

# Aiken Municipal Development Commission

## Agenda

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

December 15, 2020

3:30 P.M.

### CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of Agenda for December 15, 2020.
2. Approval of Minutes for December 1, 2020.
3. Nomination and Election to Fill the Position of Treasurer.
4. Presentation of \$10,000 Grant to Defray Costs Associated with the Economic Development Action Plan Preparation – Savannah River Remediation  
President Philip Breidenbach
5. Follow-up Discussion and Update Regarding the AECOM Economic Development Action Plan.
6. Discussion of AMDC's Submittal of a List of Priorities and Specific Requests for Funding Related to the South Carolina Plutonium Settlement.
7. AMDC Strategic Plan Summit Scheduling and Preparation – Tom Hallman.
8. Comments by Commission Members.
9. Information and Updates from Staff.

### ADJOURNMENT

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Minutes

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center  
December 1, 2020

Present: Keith Wood, Marty Gillam, David Jameson, Doug Slaughter, and Chris Verenes.

Absent: Stuart MacVean, Philip Merry, and Tom Williams.

Others Present: Stuart Bedenbaugh, Tim O'Briant, Sabina Craig, Sara Ridout, Diana Floyd, Tom Hallman, Councilmember Price, and Landon Stamper of the Aiken Standard.

Mr. Wood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

The first item of business was approval of the agenda for December 1, 2020. Mr. Slaughter moved, seconded by Mr. Verenes that the agenda be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

MINUTES

Mr. Wood asked the members to consider approval of the minutes for the November 17, 2020, meeting. Mr. Verenes moved, seconded by Mr. Slaughter, that the minutes for the November 17, 2020, meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

BYLAWS

Mr. Wood stated the next item was review of proposed bylaws. He noted that several changes were discussed at the last meeting. He stated Mr. O'Briant made changes and would review those changes for the Commission.

Mr. O'Briant pointed out in Article III, Section 3 there was concern about terms of Commissioners. He noted that had been reworded for the terms to be four years and staggered terms to be set up. Term limits were eliminated. In Section 5 a change was made regarding attendance to: the Chairman having the discretion to seek the resignation of any member regularly failing to attend without an excuse deemed valid. Section 12 previously allowed the Commission members to get together outside of the meeting and agree upon an item, but as a public body in South Carolina that is not allowed so that was deleted. The new Section 12 regarding the terms and removal of officers changed from being in office one year to two years. The reference to an Executive Committee was stricken in Section 7, Article 5. In Article VII, Section 1 reference to Executive Committee was deleted and replaced with wording that the Chair may appoint committees as needed. In Article VIII, Section 2, a sentence was added that the Commission shall annually evaluate the performance of the Economic Development Director and provide the evaluation to the City Manager. Mr. O'Briant noted those were the major changes in the proposed bylaws discussed by the Commission at the last meeting.

Mr. Jameson stated he had thought of one thing which the Commission did not discuss at the last meeting. He asked if it was the assumption that the Vice Chair is the Chair Elect or once the Chair's term ends the Commission votes on all the officers. He said he felt for the Vice Chair to become the Chair would be good for continuity. It was felt that could be added to the bylaws.

Mr. Wood pointed out that drawing straws to determine the length of the terms of the members could be done at the proposed planning session of the Commission.

Mr. O'Briant pointed out that not all appointments to the Commission had been made yet, and asked if the Commission wanted to determine the staggered term lengths before the vacant position was filled.

Mr. Wood noted that there were only five members present at this meeting. He pointed out that the Commission needed to elect a Treasurer. He said that could be done at a future meeting when more of the members are present. Also, the Commission needs to recommend a name for appointment for the ninth member of the Commission. Mr. Wood asked that the Commission members think about names of persons to fill the ninth position on the Commission and then elect a Treasurer. He noted that the Commission needs to recommend a name of a person to City Council for appointment to the Commission.

Mr. Gillam moved, seconded by Mr. Slaughter, that the Commission approve the bylaws as changed and adding the amendment Mr. Jameson mentioned regarding the Vice Chair becoming the Chair of the Commission. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### COMMENTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

##### Downtown Structures

##### Hotel Aiken

Mr. Wood stated he would like to follow up on the discussion at the last meeting regarding the Hotel Aiken owners reaching out and wanting to meet with representatives of the city staff and the Aiken Municipal Development Commission. He said the hotel owners did meet with him and Mr. O'Briant a couple of weeks ago. It was a very good open and transparent meeting. He pointed out that the owners of the Aiken Hotel have agreed to come to a Municipal Development Commission meeting and give the Commission a briefing and update on their project. He said it seems the project is moving forward. They have been impacted by COVID-19. He said he felt good about the recommendations and request that was made for them to come to a Commission meeting, and they have accepted the request. Mr. Wood noted that the meeting would probably be after the first of the year since the Commission will be meeting for a strategic plan work session.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN

##### Dr. Tom Hallman

##### AECOM

##### Economic Development Master Plan

Mr. Wood noted that at the last meeting the Commission talked about the need for a strategic planning session for a day or a half day for the Commission to start working on their goals and

objectives for the year. He said he had a discussion with Mr. Bedenbaugh and Mayor Osbon, and they liked the idea for the Commission to meet in advance of Council's strategic planning session which will take place in January. Mr. Wood stated he had a conversation with Dr. Tom Hallman and asked if he would serve as the Commission's facilitator to which he has agreed. He also pointed out that Mr. Bedenbaugh had agreed to allow the Commission to have some funding to be able to go through the strategic planning process setting goals and objectives. He said he wanted Dr. Hallman to discuss what he thinks the Commission should consider.

Dr. Hallman noted that the opportunity for the Commission to meet is limited if the Commission is to be of benefit to City Council when they meet in January. He noted it is already December 1 and with the holidays coming up the time for meeting is limited. He also pointed out that he understood the Commission will be receiving an Economic Development Master Plan from AECOM that will provide information for discussion. He had suggested that the Commission meet remotely initially. Then when the report comes, he could meet with Mr. Wood and Mr. O'Briant and try to determine where the opportunities are, assuming there are more opportunities than the Commission might be able to pursue in a short time. If the Commission is looking to stratify out the immediate priorities and the longer term priorities and the ultimate goals of the Commission, we might be able to do some of that work. We could gather some information from the members of the Commission by creating a survey on the top priorities. Dr. Hallman stated his suggestion is that he thinks it is possible to gather individual input into a combined report so the Commission members would know where to start. Then that could be sent out, assuming there is more time to do it, showing what the group said. There would be a second round to look at the information regarding what the group said and what action can be taken.

Mr. Wood noted that the AECOM report is due to the City by Friday. Assuming the City gets the report by Friday, he would assume that City staff could look at the report with Dr. Hallman included in the review. Then Dr. Hallman could develop a survey that would go out in a week or so. That information would go back to Dr. Hallman to review. Mr. Wood asked when the information is sent back to Dr. Hallman when could Dr. Hallman meet in person with the Commission. Dr. Hallman stated unless the information is sent back immediately, he felt it would be difficult to be able to get the group together before Christmas. He felt it would take two rounds on the survey to be able to hone in on the recommendations of the group. He felt it would be early January before the Commission could meet to discuss the goals, objectives and recommendations to City Council.

The Commission members then discussed the matter. Mr. Verenes stated he likes to meet as a group to discuss the items. Mr. Jameson stated he feels that some of the early steps with a survey would help to narrow down the items so the Commission would come together with a starting point. He noted that after the Commission members answer the survey, Dr. Hallman has to have some analysis time. He said another way is to just take all the rankings of projects and goals, and the Commission then begin the conversation. He said he felt that Aiken Corporation should be involved in some of the discussion on the objectives, and that the Chamber Board discuss the objectives also so they could be advocates for the proposed objectives. The survey document could allow any group that is deemed appropriate to comment on the objectives. This could show if the groups are together on the priorities or whether they are far apart. He said it seems to him that would be helpful, because we need more than nine people rallying behind the goals and objectives. He felt the survey document would help gather that information. They



would not come to the Municipal Development Commission's strategic planning meeting. However, they might have their own strategic planning meeting to determine their priorities. That way there would be more than nine people's viewpoint about our direction.

Mr. Gillam stated a survey is a good idea, and a survey may take two rounds. He said he would be okay with going ahead and setting a tentative meeting two weeks from today which would be December 15, 2020. That is not an ideal time for a meeting that close to Christmas. He said if a survey could be drawn up and sent out, we could see how the response is. We may need to have an in-person meeting depending on the response from the survey. If the survey response is good, and a priority listing is done, we could skip the December meeting and meet in January and fine tune the listing. He said he felt we need to see what happens in the next two weeks.

Mr. O'Briant stated regarding Mr. Verenes comments about having a written report to review, he stated when he gets the report the Commission could have a meeting in two weeks and he could present the report to them. He said we want the Commission to be prepared and knowledgeable about the contents of the report. He said to review the document would be at least a 90-minute meeting.

Mr. Slaughter stated he felt the Commission needs to read the document. He felt Mr. O'Briant's suggestion was a good idea. He said it would be difficult to draw up survey questions if you don't have the report. He said if the Commission meets, you can tell if there is interest in the contents. He felt that would be important before a survey is put together. He said some decisions would have to be made as to what would be in the survey. He felt just listening to someone go through the document would be very helpful.

Mr. Wood suggested a hybrid approach. He liked Mr. O'Briant's suggestion for him to review the document for the Commission members and then ask questions. He felt Dr. Hallman should be a part of that meeting. The outcome from the meeting to review the document would be the survey. The next step would be meeting in person and decide on the goals and objectives.

Mr. Verenes stated he felt that would work. He felt it would be good to hear the report and what others think the report says and why it says that. He felt that would be good going forward.

Dr. Hallman stated he felt for Mr. O'Briant to review the report would work. He said the entire scheme is based on what we think the report looks like and how we might structure some questions. If the report does not look like that, then we are back to starting with a blank sheet of paper. He felt it would be good to have the review and the members get a printed copy of the report. Then the survey would follow the review. He stated instead of meeting two weeks from today, could the Commission meet sooner than December 15 which would give more time between that meeting and the holidays.

The Commission members continued to discuss a path forward. It was noted that there would be a time crunch one way or the other, either in December or in January to be able to meet before City Council's retreat. There was a concern as to whether the City would get the AECIN report before next week.

Mr. Wood stated if the City receives the report by Friday, the Commission will tentatively schedule a special called meeting next Tuesday, December 8, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. to review the AECOM report.

INFORMATION FROM STAFF

There were no comments or updates from staff.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Wood stated the Commission needed to go into executive session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(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. Gillam moved, seconded by Mr. Slaughter, that the Commission go into executive session to discuss matters as noted by Mr. Wood. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission went into executive session at 5:05 p.m.

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

The Commission came out of executive session at 6:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

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Sara B. Ridout  
City Clerk