just to amend the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, in those commercial zones where there was some disparity. In some there would have been a public hearing before the BZA, and in other zones the business owner could have just opened as long as they had a business license and any licenses required by SLED or state authorities. Based on the comments heard at previous public hearings on other ordinances, this Zoning Ordinance amendment was proposed to require a public hearing for any indoor firing range operation. He pointed out the Planning Commission minutes of the September 11, 2012, meeting had been provided to Council as information.

Mr. Pearce stated that at the last regularly scheduled Council meeting on September 10, Council approved an ordinance on first reading related to Indoor Firing Ranges. Specifically, with our City Code now amended to allow indoor firing ranges within the city limits, Planning Department staff noted that Indoor Firing Ranges were not separately listed in the Zoning Ordinance Use Tables. In addition, there was an inconsistency in how firing ranges would be treated in different commercial zones. The ordinance Council adopted on first reading tightened up the review standard to require all facilities proposed in Aiken to receive Special Exception review by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

At first reading, Council referred these potential Zoning Ordinance amendments to the Planning Commission for their review. They conducted this review on September 11, 2012. After hearing audience comments and reviewing the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments, they unanimously voted to recommend to Council that these amendments be adopted. Should Council accept this Planning Commission recommendation, and adopt this ordinance at second reading, the practical effect would be that any indoor firing range in the listed commercial districts would first have to appear before the Board of Zoning Appeals and seek Special Exception approval to have that use on that specific piece of property at that location. Board of Zoning Appeals meetings are public. A proposed location for an indoor firing range is posted with notice that such an application is being made. The meeting and agendas are posted on our City website for BZA monthly meetings.

When reviewing Special Exception applications for approval, the Board of Zoning Appeals must find that an application meets all 11 of the following criteria:

1. Is in accordance with our Comprehensive Plan; and,
2. Is consistent with the "character and purpose" statement of the applicable district (i.e. zoning designation); and,
3. Is of a size, shape, and character best suited for the proposed site; and,
4. Is compatible with the existing uses adjacent to and near the property, and does not otherwise adversely affect the development of the general neighborhood or of the district in which the use is proposed; and
5. Does not generate vehicular traffic or create vehicular circulation problems or parking demands that have an unacceptably adverse impact on nearby properties when compared with uses permitted by right in the same district; and
6. Will not be hazardous, detrimental, or disturbing to surrounding land uses due to noise, glare, smoke, dust, odor, fumes, water pollution, or general nuisance; and
7. Is consistent with existing and planned pedestrian and vehicular circulation adjacent to and near the property; and
8. Is adequately served by essential public services and facilities not requiring additional public expense; and

9. Will not adversely affect any site or feature of historical, cultural, natural, or scenic importance; and
10. Will conform to any specific criteria or conditions specified for that use as set forth in Chapter 3, Article 3 of our Zoning Ordinance [Use Regulations. They include Bed and Breakfasts, car washes, commercial stores, large retailers, etc.]; and
11. Will not be contrary to the public health, safety, and welfare, provided that a denial based exclusively on this language shall include explicit findings regarding the way in which granting the special exception would be contrary to the public health, safety, and welfare.

Even if the Board of Zoning Appeals grants Special Exception approval, for an Indoor Firing Range, they may place specific conditions on the approval addressing various issues or concerns including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Location, size, and orientation of uses, structures, and enclosures.
2. Additional setbacks for proposed uses, structures, or enclosures, from property lines or other structures or objects on nearby lots.
3. Additional buffers.
4. Fencing or walls.
5. Shielding of lighting.
6. Pedestrian circulation, including sidewalks or other pedestrian connections.
7. Vehicle circulation, including points of ingress and egress.
8. Improvements on adjacent streets.
9. Location of paving, off-street parking and loading, and service and delivery areas.
10. Hours of operation.
11. Protection of trees and other natural assets and additional landscaping.
12. Protection of sites of scenic, historical, or cultural importance.
13. Restriction on number, size, and location of signs.
14. Siting of uses to improve capability with adjacent development.
15. Restrictions on or reduction of the extent or intensity of the proposed use.

For City Council approval on second reading is an ordinance to amend the Aiken Zoning Ordinance to require Board of Zoning Appeals review of Indoor Firing Range uses on commercially zoned properties.

Councilman Homoki moved, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve on second reading the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding indoor shooting ranges to require Special Exception approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals in the listed commercially zoned properties.

The public hearing was held.

Ms. Mattie Tolliver, 507 Williamsburg Street NE, asked that Council explain what the proposed ordinance entails for the indoor shooting range. She wanted to make sure that the residents of the area understood exactly what is proposed.

Mr. Pearce explained that under the Zoning Ordinance an indoor firing range is only permitted in commercially zoned property. A firing range would not be allowed in a residential area. To allow an indoor firing range the property would have to have one of the listed commercial zonings. This means that if someone wanted to open an indoor firing range, they couldn't just do it automatically. They would have to file an application in the Planning Department for a Special Exception approval. There are 11 criteria that the Board of Zoning Appeals is required to consider. The person who wanted to open an indoor firing range would have to come before the BZA and present their request. The BZA members have to look at the request considering the 11 criteria that must be met. They consider if it would be appropriate in that location, whether there would be noise issues, traffic issues, etc. The applicant has to prove to the BZA that they meet all the 11 criteria. Even if they approve, the BZA can put conditions on the use. By state law the applicant has to meet all of the 11 criteria, not just some of them.

Ms. Tolliver stated she understands that a person has already applied for a Special Exception approval for an indoor firing range. She wondered how the concerned citizens of the neighborhood could voice their opinion of objection to the application for an indoor firing range.

Mr. Pearce stated a person has applied for an indoor firing range on Beaufort Street in the building in Willow Run Park. He pointed out the location was already zoned to require Special Exception approval for an indoor firing range. That application will be heard Tuesday, September 25, 2012, before the Board of Zoning Appeals at 5:30 p.m. He said that was the time for residents to come and voice their opinions on the request and ask questions.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out the proposed ordinance is really a protection for the citizens that we did not have before. It is another layer of protection for the citizens.

Ms. Tolliver stated it seems that every time they come before Council they are objecting to something. She said they did not want Council to feel that they object to everything. She said they would like to have something come into their community that would enhance the neighborhood and possibly provide some jobs, not something that could possibly provide noise. She said they want someone to be looking out for their interest on the northside and something that would help the community.

Mr. Willar Hightower, 682 Edrie Street, stated he wanted to make two points. From what he had heard he said perhaps his comments should not be made at this time, but he wanted to voice two concerns with the proposed firing range on Beaufort Street. One concern is health. He said he was concerned about what would happen to the dust that would be created when firing a weapon. The second concern is what would happen to the lead that would be in the dust as well as the lead that will end up expended.

Mr. Pearce stated those comments should be made at the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting for their consideration.

Mr. Richard Johnson, 428 Marion Street NE, asked if the decision at the BZA meeting on September 25, 2012, would be final whether it is approved or denied.

Mr. Pearce stated the BZA decision on September 25, 2012, is final. Any appeal would go to the Common Pleas Court at the Courthouse. It would not come back to City Council.

Councilman Wells stated if someone were to come to the City today to open an indoor firing range, there is no special category for that to be under. It would be under the "All Other Retail Services" category. The Planning Department would look at the request. There are areas where an indoor firing range would be permitted by right, and the person would not have to go to the BZA to get a Special Exception. With this situation residents or other business owners would not know that the firing range could potentially be located near them. What Council is trying to do is to make any request for an indoor firing range a Special Exception approval so the public will know if there is a request for an indoor firing range within the City and the citizens will have an opportunity to come and voice their opinion at the hearing before the BZA. The proposed ordinance would take away the permitted rights and put Special Exception approval a requirement for the commercial zones listed. If Council does not approve the proposed ordinance, it would not stop nor prevent the present application for an indoor firing range on Beaufort Street, because it is presently allowed as a Special Exception in the zone. What Council is trying to do is to make all the commercial zone requirements uniform and require a Special Exception approval for an indoor firing range in all the listed commercial zones so BZA would have to give approval for an indoor firing range in all the listed commercial zones and so the citizens would be able to give input on the request.

Councilman Ebner stated if a request is denied, is there a period of time that the applicant can reapply for Special Exception approval. He wondered if there is a one year limit, then the applicant could reapply.

Mr. Gary Smith, City Attorney, stated the applicant would have to appeal the decision to the Court of Common Pleas.

Mr. Pearce stated anytime there is a Special Exception application, the property is posted with a notice giving the hearing date and time. The notice has to be posted well in advance of the hearing. It is also advertised in the newspaper and posted on the website.

Mr. Ed Evans, Planning Director, stated if the BZA denies an application, the applicant can come back after a year. The property would be posted again and advertised again as well as letters sent to contiguous property owners. The notice goes out 20 days in advance of the BZA meeting.

Mr. George Brightharp stated he understands that the meeting on Tuesday, September 25, 2012, is the meeting to voice opinions. He said, however, he just wants to make some points to Council. He said one person said we don't like to be seen as persons always coming to complain. He said, however, that it seems that is the role he has been in for the last five years. He said his recommendation is that whenever there is something that is going to dramatically affect adjoining properties that there should be more than just a sign on the property. The adjoining property owners should have direct notification of such a request and public hearing. He pointed out a situation he was involved in when the Willow Run Park property was set aside as an industrial park. He said at that time there was no communication with the people in the area. In fact, he said he was victimized by the city staff going by a deed on land that was made in 1919. He stated he had established his own deed for his property which had been approved, and he had paid city and county taxes for 20 years on the property. He said the city took four parking spaces of his parking lot that he had obtained permission from the city to build. He thanked Mayor Cavanaugh for helping at that time to bring parity to the particular situation. He asked that Council look at the process of informing adjoining property owners other than just announcements in the newspaper and property posting. In response to a question, Mr. Brightharp stated he did not get a letter on the proposed request for an indoor firing range before the September 10, 2012, Council meeting. However, he had been informed about the September 25, 2012, meeting before the BZA.

Councilman Ebner stated if the ordinance is passed should all the paper work be signed before the BZA meeting. Mr. Pearce responded that the proposed ordinance does not affect the application for an indoor firing range in the Willow Run Park. He said the proposed ordinance would make the requirements for an indoor firing range uniform throughout the city in the commercial zones. The zone in the particular area in Willow Run already requires Special Exception approval. The ordinance would be bringing the other zoning districts up to the same standards and requiring a Special Exception approval.

Councilman Ebner asked if there are any documents from the Aiken Corporation that are required as part of the hearing, such as a signed offer and any other changes made to the Aiken Corporation guidelines.

Mr. Pearce stated there was a change to the restrictive covenants for the Willow Run Industrial Park, and a copy of that was provided to the Planning Department for BZA.

Councilwoman Diggs stated she would like for the record to show that she is not in favor of the firing range. When she voted for the previous ordinance, it was so the City would be in compliance with the Public Safety firing range facility on Dupont Drive. She said she did not and still does not want an indoor firing range in her district. The residents of District 1 do not want a firing range. She said, however, she sees the matter as being between a rock and a hard place. She said if she votes in opposition to the proposed ordinance, the applicant could still open the indoor firing range in Willow Run if it is approved by the BZA, even if this ordinance does not pass. She said if she votes for this proposed ordinance it will give some protection to the citizens in all areas, as the applicant would have to comply with all 11 of the requirements of BZA for Special Exception. A vote of yes would mean that the citizens would be able to at least try to

fight approval of a firing range in their area, as there would be a public hearing on any application for an indoor firing range before the BZA. She said she wanted people in her district to understand that she is not in favor of an indoor firing range, but she did want the citizens to be able to be protected and be able to voice an opinion as to whether or not an application meets the criteria.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out that there are restrictions for an indoor shooting range which must be met, such as a noise ordinance and other state and local requirements so an applicant would not be able to do whatever they want.

Mayor Cavanaugh called for a vote on the motion by Councilman Homoki, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve on second reading the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding indoor shooting ranges to require Special Exception approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals in the listed commercially zoned properties. The motion was unanimously approved.

AIRPORT LAYOUT PLAN

Aiken Municipal Airport

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needed to consider approval of the Airport Layout Plan for submission to the Federal Aviation Administration for their review and approval.

Mr. Pearce stated as mentioned at the July 26, 2012, Aiken Municipal Airport information session, in compliance with applicable Federal Aviation Administration regulations and guidelines, our Municipal Airport operations and future development objectives need to be combined within an Airport Layout Plan. Prior to submission of a proposed plan to the FAA, the local governing body must first approve it.

Utility and Engineering Department Director Larry Morris has worked with our consultant and engineering firm on a Layout Plan for our Airport operation. The plan shows existing and potential future development at the airport. As part of the grant money that the City has received, as well as ongoing funds the City has received from various sources, including the operations at the airport, and the grant money that the State Aeronautics Commission has shared with the City, we are required to have an Airport Layout Plan. Mr. Morris has worked with our Fixed Base Operator and our Aviation Commission to develop an updated Airport Layout Plan. They are comfortable with what has been compiled and are requesting Council approval of it so that it can be submitted to the FAA. The Aviation Commission unanimously approved the plan that is submitted to Council for consideration. There is nothing in the plan that prevents it being amended in the future. The plan is the existing facility and potential areas for future development, which has been discussed in the past.

For Council consideration is approval of an Airport Layout Plan for the Aiken Municipal Airport. With this approval, we will submit this plan to the FAA for its review and comment.

Councilman Ebner asked if approval would still leave it open for a private citizen to build a hangar on the property. Mr. Pearce stated that would take an approval process and a presentation to the General Aviation Commission. He said a citizen had expressed the desire to build a hangar at the airport, and he has been given the Layout Plan to look at to see where a private hangar might be constructed. He pointed out there is a designated area for potential future development. He said a private citizen could build a hangar there without the Layout Plan being in place, and once the specific project is described and specified, it has to be submitted to FAA for approval.

Councilman Ebner asked if the private citizen had five spots in a hangar could he rent them to other people. Mr. Morris pointed out the barn hangars are on the leased area. They are roughly 10,000 square feet each, and more than one aircraft can be placed in them. The Fixed Base Operator, Mr. Mike Laver, of Aiken Aviation Enterprises, does manage one of the barn hangars. Also, there are private corporations that got approval through Council and FAA and constructed some hangars. There are no private T-

hangars, which would be for smaller aircraft. The City owns the northern most T-hangar. It is designated No. 1. As far as the other T-hangars, designated as 10, 11, and 12, one was constructed by Mr. Laver and two were in existence prior to his becoming FBO. Mr. Laver manages all four T-hangars.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the question was whether a private citizen had built a hangar and then was leasing it to others. Mr. Morris stated he was not aware of private citizens renting hangars to others, but only corporations.

Councilman Dewar asked why an individual could not. Mr. Morris stated no one had approached the City. He said it is very expensive to build a hangar such as that, because the FAA will require, as well as the Airport Commission and Council, that the person bear all the cost of any stub taxiways or ramp space.

Councilman Dewar stated if a person wanted to they could do it. Mr. Pearce stated that could be considered. It just has not been done yet.

In response to a question by Councilman Dewar about the hangars, Mr. Morris responded that Mr. Laver constructed hangar 12. Hangars 10 and 11 were already there before Mr. Laver became FBO. Hangar 1 is owned by the City of Aiken. Mr. Laver manages all four hangars.

Councilman Dewar asked what are the areas marked as D-1, A-5, A-4 and A-3. Mr. Morris responded that those are possible future T-hangars. They could be constructed by anyone who gets approval from Council and FAA.

Councilman Dewar asked if there was only one size hangar that could be built or could smaller hangars be built. Mr. Morris stated only that style hangar could be built in that area. There are other areas for other style hangars. The hangars in that area are T-hangars. He said part of the Airport Layout Plan is to concentrate aircraft in certain positions. We would not want a large jet such as a G-5 which is about a 70,000 pound jet in the same area with the small Piper Cub type planes.

Councilman Dewar asked if there was space for parking a single aircraft. Mr. Morris pointed out area B, which contains barn hangars. The C hangars are slightly smaller than those in B area, so one could get single aircraft in those. Those are areas where hangars could be built according to the plan. Mr. Pearce pointed out north of the area there is a dashed line outline marked as reserved for long term aviation related development. He said there are several areas at the airport for future development.

Councilman Dewar stated then the process is that someone would go to the General Aviation Commission. He asked if they have criteria for approval. Mr. Morris stated the General Aviation Commission would be guided by the Airport Layout Plan. They would review any application before making a recommendation to City Council to make sure that the proposed hangar would match other hangars at the airport. The request would go to City Council. If Council approved the request, it would then go to the FAA for final approval.

Councilman Ebner stated then either a private citizen or corporation could request to build a T-hangar. He then asked if they could rent space in the T-hangar to others. Mr. Morris stated that is a matter that would have to come before Council for a decision. He said FAA requires any structure at the airport to be revenue producing for the airport. If a private citizen wanted to construct T-hangars, they would have to negotiate with Council for an equitable rental rate, not only for the ground, but also for the T-hangar also.

Mr. Pearce pointed out we would have to look at the FBO lease agreement. He said there is a requirement under the lease agreement that Council would not enter into any contract that would unfairly operate against the FBO.

Councilman Ebner stated if the same rates were charged it would not be unfair to the FBO.

Councilman Dewar stated we were not getting revenue from those now. Mr. Morris stated we are getting revenue from the ones the City owns. The others the City is getting the rental rate as per the lease agreement, and we are getting a fuel flowage fee. He said normally a based aircraft will fuel at this airport. That is where we make the majority of our revenue.

Councilman Dewar stated he did not get the impression on the review of the airport because of the finances of the FBO that the City was getting any revenue out of any of the hangars.

Mr. Pearce pointed out we do get revenue from the City-owned hangars. Councilman Dewar stated it was mentioned that if anyone else wanted to build a hangar that they would have to generate revenue for the airport. He pointed out we are not getting revenue for the airport from the ones we have. Mr. Morris responded that the City is getting the fuel flowage fee.

Councilman Homoki asked why the hangar fees have gone up, but the 5 cents per gallon fee has not gone up in 10 years.

Mr. Pearce pointed out that the rate was not renegotiated during the time the contract was being renegotiated. The next opportunity to negotiate the fee would be 2014. It can be renegotiated every five years.

Councilman Homoki asked when the hangar fees were renegotiated. Mr. Pearce responded that he was not sure the rates were renegotiated, but there would be an opportunity in 2014. Councilman Homoki stated his point was that if the FBO can unilaterally change things, why can't the City change unilaterally. Mr. Pearce pointed out that it is the fuel flow rate that Council approves, so the next opportunity to renegotiate that would be 2014.

Councilman Dewar stated Council could have had an opportunity to renegotiate the fees a couple of years ago, but it did not come to Council. It was apparently made by somebody, but it did not come to Council. He felt it should have come to Council. It could have been done in 2009. Councilman Dewar stated he hoped Mr. Pearce would provide a guarantee that the matter will come to Council in 2014.

Councilman Ebner stated a private citizen or corporation could petition the appropriate people to build a building on the airport. There is a clause in the contract with the FBO that says you can't undercut the FBO in price. If the private citizen or corporation rented the hangar at the same price to other people, it should make him legal. He pointed out there is public access to a waiting list at the airport. He said he would assume that the private citizen could have access to the list and call or advertise to rent space in a newly constructed hangar.

Mr. Gary Smith, City Attorney, stated he was not sure who owned the list. He said the FBO may be managing the list as part of his private management of the airport. He was not sure the list would be public information.

Councilman Homoki stated he was one of the hangar renters at the airport. He asked if someone has an old sports car at the airport and he rents 20 square feet of his hangar to the owner of the sports car, would that be legal.

Mr. Smith responded that he would have to look at all the details. At this time he did not know. He said he would be happy to investigate that.

Councilman Homoki pointed out that if someone builds a facility that can accommodate 11 aircraft he would be paying rent for the space. He wondered if what he does with it would be up to the owner as long as it is not totally against safe operation of the airport.

Mr. Pearce responded that the City has an obligation as a landlord to look at the particular proposal to make sure that it fits within the lease agreement with the FBO.

Councilman Homoki pointed out the FBO already has a tenant, which is the City. He said the T-hangars belong to the City. He felt basically, even though the City owns the airport, the City is a tenant to the FBO. Mr. Pearce pointed out the T-hangars that the City owns are outside the FBO leased area. The City has an agreement with the FBO to collect the rent for the City.

Councilman Homoki stated if someone were going to build a hangar where would it have to go. He wondered if it would have to be in the area around the City's T-hangars and on the approach to the parking lot.

Mr. Morris stated two things would have to be done. He said when the applicant came before the Aviation Commission, it would have to be determined if he wanted to build on the FBO leased area. In that case, he has the layer of having to work with the FBO to build the hangar, as the FBO does control the lease area. If it is off the lease area, then the Aviation Commission would make a recommendation to Council. He pointed out if you look at the hangars designated as A-1 through A-5, the grey area would all be ramp space and stub taxiway. None of that exists. For someone to go in and build hangar A-6, they would have to put in the stub taxiway and a ramp area for A-6 before they could construct the T-hangar. He said it would be a very expensive project.

Councilman Dewar asked how long it would take for the FAA to approve the Layout Plan. Mr. Morris responded that normally they have about 90 days to look at the plan. However, it may be less than 90 days.

Councilman Homoki moved, seconded by Councilwoman Diggs, that Council approve the Airport Layout Plan for the Aiken Municipal Airport. The motion was unanimously approved.

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX COMMITTEE

Recommendations

Mayor Cavanaugh stated Council needs to consider approval of Accommodations Tax Committee recommendations.

Mr. Pearce stated Peggy Penland, Chair, City Accommodations Tax Committee, has reported results from their September 6, 2012 meeting. Council will recall that certain contingency funds are held back each year in order to enable the Committee to review mid-year requests for funding that are made. This practice has served us very well in the past. This year, our 4th quarter receipts were unusually large, and \$139,615 above our normal 4th quarter average of \$104,000. He said we also received a payment back from Prep Fest, as they did not hold their event this year. That was about \$9,500. Total requests were over \$424,000. Staff and the Accommodations Tax Committee reviewed the requests and found that, of the total requests, about \$286,000 would qualify for funding. The Committee made a recommendation to Council last March, and Council approved total funding of \$183,725. That left \$107,305 in unfunded requests that would qualify for funding. With the collection in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year,

an opportunity presented itself for the Accommodations Tax Committee to fully fund the requests that qualified for funding. That provides an opportunity to fully fund the events listed. These were unanimously approved by the Accommodations Tax Committee.

The following funding approvals and recommendations are being made by the Accommodations Tax Committee:

1. City of Aiken PRT, Tournament Bid Fees	\$ 2,700
2. Aiken Center for the Arts, Marketing	13,000
3. Aiken Center for the Arts, Antiques Show	12,000
4. Aiken Performing Arts Group, Concert Series Marketing	1,500
5. Juilliard in Aiken, Spring Music Festival	6,405
6. Hitchcock Woods Foundation, Aiken Horse Show Promotion	4,507
7. Aiken Land Conservancy, Aiken Trials	29,792
8. Aiken Corporation, CAALLAC - Juneteenth	2,508
9. ADDA, Downtown Aiken Promotions	2,020
10. Sons of Confederate Veterans, Battle of Aiken	2,900
11. Aiken Chamber of Commerce	2,500
12. Aiken Steeplechase Association, Fall Event	6,050
13. Aiken Bluegrass Festival, MiniFest	10,000
14. Aiken Polo Club, Promotions and Polo Magazine	11,423
TOTAL	\$107,305

A \$19,658 balance will be kept in this account, in the event other requests are received.

For Council consideration is approval of the Accommodations Tax Committee recommendation to disburse contingency funds in the amount of \$107,305 to these listed entities and the holding of \$19,658 as Contingency funds that could be reviewed by the Accommodations Tax Committee.

Councilman Dewar asked if we had to spend the money. Mr. Pearce responded that the expenditures are a recommendation from the Accommodations Tax Committee to fund the full requests for marketing. The money is used to promote the events and bring tourists to the city. The events are typically advertised more than 50 miles away.

Councilman Dewar asked how many of the events had already been done for the year. Mr. Pearce pointed out that typically an event is held. They have the receipts for the event that were spent, and they are reimbursed with the Accommodations Tax funds.

Mr. Parker stated the funding is for the current fiscal year, which started July 1, 2012. Some of the events could have already been held, but the organization has to present the receipts before they are reimbursed. The money is not paid up front, but the organization has to present the receipts to get the money.

Councilman Dewar stated then, other than Prep Fest, all the organizations spent all their allocation. He stated receipts must have come in for 100% of what they were authorized. He asked if there was anyone who asked for money, but did not get any. Mr. Parker responded that all requests that qualified got their full allotment. He said this was not the first time that had occurred, but it has occurred at least two other times in previous years.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that in the minutes of September 6, 2012, for the Accommodations Tax Committee, it mentions Lisa Hall talking about web advertising. He asked if money is authorized for web advertising. Mr. Parker responded that it is authorized and encouraged. He stated he felt the State recognizes that if something is on a web site it is a distribution of the information. Mr. Parker pointed out that the State changed the definition of a tourist a few years ago. He stated a tourist does not have to stay in a hotel room. You just have to visit. It does not mean that people necessarily have to stay overnight for the event to be successful in the State's eyes when they are looking at the event from a tourism perspective.

Councilwoman Diggs asked what criteria would have to be met to receive additional money from the \$19,658 left, if an agency that was funded needed some additional funds.

Mr. Parker stated the group would have to submit a new application to come before the Accommodations Tax Committee. He pointed out that normally each year there are some groups that will not hold their event or spend all their funds, but a new event will contact the City about funding through the Accommodations Tax funds. Then that individual request will be brought to Council for approval.

Councilman Wells asked what happens to the money if it is not spent. Mr. Parker responded that what is not spent from the current fiscal year's money will be the first money spent in next year's allotment. The City has a two year window to spend the money. If the money is not spent within that period of time, the money goes back to the State.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve the recommendations of the Accommodations Tax Committee for \$107,305 to the listed agencies and the holding of \$19,658 in the Contingency fund. The motion was unanimously approved.

ANNEXATION – ORDINANCE

Ashok Patel

Naman Hotels

Ferrell L. Holley, Jr.

Charles Holley

Larry Holley

Whiskey Road

Stratford Drive

TPN 123-10-06-002 (po)

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration to annex 5.71 acres on Whiskey Road at Stratford Drive, zone it Planned Commercial (PC) and approve a Concept Plan.

Mr. Pearce read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX TO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF AIKEN CERTAIN PROPERTY CONSISTING OF 5.71 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, OWNED BY FERRELL L. HOLLEY, JR. ET AL AND TO ZONE THE SAME PLANNED COMMERCIAL (PC) AND APPROVE THE PROPOSED CONCEPT PLAN.

Mr. Pearce stated Ashok Patel, CEO, of Naman Hotels, has joined with landowner Ferrell L. Holley, Jr. (Larry Holley), Charles Holley, and the Holley family to seek annexation of this portion of the Holley lands into the Aiken City limits. Mr. Patel's group is proposing to build two different hotels on this site--a Holiday Inn Express and a Staybridge Suites.

A concept plan and a detailed memo from Planning Commission Chair Wilkins Byrd were provided to Council for details relating to this annexation request. Proposed zoning will be Planned Commercial (PC).

The Planning Commission met September 11, 2012, and reviewed the annexation application and the proposed Planned Commercial concept plan. At this meeting, they heard from several area residents. After this hearing, the members present voted 5-0 to approve the annexation application and the concept plan with nine conditions listed below:

1. That proof of recording of a plat creating lot lines to correspond to the property proposed for annexation be submitted to the Planning Department;
2. That a stub-out to the northern boundary to allow a future interconnection be

provided;

3. That the Planning Director be able to approve changes in the amount of open space as long as the total for the entire site is not less than 25%;
4. That the requirement of the Access Management provisions that the driveway on Whiskey Road be aligned with the driveway across the street be waived;
5. That any freestanding signage must meet the Zoning Ordinance definition of a monument sign;
6. That the provisions of the LDR study, other than the requirement for street trees, apply to the project unless deemed impractical by the Planning Director;
7. That, if applicable, a revised Concept Plan be submitted showing any changes required by City Council;
8. That the conditions of approval be listed on the Concept Plan; and
9. That the applicant and contract purchaser sign an agreement with the City stating the conditions and that the agreement be recorded at the RMC Office.

For Council consideration is first reading of an ordinance to annex 5.71 acres into the Aiken City limits and to zone it Planned Commercial and approve the concept plan.

Councilman Dewar stated he felt this was the ideal time to ask Mr. Holley to put an access road on the 30 acres of property that he has so we can more effectively control the traffic on this property as it continues to get developed. He said what we would be doing at this time is taking a piecemeal of the 30 acres and putting in a driveway close to Stratford Drive, whereas, if Mr. Holley were willing to put an access road for his property, then the access road would take the traffic and Stratford Drive would not be an issue, and no access would be needed onto Stratford Drive.

Mayor Cavanaugh suggested that Council get the applicant to tell Council what they plan to do, so everyone has knowledge of what is being planned for the area.

Mr. Tilden Hilderbrand, of Hass and Hilderbrand, stated he was present representing the owners, Larry and Charles Holley, of the 5.71 acres at Whiskey Road and Stratford Drive, as well as the developer Ashok Patel. Mr. Hilderbrand reviewed the site and then discussed details of the site plan and addressed concerns that were voiced at the September 11, 2012, Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated the parcel under consideration is 5.71 acres on the northwest corner of Whiskey Road and Stratford Drive. It is a portion of a larger tract of 30.40 acres. The parcel under consideration at this time is approximately 600 feet from the western property line, which is a residential development, Stratford Hall. It is approximately 900 feet from the northern property line of more residential property. There is also residential property on the southside of Stratford Drive—Spring Stone and Spring Stone Villas.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated the project consists of two hotels. The hotel on the southern parcel is a 95 unit hotel with 95 parking stalls. The proposed hotel on the northern parcel would be a 90 unit hotel with 115 parking spaces. Mr. Patel will discuss later the specifics of each of the hotels and the architecture and the signage. Mr. Hilderbrand stated he would discuss the specifics of the site. The plan for the project involves a driveway onto Whiskey Road and a driveway onto Stratford Drive, which would be developed with the initial hotel. The driveway on Stratford Drive is approximately 400 feet from an existing roadway—Lynn Drive which accesses Spring Stone Villas. The location onto Whiskey Road is just north of the left turn taper onto Powderhouse Road. There are some existing drives across Whiskey Road, which during the discussion of the traffic study were determined to be too close to the intersection, and this drive does not align with those. He said they tried to slide it as far north as possible. The total open space combined on the two sites is 31%. The primary planting strips are provided along Whiskey Road and along Stratford Drive. The width of those both exceed the required planting strips. There is an existing 20 foot Aiken Electric Cooperative easement along Whiskey Road so the developer has proposed to slide the development back to allow more room for a planting strip outside the requirements in front. The planting strip along Stratford Drive is provided in excess of what is required, so a number of fairly large

existing trees can be preserved along Stratford Drive. At some time in the past the remainder of the site behind these two existing strips had been clear cut so there are no significant trees on the site other than those along the property lines. A question that was brought up at the September 11, 2012, Planning Commission meeting was if the driveway was necessary on Stratford Drive. He said that driveway is necessary so that service vehicles, emergency vehicles, etc. can access the site and service the dumpsters and exit onto Stratford Drive and then onto Whiskey Road. That connector would also provide a second access to Stratford Hall, Spring Stone Villas and Spring Stone Subdivision if there were an accident at the intersection. The driveway on Stratford Drive is approximately 400 feet from the nearest drive, which is the entrance to Spring Stone Villas.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated there was a question concerning sequencing of traffic lights. The citizens in the three neighborhoods expressed some concern about the sequencing of the lights. There was no mention of that in the Traffic Study that was done. At the Planning Commission meeting there was some discussion as to possibly the City investigating the sequencing of the light and make whatever adjustments are needed currently and also after development of the hotels. A Traffic Study has been prepared for the site. It was prepared in July, 2012. The traffic counts were performed in May, 2012,

during school time. There were some concerns about signage. Mr. Patel will expand on signage. There were some concerns about location of signage. Two signs are proposed, one for each hotel. He pointed out the proposed location for the sign for Hotel A and the sign for Hotel B. The concern was whether the signs would interfere with the power line easement, and if there would be any potential for electrical discharge. The signs would be located outside the easement for Aiken Electric Cooperative, so no problems would be anticipated. He stated there was discussion about the size of the Holiday Inn Express sign as proposed at 15 feet. The Planning Department staff had voiced some concerns related to the signs. Those concerns were related to dimensions of the base versus the height and size of the sign itself. Those matters have been resolved with the matter being a proportional issue more than the height of the sign. The sign did not meet the specific requirements of a monument sign, but the owner has submitted information to show that a modification would be done to meet that.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated another concern voiced by a number of people was construction traffic onto Stratford Drive. The construction will be directed to Whiskey Road. When a site is developed, the developer is required to install a construction access, which is typically a 100 foot long rock mat that keeps mud and debris off the highways. He pointed out where that construction access would be installed onto Whiskey Road. He said with the installation there it would prohibit construction traffic from entering and exiting Stratford Drive. There was a lot of discussion about connectivity, primarily both north and south. One of the recommendations by the Planning Commission was that a stub out be provided, not only to the western property line to the remaining property owned by the Holleys, but also to the northern property line. Mr. Patel, the developer, has agreed to that. There would be a connection both east and west and north and south.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated the planting strip along Statford Drive is provided at a width that exceeds the requirement of the Zoning Ordinance. At its narrowest point, it is 27 feet. A citizen spoke at the Planning Commission meeting and asked that the developer consult a professional to advise on preserving the existing trees. He said they have a landscape architect on retainer with whom they would consult to preserve the trees. There are a number of large trees along Stratford Drive. The dumpsters would be located near the western edge of the site. The dumpsters, per the Zoning Ordinance, would be screened with fence and plantings as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The maximum building height of the two buildings on the site meets the current Zoning Ordinance requirements. The proposed buildings are less than the 50 feet allowed in the proposed zoning. The distance from Hotel A to the first house in Spring Stone Villas is approximately 420 feet. The nearest house that currently faces Whiskey Road but is back into Spring Stone Villas is approximately 1,000 feet from Hotel A. Both of the hotels would have a pool. The pools would be fenced and regulated, primarily by S.C. DHEC. The regulations would be adhered to related to children getting into the pool area. Commercial traffic through the sites would be what would normally be expected to service a hotel, such as related to

linens, trash pickup and small deliveries. The hotels would be built with a life expectancy of approximately 40 years. The detention pond shown on the conceptual plan is located in the southwest corner. It would be a regional pond that would serve both of the hotels. The detention pond would be fenced. The fencing would be screened with shrubs or vegetation as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated his comments were a summary of the site plan for the hotels. He said he had also addressed the comments that the citizens had at the Planning Commission meeting. He said he would address any questions or concerns.

Councilwoman Diggs asked how many entrances and exits there were to Stratford Hall. Mr. Hilderbrand stated the entrance was Stratford Drive, and it is the only access to Spring Stone, Spring Stone Villas, and Stratford Hall. Councilwoman Diggs also asked how many cars could get through a light from Stratford Drive onto Whiskey Road. She pointed out Whiskey Road is very busy, and she wondered about getting in and out onto Whiskey Road from the three neighborhoods. Mr. Hilderbrand stated he would have to defer to a Traffic Engineer on that matter. He stated a traffic study was performed by a city approved Traffic Engineer, and he did not recommend any widening, turn lanes, or any physical improvements to the intersection. They did not recommend another exit or entrance. Mr. Hilderbrand pointed out the Traffic Study which was prepared by DRMP, the applicant's engineer, was reviewed by the City's on-Call Traffic Engineer so two Traffic Engineers had reviewed the Traffic Study.

Mr. Ashok Patel, developer for the proposed hotels from Florence, SC, stated he represents the company that proposes to develop the hotels. He said he had been in the business for 35 years and owns several hotels across the states. He said they are experienced in development. He said the proposed hotels are being designed for high quality that will stand out on Whiskey Road. Mr. Patel then reviewed the proposed exterior of the buildings. He said Hotel A would be a Holiday Inn Express, would be four stories high, and have 95 units. The exterior of the bottom floor would be brick/stone finish, with the other floors being stucco. The highest point of the hotel would be 38.9 feet. He pointed out the pool area and the fencing around the pool. He said the pool would have a locked gate, so it is only accessible to the persons staying in the hotel. The hotels are designed to be accessible from Whiskey Road or Stratford Drive for safety reasons. He said Hotel B is less than 50 feet in height. It also has the same stone structure on the ground floor as Hotel A with stucco exterior for the other floors. Any units on top of the building will not be visible. Hotel B is built primarily for extended stay business, which is a new concept. People stay for a longer period and the rooms have a more home-like atmosphere. Neither hotel has a bar or restaurant. Hotel B has about 600 square feet of meeting space.

Mayor Cavanaugh asked how long people can stay at the extended stay hotel. Mr. Patel responded that a person can stay one night or for several days or weeks. The units are mainly rented by the week and used by people who are moving in or out of their home or for some reason such as a fire, new employee, or in town for training, etc. He said the hotel would probably rent for \$130 to \$140 per night. Rental on a weekly basis would average a little lower.

Councilman Wells stated if the hotels were approved, approximately how many employees would be hired by the hotels. Mr. Patel stated Hotel A would hire about 25 to 30. Hotel B would hire about 35 employees. Traffic to the hotel would be service trucks for linens, trash pickup, UPS and Federal Express.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated the grounds were well planned so trucks could avoid curbs and stay within the travel lanes to maneuver through the site.

Ms. Carla Noziglia, 305 Ascot Drive Spring Stone Subdivision, stated she is the secretary for the Spring Stone Homeowners Association. She stated the Traffic Study had been mentioned several times, and she would take issue with the Traffic Study. She pointed out the levels of service that were mentioned go from A to F and that the present level of

service at the intersection of Whiskey Road and Stratford Drive is level D and that it will stay at level D. She said because the level will not change, they say it is

okay. She said she did not feel that level D is okay. She pointed out there is only one entrance and exit to the subdivision which is Stratford Drive for over 200 homes in the subdivision. She stated there is a lot of traffic in and out of the subdivision, and she felt that a level of service of D is not appropriate for the area. She stated they were told today that Mr. Patel will give them a north-south – east-west connection, but her question is to where. If the connection does not go to Whiskey Road, it will be no good, as the problem is getting from their homes to Whiskey Road. She pointed out the one road is a concern for traffic and for safety.

Richard Schreck, 244 Sessions Drive, stated he felt the plan presented is a very good plan and much better than other alternatives. He said his concern, however, is the heavy traffic on Stratford Drive. He asked if any consideration had been given to putting a gate and call box or remote openers at the entrance to the driveway on Stratford Drive.

Mr. Gerry Unverzagt, 152 Antietam Drive, stated he was opposed to the proposed plan for the hotels. He said his overall objection is not only getting out through Stratford Drive, because it is the only access, but he was also concerned with the overall issues that we have on Whiskey Road. He pointed out that as most people know Whiskey Road is extremely overcrowded, and if we continue to allow Whiskey Road to commercialize and build without thought for the future we will not be able to move on Whiskey Road. He said presently it takes 20 minutes to go one-half mile on Whiskey Road. If we allow the hotels to be built, it will continue to get worse. The green areas in the area have been a buffer for years. He said we want to preserve the historic areas in the downtown, and he felt we should be looking at preserving the green areas also for the future of Aiken. He wondered why we would be constantly looking to build and destroy green areas. He said it does not make sense to him. He said the green areas are beautiful areas. To continue to allow Whiskey Road to develop uncontrolled will let it turn into a Washington Road. He stated there is plenty of infrastructure on Pine Log Road going east and other areas around Aiken. He said the infrastructure on Whiskey Road is overcrowded. He said he was not against growth or bringing in jobs to Aiken or against hotels, but he was against the constant growth on Whiskey Road, because Whiskey Road can't handle the growth. He said we don't have infrastructure on Whiskey Road and will not have it for another 5 to 10 years. He was concerned about continuing to put more and more on Whiskey Road. He said Council is responsible for the common good of Aiken. He asked Council to leave the area green and preserve it as a green area.

Mr. Donald Randall, 209 Khaki Court, stated he had objected to the height of the buildings, as there are only one and two story homes in the area, and the hotels will be 50 foot high buildings. He said according to the Traffic Study there will be an extra 1,641 trips per day with the two hotels. He said if another signal is not added at the Whiskey Road entrance to the hotels, the traffic will all enter Stratford Drive and exit Stratford Drive. He said he did not see how Stratford Drive could handle all the traffic. He said three developments have been built so far, and no one has followed the rules for two exits for each development. He stated there is only one entrance and exit on Stratford Drive, and this is a big concern for him.

Councilman Dewar asked if the rule was that a neighborhood was supposed to have two entrances and two exits. Mr. Ed Evans, Planning Director, stated he was not aware of any regulations requiring two entrances and exits into a subdivision. He said they routinely send development plans to Public Safety for review. If they have a concern about access, they will state that. He said he would be glad to look at the regulations to be sure there is not a requirement for two entrances and exits into a development before second reading of the ordinance. He pointed out Stratford Hall was approved about 25 years ago by Council. It was pointed out that Chukker Creek has one entrance and there are others in Houndslake also.

Ms. Lee Rand, a resident of Spring Stone Villas, stated she understood the traffic study was done on Whiskey Road. She wondered if a traffic study had been done on Stratford

Drive also to see how many cars from the three subdivisions travel in and out on a daily basis. Mr. Hilderbrand responded that the traffic study also included Stratford Drive. She stated according to the traffic study there will be 1,641 trips per day being generated by 180 rooms. She pointed out there are 200 homes in the Stratford Hall area. Mr. Hilderbrand stated the accepted number of trips per day for a single family home is 10 so about 2,000 trips per day is generated from the Statford Hall area.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that the 1,641 trips is not just on one road. That is the number for the connectors that they deal with. However, the traffic from the 200 homes is on one road, Stratford Drive.

Mr. Hilderbrand stated Councilman Dewar was correct, the trips are distributed on the two entrances and exits for the hotel. Not everyone would enter or exit on Stratford Drive from the hotels. Councilman Dewar stated he thought the study did not show the normal trips per day from the existing residents in the neighborhood. Mr. Hilderbrand stated the trips from the existing subdivision were counted and are listed under the No Build and are factored in the Projected also. It was pointed out that the traffic study shows the hourly trips. The 1,641 trips are over four roads space out. The 2,000 trips from the neighborhood are not all at one time, but is an hourly rate over a 24 hour period.

Ms. Rand continued with her questions. She pointed out Mr. Patel had stated that the hotel entrance from Stratford Drive would give the three subdivisions a second access. She wondered if Mr. Patel would have a problem with 200 people using the entrance to the hotels to get to Stratford Drive. Mr. Hilderbrand stated he was sure Mr. Patel would not want everyone that lives in the three subdivisions to cut through the hotel property, but the access through the development would provide another means to get in and out if there were an accident at the intersection that blocked traffic from entering and exiting Stratford Drive at the traffic signal. He said the hotel property would not be gated, so there would be no way to prevent people from cutting through the property.

Ms. Rand then asked about the timing on the traffic signal at Whiskey and Stratford Drive. She pointed out because Whiskey Road is so heavily traveled the signal is almost 3 minutes long, and there are always cars in front and back of her waiting to get out of Stratford Drive. She asked what will be done about the timing to get the residents out of Stratford Drive onto Whiskey Road. She asked that Council take that under consideration, as with the hotels there will be more traffic on Stratford Drive waiting to get onto Whiskey Road.

Mr. Pearce pointed out the traffic signal at Stratford Drive is part of the fusion system. The system does give preference to Whiskey Road traffic, but it does constant calculations so the interval is not necessarily a set interval but it depends on the traffic situation. The system is constantly recalculating. It is not just recalculating that intersection, but is looking at activity all throughout the system. The intervals are calculated to keep a traffic flow.

Ms. Rand stated she did not have a problem with the hotels. She felt they would be a welcome site compared to the overgrown lot which does not get mowed frequently enough. She said she volunteers to clean up Whiskey Road, but at times she has refused to do it because the grass is so high. She did feel though Stratford Drive should not be used for traffic to and from the hotels when Stratford Drive is not adequate traffic-wise for the three subdivisions. She pointed out also that the residents do not want the pine trees near Stratford Drive touched.

Mr. Richard Mason, of 133 Steeple Ridge Road, President of Spring Stone Homeowners Association, stated he made the presentation at the Planning meeting asking that an access road be developed. He said in areas where a lot of commercial development is taking place the access road system is being utilized. He said an access road would give a safe traffic flow in lieu of Whiskey Road to the development. He stated we would be talking about 1,800 feet from Whiskey Road to a street called Twin Lakes which is just north of the property of the Fountain Church on Whiskey Road. He said if the hotels are built, the acceleration of commercial development on that property and the property just

south of Stratford Drive which is also zoned commercial, will increase. He said in thinking forward and the things that could be positive, he felt the access road would be the proper thing to do. It would resolve a lot of questions and the concerns that residents of the area have addressed. He said he guesstimated that it could not cost more than \$1.3 million to do 1,800 feet of an access road. He said since the outlet onto Whiskey would be 1,800 feet from Stratford, that would allow the DOT people ample spacing between traffic signals.

Mr. Morris stated Mr. Mason is talking about using Twin Lakes Road as an exit road making the access road from Stratford down to Twin Lakes for a distance of about 1,800 feet. He said as he remembers Twin Lakes Road is very narrow and to make any type roadway additional right of way would be needed. He said he felt the proposal would be very expensive and \$1.3 million might not be enough for the road. Mr. Mason stated if we are going into the future eventually something will have to be done. He felt this access road could be answer to the problem. Mr. Morris stated he felt it might be better for something like that to create an actual roadway rather than thinking of an exit road and create a minimum of a 50 foot wide right of way with a minimum of a two lane section. He felt it would probably cost more than \$1.3 million.

Discussion continued on the proposal for an access road as suggested by Mr. Mason, with Mr. Morris pointing out the area where Mr. Mason was suggesting that the road be. Mr. Morris stated the Holleys do not own the property and for it to be an access to the Holley property, they would have to work with the church to gain access and buy the right of way to make it work.

Councilman Dewar stated he had made a comment at the beginning of the discussion on this matter, that if the Holleys were willing to create an access road to the point that entry and exit to the hotels would happen from Whiskey that would alleviate a lot of the concerns that the people from the Stratford neighborhoods have. He pointed out that ultimately the entire 30 acres will be developed at some point in the future. He stated the problem with traffic planning is we have been guilty of not doing it far enough in advance. He pointed out there are many places in Aiken that we would love to have an access road that would smooth traffic. He felt the matter should be considered.

Mr. Morris stated the property proposed for the hotels has about 900 feet frontage along Whiskey Road. Councilman Dewar stated you might not have to go 900 feet to satisfy the requirement of two entrances

and exits for the hotels. Mr. Morris pointed out the shared entrance between the hotels on Whiskey Road. If an entrance were created in the centerline of the property and brought back and tied into the hotels, that roadway would then provide access to the rear of the property and also provide access to this property. This would give future access alignment to any roadway that would service the two properties.

Councilman Dewar stated all he was asking for is an access road parallel to Whiskey Road from the first entrance shown on the plan going into the hotels for a number of feet. If one were going onto the property from Whiskey either direction, there would be two driveways to enter. That would eliminate the need to have a driveway into Stratford and would enhance the development of the rest of the property and alleviate the concerns of a lot of the residents in the area. This would be looking at the property as a whole and not piecemeal.

Mr. Mason continued and stated that in the presentation they talked about a stub out going out of the back of the property of the second hotel. He said this indicates that in the future they expect that road to be continued from there. There is also a stub out between the two hotels on the plan that shows they are going to make access to the two tracts in the back of the property. He stated the concept plan shows the stub out near the dumpsters and the retention pond. The stub out would take the future development to the back end of the property. He said someone is already thinking about something happening on the back of the property. He said if the stub out goes from the second hotel to the north coming out of the property which was presented at the Planning meeting he

felt that shows they plan to do something with the property to the north of the second hotel. He said another point which has not been addressed is that there is no other hotel in the city of Aiken that empties traffic into a residential community. He said he also presented the idea of preserving the trees, and they have stated they would preserve the big trees. He pointed out during construction concern has to be taken to protect the root system of the trees. Another point he would like to make is that of the 200 homes in Spring Stone, the Villas and Stratford that the residents generate \$200,000 a year in tax revenue. He said he would like to see how much tax revenue would be generated by the hotels in comparison.

Mr. Ed Evans, Planning Director, stated Mr. Mason had indicated that protection measures need to be taken for trees being saved. He said before grading can begin protective fencing has to be erected which is generally where the canopy of the tree is. If trees over a certain size have to be removed, they have to be replaced inch for inch until they run out of room on the property.

Ms. Faye Hilbert, of The Haven Apartment, stated if she were staying at a hotel and there was a side access street, she would use it rather than taking a busy main road. She stated as a potential home buyer she had been looking at Stratford. She pointed out, as residents had, that there is one access to the 200 homes in the area. She said if all the extra traffic is put on Stratford Drive, she won't look at Stratford as a place to build or buy. She said she had been looking at Cedar Creek, which is further out than she would like, and Woodside has more restrictions than she would like. She said she loves the homes in the Stratford area, but felt the homeowners would lose property value if the traffic from the hotels is put onto Stratford Drive. She felt if the traffic is put on Stratford, people will stay away from buying homes in the area. She said her concern is for the residents of Stratford and their home values.

Mayor Cavanaugh then asked for Council discussion of the matter.

Councilman Ebner asked about the statement that the detention pond does not count toward the open space requirement and is not included in the calculations. Mr. Evans stated that for the pond to count as open space it has to be able to support trees. Councilman Ebner asked if a detention pond could support trees, and Mr. Evans responded that he thought so. Mr. Morris stated depending on the type design of the pond you could use a cypress type tree that would grow in a detention pond. It was pointed out that is what was done at Rye Patch. In other places, where the detention area is fairly shallow, the trees do very well as long as the pond empties and does not stay flooded for an extended period. He said until the final design is done on this project, he did not think we could answer the question as to whether the detention pond could be counted. If the pond has to be 8 to 10 feet deep, then trees could not survive in it. If it were only 2 to 3 feet deep and a broad expansive pond, trees could grow.

Councilman Ebner pointed out the plan calls the pond a detention pond. He said typically a detention pond drains out in a certain period of time. A retention pond would have the 6 to 8 feet of water. On the concept plan it is marked as a detention pond which typically would go dry after a few hours so possibly trees could grow in it.

Mr. Morris stated they would be looking at the total volume of the pond. It could possibly be 8 to 10 feet deep and not have water in it except during a storm. There are several examples of those in several places in the city. He also pointed out the example of the pond behind the mall, where the apartment complex is on the right for senior-type assisted living units. That pond is completely wooded. The City worked with the developer to maintain the character of the woods there. By being creative in the way they bermed the area, they were able to save all the trees and count it as green space.

Councilman Ebner stated he felt it would be good to look at the pond. If it is holding water until Mother Nature takes care of it, it would be a retention pond. He then pointed out some stormwater issues in the area. He wondered if the area where work had been done on Lynn Street had been accepted from Lynn Street to the ponds all the way down past the new part of Spring Stone and Stratford Hall. Mr. Morris stated the city does not

have any of the system in the Villas. He said the City does have the system in Spring Stone. The City upgraded that system several years ago from the lower end up a good ways into Spring Stone. He said the City would work very closely with Mr. Hildebrand to make sure that the pond would hold enough water not to overtax that system. Councilman Ebner stated he felt we need to look at the detention pond between now and second reading on the plan to be sure we are not building a trap for ourselves and be sure we have accepted the whole system. Mr. Morris stated the City does have the system in Spring Stone. It comes all the way up to Stratford Hall Drive. It does not come all the way up to Lynn into the Villas. The Villas discharge into a small lake which does not belong to the city. It is a retention area. Councilman Ebner asked who maintains the retention area along Lynn Street. Mr. Morris stated he thought it should be the homeowners' association. Councilman Ebner pointed out the pond is a man-made structure and is not natural.

Mr. Pearce asked if Councilman Ebner was asking about the one for Spring Stone. Councilman Ebner stated the one for Spring Stone Villas. It is on the west side of Lynn Street. Mr. Pearce stated it should be part of the subdivision plan that is on file at the deed office. Councilman Ebner stated the pond is not designed correctly as there is flooding behind those houses. Mr. Morris stated what he was talking about was adjacent to Spring Stone Drive.

Councilman Dewar stated he would like to have consideration of doing the frontage road and possibly addressing it at the next meeting to see whether or not we can possibly avoid having to use Stratford. He said the proposal is a great project.

Mr. Ferrell L. Holley, Jr. stated it had been a pleasure for him and his family to get to know the Patels, their business, and hotels. They have a nice website, and he encouraged Council to visit it. They have received numerous awards and acclamations over the years. They have been in business for 35 years. They have a stellar reputation for doing things right. The particular site is a portion of the 31 acres he owns at this location. It has been zoned Urban Development for many, many years. It has had for sale signs on it since the early to mid-80's. They have had interest in it before. This is the furthest that the interest has gone. He felt this particular use for the corner is fantastic. He said to be able to take the corner and put a hotel on it and take the uncertainty out of the situation for the people who live in Stratford Hall and in Spring Stone is good. Presently there are many, many things that could go on the property. He felt a hotel would create the least amount of traffic of any commercial development. Their customers come and go a few times a day. He said probably the hotels will not be filled every day.

Mr. Holley stated trees are very important to him and his family. He said they own a tree farm where they are growing long leaf pines. He said they are interested in saving the trees that the residents are interested in saving too. He said they did not cut them down when they harvested the timber on the site some years ago. The buffer was left along Stratford and across the front of Whiskey Road. They also left a substantial buffer between their property and the Stratford Hall Subdivision.

Mr. Holley stated presently the City of Aiken gets nothing from this property. Aiken County gets very little in taxes from the property. With the proposed development the property will annex to the city, and it will generate substantial revenue for the City of Aiken. He felt the proposed project would be an asset for the city. The Holiday Inn Express is a well known hotel franchise. Mr. Patel and his organization will have to adhere to strict standards in maintaining and operating the hotel.

Mr. Holley addressed Councilman Dewar's concerns about the access road. He said they are big believers in interconnectivity. He said they had been to many meetings. He said he had been through the Planning Department many times. He said they know a lot about the regulations and the desires of the city and concur wholeheartedly. He said they had had discussions about the rest of the piece of property with the Planning Director and with Roger LeDuc before he retired. He said as far as what will happen to the rest of the property, you don't really know what will go there. He said they anticipate and hope that it would be some type sit down family restaurant adjacent to the hotel. If that is the case

he was sure Mr. Patel would want his hotel interconnected to the restaurant for ease of access and not have to get out on to Whiskey Road. He said when they get into developing the rest of the property; they realize they will not be getting a Whiskey Road access for several buildings on Whiskey Road. He said they don't know if the rest of the property will develop as one piece or smaller parcels. They have talked with Mr. Evans and Mr. LeDuc in the past about coordinating with the property on the other side of Whiskey Road and to have the other entrance onto Whiskey Road to marry up with the entrance to that property across the street if possible. That road then would serve two parcels on either side or a shopping center or whatever else may go there. He said that will serve as an access road for the rest of the property. He felt it was very important to have the entrance onto Stratford Drive. He said he did not feel that it will cause the problems that have been spoken to tonight, because Stratford Drive grades out an A. It is not a heavily travelled road. He said he had been out there fairly often. He said he had been out there walking over the property. He said he sat out there one afternoon for about an hour and watched the traffic at 5:30 P.M. If you look at Stratford Drive, it is a very wide road. The reason it is wide is that they sold the roadway to Palmetto Service Corporation back in the 1980's. They were going

to use that entrance road as their East Gate entrance into Woodside. Then the mall project started, and they were able to access into Woodside by the Mall which was a better selection for them to be able to come out to the Mall. He said that is why the road was built so big. It would not have been that big if it had not been planned to accommodate much more traffic as the eastern entrance into Woodside. That was abandoned, and now it goes just into Stratford Hall and stops. He said we have the benefit now of having the nice wide road. With the two entrances, the traffic will disburse so that it does not get backed up. It will allow people to come out at a traffic light. If one is coming from Aiken, they would use the Whiskey Road entrance into the hotels. If you are coming from the other direction, you probably will take the Stratford Hall entrance, so you won't have to cross Whiskey Road traffic without a signal. Having the traffic disbursed is very important, and having interconnectivity between the Holiday Inn Express and the Staybridge Hotel is important. If a compatible use comes in next to it such as a family dining restaurant, again interconnectivity is important. It amounts to the same thing as a road, but it does not cost anyone a million dollars. He said you can go from one place to the other and then on down until you get to the other Whiskey Road entrance, which could possibly one day be signalized, particularly if something happens to the property across the street. He said he would be glad to show a drawing of what they had talked about with the previous City Manager and Planning staff.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he does have a concern about some of the things which had been said tonight. He said the traffic and the frontage road concerned him.

Mayor Cavanaugh moved, seconded by Councilwoman Diggs, that Council approve on first reading an ordinance to annex 5.71 acres located at the corner of Whiskey Road and Stratford Drive, zone it Planned Commercial and approve the concept plan. The motion was approved by a vote of 5 to 1 with Councilman Homoki opposing the motion.

ANNEXATION – ORDINANCE

486 Jehossee Drive
Habitat for Humanity
TPN 121-20-02-001

Mayor Cavanaugh stated an ordinance had been prepared for first reading for Council's consideration to annex property at 486 Jehossee Drive and zone it Residential Single Family (RS-8).

Mr. Pearce read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX TO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF AIKEN CERTAIN PROPERTY CONSISTING OF 0.31 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, OWNED BY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AND TO ZONE THE SAME RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY (RS-8).

Mr. Pearce stated Habitat for Humanity owns property at 486 Jehossee Drive. They have applied to annex it into the Aiken City limits and to zone it Residential Single Family (RS-8). Please note that their annexation request is for this property only, and not for any other unincorporated lots in this neighborhood. This particular property is contiguous to the Aiken City limits.

At their September 11, 2012 meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed this application and held a public hearing. At the conclusion of their hearing, they voted unanimously to recommend to Aiken City Council that this property be annexed and zoned Residential, Single Family (RS-8), since this property exceeds the minimum requirements for this designation.

For Council consideration is first reading of an ordinance to annex 486 Jehossee into the Aiken City limits and zone it Residential Single Family (RS-8).

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve on first reading an ordinance to annex 486 Jehossee Drive into the city and zone it Residential Single Family (RS-8) and that second reading and public hearing be set for the next regular meeting of Council. The motion was unanimously approved.

RAILROAD DEPOT

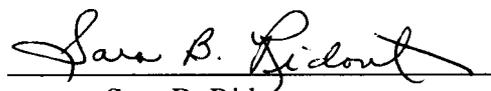
Mr. Pearce noted that he had given Councilmembers a copy of an article on the Visitors Center and Railroad Depot from the Fall 2012 issue of South Carolina Recreation and Parks Magazine.

ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Pearce also noted that he had distributed a copy of the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2011-12 to Council for their information.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk