

Aiken City Council Minutes

January 28, 2012

Aiken's Horizons

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

Others Present: Richard Pearce, Gary Smith, Ed Evans, Larry Morris, Glenn Parker, Kim Abney, Sara Ridout, Tim Coakley, Joseph Nix, and Amy Banton of the Aiken Standard.

The Aiken City Council met at Rye Patch at 100 Berrie Road SW for continuation of their annual Council retreat called Horizons 2012, beginning at 8 A.M. with breakfast.

CAPITAL PROJECTS TIMELINES

Mr. Richard Pearce, City Manager, asked that Council delay review of the Capital Projects Timelines and go on to the Mid-Year Progress Report. He stated Public Safety had received an emergency call that Officer Sandy Rogers had been shot, so the session may be cut short.

MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Pearce reviewed and reported on the status of the short-term and continuing goals which were set for FY 2011-12.

In discussing city communications there was a question as to whether emergency situations are connected with ETV as a means to communicate to the public also, in addition to the internet and social media.

In discussing the work at the Whitney polo field, it was pointed out the trustees have not come to an agreement with the city for future work on the field. Council felt this goal should be moved to Continuing Goals, since this will probably not be done soon.

There was a question regarding the pickup of recycling materials. Mr. Coakley reported that the citizens at this time preferred the smaller container and weekly pickup of recycling materials. Council wondered if there could be a savings if the city only picked up recycling materials every other week.

In discussing the comparison of City of Aiken employee benefits and salary surveys, it was suggested that the city compare these items with the private sector also where possible. It was also pointed out that the city needs to keep its benefits and salaries comparable with other cities, or we will be losing some of our best employees.

Councilman Wells asked about the status of the city's Channel 4 and any progress being made to update the system. Mr. Pearce responded that we had been checking with the private sector to see what choices may be available. He said this would be considered in working on the new budget. An update would probably require someone dedicated to take care of the channel.

Councilwoman Price stated she would like to see something added to attract and keep young professionals in Aiken. She felt there was not a lot for the young professionals to do in Aiken.

GOALS

Mr. Pearce 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. Council has just received a review of last year's goals and needs to set goals for budget year 2012-13. The proposed goals will be presented to Council for formal adoption in February.

There was discussion and concern expressed about maintaining streets and infrastructure and concern about them not being put in properly. There was also concern about concept plans being built and not following the plan presented.

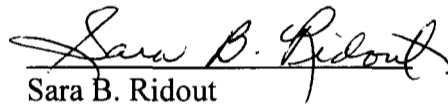
Concern was expressed about youth in our community. Concern was also expressed about not having a full time employee certified in recreational planning at Smith-Hazel who can plan activities for youth in the community.

A suggestion was also made that the city Public Safety and the Sheriff's Department partner with other organizations to help non-violent offenders get back into the work place and keep them out of prison.

It was also suggested that the city do a very comprehensive study of the Municipal Airport operations.

It was suggested that perhaps a forum or town meeting be held for citizens to discuss various issues and projects that they would like to see happen. It was also suggested that Councilmembers might want to attend the various homeowners' association meetings and discuss issues and problems with them.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 A.M.


Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk