

PUBLIC NOTICE

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Meeting

The Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet on Tuesday, October 6, 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 receive legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney client privilege.

Aiken Municipal Development Commission

Agenda

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

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

3:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of Agenda for October 6, 2020
2. Approval of Minutes for the September 15, 2020, meeting.
3. Recommendations for Vacant Position on the Municipal Development Commission.
4. Update on the AECOM Economic Development Master Plan by Tim O'Briant.
5. Discussion Regarding Bylaws for MDC.
6. Comments by Commission Members.
7. Information and Updates from Staff.
8. Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Minutes

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center
September 15, 2020

Present: Keith Wood, Marty Gillam, David Jameson, Philip Merry, Doug Slaughter, Chris Verenes, and Tom Williams.

Absent: Stuart MacVean

Others Present: Stuart Bedenbaugh, Tim O'Briant, Sabina Craig, Ryan Bland, Diana Floyd, Sara Ridout, Mayor Osbon, and Colin Demarest, of the Aiken Standard.

Mr. Wood, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

The first item of business was approval of the agenda for September 15, 2020. A motion was made and seconded that the agenda for September 15, 2020, be approved.

Mr. Wood asked for approval of the minutes for the August 18, 2020, meeting. Mr. Williams moved, seconded by Mr. Gilliam, that the minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Wood noted that several changes had occurred since the Commission's last meeting. He pointed out that Tim Dangerfield serves as an appellate panelist for the South Carolina Department of Employment & Workforce for the State of South Carolina, and it has been ruled that because of that he would not be able to serve on the Municipal Development Commission so Mr. Dangerfield has resigned. He noted Mr. Dangerfield's letter of resignation was included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Wood stated he would like to report to the Commission the decision made at the City Council meeting on Monday, September 14, 2020. City Council has decided to appoint David Jameson to the Commission. Mr. Jameson was formerly an ex-officio member of the Commission, but will now be a voting member of the Commission. Also, Council appointed Philip Merry and Doug Slaughter to the Commission as voting members. Mr. Wood welcomed the new members and noted that the Commission is a very active group and meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month. He said the Commission wants to be aggressive and help the City.

Mr. Wood asked the new members to tell the group about themselves as far as their background.

Reverend Slaughter stated he is pastor of the Second Baptist Church and has just started his 29th year in Aiken as pastor of Second Baptist. He said the church had been very active in the community, particularly regarding education and housing. He said their Community Development Commission is about to finish their 100+ house on the northside. They recently purchased the old Bi-Lo building on York Street and that will be the new site for Second Baptist Church event center. The building should be finished in about a month. They will be able to seat about 350 for an event. He said when we can get around COVID he would like for the

Commission members to come and see what they are doing and how they can help Aiken grow economically.

Mr. Merry stated he had grown up in Aiken and had been a Councilmember. He said he was happy to be able to serve on the Commission as he felt economic development was a critical issue for the city.

Mr. Wood noted that David Jameson is President of the Chamber of Commerce, and he has been appointed as a voting member of the Commission. He has a strong background for economic development and represents a lot of businesses in Aiken through the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Wood noted there is one more position on the Commission to fill the nine positions. He said he understood City Council is looking for someone to fill that position. He pointed out that Mr. Dangerfield had asked that the Commission members submit some names in an email at the Commission's last meeting. Those names were submitted. He asked that Commission members look at the names and possibly discuss those at the next meeting. He noted he was not suggesting discussing them at this meeting as there was no biographic information on the names submitted. He thought there were three names on the list, and he would like to ask the group to look at the names and discuss the listing at the next meeting before submitting a suggestion to City Council. He said Council was looking for the Commission to make a recommendation.

Mr. Wood stated the Commission needs to appoint a new Chair. He asked for recommendations from the Commission. Mr. Verenes moved that Mr. Wood be elected Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gillam. Mr. Wood noted that in his job he travels a good bit and that may affect his attendance at meetings. He said he would be willing to serve with that being known and the Commission would need to appoint a Vice Chair. The motion was unanimously approved to elect Mr. Wood as Chair.

Mr. Wood stated the Commission needed to elect a Vice Chair. Mr. Gilliam moved, seconded by Mr. Williams that Mr. Verenes be elected Vice Chair of the Commission. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Tim O'Briant gave an update on the AECOM Economic Development Master Plan. He noted that the Project Leader Marsha Tobin had been stalled by COVID 19 and it had stalled the redevelopment plan for some months. Also, a couple of her team members had left the firm. Ms. Tobin has called upon a couple of very senior people in AECOM to help complete the plan. The original agreement was the plan would be complete by the end of September and now he understands it will be November before the plan is complete. He said he would be working with AECOM to get a definite date for completion of the plan. He said he wants to be sure we are getting a good plan.

In response to a question regarding the plan being presented at the Chamber's annual State of the Community, Mr. Jameson responded that had changed because of not knowing the completion date. Mayor Osbon is now to be the speaker and will report on the state of the community on September 30, 2020.

Mr. Jameson stated his concern is that COVID may have changed the reality of the things that may be able to happen or may have delayed them. He said it seems that the timing of bringing this out has to be a time when our community thinks it is realistic to follow the plan. He said

other factors have to go into the plan because the community will have to have confidence that this is a new plan for the community.

The Commission members then discussed the plan, the status of the plan, and the timing of the plan considering the economy because of COVID. The Commission wondered if they could be of help in some way in getting the plan completed. It was pointed out that at some point we will come out of COVID, and we need to be ready to go forward with our economic development plan and changes for the community. Mr. Jameson stated in talking about action, he hoped the private sector would be inspired and that developers can find projects that they want to go forward with.

Mr. O'Briant stated he felt we have a good working relationship with Ms. Tobin, and the issue of a deadline not being set is understandable. He said he would try to get the deadline set in the next week. If by the next meeting we do not have confidence that we have a definite date for completion, then maybe we could move to a more official notice regarding the contract that we have and formally issue a notice with AECOM that we have some concern about the performance and what the contract calls for.

Commission members asked if there were any idea of where AECOM is in the plan—whether it is 50% or 75% complete. Mr. O'Briant stated based on the feedback that he had received, he felt Ms. Tobin had characterized the plan as being about 40% complete with the initial collection of information and data. It was also pointed out that if the plan schedule had been met, it would have come out in March or April in the middle of the shutdown for COVID and that probably would not have been a good time for the plan to be presented.

Mr. Wood asked that the status of the Economic Development Master Plan be put on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Wood asked that the Commission discuss the \$600 million DOE Plutonium settlement distribution to the State of South Carolina. As background there has been an ongoing suit between the State of South Carolina and DOE for some time regarding making the determination as to what DOE is going to do with the material that was sent to the Savannah River Site years ago. There is language in place that will require the DOE to pay the State if the material is not removed during a certain timeframe. According to the stories in the Aiken Standard there was a settlement that took place a couple of weeks ago between the United States Department of Energy and the State of South Carolina and the Attorney General's Office to the tune of \$600 million that will be forthcoming to the State. A sizeable portion of that will pay for attorney's fees. Probably about \$525 million or so will be forthcoming. From our understanding the funds will be going to the Attorney General's Office and then will be moved over to the General Fund and the General Assembly will make a determination as to where the funds will be allocated. He said that is a lot of money. There are many within this community who feel that most of those funds should be forthcoming to the communities that are impacted around the Savannah River Site. Many people and organizations are saying funds should go to various places. Mr. Wood stated the reason this matter is on the agenda is there has been some discussion with Aiken County and the City of Aiken and members of the Municipal Development Commission to start trying to put together information on why Aiken County needs to get our fair share of the funds. Meetings have taken place. A foundation is being built to make sure that our General Assembly and our State Delegation understand that, and that we are having those discussions with the right persons. He said he was sure that Barnwell and Allendale Counties and other counties in the

area will also be asking for the funds. There is a major concern that the State of South Carolina may not think of Aiken, Barnwell and those surrounding the Savannah River Site. They may think that the money may need to go for State purposes. We want to make sure we have voices at the table. He said he would ask that Mr. Jameson, Mr. Verenes and others who were at the meeting make any comments regarding the matter.

Mr. Jameson stated the Attorney General has made it clear and our Congressmen have made it that Aiken County, Barnwell County, and Allendale County should be the recipients of a “setaside” of the funds. He said the question in his mind is what is the right amount. What should we have in our minds to pursue. He said a couple of the meetings in which he had been, the local thought is 100% of the funds, with the logic being that if Boeing were having a settlement with the State of South Carolina that money would go to Charleston County and Aiken would not be entitled to the funds. If B&W were having a big settlement with the State of South Carolina, he did not feel that Aiken County would expect any of the funds. It was felt the same should apply here. He said trying to understand the process and trying to figure out who is going to make the ultimate decision is real important so we can get organized. One of the things that came out of one meeting he was in is that if the issue is a Savannah River Site issue, then maybe the projects that are proposed should be the kind of things that positively impact the Savannah River Site. He said something that comes to his mind is the City and County are working together very closely on the Whiskey Road Corridor Study and the engineering on the drainage piece of it now. He said fund that project with \$30 million as it is the main flow of traffic to the Site. The University is working with the AMC and the National Guard Dream Port for \$15 million for the Dream Port. The University says they need another \$10 million on the AMC which would make \$25 million. He said no one knows what is the logical amount to have of the funds. We don’t know if the State is going to keep the funds, put it in the General Fund and try to balance everything they lost through COVID.

Mr. Wood stated the belief is that Aiken County and the City of Aiken really need to be making sure we educate our leaders and those who are going to be decision makers because 50% of the workforce of SRS lives in Aiken County and half of that number lives within the city limits of Aiken. There is a strong feeling that Aiken County and the City of Aiken needs to be at the table. Mr. O’Briant pointed out that 76% of the SRS South Carolina workforce live in Aiken County.

The Commission members then discussed the matter regarding who they should talk with and contact regarding the funds. It was felt that it is a State issue, but all officials, state, federal and county should be contacted regarding the matter.

Mayor Osbon was present and stated that a meeting had been held with Senator Tom Young regarding the matter as well as the County, and it was felt that we should form a coalition with the other entities, such as Barnwell and other areas that have been impacted because of the MOX not being done. He said there are some key things that make sense to focus on such as economic development and environment for a portion of the funds. He stated they had been working with the Delegation. He said in the settlement there was no designation of the funds. The funds are unrestricted. Designation of the funds is up to the General Assembly.

The Commission members felt that funds could be used for infrastructure, especially along Whiskey Road for water lines, sewer lines, stormwater, sidewalks, etc. It was noted that the vast majority of the workforce of SRS live in Aiken and improvements in the infrastructure from the

SRS to downtown Aiken would help the SRS and benefit the city tremendously. It was noted that what would be a fair allocation should be considered first.

The Commission members continued to discuss the matter, discussing who should be contacted, how much money would be a fair allocation, who should get the funds, what would be the best way to go about seeking some of the funds, what projects we would want to request funds for, a recovery fund for the risks that have been incurred by having plutonium in our community, and forming a coalition to work with others to request funds so we are not divided and fighting against each other.

Mr. Wood stated he felt the Commission's task is to determine what they think is the right thing to do and reasons why funding should come to the city. He felt this is a huge opportunity for this community, and the Commission should work with the city staff, Mayor and others to help build a case. He asked that if Commission members had additional thoughts and ideas to send him an email or give him a phone call. He said the ideas would be put together as we send the Commission's information to the city. As needed the matter will be put back on the agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Wood asked if there were any comments from Commission members about any matters. Mr. Gillam asked if there were any more discussion on the land around the Shaws Creek area surrounding the City's water supply. Mr. Wood stated the Commission did not take any action. The matter was received as information.

Mr. O'Briant noted that the Commission could not take action as the land is outside the city limits. The Commission's purview is within the city limits. He said the Commission may receive information like that, and if the Commission wants they can give advice to City Council. He said the Commission is an advisory group and can take no action related to that item.

It was noted that information previously sent to the Commission members should be sent to the three new Commission members to give them some information on previous matters discussed.

Mr. Wood pointed out that the Commission does not have bylaws. He felt a subcommittee should be formed to work on bylaws for the Commission. The formation of a subcommittee will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mayor Osbon welcomed the new members of the Commission and thanked them for being willing to serve. He noted regarding bylaws, City Council felt the Commission should have the autonomy to create their own bylaws. He noted there are models from other Commissions that can be used as a starting point for the group. He said they want the Commission to be able to move and operate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Wood 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. Merry moved, seconded by Mr. Gillam, that the Commission go into executive session to discuss matters noted by Mr. Wood. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission went into executive session at 4:25 P.M.

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

The Commission came out of executive session at 5:25 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Verenes moved, seconded by Mr. Merry, that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk