

PUBLIC NOTICE

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Meeting

The Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 3:30 P.M. The meeting will be held at the Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center at 841 Edgefield Avenue NW.

EXECUTIVE SESSION NOTICE

The Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet in Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(2) of the South Carolina Code to discuss matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

Specifically, the Aiken Municipal Development Commission will discuss matters regarding property in the downtown area.

Aiken Municipal Development Commission

Agenda

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center
841 Edgefield Avenue NW

September 15, 2020

3:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of Agenda for September 15, 2020
2. Approval of Minutes for the August 18, 2020, meeting.
3. Acceptance of the Resignation of Chair Tim Dangerfield and the Nomination/Election of a new Chair.
4. Discussion of the Commission Makeup Considering Action Presently under City Council Consideration Regarding Council Member Roles, to Include the Commission's Future Role in Nominations or Appointments to the Body.
5. Update on the AECOM Economic Development Master Plan by Tim O'Briant.
6. DOE Plutonium \$600 Million Settlement Distribution. An Update on a Meeting Attended by City/Chamber of Commerce/AMDC Representatives to Discuss Local Priorities for the Funding and the Best Ways to Make our Community's Case for Local Allocation to the General Assembly.
7. Comments by Commission Members.
8. Information and Updates from Staff.
9. Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Minutes

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center

August 18, 2020

Present: Tim Dangerfield, Ed Girardeau, Stuart MacVean, Lessie Price, Chris Verenes, Ed Woltz, and Keith Wood.

Absent: Marty Gillam and Tom Williams

Others Present: Stuart Bedenbaugh, Tim O'Briant, Sabina Craig, Brian Brazier, Sara Ridout, Jane Page Thompson, Sharon Richardson, Laura Bagwell, Susan Hook, Colin Demarest, Susan French, Robert Stack, and Bill McGhee.

Mr. Dangerfield called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

The first item of business was approval of the agenda for August 18, 2020. Mr. Dangerfield stated he would like to move Item 5. "Discussion of Potential Recommendation to City Council regarding Alteration to the Organization and Membership of the AMDC Through Potential Amendments to the Enabling Ordinance to be Considered by City Council" to be Item 9 on the agenda after Executive Session.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. MacVean, that the agenda be approved with the amendment to move Item 5 to Item 9 after the Executive Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Dangerfield asked the Commission to consider approval of the August 4, 2020, minutes. He noted that on page 3 it was stated that Mr. Verenes abstained from voting and that should state that Mr. Verenes recused himself from voting. Mr. Woltz moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the minutes of the August 4, 2020, meeting be approved with the correction noted. The motion was unanimously approved.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Jane Page Thompson

Green Commerce Initiative

Mr. Dangerfield stated the next item of business was a presentation from Jane Page Thompson regarding potential Economic Development Projects in and around the City of Aiken entitled as a Green Commerce Initiative.

Ms. Jane Page Thompson, present as a citizen, noted that several of those present had heard the presentation before. City Council members had heard the presentation in a work session and in other individual meetings. She noted that the City had already budgeted everything in the proposal at one time or another. They have also already presented every initiative listed in the handout as a goal of City Council or one of its appointed boards and commissions. She said the proposal lists everything the City needs to do from an infrastructure standpoint and makes it a conservation led economic development initiative. She pointed out that Sharon Richardson is working with the Land Conservancy on a parcel of land that is just above the end of the City of Aiken's water line on Shiloh Church Road. It surrounds the City of Aiken's entire water

reservoir for about 28% of the water service customers on the north side of Aiken and for the downtown area. It is a very important thing to protect our water reservoir. She noted that DOT is about to replace the Shaws Creek bridge which is right at the City of Aiken's Water Treatment Plant. She noted that the City is about to spend about \$28 million to build a new Water Treatment Plant. There is a way for the City to use the historic lowest interest rates to lessen \$110,000,000 of infrastructure projects which have already been identified as important. She reviewed several projects and noted various funding sources that could be applied for to help fund the projects.

Ms. Sharon Richardson, Resilient Lands, Consultant for the Aiken Land Conservancy, explained how the City can invest and capitalize on parcels that surround the City's 85-acre reservoir. She pointed out there is a 2,500 acre tract of forest land that surrounds the Mason's Branch Reservoir. Various proposed development plans for this property have included 4,000 home sites, golf courses and assorted commercial options. She noted the Clean Water Fund, Wet Land Credit sales, public-private partnership with ALC, and the State Forestry Commission as ways to purchase and preserve the land surrounding the City's water sources. She pointed out that one of the advantages of the City being the applicant and getting a loan at low cost money that only the City has access to, is that the City would be eligible for some of the grants also.

Ms. Laura Bagwell, Aiken Area Water Commissioner and Edisto River Basin Commission Member, stated Jane Page Thompson had introduced the idea of making an investment in City water quality and Sharon elaborated specifically on how the City can invest and capitalize on a 2,500 acre parcel called Brunswick tract that surrounds the City's 85-acre drinking water reservoir. She noted that she had prepared a handout which had been distributed to those present regarding the City of Aiken Public Water Supply which she called an annotated illustration of the City of Aiken's water supply and the issues facing the water supply. She pointed out the handout focuses on Shaws Creek. She stated 20% to 30% of the City's drinking water comes from the surface water supply at Shaws Creek which rises in Edgefield County and flows into Aiken County and eventually into the South Edisto River. The water treatment plant on Highway 1 pumps water from Shaws Creek and distributes it to the City's residences and businesses mostly north of Richland Avenue. The City's water treatment plant is about 70 years old, and the people who work there are holding that water treatment plant together. She said we had talked about a grant and the \$30 million investment that the City is going to make in a new water treatment plant. She noted some things we can do to make sure the present water treatment plant and the new one will be run as efficiently as possible is to test the quality and quantity of the water coming into the water treatment plant. She pointed out Aiken gets water out of Shaws Creek, but sometimes there is not enough water in Shaws Creek, and supplemental water comes from the 85-acre emergency reservoir. The reservoir was acquired by the City in the early-1980s and has been opened about four times to supplement the City's flow of drinking water. She pointed out the 2,500 acre parcel that surrounds the 85-acre reservoir is the most important parcel for lots of reasons. There have been various development scenarios floated as to what can happen to that parcel. Some have been a golf course and other commercial recreational type developments, and clearing the land for up to 4,000 homes with septic tanks. She pointed out that whatever investment the City makes to protect the Mason Branch Reservoir today, even though it may seem significant, take it and compare it to what it would cost to repair the quality of the reservoir or to build a new reservoir. She said the message she wanted to leave is "protecting it is a lot cheaper than replacing it."

Ms. Thompson pointed out the charts in the information packet she had distributed which show the projects, the estimated cost, funds budgeted, and possible funding sources. She pointed out the numbers do get mindboggling, but we need to look at how to achieve this universal concept and have Aiken become a healthy green community which is one of the things the Chamber of Commerce talked about. We need to attract millennials. Being a healthy green community would help us do that. She said having an area just above the city limits which will eventually be annexed into the city because of the annexation policy, helps to develop tourism spots right at the interstate. She said she was excited about the Strategic Plan which is to be presented by AECOM in September about how we can welcome people at the interstate into our city. She pointed out when one exits either Exit 18 or 22, there is 8 miles to go to get to Aiken and that area is ripe for constructive development. As the City looks at how we are going to deal with the Pine Log Connector Road, that is development that will have roads, brick and sidewalks, all these things play into how we develop in encouraging growth and tourists. The Municipal Economic Development Commission is in a unique position to see the different places that the City is trying to grow. She noted the historic low interest rates, and stated we need to capitalize and leverage it. We need to couch it and create a pre-existing credit that Will Williams can use to help attract economic development to Aiken. It will help us to leverage the Amazon reinitiative, the Kimberly-Clark reinitiative, and the Savannah River Site. This can't be done on the federal level; it has to be done on the municipal level to maximize the return for the City itself.

Ms. Thompson stated we are in a unique position to leverage Aiken's existing infrastructure which are our parkways and Hitchcock Woods. We have the leverage and the political will for the first time. She pointed out that now is the right time to move forward. We also know that we can't ignore some of these things. Our infrastructure problems in the City of Aiken have been ignored for 20 years. It will impact development in the future. She said we are at a critical point. It is something the average person can get excited about, whether they are picking up trash in a park for litter control, recycling plastic bags, putting green horseshoes on the street, we love our trees, our greenery, and our parkways. This is something we can leverage all of this into a conservation for economic development packet.

Mr. Bedenbaugh noted that City Council had been proactive with conserving the water shed at least from the water plant heading north of Shaws Creek. They have allowed over the last four years a number of 319 Grants to preserve the water shed on Shaws Creek. He pointed out there was a developer that was interested in putting a golf course on the property in the Shaws Creek area, but with the pandemic induced economic downturn, they don't seem to be interested at this time. There were discussions with the Land Conservancy and with the Water Conservation Commission to try to work out some way to conserve the water shed, but the two sides were not able to come to an agreement because of the conservation element and the potential disturbance of the reservoir. Access to utilities was a big issue as well for them. He said he wanted to provide some of the background for the property. He pointed out that the current owner of the Brunswick property is from the Batesburg-Leesville/Lexington area. He is very conservation minded, and he has been very patient with trying to find a future that would allow it to be conservation-binded. He said we have talked to Council about this matter over the last three and one-half years. He said he felt we are finally getting to the point where we will have additional discussions with Council now.

Ms. Thompson stated the presentation was for information for the Municipal Development Commission.

Ms. Bagwell pointed out the list that Jane Page Thompson had put together for \$110,315,500 for Aiken's Green Commerce Initiative. She said it is a great idea, and it is certainly cheaper to bundle things than to do them piecemeal. She said speaking specifically to the issues relative to Shaws Creek and the City of Aiken's water quality, she said there is no better time to do this than today. She noted that in terms of the stakeholders and the people who use the water, they have never been more aware than they are right now about where our water is coming from and what the issues are about our water. This is because of development and new demands for ground water and surface water out of the Edisto River. She pointed out that ground water and surface water are connected. She noted that people these days know where their water comes from. She pointed out this is the time to sell this to the stakeholders, the citizens, taxpayers; they are as ready as they will ever be as they are interested in these issues these days.

HOTEL AIKEN

Letter of Concern

Mr. Dangerfield stated the next item for discussion was a draft letter to City Council regarding the paused redevelopment of the Hotel Aiken by the owners of the property. He said at the last meeting he got a consensus from the members present to draft a letter to Council to ask that some action be taken at Hotel Aiken to address the concerns of public safety, health, morals, and welfare of the City of Aiken, especially the concern of the danger of fire related to lack of a functioning fire suppression system.

Mr. Dangerfield pointed out that he had talked to the City Attorney about the concern at the last meeting regarding voting. He pointed out there are nine members; one member was absent at the last meeting; one member recused himself, and three members abstained from voting. He noted that Gary Smith, City Attorney, had stated that four members was the number needed to vote on a matter at the last meeting. Because three members abstained, they counted as being present.

He stated the letter had been drafted, reviewed by the members, and mailed to the Mayor and Council. He pointed out the letter asked Council to take the following actions:

1. Within 10 days, require the owners of the site to provide manned 24-hour security and fire-watch to secure the property from vagrants, report lightning damage and any other such peril that could ignite a fire in the structure.
2. Require the existing building (where is, as is) be fitted with a fully functioning alarm and fire suppression system (to include sprinklers) within 90 days of notice requiring such from the City officials responsible for such enforcement. Upon satisfactory installation, the site owners could be relieved of the burden imposed by the initial manned security requirement as City codes enforcement officers deem reasonable.
3. If the owners of the site refuse to themselves abate the fire danger as demanded, the City must cause these safety measures to be taken at its own expense, the cost of which would be entered as a mechanic's lien against the property.

Captain Brian Brazier, of the Aiken Public Safety Department, stated the City had required a fire detection system throughout the hotel. They were required to put that in once the exploratory demolition process started inside the building. The sprinkler system was out of service, and the

City required a heat detection system throughout the whole building. This was a temporary process with the understanding that when the renovation process started, the sprinkler system was to be put back into service. He said he had requested a meeting with the owners to review what they are doing, and that they move forward to making the building as safe as possible.

Comments from Staff

Mr. Tim O'Briant reported that at the City Council meeting on Monday, August 10, 2020, the initial basic Redevelopment Plan One was approved by City Council by resolution. He pointed out that the document gives the Commission a plan to begin considering the area. He noted that the Commission has been given a document with permission of Council to study the targeted area so we can move forward.

Mr. Dangerfield stated the Mayor had been asked about funding for the Municipal Development Commission.

Mr. O'Briant stated regarding funding, there have been some committee meetings regarding who to speak to and generally what kind of support we are seeking. We are in the process now of establishing meetings with those whom we believe would be supportive of our efforts.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Dangerfield stated the Commission needed to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(2) of the South Carolina Code to discuss matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body. Specifically, the Aiken Municipal Development Commission will discuss matters regarding property in the downtown area.

Mr. Verenes moved, seconded by Mr. MacVean, that the Commission go into executive session to discuss matters noted by Mr. Dangerfield. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission went into executive session at 4:15 P.M.

After discussion, Mr. MacVean moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Commission come out of executive session. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission came out of executive session at 5:05 P.M.

Membership of Commission

Mr. Dangerfield asked if the Commission would like to make a recommendation to City Council regarding the makeup of the membership of the Municipal Development Commission.

Mr. Verenes moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the Commission recommend to City Council that the Municipal Development Commission remain as a nine member Commission, that the three Councilmembers remain on the Commission as non-voting ex-officio members, and that Council appoint three more members to replace the three Councilmembers as voting members. The motion was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Verenes moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk

TIMOTHY N. DANGERFIELD

240 Lancaster Street, SW
Aiken, South Carolina 29801

September 2, 2020

Dear Mayor Osbon, Members of the Aiken City Council, and Members of the Aiken Municipal Development Commission,

On Tuesday of this week, I was interviewed by the South Carolina legislative committee who reviewed my qualifications for re-election as an Appellate Panelist (Judge) for the Department of Employment and Workforce. I have held this job for ten years, having been elected by the South Carolina legislature in May of 2010, and re-elected in June of 2012 and June of 2016.

This committee was to have met in February of this year to review our qualifications, and voting by the House and Senate was to take place in April or May.

My job as an Appellate Panelist (Judge) for the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce falls under South Carolina codes, one of which is the South Carolina Judicial Code of Conduct (JCC), Canon 4(C)(2) that states:

A judge shall not accept appointment to a governmental committee or commission or other governmental position that is concerned with issues of fact or policy on matters other than improvement of the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice.

Under this code, I am not allowed to accept a position on the Aiken Municipal Development Commission. After attending my interview process on this past Tuesday and reviewing the Code, I realized that I cannot fulfill my obligation as a commissioner.

I really enjoyed working with this group, appreciate the appointment, and was interested to see the numerous opportunities for advancing our community. Therefore, I submit my resignation.



Tim Dangerfield

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