

Aiken City Council MinutesREGULAR MEETING

March 13, 2017

Present: Mayor Osbon, Councilmembers Dewar, Diggs, Ebner, Homoki, and Price.

Absent: Councilman Merry

Others Present: John Klimm, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Gary Smith, Charles Barranco, Jessica Campbell, Kim Abney, Sara Ridout, Michelle Jones, John McMichael, Nola Grant, Ryan Bland, Tim O'Briant, Michael Smith of the Aiken Standard, and about 30 citizens.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Osbon called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. Mr. Charles Matthews, of Second Baptist Church, led in prayer. The pledge of allegiance to the flag was led by Chief Charles Barranco.

GUIDELINES

Mayor Osbon reviewed the guidelines for speaking at the Council meeting.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Mayor Osbon recognized Mayor Pro Tem Ebner for any additions or deletions to the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Ebner asked if any Councilmembers had any additions or deletions to the agenda. Councilman Ebner moved that the agenda be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Work Session and Regular meeting of February 27, 2017, were considered for approval. Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that the minutes of the Work Session and Regular Meeting of February 27, 2017, be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONAiken Brewing Company

Mayor Osbon stated Council would like to recognize Aiken Brewing Company for their 20 year anniversary.

Councilman Dewar read a proclamation recognizing Aiken Brewing Company for their 20 years in business in Aiken.

Councilman Dewar moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that the proclamation of recognition of Aiken Brewing Company for their 20 years of business in Aiken be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Osbon and Councilman Dewar presented the proclamation of recognition to Lannie and Rob Pruitt.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONSAppointments

Mayor Osbon stated Council needed to discuss appointments to various city boards, commissions, and committees.

City Manager John Klimm stated Council has 18 pending appointments to fill vacancies on different City boards, commissions, and committees. No appointments are presented for Council's consideration and vote at the meeting tonight. However, a list of boards, commissions and committees needing appointments by City Council was provided to Council for information. Council may have some nominations for appointments to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of Council.

Councilwoman Price stated she would like to recommend that Tammy T. Robinson be appointed to the Energy and Environmental committee to fill the position of Frank Wright who has resigned. Ms. Robinson has been voluntarily attending the meetings. Ms. Robinson is a Public Affairs Specialist for the U.S. Forest Division – Savannah River Site.

Councilman Dewar stated he would like to recommend the reappoint of James Archibald to the Building Code Appeals Committee. He would also like to reappoint Dr. Rose O. Hayes (Fox) to the Arts Commission.

ANNEXATION – ORDINANCE 03132017

696 Henry Street
Vanessa Mozingo
TPN 122-09-05-005

Mayor Osbon stated this was the time advertised for second reading and public hearing on an ordinance to annex 696 Henry Street owned by Vanessa Mozingo and zone it Residential single-Family (RS-10).

Mayor Osbon read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX TO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF AIKEN CERTAIN PROPERTY LOCATED AT 696 HENRY STREET AND TO ZONE THE SAME RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY (RS-10).

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve on second reading an ordinance to annex 696 Henry Street to the city and zone it RS-10 Residential Single-Family.

Mr. Klimm stated Ms. Vanessa Mozingo, applicant, is requesting annexation of a .257 acre parcel located at 696 Henry Street and zoning as Residential Single-Family (RS-10). This lot is in the Virginia Acres Subdivision and is in an unincorporated "doughnut hole." The surrounding lots are in the city and zoned RS-10.

The Planning Commission at their February 14, 2017, meeting unanimously recommended to Council that 696 Henry Street be annexed to the city and zoned RS-10 Residential.

City Council approved this ordinance on first reading at the February 27, 2017, meeting. For City Council consideration is second reading and public hearing of an ordinance to annex 696 Henry Street to the city and zone it RS-10 Residential Single-Family.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Diggs, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve on second reading and public hearing an ordinance to annex 696 Henry Street to the city and zone it RS-10 Residential single-Family. The motion was unanimously approved.

CITY CODE – ORDINANCECity ServicesFeesDue DatesHolidaysEmergency Situations

Mayor Osbon stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration on first reading for approval of an ordinance amending Section 2 of the Aiken City Code regarding due dates for City services or fees.

Mayor Osbon read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 2 OF THE AIKEN CITY CODE.

Councilman Dewar moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve on first reading an ordinance amending Section 2 of the Aiken City Code regarding due dates for City services or fees.

Mr. Klimm stated when payments for City services, taxes or fees are due to the City on a date that falls on a Saturday, Sunday or City holiday, no penalty is incurred provided the payment is made by 5:00 p.m. on the next business day. Staff would like to propose a change to allow additional flexibility for our local businesses by adding federal holidays and also allowing the City Manager's discretion on a case-by-case basis to the list of dates where no penalty is incurred.

Currently there are three federal holidays that the City is open for business: Washington's Birthday [third Monday in February]; Columbus Day [second Monday in October] and Veterans Day [November 11].

The City Manager under the proposed change would have discretion to waive due dates regarding situations such as weather events or states of emergency.

For Council consideration is first reading and public hearing of an ordinance amending Section 2 of the Aiken City Code.

Mr. Klimm stated staff has received complaints from time to time because they are enforcing the present ordinance. We believe there should be flexibility on a case by case basis, and for those federal holidays, but not city holidays, to waive the penalty. We also feel there should be flexibility for staff to waive the penalty if there is an ice storm or emergency weather situation. He said the city's goal is to be business friendly.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Councilman Dewar pointed out he understands from the proposed ordinance that the three federal holidays that are not recognized by the city are not at the discretion of the staff, but there will not be a penalty on the holiday, but the discretion for staff is for the emergency situations.

In response to a question as far as the last federal holiday which was February 20, if any penalties were assessed, they will be rebated by the city.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilman Dewar, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve first reading of an ordinance amending Section 2 of the Aiken City Code regarding due dates for City services or fees. The motion was unanimously approved.

SALE OF CITY PROPERTY – ORDINANCEPrice AvenueFamily PharmacyJay Watts110 Price AvenueTPN 106-08-04-015

Mayor Osbon stated an ordinance had been prepared for Council's consideration on first reading of an ordinance approving sale of City property on Price Avenue.

Mayor Osbon read the title of the ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE SALE OF 110 PRICE STREET.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council pass on first reading an ordinance approving sale of City property on Price Avenue.

Mr. Klimm stated Jay Watts, owner of Family Pharmacy at 110 Price Avenue, has contacted the city about purchasing the city-owned parcel adjacent to his business on Price Avenue. He has leased the parcel which is used as a parking area from the city since 2009 for \$600 per year. The lease expires in 2019. He would like to join the parcel to the pharmacy parcel.

A recent appraisal has placed the value of the land at \$5,000. Mr. Watts has offered to purchase the property for \$6,000. His plans are to continue to use the property for parking for Family Pharmacy. The sale of the property has been discussed with Public Works and the Planning Director, and they see no problems with the sale.

For City Council consideration is first reading of an ordinance authorizing the sale of the city-owned lot on Price Avenue adjacent to Family Pharmacy, TPN 106-08-04-015, for \$6,000.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Councilwoman Price asked what would happen to the AT&T substation agreement or easement on the property which Mr. Watts is proposing to buy. It was noted that typically if there is an agreement or an easement that carries forward with the property. Mr. Gary Smith was asked to check on that before second reading of the ordinance.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Diggs, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council pass on first reading an ordinance approving sale of City property on Price Avenue. The motion was unanimously approved.

EUSTIS PARK SENIOR/YOUTH CENTERCameron ScottCheatham, Fletcher, Scott ArchitectsRevised Proposal

Mayor Osbon stated for Council consideration is approval of a revised proposal for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve a revised architectural and engineering proposal from Cheatham, Fletcher, Scott architects for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center project.

Mr. Klimm stated Cameron Scott, of Cheatham, Fletcher, Scott Architects, has submitted a revised architectural and engineering proposal for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center project. The previous contract Council approved in March, 2015, was for design services on the Eustis Park site. Since the execution of the contract, we purchased the 5.5 acre site adjacent to the park from the Aiken County School District, which is reflected in this updated agreement. In addition this revised proposal is based on the latest scope changes

as discussed with City Council on February 13, 2017, which includes reducing the main banquet room seating from 375 to 300.

This proposal is submitted to City Council for approval so we can proceed with this project.

For City Council consideration is approval of a revised architectural and engineering proposal from Cheatham, Fletcher, Scott Architects for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center project.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Councilwoman Price asked if Mr. Bedenbaugh could review what is next for this project.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated the architect is continuing his work. He noted that presently the abatement of the asbestos is occurring, then the buildings will be demolished. During this time the architect will continue his design and then be ready to go out to bid late spring or early summer for the project. He pointed out that the project is on schedule. He noted that the revised proposal reflects the fact that the original contract was for the building to be constructed on the Eustis Park site that the city has owned for many years. Now the proposal reflects the reducing of the banquet facility and includes Helping Hands in the facility. It was pointed out that the proposed contract covers what is to be built, and we are waiting on approval of a grant. The architect is ready to go with the plans, and it will be about six weeks before we know about the grant for which we applied.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Diggs, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve a revised architectural and engineering proposal from Cheatham, Fletcher, Scott architects for the Eustis Park Senior/Youth Center project. The motion was unanimously approved.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Hopelands Gardens

Aiken Council of the International Reading Association

Friends of Hopelands and Rye Patch

Mayor Osbon stated for Council consideration is approval of a request to place a Little Free Library at Hopelands Gardens.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Homoki, that Council approve a request to place a Little Free Library at Hopelands Gardens.

Mr. Klimm stated the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department has received a request from the Aiken Council of the International Reading Association (ACIRA) to place a Little Free Library (LFL) in Hopelands Gardens. They would stock the library with books and maintain it so that all visitors to Hopelands Gardens can enjoy a book there or take it home to read and return it when they have finished.

The Little Free Library is a non-profit organization that promotes a love of reading, builds community, and sparks creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges around the world. The idea is to promote reading with a person "taking a book and leaving a book" from the Little Free Library.

It is proposed to locate the Little Free Library behind the Doll House, just a short distance from the location of Story Time in the Gardens, a program offered by the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department. The Little Free Library initiative is supported by the Aiken Garden Club and the Friends of Hopelands and Rye Patch.

For City Council consideration is approval of the request to place a Little Free Library at Hopelands Gardens. Mr. Klimm noted that Council has, as part of the agenda, a number of letters of support for the Little Free Library in Hopelands Gardens, including a letter from the Friends of Hopelands and Rye Patch.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Councilwoman Diggs commended the group for wanting to place a Little Free Library in Hopelands Gardens. She pointed out there is a Little Free Library at the Health Center in Clearwater and the children love to get a book while waiting for the doctor. She also noted all the letters of support for the Little Free Library in Hopelands Gardens.

Councilman Ebner pointed out his comments were not about whether the Little Free Library is good or not as it is good. He noted there are a number around town, and he has supported them. He felt the issue is whether this should be a City Council resolution or should this be a staff issue. He pointed out that other cities have allowed private property on public property. He said we get into the liability issues. He pointed out that this puts Council into the position of saying this group is okay, but what do we do when the next request comes. He recommended that this request be looked at as a city policy to say it's okay. He pointed out that we have other places in the city that would be appropriate for this type activity. He pointed out that about three or four years ago a group came and offered to install a Little Free Library, and it was a liability issue at that time. He pointed out this would be private property being installed on public property. He felt the requests might be a policy for the City Manager so he has the ability to approve the requests, otherwise all the requests will have to come to City Council for approval.

Mayor Osbon stated he would suggest that Council approve this request since it is before Council at this meeting and then perhaps Council could direct city staff to look at a policy for approval.

Mr. Bill Reynolds, President of the Friends of Hopelands and Rye Patch, stated he did agree with Councilman Ebner. He said the Friends were just thinking of Hopelands. He felt Council did need some kind of city policy for approval of such requests as each park is different and serves a different clientele. In the case of Hopelands, it is a quiet, peaceful garden. It is felt the Little Free Library is very compatible with Hopelands, but there could be issues in other places and a policy would be appropriate.

It was felt that Council should go ahead with action on this request at this meeting, and ask staff to formulate a policy for future requests.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Diggs, seconded by Councilman Homoki, that Council approve a request to place a Little Free Library at Hopelands Gardens. The motion was unanimously approved.

BANNERS

Horses & Courses Art Walk Downtown

Mayor Osbon stated for Council consideration is approval of a request to hang "Horses & Courses Art Walk" banners downtown.

Councilwoman Diggs moved, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve a request to hang "Horses & Courses Art Walk" banners downtown.

Mr. Klimm stated the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department and the Arts Commission are requesting permission to place four banners in the downtown area promoting the "Horses & Courses Art Walk" to be held on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in the downtown. They are requesting that they be allowed to place banners on the arms of the traffic light poles at Richland and Laurens (both directions) and at Park Avenue and Laurens (both directions).

The banners would be 2' x 8' and made of vinyl material and have wording advertising the Horses & Courses Art Walk with the date and time of the event. The banners would also have the logos for Experience Aiken, Aiken Tourism, Farmers Market, Aiken Artist Guild and ADDA.

For Council consideration is permission for the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department and the Arts Commission to put up banners in the downtown to advertise the Horses & Courses Art Walk on March 23 and remove them by April 6, 2017.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Diggs, seconded by Councilman Ebner, that Council approve the request to hang "Horses & Courses Art Walk" banners downtown. The motion was unanimously approved.

RIBBONS

Brain Cancer Awareness Month

Rebecca Harper

Downtown

Proclamation

Mayor Osbon stated for Council consideration is approval of a proclamation and request to place grey ribbons in the downtown area in May to bring awareness to Brain Cancer Awareness Month.

Councilwoman Price read the proclamation proclaiming May as Brain Cancer Awareness month.

Councilwoman Price moved, seconded by Councilwoman Diggs, that Council approve the proclamation proclaiming May as Brain Cancer Awareness Month and the request to place grey ribbons in the downtown area in May to bring awareness to Brain Cancer Awareness Month. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Osbon pointed out that Dr. Rebecca Harper had initiated the request to proclaim May as Brain Cancer Awareness Month and the request to place grey ribbons in the downtown area to bring awareness to Brain Cancer Awareness Month. He asked if Dr. Harper would like to make any comments.

Dr. Harper stated on September 3, 2016, her mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor which they had thought was a stroke or bell palsy, but was a tumor. Her mother was 60 years of age and had taught school for 31 years. She walked in the hospital on September 3, 2016, and she was taken out in an ambulance in November. She came home on hospice for three weeks and died at home on December 20, 2016. Dr. Harper stated in a short amount of time she got very educated about brain cancer. She pointed out that cancer had not been a part of her life until then, but then it became a real part very quickly. It became a real part of her life, her husband's life, and her children's lives. She pointed out she realized she knew a lot about other things, but she did not know a lot about this particular illness. She said she knew there were other people in our community and in our state who were dealing with some of the same issues. She pointed out that for her mother it was a very quick and rapid decline. There is not very much in the way of treatment for the type of brain cancer her mother had. She had one of the most deadly cancers. She pointed out that she began to think about the teal ribbons in the downtown area and how that made her think about ovarian cancer and what she needed to watch for. She pointed out that she felt that it might be a good thing to put grey ribbons in the downtown to call awareness to brain cancer. She pointed out that there is the person who is at the center of the illness, but then there are the family members, their caregivers who are in the middle of a storm and who stay in hospitals for days and when they come out the world is spinning. She pointed out that she misses her mother every day, and to place grey ribbons in the downtown would be just one way for her to make her life have meaning and perhaps help someone else who may be going through something similar. She thanked Council for hearing her request and help make losing her mother a little easier to bear. It makes her feel that at least it has some purpose and that she can do some good.

Mayor Osbon pointed out that through Dr. Harper's loss this awareness is happening because it was brought to her attention, and she is sharing it with others. He pointed out that she is making a difference in our community and our city. He said we appreciate that

she is taking her loss and turning it into a positive for the community and making an awareness so other people will know by seeing the grey ribbons.

Mayor Osbon and Councilwoman Price presented the proclamation to Dr. Harper.

BANNERS

Bluegrass Festival

Mayor Osbon stated for Council consideration is approval of a request to place banners in the downtown intersection advertising the Bluegrass Festival.

Councilwoman Price moved, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve the request to place banners in the downtown intersections advertising the Bluegrass Festival.

Mr. Klimm stated the Aiken Bluegrass Festival Steering Committee is requesting permission to place banners in the downtown advertising the Bluegrass Festival to be held on May 12 and 13, 2017 at the Aiken Fairgrounds.

They are requesting permission to place four banners in the downtown area on the arms of the traffic light poles at Richland and Laurens (both directions) and at Park Avenue and Laurens (both directions) and at South Boundary promoting the Bluegrass Festival. They would like to put the banners up on April 21 and take them down after the festival.

For Council consideration is permission for the Bluegrass Festival Steering Committee to put up banners on April 21, 2017, in the downtown to advertise the Bluegrass Festival and remove them by May 15, 2017.

Mayor Osbon asked for comments from the audience and City Council.

Mr. Will Gibbs, 24 Burgundy Road, stated he was a member of the Bluegrass Steering Committee, and he wanted to thank Council for considering the request for banners to advertise the Bluegrass Festival. He said the event has turned into a large event. They have gone from being in the downtown Newberry Street Festival area to the Jaycee Fairgrounds. He said they are recipients of Accommodations Tax money which has allowed them to advertise the event in other areas. They have already seen ticket sales for this year's festival from Oregon, California, Colorado, etc.

Mayor Osbon called for a vote on the motion by Councilwoman Price, seconded by Councilman Dewar, that Council approve the request to place banners in the downtown intersections advertising the Bluegrass Festival. The motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION

Downtown Infrastructure Improvements

Mayor Osbon stated a resolution had been prepared for Council's consideration regarding downtown infrastructure improvements.

Mayor Osbon read the title of the resolution.

A RESOLUTION REGARDING DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.

Councilman Dewar moved, seconded by Councilwoman Price, that Council approve a resolution regarding downtown infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Klimm stated he was proud that City Council a year ago decided to make the repair of aging infrastructure as the highest priority. He stated Council recognizes that we are embarking on citywide infrastructure improvements, including addressing some of our oldest infrastructure located in our historic downtown. As we potentially see downtown revitalization, we recognize that infrastructure improvements in this area, bordered by Laurens and Newberry Streets between Park and Richland Avenues must be completed. Councilmember Dewar would like consideration of the proposed resolution, which would

require an engineer-led evaluation of sewer, water, valves, fire hydrants and storm water in this central area as soon as possible.

For Council consideration is a resolution regarding downtown infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Klimm stated he had discussed the proposed resolution at length with Councilman Dewar, and has offered several comments to him. He noted that we are deeply and strongly supportive of this resolution, but he had asked Councilman Dewar for consideration of continuing the resolution because we want to get input first from our engineers and get a better understanding of not only what is being proposed downtown, but also what their recommended timetable would be and also to get a better understanding of what that infrastructure improvement entails in each of the various locations. He said he wanted to make sure that the engineers working on our infrastructure plan agree with the delineation of roads that are included in the resolution not just because these are areas where there might be downtown revitalization. An engineer might say if you are going to open up this road don't stop it here, do a larger section of road. He said we are looking for input from our engineering staff before a final vote is taken. We want to ask the preferred developer of the Downtown Revitalization how this would impact what he is proposing just to get input from the developer. We also want to ask the present tenants for their advice and input. He said he had talked to one tenant who felt very strongly that if we are going to do both infrastructure repairs and downtown revitalization that we should try to do the timetable as compact as possible so that it impacts the running of the day to day business as little as possible.

Mr. Klimm stated he wanted to talk to the Aiken Downtown Development Association so we get a consensus of the downtown businesses as they are the ones who will be impacted. He said he wanted to make sure that we have allowed customers and residents to weigh in. To do that we need to see a schedule of proposed infrastructure repairs and line it up with the proposed revitalization recommendations.

Mr. Klimm stated he wanted to make sure that no one believes that the infrastructure improvements are somehow tied to the downtown revitalization so if it is Council's will in the end not to follow through with the downtown revitalization with the plans that are before them that we will stop the infrastructure improvements. He said the infrastructure needs to be done. He said he applauded Councilman Dewar and supports the resolution strongly, and has asked for Councilman Dewar's consideration and Council's consideration to let staff do more work so when a resolution is passed in the near future all of the various parties have weighed in and so there would be no unintended consequences.

Councilman Dewar stated he and Mr. Klimm did have a discussion. He said when you talk about running this proposal through the tenants, developer, ADDA, customers, etc. it lends itself to a more lengthy delay than he had originally anticipated. He pointed out the resolution also includes Hayne Avenue from Laurens Street to Pendleton Street which is near the city's Laurens Street building. Councilman Dewar stated he hoped Council can approve the resolution at the next meeting. He felt that by that time we should have some guidance from the engineers and that involves a lot of facts. He noted that you can't just start at Newberry and Park, for example, and expect to go to Laurens and Park because the engineers may need to say that you need to start some distance from that intersection and go beyond that intersection. He felt the engineers would drive what needs to be done on any of the streets. He said his focus was to get the work done, hopefully, before we really start the construction for the renaissance, depending on how that develops as the infrastructure work needs to be done anyway. He felt if we can do a small area of the work and put it out to bid that would help us solidify our overall planning for how much it is going to cost us to fix the infrastructure. He was not sure we have a precise figure of the cost for the infrastructure work. He noted that sometimes in this kind of work, you don't know what you are getting into until you get into the dirt. He felt we would learn a lot from whatever section we dig, and that it would help us determine how much money it will take to do that. He felt we have to get the downtown infrastructure work done as soon as possible. That has a major impact on business and future development. He said he hoped Council would approve the resolution at the next meeting.

Mr. Klimm stated he just wanted to reiterate that he not only totally agrees with what Councilman Dewar said, but believes that in two weeks we should know much more. He said in suggesting that Council might not want to take a vote at this meeting, he was not suggesting any lengthy delay. He pointed out that the engineers are working now, and in two weeks we should have a lot more information.

Councilman Dewar stated he would support a motion to continue approval of the resolution regarding downtown infrastructure improvements. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ebner and unanimously approved.

Councilman Homoki noted that some lessons were learned from the Silver Bluff Road widening project, and he felt we need to find out what the critical path is. We can't just barge off on one side. We have to make sure that everything underneath is taken care of before we join up again. He pointed out this is very important, and we don't want to get ahead of this and suddenly find out that we have to back track and tear up something that we have just done. He felt we need to know what the critical path is. Once that is known, we can better estimate the cost because we would know what needs to be done.

SURVEY

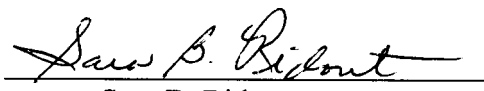
University of South Carolina Aiken

Councilman Dewar pointed out there is an article in the Issues and Updates about the survey for citizens' input. He felt that information about the survey should be explained so when the citizens get the telephone call they will know what it is about.

Mr. Klimm stated we have discussed at length, specifically during the last budget process, the need to conduct a professionally run citizens' survey on an annual basis. He said the reason for that is that we ask our citizens as taxpayers every year to give us over \$50 million in our annual budget. He said he had learned in his previous experience that one of the effective ways of knowing what our citizens think about the various programs and services that we offer is to ask them through an objective evaluation process. He said that is why Council supported the appropriation in the budget to conduct a citizens' survey. He said we are partnering with USC-Aiken who has conducted surveys in the past. Over the next three or four weeks, there will be calls made to our citizens. We have issued press releases, and there have been several nice reviews on the local TV stations over the past three or four days. We are trying to do all we can through social media to get the word out that over the next three or four weeks if the citizens get a call from the University of South Carolina-Aiken stating that they are representing the City of Aiken, they are performing the survey for us. It is not a political survey, but, it is based on allowing the citizens an opportunity to comment on the various departments programs and services that we offer and allowing the citizens to say what they like or don't like, etc. The survey will allow us to do that, and we would ask the citizens if they do get a call that the survey will take about 10 to 15 minutes, and it is valuable information that we need to set a base line that will be used in future years to track the performance of our departments and our programs to see from year to year whether our programs and services are improving or declining. Also, this would be an objective way to see how our citizens feel about their relationship with the city government and how we can improve what we do. He noted that the survey will be a random sample survey that is across the city; it will represent various factions of the city and various locations in the city.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilwoman Diggs moved that the meeting adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Price and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk