

PUBLIC NOTICE

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Meeting

The Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 3:30 P.M. at the **Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center at 841 Edgefield Avenue NW.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION NOTICE

After the regular meeting, the Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet in Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(1) and (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 economic development projects.

Aiken Municipal Development Commission

Agenda

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

January 11, 2022

3:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of Agenda for January 11, 2022.
2. Approval of Minutes for December 14, 2021.
3. Program Manager Update – Tom Hallman.
4. Committee Reports – 2022 Suggested Goals from Each Committee.
5. Williamsburg/Jackson Property Update.
6. Rainsco Visit Recap.
7. Comments by Commission Members.
8. Information and Updates from Staff.
9. Executive Session – Discuss Economic Development Projects.

ADJOURNMENT

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Minutes

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center
December 14, 2021

Present: Keith Wood, Catina Broadwater, Marty Gillam, David Jameson, Chad Matthews, Philip Merry, and Chris Verenes.

Absent: Stuart MacVean, and Doug Slaughter.

Others Present: Tim O'Briant, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Buzz Rich, Sabina Craig, Sara Ridout, Diana Floyd, Tom Hallman, Marya Moultrie, Mary Tilton, Peter Messina, and Colin Demarest of the Aiken Standard.

Mr. Wood, Chair, called the meeting of December 14, 2021, to order at 3:40 p.m.

AGENDA

Mr. Wood stated the first item of business is approval of the agenda.

Mr. Jameson moved, second by Mr. Verenes, that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

MINUTES

Mr. Wood asked the members to consider approval of the minutes for the November 23 and 30, 2021, meetings. Mr. Gillam moved, seconded by Mr. Jameson, that the minutes for the November 23 and 30, 2021, meetings be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

PROGRAM MANAGER UPDATE

Mr. Wood stated Dr. Hallman would give the Commission an update on the Commission work and program. He said Dr. Hallman would give his update and that would be the basis for the next agenda item for discussion on the 2022 Goals and Objectives.

Dr. Hallman stated his first remarks were general observations, and then he would go into more detail. He pointed out that the legal spreadsheet will probably not be the way the spreadsheet will look in the future. He said we will probably want to make some changes. One of the changes one might notice from the last report is that the objective goals within the plan have been moved to be under each of the goal areas, particularly as it relates to the Commission assignments. He said that may lend itself to a different format for reporting in the future as well as putting them in numerical order.

Dr. Hallman stated soon we need to begin to operate and recognize the plan as a living document. He said we will talk about what sort of things might need to change. He noted that the plan has to move with the activities and events that we have. He noted that as part of trying

to group the activities under the goal areas, we end up with some items that appear both under the Commission's agenda and within the City's list. He noted that so far we have been able to recognize where the real activity would take place on items, but it may cause confusion as the Commission members read the spreadsheet. Another thing which he talked about in October, he thinks there is a perception this is all crafted in the same manner and language of many business strategic plans. He pointed out that not everything in the document fits that bill. Some items are not actionable right away, such as the Innovation Center. He pointed out that is not happening at this time so the activity for that group is not necessarily defined in the plan as they are trying to better understand how this operation works in places that have already done it. There are items that really reflect a change in the way some business is done as opposed to a specific check mark. It is a longer term commitment.

Dr. Hallman stated as noted earlier there are some items in the report that are no longer cogent. A good example of that is under the City's purview there is an item called Develop Neighborhood Services and Housing. The narrative for that speaks about the Save-A-Lot building at the corner of York and Hampton. As we know, a significant part of that area has already been developed. He said his suggestion would be that we need to recraft the way that is stated so there is an ongoing commitment on the part of people in this process to be thinking through how we might suggest some opportunities coming from a variety of sources and not just from within the bounds of the Commission. There is also a very specific sort of recommendation that the Main Street Program be implemented again. He said he thought about the time the plan was adopted by the City, the Main Street Program was implemented again by the ADDA. He noted that not every item will be on the list for the long term.

Dr. Hallman stated the Commission talked in November about a reporting scheme that would divide up the time in the Commission meetings starting in January. We would take 30 minutes out of the meeting. We would assign 15 minutes of that to one of the working groups of the Commission to make a more in depth report about their activities and where they see their focus changing in the future. The other 15 minutes would be devoted to his cohort on the City side, Mary Catherine Lawton. She would choose some entities within the City to report on their activity and progress related to the plan.

Dr. Hallman then asked the Commission members to look at the AMDC Economic Development Plan Brief Recap of Activity report. He pointed out Goal 3 Targeted Residential and Business Development group. He pointed out that group has been very active under Mr. Gillam's leadership, with Mr. Gillam, Ms. Broadwater, Mr. Merry, and Mr. Slaughter. They are looking at adding a couple of non-Commission members to the group. He noted this group is an example that other groups might want to emulate by including non-Commission members in the group. Presently that group is empowering its members to try to identify properties that might be available for either residential or commercial development and to create a pool of properties available for development.

Goal 1: Aiken Innovation and Impact District. Dr. Hallman noted this goal is an example of one that is not quite ripe for action directly aimed in the goal statement, but this is a time where the group, Mr. Jameson, Mr. Wood, Mr. MacVean, and Mr. Slaughter, are looking to engage with the Savannah River National Lab and the University partner that has been identified as part of the collaborative to figure out where there might be gains for all sides in a program such as this. They are also taking time to study what communities have already implemented in Innovation

Centers around these sort of magnet programs and what has worked with them and what did not work.

Goal 5: Marketing Aiken as a Good Community for Investment. He noted that Mr. Jameson, Mr. Wood and Mr. Verenes serve on this group. They have met with the City as it finalizes the redesign of the website and have tried to find all the ways that we might weave this message into existing outreach efforts.

Goal 4: Making Aiken More Business Friendly. Mr. Merry has guided this thus far. There was activity underway within the city even as we were identifying this as a priority and some of those things are ready to come before City Council in the not too distant future. With Ms. Moultrie being named as the Planning Director, there might be more opportunity to explore some of that in cooperation with Ms. Lawton.

Goal 2: Whiskey Road Corridor/Development Ramifications of Transportation Improvements. Dr. Hallman stated the only item to not get a green rating was Goal 2 related to the Whiskey Road Corridor. He said he felt this may be something that we need to go back and reexamine what we have to contribute.

Mr. Wood noted that was chaired by Tom Williams who had to resign for personal reasons. He said that we are pursuing who wants to chair that group. He pointed out that he was the one pushing for a red-green light chart. He pointed out that he felt that some progress is being made on some things in that area that are not necessarily labeled Whiskey Road Corridor. The City is working to do some things at the gateways and making some progress. He said he was familiar with at least one. He asked that the goal be looked at, and it could possibly be a yellow light.

Dr. Hallman pointed out that the only goals color coded on the spreadsheet are the ones directly under the purview of the Commission. The other goals such as the ones under the City and the Outreach Efforts to Education and Healthcare were not ranked because those rankings would come up in the periodic reports where the reporting entity would give their best estimate of where they should be ranked.

Dr. Hallman stated the City seems to be making progress across a number of projects and the coming year will offer more opportunity for progress.

Dr. Hallman stated the Chamber of Commerce has two items under its purview, and they have moved on those and actually gone beyond that to look at the ones that they share responsibility with the City on outreach to prospective visitors to Aiken. They have done a very creative program there that would lend itself to replication in other communities when they are ready to do that.

Dr. Hallman stated there are two items related to Healthcare and Education Outreach. He said he thought those two items would fall mainly to him and the Mayor to work through and implement. That will probably come to fruition in the new year.

Dr. Hallman noted the Observation at the end of the report. This may be a time for all of our activities to begin to consider how we might be able to involve non-commission people in our

activities where appropriate and where it is to their benefit and ours in trying to roll these goals forward.

Mr. Wood noted that Peter Messina contacted a City Councilmember and stated he was interested in helping the city as far as planning perspective and economic development perspective. He was very encouraged with what the AMDC is doing, our success, and where we are going. He pointed out that he and Mr. O'Briant talked to Mr. Messina and mentioned that they wanted to introduce him at this AMDC meeting. He asked that Mr. Messina briefly give the Commission a summary of his background. Then if anyone is interested in working with Mr. Messina or Mr. Messina has specific interests in what the Commission is doing, he can be contacted.

Mr. Messina stated he was very interested in planning and engineering. He said his background is that he is a late professional engineer and professional planner. He said for 25 years he was a City Engineer and City Planner. During that time the city was going through dramatic growth. He pointed out when he started work, the city had 10,000 people. When he left there were 30,000 people. There were over 6,000 new homes and around 4 million square feet of office space. He said he was involved from the beginning, working with developers, property owners, etc. in trying to get the best planning for the city. He said he would like to get involved with the AMDC group.

Mr. Wood pointed out that the AMDC had talked about communication to City Council on the progress being made against the AECOM report. He noted that the spreadsheet and the meetings that Dr. Hallman had been making were a great way to be able to update Council. He pointed out the AMDC knows what they have done this past year. He asked that the AMDC get ready for 2022. He suggested that possibly in late January or early February, AMDC could make a presentation to Council or submit a report to Council for their update.

Mr. Bedenbaugh stated he felt the preference would be to do an in person report. He noted that he was in the process of setting a date for Council's strategic plan retreat, called New Horizons. The date would be in late January or early February. He felt it would be good for AMDC to make a report to Council at that meeting. If that meeting date does not work for the AMDC, a written report could be submitted, or an in-person report could be made at a Council work session in February.

Mr. Wood responded that he felt an in-person report should be made along with a written report and at a meeting of Council that Mr. Bedenbaugh felt would be appropriate. Mr. Bedenbaugh stated he felt the Council retreat meeting would be the best time for the presentation to Council.

2022 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. Wood stated the AMDC had been very busy in 2021. He pointed out that the Commission knows what they have accomplished this past year. He noted some of the items such as Project Pascalis, many meetings of the AMDC, the work of the committees, going after and behind the scenes pushing for money to come back to Aiken County and the City of Aiken. A lot has been done, and there is a lot to be completed in 2022 with those projects. He felt the Commission needs to talk about what is important for AMDC in 2022. He suggested there were a couple of ways to do that. Each Committee could come back in January and give their top two goals for

the year, there could be an open discussion or a follow up session to set goals. He felt there was value in the AMDC setting a top 5 or 6 goals for 2022. He felt that should flow from the Committees. He asked for comments from the Commission members.

Several Commission members commented. Mr. Verenes pointed out that the Committee has to continue to push on the AECOM plan projects. Project Pascalis is a very high project and goal that needs to be continued. The Commission has to presume that there will be some funding from the Plutonium Settlement funds, and the Commission needs to plan what to do with the funding.

Mr. Jameson pointed out the Williamsburg Street project in 2022 and noted that we need to consider what we plan to do with the Jackson Petroleum property as the City moves forward with the Community Development Block Grant funds. He felt it was time to make a move there to decide what the next step will be in early 2022.

Mr. O'Briant stated that on the Williamsburg Project, that should match up well because we will be drawing funds in January. By late January we should have the engineering design for the work that the City will do on the streetscape so we can go to bid. We should have a schedule for the cleanup and demolition of what's on the property. He wondered if the Commission wanted to have a separate ad hoc committee or assign a standing committee. He said in January there will probably be some work to be done on steering that project while we are also working on some of the details of Pascalis.

Mr. Wood stated part of the request is to target an area. He stated perhaps there is an initiative that we can target for redevelopment. Mr. Gillam stated recently a lot of effort had been pushed toward Pascalis. He said he felt it was important to identify as a group Target Areas for redevelopment. He stated that every group needs to bring their top three priorities so the group can discuss them and set the goals for 2022. He noted that he felt it was still going to be very busy with Pascalis for the next few months. He said we should make sure that others are working on other things while Pascalis is happening.

Mr. O'Briant stated he felt there is a great overarching statement and living document of what our strategic goals are over time. He said he felt that for 2022 each group should pick one or two things they feel they can accomplish in 2022.

Mr. Jameson stated he brought up the Williamsburg Street project, but he felt there is another project whether the Commission leads it, or is part of it, the City Municipal Building will be available soon. He asked what the Commission's role would be in redevelopment of the Municipal Building. He felt the Commission needs to think about that. He noted that the Commission should not take on too much, but needs to concentrate on things that can be accomplished. He pointed out that we are taking a break presently from Pascalis, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done for Pascalis. He stated he did not want the Commission to over promise and under deliver. He said they have to be strategic with their time and energy to get things done.

Mr. Verenes agreed with Mr. Jameson. He said the Commission needs to be careful not to outstretch their capacity to deal with the issues. He noted that if we receive some of the Plutonium settlement funds, there are projects that need to be accomplished with those funds,

and we need to take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity to get projects accomplished. He stated he was excited about the Commission's work.

Commission members continued to discuss goals and objectives of the Commission. It was suggested that the Commission should go through their list of projects and consider if a project is funded what are some of the first steps that need to be taken. It was also pointed out that there are external factors. It was pointed out that there are matters to consider as Hahn Village demolition and redevelopment moves forward and the old hospital project moves forward, which are not city projects, but there will be requests concerning the projects as well as for other projects such as the Steeplechase project and the Municipal Building. It was also pointed out that these projects present opportunities. It was pointed out that the Plutonium settlement is very significant and the Commission should advocate for the funding. It was pointed out that there are projects that would not happen if the Commission does not get involved, and there are projects that will only happen if the Commission gets involved. It was suggested that the Commission needs to take a look at their selection criteria for projects. It was noted that the Williamsburg Street project is a project that would not move forward without the Commission and City's involvement. It was noted that the Williamsburg Street project involves the City, a private developer, the Aiken Corporation, and the AMDC.

Mr. Wood asked if there was a list from the individual committees that might be short term goals for 2022. It was noted that the City is working on a faster and simpler process for businesses or developers looking to start a business or a development in Aiken with more coordination between departments. The City's IT Department is looking at processes so someone can electronically submit their plans instead of sending five copies to each department. That will change the efficiency of the process. There should be some sort of citizen communication and recommendation on the process. Another item is revision of the Stormwater Ordinance which the City of Aiken is working on. It was also suggested that the City might work on a recommendation regarding the height ordinance in the city and the sign ordinance which affects businesses all over town.

After discussion, Mr. Wood asked that each of the sub-committees give the Commission their top two or three goals for 2022. The Commission will meet in January and discuss the goals from the sub-committees and will set the goals and priorities for 2022. The suggested goals will be given to Council in late January or February. In the meantime, Dr. Hallman will still be working on his document with everyone.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

There were no additional comments from the Commission members.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF

Mr. O'Briant stated that he had attended the International Council of Shopping Centers Conference in Las Vegas recently which is where financial people and developers meet with retailers and decide who is going where. He said he did meet with a firm that Mr. Jameson had spoken with sometime ago regarding retail strategy. He said he had a proposal from a firm to help us with retail recruitment which he felt is high priority for us as we go forward with Project Pascalis as we want to make sure of the benefits of that to enlarge our downtown neighborhood

as well as the new retail that we will get. A lot of that is around site selection, what is available, and having them match you up with potential partners. They meet with your committee and go over what that firm offers as far as direct marketing to retail potential folks.

Mr. Jameson stated he started looking at retail strategies in 2014. In 2015 they were brought in for a First Friday breakfast, and they made a presentation. He said it did not work out at that time. He felt we were in a lot better position now to move forward because we know that Project Pascalis is moving forward; we know that the Mall has some commercial needs in that part of town; we know that the AMDC could drive food, beverage and hotel, motel; and we have great interest in other things on the north side. He felt now is the time that we can bring them in and specifically pinpoint what is happening in various areas and what we need in the various areas. It is more targeted than we would have been in 2015.

Mr. O'Briant pointed out that the thought is that with the current Municipal Building being available and Laurens Street and the Central Business District, it would be wonderful that as Pascalis moves forward, we actually have retail development down Laurens Street and other areas also.

Mr. Jameson stated another point is that if we move forward with the contract and the professionals come in, they have contacts, and they also know the criteria, such as how many rooftops, what kind of income, the age demographic—what it takes to attract a certain kind of thing. He felt this would give the Commission a lot of expertise and knowledge.

Mr. O'Briant stated there may be some partners who might join the Commission and provide some funding for the project.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Wood stated the Municipal Development Commission needed to go into executive session and asked for a motion to go into executive session.

Mr. Merry moved, seconded by Mr. Gillam, that the Commission go into executive session pursuant to Section 30-4070(a)(1) and (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 proposed development projects.

The Commission went into executive session at 4:35 p.m.

After discussion by the Commission a motion was made and seconded that the Commission come out of executive session. The Commission came out of executive session at 5:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Gillam moved, seconded by Mr. Verenes that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk