

Aiken City Council Minutes

WORK SESSION

April 24, 2014

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

Absent: Councilmember Merry

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Kim Abney, Glenn Parker, Kim Coleman, Phil Berley, Jeff Metz, Sara Ridout, Mike Gibbons, and Michael Ulmer of the Aiken Standard.

BUDGET

Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department

Mayor Cavanaugh called the workshop to order at 4 p.m. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed budget for the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department.

Mr. Pearce stated that in 2008 the City had a master plan done for Parks and Recreation and since that time we have added Tourism Division to its operations. In the 2013-14 budget we had track lights at the soccer field at Virginia Acres Park, the Spray Ground parking lot and restroom at Citizens Park II. Other projects include the painting of caboose at the Visitors Center and Train Depot. We also put in the pocket parks in Crosland Park. We are currently working on the Smith-Hazel roof work and heating and air conditioning replacement as well as some work at Governor Aiken Park.

Mr. Pearce stated Mr. Parker had turned in his notice of retirement at the end of May. He is here today to talk about Parks, Recreation & Tourism and their operation for the different divisions. He pointed out the Superintendents are present with Mr. Parker, including Kim Coleman with Recreation, Phil Berley with Parks, and Jeff Metz with Athletics.

Mr. Parker reviewed his power point presentation. Mr. Parker stated one of the beauties of his job is his Superintendents. He said at least three of them had pretty much grown up together. He said he came to work in 1984. Phil Berley, who is in charge of Parks and oversees everything the Department does, takes care of the maintenance, has been with the city since 1985. Kim Coleman interned with the city initially as an intern at USCAiken and started full time work with the city in 1987. Ms. Coleman oversees the Recreation Division, Hopelands, and Rye Patch. She oversees the Weeks Center, Smith-Hazel, all the programs that go on at Hopelands and Rye Patch. Jeff Metz has been with the city for 10 years. Mr. Metz oversees all the operations of Citizens Park, everything with Athletics, and directly oversees the Tourism Division. He said that is the structure of the Department. In response to a question by Councilman Dewar, Mr. Parker stated he came to the city in 1987 as Assistant Director with primary responsibility over parks, with all four parks employees at the time. Presently we do not have a position called Assistant Director. Mr. Parker stated because of seniority when he is out Mr. Berley falls into the role, but we do not have the position of Assistant Director.

Mr. Parker stated the last time he had met with Council reviewing the Department was in 10-11 when there was a format similar to this workshop. He compared staff in 10-11 and 13-14. He pointed out that in 10-11 the department had 51 full time employees and 55 part-time employees. Today the department has 52 full time employees and 55 park-time employees. He said he would go through that in more detail. He pointed out the 1 additional employee has been in the Tourism Division since 2010-11. In 2010-11 the Department was responsible for or worked with the Accommodations Tax Committee, Arts Commission, and Recreation Commission, to which Council appoints members. The Department was also responsible for working with the Friends of Hopelands and Rye

Patch, Farmers Market Committee, Aiken Music Festival (Julliard), Aiken Performing Arts Group, Aiken Community Playhouse, and Hall of Fame Executive Committee on a daily basis. Since 2010 the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department has taken on the responsibility of working with the Senior Commission, Community Tennis Association, and Friends of the Railroad Depot. He said the Community Tennis Association is a group that has come together in the last year or so. Their primary focus is to organize tennis events in the area. They are also going to be a grant avenue for the department. He said USTA South Carolina awards resurfacing grants, construction grants, etc. through local community tennis associations. Mr. Metz, our Tennis Pro Mark Calvert, North Augusta, some local country clubs, and local tennis players work with the tennis association. They meet periodically and are formulating the group. Long term it will have potential in helping to get some grants to help with resurfacing the tennis courts, running events, etc. He pointed out Council is familiar with the Friends of the Railroad Depot. Another group which started in the last six months is the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He said he had met with Tom Lex and the group a few times. Their goal is to oversee what is going on in the County with bike paths and walking paths. They attend the ARTS meetings to stay in touch as to where the funding is going. They are very interested in the study Alta Planning & Design did a couple of years ago for the overall bike path plan for the County.

Councilman Ebner asked if the Recreation Department was the right department to be over the Senior Commission. Mr. Parker responded he thought so. He said the Senior Commission is looking at a lot of things that the Recreation Department does, and they also look at housing. They run the Senior Extravaganza along with Ms. Coleman. They are looking at the senior games that were started last summer in collaboration with the City of North Augusta and Aiken County.

Mr. Parker then showed a slide of a listing of about 50 events that the Department works with in sponsoring or providing help for events that enhance the quality of life in Aiken. He said the events are not directly under the PRT and are not run by PRT, but PRT employees are heavily involved in the events. A lot of the assistance falls with Mr. Berley and his logistics background. He pointed out events such as the Lobster Race, and Turkey Trot, which is a road race event at Citizens Park. He said staff had developed a 5K course at Citizens Park, and we are starting to see a lot of 5Ks being run there. He pointed out that Mr. Berley's group provides bleachers for the polo events. He pointed out an unusual event—the National Bluebird Society. He said Mr. Metz and his staff brought that event into town and hosted that event while they were here. He said the department had done that for several events recently. He said he wanted to share with Council the number of events that staff is touching that are not directly shown in the budget. In response to a question by Mayor Cavanaugh as to how many of the events were relatively recent, Mr. Parker stated the department had been involved with most of those events listed either this year or the previous year. He said staff is working with the groups annually. He pointed out that South Aiken and Aiken High School play their tennis at the Weeks Center so staff gets the courts prepared for the use.

Councilman Dewar asked if the Department controls the rental of the mobile stage, and Mr. Parker stated the department did. Councilman Ebner asked if it was a competitive rental. Mr. Parker stated the stage had only been rented a couple of times. He said it is used mostly in-house for city events. Councilman Ebner asked if it was competitive with All Star Rents. Councilman Dewar pointed out that he did not think All Star Rents had anything like the city's mobile stage. He pointed out the city's stage is very unique. Mr. Parker stated All Star has a trailer, but they do not have one that opens up like the city stage which has the sound system and lights. Councilman Dewar stated you can't say it is comparative because there is nothing to compare with. He asked if non-profits would get a break in the pricing for renting it. Mr. Parker stated several groups have used it since word is getting out in the community about the stage. He felt it was worth the rental fee that is being charged for it. Mr. Parker stated he did not remember if there was a special rate for non-profit use, but would check on it. Councilman Ebner stated if you have a special rate for non-profits, you would not be competitive with All Star as they don't give a break. He pointed out that most of the events on the list are 501(c)3 organizations. Councilman Dewar pointed out the stage was paid for by taxpayer money, and he could not imagine why we would have gotten it otherwise.

Mr. Parker stated he had talked about staff earlier. He said he wanted to go back to 2007 and show the staffing levels. He pointed out that in 2007-08 the department had 48 full time employees, and today we have 52 full time employees. The department has 52 full time and 55 part time employees. He pointed out that over the years the Department has remained relatively flat with the number of staff doing all the events. He then showed a slide showing the PRT Budget Trend. He pointed out the huge spike this year which is related to capital projects, such as the Smith-Hazel roof and walking track. He said about 70% to 80% of the budget increase was related to those two projects, which are capital items and not repeating items.

Mr. Parker then presented a listing of all programs with the new programs in 2013-14 being shown in red. He said all the items shown in red are new programs which are being done by the same number of staff. He said a lot of the new programs place emphasis on fitness.

Mr. Parker provided a slide showing various Youth Sports, including baseball, softball, spring soccer, fall soccer, flag football, cheerleading, volleyball YCBB, and city basketball. He pointed out that the old traditional sports that we played growing up are still strong, including baseball and softball. They have remained fairly level over the last four years. He said we do not see them growing a lot right now. What we do see growing is some of the newer sports, including soccer, flag football and cheerleading have taken off in the last couple of years. Volleyball is small, but it is a growing program with the young ladies. One program that has dropped in the last few years is the Youth Church Basketball Program. There are a couple of reasons for that, with the biggest reason being Upward Basketball. He said Upward is run primarily by the churches. The kids play in the Upward Program up to about the sixth grade. He said we have lost a couple of big churches, one being Millbrook, who used to put 20 to 25 teams in the city program. They are now playing Upward and are not in the city program. He said staff realized we need a program for some kids who did not want to participate in Upward. He said this year we started a City Basketball program. Just like baseball and softball, any kid can sign up. We register the kids and they are drafted on the teams, and they are playing. It is a public basketball program instead of the traditional youth basketball program which has been run through the churches.

Councilman Dewar asked how many courts we have. Mr. Parker responded the city has two or four at the Weeks Center and then one at Smith-Hazel. He said we utilize schools and churches to operate on Saturdays with the Youth Church Program. He said it depends on the number of teams that we have. He said the number has gone down. We used to utilize all the middle schools and two or three churches. It was pointed out the city still has the Youth Church Program. Councilman Dewar asked if Upward was a traveling team arrangement. Mr. Parker responded Upward's primary focus is spiritual relationship; then basketball is an additional component to that. The Upward program probably is not as competitive as the city program because the emphasis is not on winning as much as it is on the spiritual component. He said it is a program that is becoming nation-wide. It started in Spartanburg and has grown.

Mr. Parker then presented a slide showing the Adult Sports, and pointed out the department does not offer as many Adult Sports as Youth Sports. He said Adult Flag Football and Adult Basketball are the two primary ones. He said the department does run an adult softball program, but that is run through an organization that rents Citizens Park so staff does not provide the staff to run that program.

Mr. Parker provided the attendance numbers for the URS Center. He pointed out that the attendance numbers have really gone up in the last couple of years. He said last fiscal year there were over 20,000 people attending city events and the Community Playhouse events. He said there are more rentals and URS uses the theater often. He pointed out that attendance for this year is just under 15,000 in March so it will probably top the 20,000 mark again.

Mr. Parker presented a slide showing events at Rye Patch, the Guest Cottage, and Hopelands Gardens. He pointed out that the number of meetings being held at the Guest Cottage. He said the Guest Cottage had been renovated with hopes that it would take some of the pressure off Rye Patch. He said groups were wanting to rent Rye Patch, but the cost was prohibitive for them. With the renovations to the Guest Cottage, it is available for meetings, such as Garden Clubs and other small groups. He said rentals have increased for that facility. The Guest Cottage would hold about 35 to 40 chairs for meetings. Mayor Cavanaugh asked if meals were prepared at the Guest Cottage. Mr. Parker stated there is a catering kitchen for a caterer to bring their food and keep it warm. Several years ago the Guest Cottage operated as a restaurant.

Councilman Ebner asked if Rye Patch was economical for anyone to rent. He pointed out he thought in the original agreement it was to be affordable for anyone to rent. Mr. Parker stated he thought when the property was given to the city there was a sentence that said that it should be that anyone in Aiken could afford to use it. Councilman Ebner stated he wanted to be sure we were still complying with that.

Councilman Dewar said Mr. Parker had indicated in his comments that Rye Patch was cost prohibitive to some people. He asked what the cost is. Mr. Parker stated the cost depends on the event. The cost is about \$700 to \$800 for a rental on a weekend. He pointed out the Guest Cottage can be rented for \$50. He pointed out one can't have a wedding reception in the Guest Cottage, but for a group of 30 people it was cost prohibitive for them to rent Rye Patch. The Guest Cottage gave another option. Councilman Dewar asked if we need \$700 or \$800 for a rental. Mr. Parker stated there is a lot of staff time involved. It was pointed out that Rye Patch is rented almost every weekend. Councilman Dewar stated it is a great location for a wedding, as it is a beautiful location. Mr. Parker pointed out Hopelands is adjacent so it is a great location. Mr. Parker stated the next slide shows the attendance at the events at Hopelands and Rye Patch. He said the attendance did not include summer concerts, just rental events.

Mr. Parker stated the Parks Division staff records their man hours. He said that information is then used to determine staff allocation for programs, events, rentals and overall crew assignments. He said he wanted to show on the slide that when the Parks Division generates their work orders every day, they fit into one of these categories. He pointed out the one that spikes is the category Other. He said that Other includes the list of events that the department helps other organizations with that are not city sponsored events. He said the department may need to define Other better so staff can get a better handle on how much time staff is spending on some of the events. He said the city does charge staff time for a majority of the events unless the city is co-sponsoring the event.

Mr. Parker then talked about marketing efforts. He said about every three years the department tries to bring travel writers in and spend some time with them. In the 13-14 year we have spent \$7,647 bringing people in. That is the city's cost. The value we have gotten out that—the return on investment—is up to \$185,321. He explained how that was determined. He pointed out Azalea Magazine. Out of the writers coming to Aiken there was a two or three page article in Azalea Magazine. Had we bought that article it would have been equivalent to \$15,000. For \$7,647 the city got about \$185,321 worth of marketing. He pointed out the list where ads have been placed in magazines, etc. He said that is how the department is attracting people to come to Aiken.

Mr. Parker reviewed the slide on Tourism Online Growth. He pointed out website visits, unique visitors, and page views. He pointed out that the visits have already passed last year's numbers. He said online is the way to market in the future. The next slide showed Visitors Center and Train Museum visitors. He pointed out the spike was visits during Aiken's Makin.' He said there were a lot of visitors this year during the Masters. He said we always add two or three extra tours during Masters week. Mr. Pearce pointed out that the new trolley was here and that was a major improvement. The next slide showed the revenue from rentals of the Visitors Center. He said it is becoming a more and more popular place to rent. He said several school groups have been to the Visitors Center. He felt when the train cars are finished and the deck is constructed that it will become a very popular place for rental.

Mr. Pearce stated we had done the revenue analysis for the CPST III revenues and the \$500,000 for the Railroad Depot is at the bottom of the list so it is in jeopardy at this point if we don't have sufficient revenue from CPST III. Councilman Ebner asked if the Accommodations Tax could be used in this area. Mr. Pearce stated he had recommended about \$70,000 in the budget this year towards Depot work. Councilman Ebner pointed out we had wanted to get the deck, restrooms, baggage building constructed. He thought that cost was about \$150,000 to \$175,000. He said since this may be off the list we might want to consider Accommodations Tax funds when doing the budget. Mr. Pearce stated he already had some funds for the Depot, but we could take a look at that and it might be a way to get the deck and the shell of the building done and then budget for the up fit. Councilman Ebner said up fit on the cars gets expensive. Mr. Pearce stated the last cost he had was \$300,000 to \$350,000.

Councilman Dewar said, regarding the Accommodations Tax money, that last year he raised the issue to maybe using some of the Accommodations Tax money for the polo sign or scoreboard. He asked Mr. Pearce if he would be coming to Council and letting Council know the amount of money available and ask Council to determine where that should be spent. Mr. Pearce responded in the budget there would be the Manager's Recommendations in the 007 Accommodations Tax Fund. Councilman Dewar asked if that was something that Council should decide on. He asked if the Manager should tell Council there is X amount in Accommodations Tax money and Council decides where they want to spend it as opposed to putting it in the budget. Mr. Pearce said the Accommodations Tax fund has its own section in the budget. He said he and staff had looked at it. Staff has made requests as to where to spend the money for upkeep on existing facilities. He said that will be in the budget. He said we could have a worksession before the budget ordinance on May 12 to go thru the budget.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that the Depot has become a very interesting place, but he felt with the position it is on the CPST III ballot the chances of it making the cut are slim. He wondered if that is something that should be discussed as a separate item from this meeting. He said the funding is probably not there, but if the baggage building and the deck get constructed it becomes a place that can be used even without the cars as there would be a covered deck, the restrooms, and storage area which would enhance the area without a doubt. Mr. Pearce stated he had allocated about \$70,000 on that line item now. Councilman Ebner asked how Council could put more money in that line item. Mr. Pearce stated that would be a Council motion and vote.

In response to a question regarding when the budget would be considered, Mr. Pearce stated that May 12, 2014 would be the first reading of the budget ordinance for fiscal year 2014-15, and if Council wished there could be a worksession before the Council meeting.

Councilman Dewar stated he had assumed that Council would have the normal worksession where the budget was presented for Council review. He said these workshops are generating a lot of questions and these could be dealt with in a worksession or on first reading. Mr. Pearce pointed out there would be 30 days between the first reading and second reading of the budget. He said that gives time for discussion and any adjustments that Council would want to make in the budget. Councilman Dewar asked how much Accommodations Tax funds are anticipated to be received. Mr. Pearce stated 007 is the Accommodations Tax funds. He said the \$70,000 he had mentioned as a line item for the Depot was only a portion of the funds to be received. He said the total for this year was \$563,690. He pointed out that the money for the new trolley came from Accommodations Tax funds. He pointed out there are notations in the Recreation Department budget forms noting that zero is budgeted and says see 007 which means the item would be funded by Accommodations Tax funds, as the item is tourism related.

Councilwoman Price pointed out that the week of the Masters URS sponsored an event at the Depot, and they had about 140 guests. She said about 98% of the people had never set foot in the Depot before. She said some were international visitors. She said there were just wonderful comments about the Depot. She said it was a beautiful event and a beautiful setting. She said they had received some written comments about the event.

Councilman Ebner asked if other Councilmembers were interested in discussing about using more Accommodations Tax money to proceed with the platform and building. He was concerned about CPST funds could be years away. Mr. Pearce stated it was fine to have a discussion today as this is a workshop. He said after having the workshops staff was going back to the budget and try to address the concerns that had come up. He pointed out there is about \$70,000 in the draft budget now for the Depot. He said we could check the estimate on revenue. He said what he was hearing from Councilman Ebner was funds for the deck and the baggage building. Councilwoman Price pointed out that, based on the feedback received from the event, URS recently held there that there will be more interest and utilization of the facility. Councilman Ebner pointed out the baggage building is important as more restrooms are needed for large groups. Mr. Pearce stated he could look at that, but he would have to adjust the other figures. He said other items in that budget are tournament bidding money, maintenance money for the theater and for the depot.

Councilman Dewar stated he does not have anything special in mind beyond the Whitney Polo Field, but his sense is that it should be a Council decision on how that money is allocated. Mr. Pearce pointed out that Council definitely votes on the budget. Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out that Council could have a budget worksession before the May 12 Council meeting.

Councilwoman Diggs asked the cost for rental of the Depot. Mr. Metz responded it is \$600 in a 6 hour block, and if the facilities are left in good shape there is some refund.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that in January, 2011 the estimate for the baggage building was \$290,000 which included the restrooms, the catering kitchen, and the deck. He said it may take two years to get it done, but perhaps we could start working on it and get the deck done and then the other part. He felt this was something we should look at.

Councilwoman Price stated the Depot is important, but we have to look at the other priorities in terms of staff, salaries, etc.

Councilman Dewar stated something we had seen so far with Engineering & Utilities and very clearly in Parks and Recreation, is they are doing a lot more but they need more to do a lot more. He said unfortunately the money is not there. He said that is an issue they are stuck with. He said what Mr. Grinton wants to do needs to be done, and there is no question about it. He said the Recreation Department has a major effect, probably more than other departments, in how much revenue comes to the city and the quality of life. He said it is very important. He said there will be some difficult decisions to be made.

Councilwoman Price stated in going back in history when Mr. Parker started with the city there were 7 employees and now there are 106 employees. She pointed out that Mr. Parker had been in the trenches to help grow all of this. Mayor Cavanaugh stated the department is probably the best group in the state.

Mr. Pearce stated this is a workshop. He said we are seeing an uptick in the Accommodations Tax revenue. He said we are up \$20,000 over last year. He stated to Councilman Ebner's point about \$290,000, that in this year's budget we bought the trolley at \$100,000 and then we had \$175,000 for park maintenance which was the Virginia Acres walking track. He said that amounts to \$275,000 in money that we would not necessarily spend in this year's budget because we already have those. Councilman Ebner pointed out that we know something now about the Capital Projects Sales Tax that we did not know when Mr. Pearce put this together a couple of months ago. Mr. Pearce stated we did not know about the CPST funds and also did not know about the uptick in the Accommodations Tax money. He said that is something he could take a look at. Councilman Ebner stated we need a nice looking but not expensive facility. Mr. Pearce pointed out that we at least have a concept of how the deck and the access ramp, the baggage building, caterer's kitchen and restrooms could be.

Mr. Parker stated to wrap up the presentation, he wanted to point out some of the Capital Projects Sales Tax projects that have been completed. He said these include the stage at Hopelands, the Library Park, the mobile stage, and the Carolina Bay Observation deck. He pointed out that in the future we will need to replace several of the playgrounds around the city. He said the surfacing is the way to go in the future. He said you spend as much money on the ground as you do above the ground because the surfacing is expensive. He said, however, from a safety perspective that is the way to go with the rubberized surfacing for the playgrounds.

Councilman Dewar stated he would like to see us get more revenue out of rental of the Carolina Bay. He felt we may need to lower the price to get more rentals out of it.

Mr. Parker asked Mr. Berley to talk about the Parks Operation Center. He said most people will not see this area, but it has made a huge impact on the department's operation. He said the POC is located on Banks Mill Road. He pointed out that years ago, the city bought the old Durawool Plant where they made SOS pads. He said the building had been upgraded in the last year. Mr. Berley stated they had gutted just about all the electrical wiring in the building as it was so dangerous. He pointed out the city department did not need the power in the building that was there before to operate the heavy equipment. He said they looked at reducing the number of transformers on site. He said there were three transformers there. He said he found out that we were being charged \$150 rent per month per transformer. He said they rewired everything in the main warehouse. He said they are feeding the other three warehouses out of the one main. He said they are planning to have the other two transformers taken off the property so the \$150 per month per transformer will go off our electrical bill. He said the front warehouse has been rewired and they have new lighting. It is energy efficient lighting. He said it is a much safer environment now in the main warehouse. In response to a question as to the size of the warehouse, Mr. Berley stated the total is about 51,000 square feet for the five warehouses. Mr. Berley pointed out the warehouse is a tremendous improvement, as the Park Operation used to be where the Administration office is now at Banks Mill and Pine Log. He said the trucks and equipment were parked under the trees at that location. He said now most everything is under shed and under cover.

Mr. Parker continued with the items installed with CPST funds including the Citizens Park walking trail which encompasses Citizens Park, the Sprayground and restrooms and Governor Aiken Park playground. He pointed out the playground in Governor Aiken is the future as a playground. He said it is not the typical playground that we grew up on. It is designed for fitness to challenge the children when they are playing and running up and down to give them more exercise. He said it goes hand in hand with the basketball court that we redid beside the playground in the park. He said it is a small park, but a nice park.

Councilwoman Diggs asked about the area around the playground that is fenced in. She said there is a huge ditch. She said she had had complaints about the safety of the area as the shrubbery gets too high. Mr. Parker stated that is a retention pond. Mr. Pearce stated that he would share that with Mr. Coakley, as his crew would maintain that shrubbery.

Mr. Parker then started the review of the various divisions of the department. He said the Superintendents here will be the people implementing the budget in the next fiscal year, as he will be retiring. He said the Superintendents will tell Council about some of the bigger things we are doing in the divisions that tie in with the goals of City Council. He said Ms. Coleman would talk about some of the wellness programs.

Ms. Coleman said they want to be sure that everybody knows that they are very conscious of the wellness goals that City Council has. She pointed out there are 17 different programs that are geared specifically toward wellness, including the Fitness Center, the City Cup Program, Pickleball League, racquetball court, Fit Forever Program, two certified personal trainers that work out of the fitness center, yoga, boot camp, line dance, zumba, silver sneakers, Senior Extravaganza, senior basketball, senior women's basketball, climbing wall, fitness classes at Smith-Hazel, kids marathon, outdoor fitness

with eight pieces of equipment. Mr. Berley stated the equipment would use hydraulics so the strength can be adjusted. It will be located outside the southend of the soccer field so if a person is walking the trail, they can just walk off the trail and go to the fitness area, do their work out and go out the other end of the pad and be back on the walking trail. He said the equipment would all be consolidated in one area.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that years ago there was something where every 50 feet there would be some equipment. Mr. Berley said this grouping could be done that way, but everyone they talked to discouraged that, and said to group them together as people will utilize them more than if they are spaced out around the trail. He said the pad was laid today, and the equipment should be put out next week.

Councilwoman Price stated she would like to make a suggestion regarding Aiken and having its recognition as a healthy city through business involvement. She said that would take some work. She pointed out the presentation at the last Council meeting by Ken Rueter. She said Mr. Rueter is pushing fitness and wellness hard with his staff. She said that is one of his key goals. She said given the cost of insurance many of the other businesses are looking at fitness and wellness. She said if they could start out with about seven or eight companies, and invite the CEOs or their deputy to a meeting and get involvement with that approach.

Mr. Parker stated the city does have Corporate Cup and City Cup and several agencies participate in this. He said it has been growing steadily over the last year. He said the event is May 20. Councilwoman Price stated we need to publicize it more. She said Mr. Rueter has a pretty defined program in terms of health and fitness for his employees and what he wants them engaged in. She said he is the leader of that. She said if you get the senior staff involved, the employees will fall in line with fitness and wellness and a healthy city. Mayor Cavanaugh stated some of the businesses may help finance some of the program. Mr. Parker stated a lot of the businesses will help run the events and send out staff who are not participating on a certain night and they help run certain events. Councilwoman Price stated with business involvement, with a healthy city and wellness type city, she felt we can see some great returns with that involvement.

Mr. Parker asked if there were any questions on 5110 Recreation Division. Councilman Dewar stated the Senior Extravaganza is listing as costing \$16,000. Mr. Parker stated most of that is drape and piping and advertising. Ms. Coleman stated the participants get a bag, T shirt and other expenses are table decorations, banners, brochures, and advertising, which is about \$4,500. Ms. Coleman stated the vendors pay to have a booth at the event. Ms. Coleman stated the event brought in \$26,000 to \$28,000 for the event. She pointed out the city is not losing money on the event. She pointed out the event draws a large crowd.

Councilman Dewar pointed out the line item for Public Trips 33-51. He said this year so far we had spent about \$5,000 out of a budget of \$26,500. Ms. Coleman pointed out that other organizations offer trips, such as the hospital. She said trips are being offered, but many of the trips have been cancelled because of lack of participation. Mr. Pearce stated he had reduced the amount to \$10,000.

Councilman Dewar asked about the line item 33-76 Pool Smith-Hazel. It was pointed out this is expenses for the pool. He asked about 46-02 Building Maintenance. He said the expense this year is \$1,500 out of \$44,000 budgeted. He asked if that was for additional buildings. Mr. Pearce stated it is itemized in Form 5 for some ceiling tile replacement and other work needed at the Weeks Center. Mr. Pearce stated Weeks Center renovations had been reduced from \$55,000 to \$35,500.

Councilman Dewar asked about 59-02 Building Depreciation, which was \$103,276. Ms. Abney stated the amount for two years ago was the accrual which is an annual adjustment for the auditors. The building depreciation would be X amount and that would be cash funded. Councilman Dewar asked if we would wait until the end of the year to see how much money we have. Mr. Pearce stated that is when we look at the depreciation. Councilman Dewar stated it is not likely that we will have a lot of money and that the

item could be fully funded. Mr. Pearce stated the Recreation expenditures show that we will have depreciation money at the end of the year based on what is spent to date. Mr. Pearce stated we will know in August when we do the budget reconciliation.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated it seems that we have been talking a lot about depreciation lately. He said depreciation is used to repair something or buy something to replace something. He said it seems that should be a number one thing we do so we have money to replace something like a roof. He pointed out that we depreciate vehicles and equipment for a certain number of years. He asked if building depreciation should not be considered like vehicles.

Mr. Pearce stated during the darkest times of the economy, building depreciation and the utility system depreciation were items that the prior City Manager told City Council about and Council voted not to fund the item at the time because of a lack of funds. Mayor Cavanaugh stated he understood that. He pointed out Council always has the final say. He said he was thinking ahead as we move into the budget.

Councilman Dewar pointed out it is clearer and a no brainer when you are talking about assets such as vehicles and equipment that has a clearly defined life. He said that has to be a part of the budget, not something they look at the end of the year.

Ms. Abney pointed out that when we buy vehicles they go on a schedule and every month we set the cash aside in depreciation for the vehicles. She said when you talk about the Water & Sewer System depreciation that is different and when you talk about building depreciation that is different.

Councilman Dewar stated he could understand the infrastructure and the buildings, but there are other assets beyond vehicles that we should be depreciating. Mr. Pearce pointed out that when Council gets the quarterly detailed statement, it shows that we are taking the depreciation money out as an expenditure throughout the year.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that we are five years into this now. He said we need to start readjusting our depreciation of buildings. He said the things being done to the buildings should not be coming out of our one year's budget. Councilman Ebner pointed out there is over a million dollars of projects on the pink sheets. He asked if something like the tennis court rebuild would come out of depreciation of the tennis courts or where. Mr. Pearce stated it could be a source. Councilman Ebner stated what happens if we are not depreciating it. He pointed out the Virginia Acres tennis courts rebuild. He said the money has to come out of the budget, from fees or depreciation. Mr. Parker stated Accommodations Tax funds could be a source of funds, as tournaments are played there and you are bringing in people. Councilman Ebner stated at some point we have to make depreciation equal to our expenses that we put into the buildings. Mr. Pearce stated when you need to spend the money to repair what is wearing out, you would anticipate using the depreciation funds to do that. Councilman Dewar stated he did not think we do that. Mr. Pearce stated he felt we do it, but whether we are doing it 100% is up for discussion. He said last year when we did the budget reconciliation depreciation was some of the first building depreciation we did with the unspent funds. He said we made sure to commit that money towards depreciation. He said we did that for Public Safety, Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Engineering & Utilities, and the City Hall building.

Councilman Dewar asked if there is a depreciation report so Council can look to see what we have been depreciating and the status of the items. Mr. Pearce stated that is the Holding Fund Accounts that Council gets. He said that is the cash on hand. Councilman Dewar stated that is just a summary. Ms. Abney responded that the cash on hand is in the Holding Fund. She responded to Councilman Dewar that we do have a fixed asset system that lists each item and it says whether it is fully depreciated or active. Councilman Dewar asked how many items would be on that report. It was pointed out it is an enormous list.

Councilman Ebner pointed out the Citizens Park fencing replacement at a cost of \$400,000. He asked if that would come out of depreciation. Mr. Pearce stated that would

come out of One Cent Sales Tax money committed for that project. Councilman Ebner stated he would ask should it come out of depreciation. He said we paid for the fence some ago. Mr. Pearce stated it is an asset so it could be depreciated to be replaced. Instead we are funding this one through the One Cent Capital Sales Tax. Councilman Ebner asked when we get to buildings if we were to replace a roof where would the money come from. Mr. Pearce stated that would be from depreciation. He said it is itemized in the budget book.

Councilman Dewar asked if staff could tell Council what the accrued depreciation is on the Weeks Center or Smith-Hazel. Mr. Pearce stated he could tell Council what funds are committed to the project to replace the roof as that is reported to Council. He said Smith-Hazel roof used \$150,000 of Parks, Recreation & Tourism depreciation and another specific asset number for the other \$100,000 for the project. He said for the roof Special Holding and Depreciation were used. Councilman Dewar stated if we are using two accounts would that mean that we are zeroing out the depreciation for Smith-Hazel.

Ms. Abney stated in the fixed assets system we list every asset and whether it is fully depreciated or active. We have the buildings listed, but that is an accrual, an accounting depreciation. She said the cash money depreciation is where it might be \$10,000 or \$20,000. She said during the budget closeout last year we were able to fund more than \$10,000 to Public Safety, Parks & Recreation, and we keep those line items cash and we keep up with 5110 Buildings has X amount of money, 5120 buildings has X amount. She said it is broken down by division within the department.

Mr. Pearce said based on the vote that Council takes in August the money that is committed to PRT building depreciation goes into Special Holding as that was cash money. Councilman Ebner asked if that was accrual or real dollars. Mr. Pearce responded that is real dollars. Councilman Ebner pointed out that when you get into doing repairs accrual does not mean anything. Mr. Pearce stated that is valuing your assets. He said that is not cash. Councilman Ebner stated there is no money for non-cash depreciation. Mr. Pearce stated but it is cash when Council in the August budget reconciliation commits building depreciation money to a certain account. He said that becomes Special Holding as that is cash so it is transferred into that specific holding. Then there is depreciation that we have in the budget.

Councilman Dewar asked the value of non-cash depreciation. It was pointed out it is the asset value, but is not a cash depreciation. Ms. Abney stated all depreciation is calculated the same way, but we don't fund the buildings and infrastructure. Councilman Dewar stated then if you don't fund depreciation on Smith-Hazel or the Weeks Center, when we need a new building, we would be building it from scratch. Mr. Pearce pointed out that depending on the nature of the facility, you could have Capital Projects Sales Tax money, tourism money, general fund money, borrow money. He stated we have used the depreciation fund money for projects like the reroofing project at Smith-Hazel.

Councilman Dewar stated the critical thing is the depreciation of the assets because when they wear out whether you are talking about a lawn mower or a vehicle, you have to be setting aside money to replace them. Mr. Pearce stated that prevents the need to have to borrow money which is an expense. Councilman Ebner asked if when we depreciate a vehicle, it is real money. Ms. Abney responded that it is, and it is done every month and the cash is set aside every month. Mr. Pearce stated that has been done with buildings as well, but it may not be 100%. Councilman Ebner stated that in his four budget years coming to the fifth one, he felt we have been way down on that. He said he calls that the flywheel plan. Mr. Pearce stated the flywheel money is something that we started last August.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that in Mr. Parker's cover sheet he had listed several Capital Project II and Capital Project III projects for Parks and Recreation. He asked if we have anyone looking at our \$8 to \$10 million worth of projects that we have. He said we have talked about this several times. He said we have a lot of money, and we have had several work sessions. He said we have said that we would have somebody report to Council once a quarter or so as to what we are doing. Councilman Ebner stated he was

still looking for that because there is a lot of money, and it covers almost all of the city. Councilman Ebner asked who is watching over that money.

Mr. Pearce stated that Mr. Grinton had prepared the timelines. Councilman Ebner asked if he prepares the PRT money. Mr. Pearce stated he had had a discussion with the City Attorney, and it would be appropriate to set aside One Cent Sales Tax money for an Operations Manager. That would be the person who would have the sole responsibility for making sure the Capital Sales Tax Projects are progressing, giving progress reports, working with the Purchasing Agent to bid the projects out, provide a status report, building in the contingencies, and issuing a report. He said he wants to propose in this budget that we have a new position as an Operations Manager to oversee just the Capital Projects Sales Tax.

Councilmembers Dewar, Ebner and Price stated Council had talked about that. Councilwoman Price stated she had proposed that two years ago. Mr. Pearce stated we did hire Pearce Atkins in the Engineering group, and he is working on the Utilities projects. He said with the recreation money of about \$8 or \$9 million, it has become apparent to him that if the person is in the Engineering and Utilities group, that he needs somebody that has authority in all departments and not part of a single department. He said he would like for this position to be in the City Manager's Office to work with Purchasing and to work with the department directors.

Councilman Ebner stated the City Attorney does not have anything to do with this. He said he did not see what his position is in this. He said it is Capital Projects Sales Tax money and Mr. Grinton has his list. Then we have the PRT money. Mr. Pearce stated the reason he talked to the City Attorney was to see if it was appropriate to use the Capital Projects Sales Tax money to fund the position, and his opinion is that is appropriate use of the money. Councilmembers Dewar, Price and Ebner stated they agreed to that two years ago. Councilman Ebner stated the City Attorney can give his opinion, but it does not mean much; you are supposed to fund it and that is what the law says already. Anything you do with the Capital Projects Sales Tax projects, including the design or staff time, is supposed to be from the Capital Projects Sales Tax fund.

Mr. Pearce stated he sees a lot of benefit and has discussed it with staff. He felt we would see a lot of benefit from seeing this person dedicated to the Capital Projects Sales Tax. Councilwoman Price stated in proposing that two years ago Council realized what these projects entail and no single person has the time to monitor the detail along with their regular job. She said one dedicated person who manages the projects is needed to keep the City Manager up to date and keep Council up to date on a regular basis which is almost every week in terms of any questions about a project. Then any of us can go to that person, and they have that information immediately at hand as that is all they are doing. It would make life much easier, and the tracking of these numbers and project timelines, and make all the issues easier to manage.

Councilman Dewar asked how it would be funded as it would have to come out of the various Capital Projects Sales Tax projects. He wondered if you take funds out of each project such as, Hitchcock Woods or the Senior Center, etc. He said the other thing is this has to be the person's job and nothing else. He said that person should not be a Projects Officer. He said that is how George Grinton started, and then he got into something else. Then we started with Pearce Atkins in it. He said the Capital Projects would just be their job. Councilwoman Price stated the reason she knows it works and the information she brought is through a person that she met out of Little Rock, Arkansas. She said it was amazing when he brought his sheets out, and he could go over each project in detail, time, issues, and problems. She said anybody could read the report and find out the status of any project. She said a new person coming in on Council would be able to look at that knowing when the project started; the issues regarding the project; and the money that has been spent and what is left.

Mr. Pearce stated that would be a perfect test case for the dashboard. It could be put on the website and anybody could see where the penny is going. Councilman Ebner stated you need face to face on these projects because this touches 30,000 people. He pointed

out that Mr. Atkins would be about finished with the Engineering and Utilities projects in less than a year from now. He wondered what Mr. Atkins will do then. He wondered if he would come back to this. Mr. Pearce stated he would be working on the infrastructure work with specific infrastructure projects. He said what we need is an Operations Manager over all aspects of the Capital Sales Tax Projects. Councilman Ebner stated he understands that, and he is where Councilwoman Price is. He said he had talked about it for four years. He said we do the hand-me-down. We hire somebody for it, and then they disappear. Mr. Pearce stated they are not going to disappear. This will be a Capital Projects Sales Tax funded position in the City Manager's Office.

Councilwoman Price stated she thought we had budgeted \$60,000 for that. Councilwoman Diggs asked how soon we would get that person. Councilman Ebner stated we have already hired two people to do it, and we don't have them. Mr. Pearce stated what we have is an Engineering & Utilities Department Director and then he hired an Engineer because that is the position he used to have. The hope was that they would be able to handle that, but he agrees the scope is too big on the Capital Projects Sales Tax. You need a dedicated person for just that money. Councilman Ebner asked how we get one hired. He said he would propose the position in the budget to be funded out of Capital Projects Sales Tax funds. Councilman Ebner stated Council had already agreed to that position before. Mr. Pearce stated it was part of the Engineering and Utilities group. He wants to propose that position for the City Manager's Office to oversee the projects. Councilman Ebner stated we could still go ahead and get the person hired as the position is there and the position could be moved wherever you want it as that is the City Manager's call. He said we have a position available. It just is not filled. Councilman Dewar stated it was not funded. Councilman Ebner stated it was funded, and Councilwoman Price stated she thought it was also. Mr. Pearce stated he would talk with Mr. Grinton about this. He said his understanding is that Mr. Atkins' position is Mr. Grinton's former position before he became Director. Mr. Pearce said what he wants is a new position in the City Manager's Office that has more oversight of all the projects. Councilman Dewar pointed out that Mr. Grinton and Mr. Atkins are paid out of Utilities fund. Councilman Ebner stated he did not care where the person works. Councilwoman Price stated all it takes is for Council to make a motion that we transfer the position from the Utilities Department to the City Manager's Office and designate funds or a percentage of funds from the projects to fund the position.

Councilman Dewar said that would assume that Mr. Atkins could come out of that position and do this job. Councilwoman Price stated the idea is to hire a new person. Councilman Dewar stated Mr. Atkins was a new hire. He was new to the Department. He did not fill an existing slot. Mr. Pearce stated Mr. Grinton is out of town this week. He said he would have the conversation with Mr. Grinton next week. He said he anticipates the conversation with Mr. Grinton to be that he needs Mr. Atkins to work on the infrastructure projects. Councilmembers Ebner and Dewar stated they have no problem with that. Mr. Pearce stated he would like to leave Mr. Atkins where he is. Councilman Ebner stated there is an open position now that is funded and no person in it. Mr. Pearce stated he wanted to talk to Mr. Grinton to see what his thoughts were about what that person was going to be before he takes something away that he may need. Councilman Ebner stated then the matter will be in the May budget. Councilman Ebner stated let's start over and get this person. He said he hoped this person would submit a monthly report.

Mr. Parker stated the next division is 5120 Athletics. He said Jeff Metz oversees that division. He said Mr. Metz will talk about what we plan to do with the Capital Projects Sales Tax money to fence Citizens Park I.

Mr. Metz pointed out that the department lost the backstop at Citizens Park Field 5. He said going back with the netting concept, there is money in the new budget for Stewart Field fencing. He said it is hoped that if the netting project works out we will go back and net there as well, as the field is a very old field. It is heavily used and open to the public year round. He said it is in dire need of fence replacement. Refencing for Citizens Park I is in the Capital Projects Sales Tax. He said a lot of fence work is being done. He also noted that the lights at the Weeks Center had been replaced. He said light poles were

replaced at Stewart Field in the last couple of years as well. He those facilities are being brought up to date.

Councilman Dewar stated he had received an email on Stewart Field. He said the person was concerned with the equipment that we are leaving out and about. He said he was not sure he agreed with the comment as soccer nets are soccer nets, and they are meant to be outside. He said the other comment made was that the teams are not cleaning up the field before they leave and that Recreation Department staff is having to do that. Mr. Metz pointed out that for every facility the department has there has to be trash pickup after an event. He pointed out that trash was left at the Splash Ground when it was opened. He said they try to monitor this. Councilman Dewar asked if we encourage the teams to pick up trash. Mr. Metz responded that the Recreation teams do a good job at that, but the field is open to anyone. He said it is tough to know who is there at all times.

Councilman Ebner asked when they intend to do the fencing. He pointed out we would have to borrow the money to do it. Mr. Metz asked if he meant Stewart Field or Citizens Park I. Councilman Ebner responded the \$500,000 for Citizens Park fencing. Mr. Parker pointed out that it was on Mr. Grinton's spreadsheet to be done this fall. He said we have to look at the end of tournament schedule to February. Councilman Ebner pointed out that Council had not voted for the money because we would have to borrow the money. He said if they expect to do it this fall, it needs to get on the agenda pretty quickly. Mr. Pearce stated we would do that over the summer. Councilman Ebner said if he talks to Mr. Grinton, then it may need to be on the May agenda. He pointed out that it takes two readings for an ordinance. Mr. Pearce stated it does not have to be part of the budget process because it is One Cent Sales Tax money. Councilman Ebner stated still the money will have to be borrowed to do the project. Mr. Pearce stated we could do that over the summer once we have the budget completed.

Councilman Dewar asked why we would want to borrow money when we are still in the process of paying back all the money we had previously borrowed and the money coming in is not as much as we had anticipated it being. Councilman Ebner pointed out it was said they plan to do the fencing this fall. He said if they plan to do it in the fall, which is 2014, we will have to borrow the money to do it. Councilman Dewar stated this fall is next year's budget. Mr. Pearce pointed out that the One Cent Sales Tax money is not part of the budget process. Councilman Dewar said we can't do it out of One Cent Sales Tax money until we pay back what we have already borrowed. Mr. Pearce stated that would be subject to a Council vote. Councilman Ebner pointed out that the proposed budget does not represent Capital Projects Sales Tax expenditures. He said of the \$52 million budget there is no Capital Projects Sales Tax in that number. Mr. Pearce responded there is none in the budget as the Capital Projects Sales Tax money is separate. He said it is like a holding fund. He said the project is listed in the special holding list that was given to Council.

Councilman Dewar pointed out there is an item for Wi Fi for \$6,000 at Citizens Park buildings. He pointed out that for \$200 the Friends of the Aiken County Public Library installed a free Wi Fi at the library and no one is more sensitive to data than the library system. He asked if it would really be \$6,000. Mr. Parker stated the Department had worked with IT to get those numbers. He pointed out that the cost included all of the complexes. He said one of the issues is that the farther you get away, the more power you have to add so if you are standing on the far side you can receive it. He pointed out that he thought that item was cut from the budget. Councilman Dewar asked if we have Wi Fi in City Hall. Mr. Pearce responded that we do, but you have to have an access code. Councilman Dewar stated that is not what he meant by free. Councilman Dewar stated his point was that it does not cost a lot of money to do that. Mr. Pearce stated there may be another funding source for that. He said we may not have to use taxpayer money for it at all. He said that is why he did not fund it.

Councilman Homoki asked if the Wi Fi system would cost more or less if it is left open to everybody. Mr. Pearce responded the firewall protection does add a cost. He said the city has to have a firewall protection.

Councilman Ebner asked about the buddy baseball field and the soccer fields. He said there is \$2 million available in cash. Mr. Parker said that Councilman Ebner had asked about Buddy Baseball. He said we have been talking with Jerry Shedd about that, and he was going to run the numbers on what it would cost to do a field. He has recently given the numbers to us. What he is looking at is about a 180 foot field down the lines 200 to center. His idea is that he would like to see just a baseball field. Mr. Parker stated staff's thought was to design something that could be used for baseball, but in the fall we could play buddy soccer or something of that nature on it so it would be more multi-purpose. He said we would probably want something a little bigger. Mr. Parker stated Mr. Shedd is looking in the neighborhood of \$240,000 which did not include the concrete base, the fencing or lighting, just the miracle field itself. With the rubberized surface the cost would be around \$275,000. He said once you put the amenities with that, you are somewhere in the \$400,000 to \$450,000 neighborhood to build a field like that. Councilman Ebner stated in other words \$500,000 would give us a year round field and we would not get any complaints about lumps. He said it could be used by the colleges, the high schools and everybody. Mr. Parker said if it is designed big enough that could happen. Councilman Ebner stated there could be an annual usage fee for it.

Mr. Parker stated when the department did the master plan originally miracle fields were sort of cutting edge at the time, and we plugged \$600,000 into the master plan to talk about. He said that was a pretty close number not really realizing at the time how they would evolve. The closest one is in Augusta. They took the old ballfield behind the VA Hospital and converted it into a miracle league field which was done by the YMCA. Mr. Parker stated there is a need. He said there are 24 kids in the program currently that are playing buddy baseball. They play a couple of nights a week. One night they go to USCAiken and Kenny Thomas hosts them over there. He said that is a big thrill for the kids to be able to play on the USCAiken field. He said most of their games are played at Citizens Park. Councilman Ebner pointed out that it could be used all other times by anybody else for soccer or whatever sports you wanted because it is turf type stuff.

Councilwoman Price asked about the tennis courts at Eustis Park. She said they had not been resurfaced for a long time. She pointed out the court is not used heavily. She said she spoke with Betty Myers who has a program in the summer with USCAiken utilizing it with some kids. She wondered what it would cost to resurface the tennis courts. Mr. Metz stated the cost per court for a hard court would be about \$2,500 if there is no major damage to it. It was pointed out there are two courts at Eustis Park. Mr. Parker stated it would cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 to resurface the courts. Mr. Parker stated we don't see a lot of use of those courts. It was pointed out that the courts need some work, and the use is going to change. Councilwoman Price said there are some people who are interested in tennis and revitalizing the community. She said she would like some consideration there. Mr. Parker stated the department had a summer program at Eustis Park several years ago with some college students teaching some of the kids. Rackets were provided to the kids through a scholarship. Mr. Pearce stated we can look to see what funds might be available this year to resurface the courts.

Councilwoman Diggs stated she has two more meetings after this meeting and she will have to leave. She said one meeting is the Neighborhood Association meeting at Edgewood. She said before she leaves, she wanted to talk about Hopelands and Rye Patch. She said she was very concerned about the letter from the Friends of Hopelands and Lisa Hall and the possibility that she might take an early retirement. She pointed out Ms. Hall is a very, very valuable employee. She said she did not want to see Ms. Hall leave. She said she wanted to find out we need to do to get her to stay. If it is to provide an additional staff member to help her, then we need to do that. We don't need to work our employees to death. She said she wanted to see Ms. Hall stay and she hoped they would talk about what we need to do to keep her. She asked that someone meet with her to see what the issue is. Councilwoman Diggs said she wanted to mention that before she left. Mr. Pearce stated he would be meeting with Ms. Hall.

Councilman Dewar stated he heard the issue is that she has had so many additional duties thrown on her. He said Ms. Hall is not alone in that in the department, as he recognizes that.

Mr. Pearce stated he had a couple of things that would help Ms. Diggs with her meeting in Edgewood.

Councilwoman Price asked if they were going to talk about Eustis Park and the Senior/Youth Center. Councilman Ebner stated there is no use to talk about it if we don't have somebody to talk to. Councilwoman Price stated we need to talk about a location. She pointed out that working with the School District is not on the table any more as far as location. She said we need to talk about a location. She said Mr. Pearce had mentioned that perhaps Council needs to go out in the area and look at some areas that are being proposed for the Senior/Youth facility and see if they are a viable option and bring in the community and have a discussion, then get a design plan for them to review. Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out the money is specific to the one spot, Eustis Park. Councilwoman Price stated there is some property that could be used that is part of the School District and the city owns some property there as well. Mr. Pearce pointed out that the city bought some land from the School District. That would give you a potential building site and adjacent to it would be the School District parking space with about 40 parking spaces. Mayor Cavanaugh stated that is the same place we have been talking about initially. Councilwoman Price stated it is a different location, but still in the area.

Councilman Ebner stated it has been 10 years now, and we are still talking about it. He said we have talked about in special session and etc, but we are still at zero. Mayor Cavanaugh stated it has to do with somebody pushing it again and getting it done. Councilman Dewar stated when we originally selected that area no one told them about the basketball court that was built with a federal grant. He said possibly no one knew about it. Councilman Ebner stated he did not buy that. He said we have not contacted anybody to get relief from that and reorganize it. He said we have been talking about that for three years and there is nobody to talk to and get it pushed. He said once we get that person, if we have to buy a ticket to Washington, DC so be it. Mr. Pearce stated he had some information. Councilwoman Price stated if the city owns the property that allows us to put more into the facility itself so that is a plus. She said we can restructure some things. She pointed out there is a walking track there. She said she was in the area early this week and saw about 20 plus kids on the basketball court. She said she met a lady who is a beautician in the community who had her granddaughter out. Councilwoman Price said she asked the lady how often she walked the track. The lady responded that she is out there every morning and most evenings with the granddaughter who loves the area. The lady said she had thought about moving to Woodside, but she loved the track so much. She said the track keeps her in the community. She said the lady had so many good things to say. She asked about the Senior/Youth Center and said they had been hearing about it for years, but nothing has happened. Councilwoman Price stated people are anxious, but yet patient.

Councilman Ebner pointed out that a 20,000 square foot building is about the most you can build. He said that is 100' by 200'. Mr. Pearce stated we are working on a concept for the building. He said it might be good to have a Council meeting at Eustis Park like we have had at other venues and let the architect present the concept, then think about whether Council just wants to have that meeting or if they would like the neighbors to come. Mr. Pearce stated the project is listed in the Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation & Tourism master plan for recreation as a neighborhood park. He said according to the people who worked with the city back in 2008 you can go out a mile and a half and draw a circle and that would be the audience. He said there is an opportunity to look at a concept, talk about what folks in the area would want in a facility that is being built. He pointed out that staff traveled and visited the facility in Covington, Georgia. It had a number of features to it that was multi-generational. He said the good news is that as far as where you put the building, if we are looking at a 100' by 200' building, we can think about the land we bought from the School District. Then you would not touch the basketball courts, the tennis courts, or the gazebo. So the issue about replacing the facility would be gone. He said there is an opportunity for a potential mutual agreement with the School District because they use their parking lot for employees who are there from 8 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. In the evenings and weekends there is at least 40 parking spaces and at least two, and opportunity for at least two more, handicapped

parking spaces there. He said you might have a joint use agreement for the parking lot that the School District already has in place and save that expense.

Councilman Dewar asked how many spaces would be available at lunch time during the week. Mr. Pearce stated he did not have an answer for that. Mr. Pearce stated the numbers were 40 parking spaces in an existing parking lot immediately adjacent to the eastern end of Eustis Park. He said typically those spaces are empty by 5 p.m. and on the weekends.

Councilwoman Price asked who owns the road that goes along the track in front of the area being proposed. Mr. Pearce asked if she meant the driveway and if so that would be the School District's driveway. He said the city would have the right to use the driveway since we bought the adjacent land.

Councilman Dewar stated he did not know that Council needed to have a meeting in the area, but just needed to get moving. He said if we can get moving in this room, the biggest thing is that we need to get land acquisition. He said hopefully whoever gets the new Project position, at the same time we are looking at land acquisition, we can also look at the size of the building. Councilman Dewar asked Mr. Parker how big a building the department was scoping out. Mr. Parker responded that he did not think they ever put an actual footprint at Eustis Park. Councilman Dewar stated he thought there was a building on the master plan. Councilwoman Price stated there is no design plan. She said one of the goals was to have a design plan in place as of June, 2013. Mr. Pearce stated we ran into the issue of where to put the building. Mr. Pearce stated that he and Councilmembers Price and Diggs were in the area on Tuesday. He said we do have an architect who is working on a concept building that could be put at Eustis Park. In response to a question as to who the architect was, Mr. Pearce stated it was Cam Scott. Councilman Ebner stated a 20,000 square foot building would be \$4 to \$5 million and takes out everything you need with the building and leaves about \$150 per square foot divided into the rest to give you 20,000 square feet. He said he and Mr. Parker don't fully agree because he says you take \$150 and divide it into \$4.5 million. He said then he has to put another \$2 million in the budget to cover all the facilities. Councilwoman Price stated there is \$3.5 million for the facility. Mr. Pearce stated the amount in CPST III was \$3.5 million, and there is less than that because we bought the land and have had some other expenses. Councilman Dewar stated we may have to buy more land. Mr. Pearce responded that we would not necessarily have to. Councilman Dewar asked if there would be any advantage to buying the land the County just emptied. Mr. Pearce stated they would not be emptying out for another year, and we have no idea what they might want. Councilman Dewar stated he was not talking about the original building, but was talking about where County Council meets and the Board of Registration and those buildings. Mr. Pearce stated the last word he had on that was that the Preparatory School might be interested in that property.

In response to a question by Mayor Cavanaugh regarding staff looking at another city, Mr. Pearce stated staff had looked at a center in Anderson which was more of a Youth Center and visited Covington, Georgia, which had more of a Senior/Youth Center. In response to a question as to the size of the building at Covington, Georgia, Mr. Parker responded that the building was about 45,000 to 50,000 square feet. He said it was not quite the size of the Weeks Center, but closer to the size of the Weeks Center than to Smith-Hazel. Mayor Cavanaugh stated Covington's center then was much bigger than what we are talking about at Eustis Park. Mayor Cavanaugh asked how much space we feel we need at Eustis Park.

Councilwoman Price stated based on what the community has a desire for it is to host events, with some being formal events. She said she was sure it would get some rental use. She felt it would generate some revenue. She felt it should be something that would accommodate about 250 people. Councilman Ebner stated 20,000 square feet would do that. He said he had worked with the same person. He said if you take \$3.5 million you can get about 20,000 square feet at \$150 a square foot. He said that leaves \$500,000 for up fit which is all the kitchen facilities, sidewalks and furniture. Then the \$1 million

could be for the site work. Mr. Pearce stated it would be nice to have a good sensible approach to use the money we have in hand and committed.

Councilman Ebner stated he felt before we go to the community that Council should review the project. Councilwoman Price stated that was the intent to get something for Council first. She pointed out we are not ready to go to the community at this time because we have nothing. Mr. Pearce stated that could be another workshop that we do just on Eustis Park. He said it would be helpful to have the concept plan with kind of a master plan behind it. Councilman Dewar stated he would be willing to wait until we get the new person hired to start the project. Mr. Pearce stated we will go ahead with the concept plan the architect will do. Councilman Dewar asked if that would be a bidding contract. Mr. Pearce stated the cost would be under \$10,000 and is under Professional Services. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Scott lends towards the engineering side rather than architect side. He said we want an engineer working on this project.

Councilman Homoki left the meeting.

The next division was 5130 – Tourism. Mr. Parker stated that Mr. Metz will tell Council about an idea they have with Channel 6 that we are working on to help with some marketing. He said we have talked about social marketing.

Mr. Metz stated staff had met with Channel 6 about some online additional media and approaching three markets including Asheville, Greenville, and Savannah. He said we want to try to pull visitors from those areas. He said we are doing that by demographics, location and income and gender. We are also producing a three minute commercial that Jamie Koelker is producing to help sell Aiken. He said we would use that in trade shows to help bring conferences and tournaments to Aiken. He said staff is looking forward to having that promotion.

Councilman Ebner asked when Council meetings are going to be on Channel 4. Mr. Pearce stated staff has had a discussion with Atlantic Broadband, and they are in the process of converting their signal to digital. He said we have a proposal from them and from ASTV to have a totally digital set up. It will have the capability of broadcasting the Council meetings. He said we would have to get a price on that. He said we are getting the system in place for Channel 4 first to make sure we work all the bugs out and then bid that out. Councilman Ebner asked if we would be another couple of years for the broadcasting of Council meetings. Mr. Pearce stated that is something we can work on this coming year. Councilman Dewar stated the digital is already partially in effect. He said he has the equipment for the digital, but has not installed it yet. He said his point is that they are starting the digital process, and it should not be a long time. He pointed out this is also affecting Channel 4. He said once they get to that people will not be able to watch Channel 4 without the box. Mr. Pearce stated that is bid out and all lined up. He said we will get it hooked up and if people get the box they will be able to see Channel 4. Councilman Ebner said then by the end of the year, a person should be able to see the City Council meeting on TV. Mr. Pearce said he did not say that. Councilman Dewar stated they would like for him to say that. Mr. Pearce stated they like to paint the City Manager in a corner, and he was not going to say that. He said he was not going to say that because he does not know. He pointed out staff thought we were going to have something done with Atlantic Broadband last summer, and they kept saying they were going to have a digital signal and they did not have it. Then it was going to be December; then January and now it is April. He said now it is April, and they are getting it done. Councilman Dewar stated to keep in mind that U-verse is coming in as well. Mr. Pearce stated U-verse is coming in, and we have a letter from AT&T. Councilman Dewar stated he thought they had already started, but were not in his neighborhood yet.

Mr. Pearce stated Council had said something about bidding the architectural services. He said staff actually talked to four different architectural firms and got a best price deal. He said they did not just go to Cam Scott. He said for the total package Mr. Scott had the best value. Councilman Ebner stated Mr. Scott is an engineering firm and architectural firm, and will give a good detail. Mr. Pearce stated Mr. Scott was very helpful on the Administration and Finance Building and did a fantastic job.

Councilwoman Price asked Mr. Pearce if he had talked to Heather Mitchell with the Boudreaux group out of Columbia. She said she liked what she did for the North Augusta Municipal Building. Mr. Pearce stated she is to meet with him next week.

Councilman Dewar stated then the game plan for potentially televising Council meetings is to work with ASTV to get a bid from them. Mr. Pearce stated we already have equipment coming in from ASTV with the digital turnover. He said we want to get that hooked up and see how it does and make sure the public can access it. Then we will work out a bid as far as trying to do what Council would like to see which is broadcasting the City Council meetings. He said we will get a price for that. Mr. Parker said some of the equipment for Channel 4 came in this week. Councilman Ebner pointed out that ASTV used to televise the Council meetings so we know it can be done. Mr. Parker said the first part of the equipment, which is the modules, came in to make the changeout. Mr. Pearce stated we are changing Channel 4 from analog to a fully digital signal.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that in Tourism there is money for Survey Monkey. He asked what the department is surveying. Mr. Pearce stated we have the hand held smart pads and people fill out a survey about how they like a program. Mr. Parker stated the ipads are used at Citizens Park. Rather than walking around with somebody and writing it down, the person can pop in their answers on the ipad. It is automatically uploaded and gives the department the data needed.

Councilwoman Price pointed out that in dealing with some folks in the DOE headquarters each employee has a Survey Monkey at the bottom of their email they send to you and ask that you complete the survey on how they have serviced you.

Mr. Parker stated the next division is 5150 – Parks. He said this division is the behind scenes group. This is where the money is for taking care of the ballfields, the restrooms, etc. He said Mr. Berley has the largest crew with 32 employees in his division. He pointed out this is the biggest budget item.

Councilman Ebner asked about the proposed parking lot. He asked if it was curb and gutter or just asphalt. Mr. Pearce stated he had not included it in the budget. Councilman Ebner stated there is not a city requirement for curb and gutter and if it was just an asphalt parking lot, it probably could be done for one-third of that amount. Councilman Ebner stated he knew that it was not approved, but what happens is what we did for First Baptist with curb and gutter for the parking lot which triples the cost over if only asphalt was used. He said we could probably put an asphalt parking lot in for about \$30,000. He said Mr. Evans will say you can't do it, but it is done in all the neighborhoods so PRT should be the same as a neighborhood. Mr. Pearce stated the city is subject to the Zoning Ordinance just like everybody else. Councilman Ebner stated he could drive him around the neighborhood where there is not curb and gutter. Mr. Pearce asked if he was talking about the rolled asphalt curbs. Councilman Ebner stated that is a whole lot cheaper.

Councilman Dewar asked Mr. Parker to explain the recalibration of his staff. He pointed out there are six people being moved up to Supervisor position. Mr. Parker stated he and Mr. Pearce had not talked about personnel so he was not sure if that would be approved or not. He said that is what he would like to do. Councilman Dewar asked if that would be recognition of added duties. Mr. Parker stated there is a Superintendent which is Phil Berley. Directly under Mr. Berley are two Supervisor II positions. One of the Supervisor IIs oversees Virginia Acres, the Weeks Center, the tennis courts and Citizens Park. He is over all those crews. The other Supervisor II oversees everything else from URS Theater, Hopelands/Rye Patch, and all the small neighborhood parks. He said basically the existing Crew Leaders are doing a lot of the responsibility that a Supervisor in other divisions is doing. He said it would be a reclassification of six positions to Supervisor I. Councilman Dewar pointed out that there was also a request for two additional Facility Assistants.

Councilman Dewar stated we are going to talk at the Council meeting about narrowing the median on the Hitchcock bypass. He said if we don't end up narrowing that median,

how many extra people will it take to take care of a 12 foot wide median for 4.5 miles long. He said that probably would be the city's responsibility. Mr. Pearce stated that would not be PRT, but would be the Public Services group. He pointed out they maintain the median on York Street. He said he had talked about the proposed median on the bypass with Mr. Coakley. He stated they use inmate labor. He pointed out in reviewing that budget Mr. Coakley noted that he was asking for additional personnel to supervise an inmate crew. That was part of the reason for his request.

Councilman Dewar stated he hoped the median could be narrowed. Mr. Pearce stated it would be interesting to have an opportunity on April 28 to try to contain DOT's budget for Hitchcock Parkway. He said in the Council Agenda packet that they will see the three items listed for discussion for a resolution are the elimination of the sidewalks and Council has talked about that savings being about \$1 million, narrowing the landscaped median so you can pull the project in even more, with a 49% reduction on the footprint. Mr. Pearce stated he left the third item purposely very broad and called it funding which goes with the question about the phasing of the project, but also containing the cost and putting a cap on it.

Councilwoman Price pointed out that we will no longer have Kevin Gantt. She said he took a lateral move. Mayor Cavanaugh asked who took his place, and Mr. Pearce responded Randy Young would cover for him. Councilmembers said Mr. Gantt would be missed. Councilwoman Price stated she told Mr. Gantt that he would be missed. She said he is a highly professional guy who maintains his composure. She said Mr. Gantt will accompany his replacement at some meetings and will not leave him out in the cold. She said Mr. Gantt is excited about his new opportunity.

Mayor Cavanaugh pointed out the decisions by City Council will be very important because we have to go to the ARTS in about a week. He said DOT wants ARTS to vote on the matters. He said he had talked to Mr. Gantt and told him that the matters are a Council thing to decide. Councilman Ebner stated Council makes a decision. Then it goes to the ARTS, the Subcommittee, and then ARTS and then back to SCDOT.

Mr. Pearce stated based on the discussion at the ARTS Subcommittee meeting over which Mayor Lark Jones presided, they were very clear that they wanted direction from the Aiken City Council and would not decide it there.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated he had talked to Mayor Lark Jones and Mr. Gantt also. He said ARTS will have a chance to vote on it, but they should not vote against what the city recommends in his view. He said it has to move along the process up to the Policy Committee, and they have to vote yes or no. Councilman Ebner stated usually the Policy Committee does not go against what the person recommends. Councilman Dewar stated they will take the cue from what City Council does on Monday night.

Councilwoman Price pointed out that somehow the community is not convinced that we really need this road expansion of Hitchcock Parkway. She said she was talking with someone who said Council was making decisions without listening to the public. Councilwoman Price pointed out that the citizens voted on it in 2010 with 25,000 people voting on it.

Councilman Dewar pointed out that nobody realized what the project would be. He said what he tells people is that in the beginning all he heard from was the naysayers, but in the last several months before the final decision he had heard about 50-50 for versus against the widening of the road. He pointed out when the business community spoke they were generally in favor and a lot of private citizens were also generally in favor of the project.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated all you have to do is look at what's happening. He pointed out that 19,000 vehicles travel that road daily.

Mr. Pearce stated this is an investment. It is infrastructure that will be needed down the road.

Mr. Pearce stated we need to cover Hopelands/Rye Patch and the Theater divisions.

Councilman Dewar stated he had a comment. He said there is \$35,000 for a video surveillance system and \$11,000 for theft prevention. He said he has an ADT system in his house that does not cost that much. He asked if we could get some kind of alarm system to monitor that. Mr. Pearce pointed out he has severely cut that back. Councilman Dewar asked if there are any alarms there now. Mr. Parker stated there are alarms at Rye Patch and the Thoroughbred Hall of Fame as well as a fire prevention system.

On the Theater, Councilman Dewar asked if Mr. Pearce had deleted the marquee sign for \$76,000, and Mr. Pearce responded that he had.

Councilman Dewar stated he had found the budgeting process of reviewing the four major departments interesting and he liked the process. He pointed out now we have to assimilate this and put it together when Council has their worksession for the budget. He said it would be nice to have a list of the new items, but the Councilmembers could individually look at the packets and generate that themselves. Mr. Pearce stated if it would be helpful to Council in his cover memo he will refer to the discussions with the different departments.

Councilwoman Price stated she did not want to see Mr. Parker leave as there is too much expertise walking out the door.

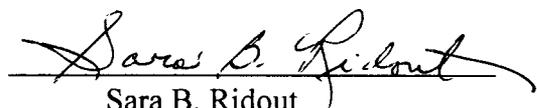
Councilman Dewar asked if application for the position to replace Mr. Parker is closed. Mr. Pearce stated it closes on April 25, 2014. In response to a question as to how it was advertised, Mr. Pearce stated we advertised regional—southeast. He said he did not have the number of applicants, but did have applications internal and external. Councilman Dewar asked if Mr. Pearce would publicize the last three applicants.

Councilwoman Price stated one of the things she misses is being able to talk to the person as a Council body. She said it would be nice to be able to meet the department directors being hired before the world meets them. She pointed out that it would be nice to be able to talk to the person to be hired for the Capital Projects Sales Tax. Councilman Ebner stated Council has a say so in the person to be hired for the Capital Projects Sales Tax projects. He said Council has a say so for that person because that is a separate pot of money which Council controls. Mr. Pearce stated he did not agree with that. He said the hiring and firing is with the City Manager. He said if we narrow the field to three candidates and Council would like to meet them that could be done. Councilman Ebner stated it was the Capital Projects Sales Tax that he was talking about. Mr. Pearce stated regardless of the funding source the three appointments that Council makes by City Code are the City Manager, the City Attorney and the City Solicitor.

Councilwoman Price stated she was not saying that Council should get into the City Manager's business in terms of hiring and firing, but it would be nice to meet them.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk