

Aiken City Council Minutes

Aiken's Horizons

February 1, 2003

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

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

The Aiken City Council met in the City Council Chambers in the Municipal Building at 214 Park Avenue SW for continuation of their annual Council retreat called Horizons 2003, beginning at 7:45 A.M. with breakfast.

CHARACTER PROGRAM

Mayor Cavanaugh reviewed the Character Program, giving a brief history of the program for Aiken, and the current meetings and programs of the Character Program. He pointed out Aiken was the first city in South Carolina to become a city of Character.

NORTHSIDE RENEWAL PROGRAM

Mr. LeDuc reviewed the programs which the city had started over the past few years to revitalize the northside, which he stated had been a scattered site approach with funds applied in areas as property became available. This approach has been successful, but has a limited overall impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. LeDuc also reviewed a proposed program for renewal of the northside whereby areas would be targeted for renewal and redevelopment of an entire neighborhood. The city would purchase vacant lots and build houses to revitalize the areas. Also present was Harvey Ramseur from Second Baptist Church and Reggie Barner from the Housing Authority. Mr. LeDuc pointed out these groups and the city would work together, along with other churches in the city, to target an area. He showed Council maps pointing out the number of vacant lots in areas. It was pointed out that Toole Hill has the largest concentration of substandard housing and vacant lots of any northside neighborhood and it was suggested that this be the first targeted area, with the Edgewood community the next targeted area.

Mr. LeDuc reviewed the cost involved and funding for the project and the return that the city would get from its investment in the community.

Council discussed the proposed program at length, and it was the general consensus of Council for the city to proceed with the program.

REVENUE

Mr. LeDuc then reviewed the revenue projections, pointing out the loss of revenue for telecommunications and vehicle tax and how this would affect the budget. He pointed out the city needed some other source of revenue or services would have to be cut. He suggested some additional revenue sources could be reinstatement of the hospitality tax, increasing the franchise fee for the electric companies, other possible fees or a tax millage increase.

Council discussed the matter at length and felt this matter needed a lot of study by Council.

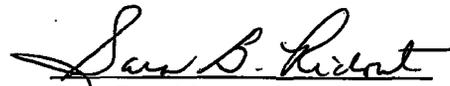
GOALS

Mr. LeDuc stated each year at Horizons Council reviews the programs and operations of the city and sets goals as to what they would like to see accomplished next year.

Mr. LeDuc reviewed the discussions so far at this Horizons and stated he understood from Council that they would like for the staff to redo the employee evaluation form, conduct a survey of the citizens regarding whether they would prefer curbside garbage pickup or an increase in garbage fees, proceed with the proposed quarterly trash pickup program, establish a Recreation Committee, move forward with studying proposed use of the Old Playhouse building on Price Avenue and Two Notch Road, and proceed with plans for Phase I of the Northside Housing Plan. He said decisions still need to be made on a proposed greenway plan, recommendations regarding a Parks and Recreation Maintenance facility by staff, and consideration of increasing water and sewer rates.

Council then proceeded to list goals for the fiscal year 2003-04 which will be presented to Council for formal adoption.

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.



Sara B. Ridout  
City Clerk