

PUBLIC NOTICE

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Meeting

The Aiken Municipal Development Commission will meet on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 3:00 P.M. at the **Hotel Aiken** for a tour of the building. After the tour at 3:45 P.M., the meeting will move to the Board Room at Security Federal Bank on the 2nd floor at 100 Laurens Street 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 and the purchase or sale of property.

Aiken Municipal Development Commission

Agenda

3 P.M. Hotel Aiken

3:45 P.M. Security Federal Bank 2nd Floor
100 Laurens Street NW

February 8, 2022

3:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

1. 3:00 P.M. Meet at Hotel Aiken for a Tour of the Building.
3:45 P.M. Meet in Board Room at Security Federal Bank 2nd Floor.
2. Approval of Agenda for February 8, 2022.
3. Approval of Minutes for January 11, 2022.
4. Update on Economic Development Master Plan Implementation – Tom Hallman.
5. Innovation District Committee Quarterly Report – David Jameson.
6. Comments by Commission Members.
7. Information and Updates from Staff.
8. **Executive Session** – Legal Briefing and Discussion on the Purchase or Sale of Property.

ADJOURNMENT

Aiken Municipal Development Commission Minutes

Lessie B. Price Senior & Youth Center
January 11, 2022

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

Absent: Stuart MacVean.

Others Present: Tim O'Briant, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Buzz Rich, Sabina Craig, Sara Ridout, Diana Floyd, Tom Hallman, Marya Moultrie, Mary Tilton, Susan French, Lessie Price, Haley Knight, Mark Chostner, and Landon Stamper of the Aiken Standard.

Mr. Wood, Chair, called the meeting of January 11, 2022, to order at 3:32 p.m.

AGENDA

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

Mr. Slaughter moved, second by Mr. Merry, 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 December 14, 2021, meeting. Mr. Jameson moved, seconded by Mr. Slaughter, that the minutes for the December 14, 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's work and program. He noted that Dr. Hallman had met with Commission members and city staff. He pointed out that each month the Commission will focus on a specific sub-committee with a detailed report. He noted that at this meeting Mr. Gillam will give a detailed report from the Target Potential Areas for Redevelopment/Investment Committee.

Dr. Hallman pointed out that having a sub-committee give a detailed report each month means that each committee will give a detailed report three times during the year. He noted that at each meeting 30 minutes will be for committee updates with 15 minutes from one sub-committee and 15 minutes to hear from the City. Ms. Lawton will schedule the City updates.

Dr. Hallman pointed out that he had met with some Committees since the last MDC meeting. He noted that he had met with Mr. Merry; he had sat in on Mr. Gillam's committee meeting. He said he had emailed some material to the Mayor that he and the Mayor need to talk about and move into the areas in the plan that are related to how the city interacts with education and health care entities in the area. Both of those are key to having a vibrant, thriving community. That

will develop over the next several months. He pointed out that Mr. O'Briant had assisted by putting the spread sheets that were distributed at the last meeting on the AMDC website.

Mr. Wood noted that AMDC will be called upon to give an update to Council at their New Horizons meeting as to what the Commission has accomplished.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Target Potential Areas for Redevelopment/Investment

Mr. Gillam, Convenor of the Target Potential Areas for Redevelopment/Investment Committee, stated the committee had had five meetings to date. He reviewed the work of the committee. He said they started out designating areas on the north, east, south and west in the city limits to get started. Now they are assigning people some properties to look at in the areas. On the north they talked about Laurens Street to Hampton, York Street to Hampton and farther out since the city limits go farther out. On the east side there are already things going on, including the redevelopment of Williamsburg Street, the Farmers' Market, the Train Depot and Citizens Park. On the South side there is the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee, but they are still looking for opportunities for property in the area. On the west side there is the old hospital, and they are still looking for ideas. He noted that on the west there is a residential and commercial entrance which can tie into Project Pascalis. He pointed out there is no welcome to the city or landscaping on either the north or west entrance to the city.

Mr. Gillam stated at this point the committee has got to the point to assign research for specific properties. He said at this point they don't have ranking for the properties. He pointed out that the committee members had done some training on the GIS. He pointed out that the committee has started to talk more about residential development in addition to commercial. They have talked about the best use of property and density, residential or commercial use. He said they may be getting to the point to list 6 to 8 properties and rank them and bring some recommendations to the Commission for discussion

Mr. Gillam stated of the AMDC Priorities Goal 3 is the Targeted Residential and Business Development mission to create new opportunities for commercial and residential development through partnerships and existing groups, as well as new investors to increase the quality and density of those living and working with the City of Aiken. He pointed out the committee had thought they need criteria in selecting property for development and so they made a list. Mr. Gillam reviewed the criteria. 1. Specific charge from AMDC or Council to research a property. 2. The best use of the property for the city and the surrounding citizens. 3. Is it a complex project. Is the property for sale? 4. Clean up blighted property. 5. Are there zoning issues, stormwater issues, etc. 6. Prior insight and knowledge that may not be public information.

Mr. Gillam stated their goal is to identify, research, discuss, and rank and prioritize projects. He said when they find property that they feel strongly about, they will bring a recommendation to the Commission for discussion and action. He also stated that if any of the other committees have something with which they can assist or research, they would be glad to help.

Mr. Wood thanked Mr. Gillam and his committee for their thought and effort in their mission.

Mr. Rich pointed out that the Aiken Corporation had recently been given a 25 acre tract of property off York Street just past the railroad track. He pointed out the property has water and sewer service available. He also noted the property is in the Opportunity Zone. He pointed out this had just happened in the last couple of weeks. It is a large tract and is within the city limits. It was given to the Aiken Corporation with no restrictions. He said they are looking for an opportunity to do something with that property. He suggested the Committee might look at this property.

Mr. Wood stated he had a comment. He noted that he thought that at some point they need to think about the process. He pointed out if there is a piece of property the Committee would like to pursue, what is the process, how will it be marketed, how will it be acquired, etc. He said there probably needs to be some process in place that we consider in looking at and acquiring properties. It was noted that part of the process may be how we acquire property, how we control—a lease or option. It was also pointed out that it was essential that you approach the process for each potential property or project individually. The process would be different for a residential area versus commercial or rural area. It was pointed out that everything you see is a piece of property and we can't buy or develop everything. The question is what makes one piece or place stand out from another. It was felt that the process for each potential project should be unique based on the characteristics and goals of the project. The Committee continued to discuss the matter of a process for dealing with and acquiring properties. They also discussed the gateways to the city and the need for improvements at the entrances to the city.

Whiskey Road Corridor

Mr. Wood pointed out the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee is probably the most inactive committee for several reasons. He noted that the City owns the Whiskey Road Corridor. He pointed out that Mr. Bedenbaugh is probably the chair of that, but does not realize it from an AMDC perspective. He noted that they are really relying on the City for Whiskey Road. He pointed out that in the AECOM report the gateway issue is mentioned. He wondered if the Committee should not be focused on the Whiskey Road Corridor, but have some involvement in support of the City. He wondered if the Committee should focus on the gateway. He pointed out that some things are happening. He said a gateway or some signage is being looked at on the south side. He noted the west side signage had been mentioned. He also noted there is a sign on the east side as well. It was pointed out there is a sign on the north side at the corner of Aldrich and York.

Mr. O'Briant noted that maybe a gateway could be more visible closer to the downtown. He said they are working on a site at Whiskey and South Boundary. It could welcome people to the downtown, direct them to the oaks down South Boundary, the library, Hitchcock Woods and the downtown.

Mr. Wood asked if we should revamp the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee to support, help strategize with the city on gateway signage, gateway entrances.

Mr. Jameson stated he did not think the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee needs to be refocused on gateways. Another committee might be formed for gateways. He said that the City and County have a proposal and study for what needs to be done on Whiskey Road. Some of that work has already started. He felt the purpose of the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee as it

pertains to the Whiskey Road Corridor is to be ready to take advantage of changes once Whiskey Road is improved and how that will impact the land on both sides of Whiskey Road and be ready to act when that happens. He said he did not want to take our focus off of that. He noted if we get any settlement money for the Whiskey Road project, that would accelerate changes in the Whiskey Road area. If we don't get any money, then the Whiskey Road project will take much longer. He said there is some potential and what we need to be looking at as far as the Whiskey Road Corridor Committee. is once that opens up how do we take advantage of it. Will we just connect people, or is there a purpose in the land. He felt there is room to do more than gateway changes. It may be more than transportation, and more about the development of these areas on the south side. It could be called the Southside Improvement Committee. It was felt that it would be wise to have thoughts on paper and plans of what will happen after a road is built.

Mr. Wood stated he was struggling with the timing and what the MDC could do with the Whiskey Road Corridor in the short term, especially for this year. He said he was looking for a convenor for the Committee. He asked if anyone was interested to let him know.

Innovation and Impact District

Mr. Jameson stated the Innovation and Impact District Committee met on Friday. He noted there had been conversations with individuals, but this was the first time everyone was in the room together. Included in the meeting was Dr. Vahid Majidi from the National Lab and Dr. Heimmermann from USCAiken. He said the question is finding out how the community can take advantage of the AMC and the DreamPort and use those two as engines to begin to move the economy more towards an innovation economy. That needs to be done by moving now even though those projects are not built by taking action now to be ready. The Committee came to the conclusion that we need a professional group that has done this in other places, has a track record, and the expertise to help us with not just a generic vision of what this can be, but understand what the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) and DreamPort are and what that could drive in the public sector to building the community. They need to do some research about who those companies are that could help and how much that would cost. He said he had contacted some people who are in current senior leadership at the Site or have been in senior leadership at the Site, and asked them what companies they know that have the expertise. He said if several of them recommend the same company, then he will know that should be a priority, but if they are all different companies that makes the job harder. He said that is where the Committee is presently focused, doing research to find out who has expertise in this field. He said they see this first as a vision statement that ties to what is going on based on the AMC and DreamPort and on potential growth perhaps at the Savannah River Lab and help us bring what that vision is that we are trying to articulate. The second phase might be to identify these properties and develop a master plan for what it could be when it starts moving forward. They also learned that it is very important for the success of an Innovation Park for the infrastructure to be in place, including broadband.

Mr. Slaughter pointed out that the Cyber Center in Augusta might be a model for what the AMC and DreamPort could be. It was noted that cyber would probably be a piece of what would be at the DreamPort and the AMC. It was also pointed out what Greenville has been able to do with Clemson around the auto industry. They have a big research center that ties in to BMW. It also helps some of the supporting businesses around it.

Dr. Hallman noted there is a difference between the Cyber Center in Augusta and this area. He pointed out those folks brought the Cyber Center to a place that was already well populated with a hotel, eating places, and service activities. He pointed out that is not true at the end of the city where the AMC and DreamPort are to be developed. He said that has to be an aspect of the planning to think about what will draw people to open their business there and what will draw people to come and be a researcher.

The Commission continued to discuss matters and ideas regarding the Innovation District.

Make Aiken More Business Friendly

Mr. Merry stated there had been progress on the Make Aiken More Business Friendly. He noted the Committee started with a list of potential items that need to be looked at and addressed as far as the process or the ordinances of the city. He noted that he and Dr. Hallman had met, and they talked about the process. He said he also met with Mary Catherine Lawton, Assistant City Manager, to go over items on the list. He noted that some progress had been made. He pointed out that amendments to the Noise Ordinance were being considered by Council. Mr. Bedenbaugh pointed out that any amendments will not go into effect until April 1, 2022, to give time to publicize and educate the public on the changes.

Mr. Merry pointed out that another ordinance which had been amended by Council was the Stormwater Ordinance which helps developers dealing with stormwater. He also gave credit to Mr. O'Briant, Mr. Bedenbaugh, and Ms. Lawton for creating a charrette process to better communicate to Planning, Public Safety and others with a meeting with three property owners to talk about their projects. He noted that such a meeting shows where city policy or ordinances might conflict with development. He said the group is used for hearing ideas or problems that property owners have and for continued improvement.

Mr. Merry stated that he and Ms. Lawton talked about city policy for PUDs, and making recommendations to property owners for everything over a certain acreage should be a PUD. He pointed out that is a policy not an ordinance. Ms. Lawton was going to do some research on how that got to be a policy. He said there are some great things about PUDS (Planned Unit Developments), as they are a great tool, but they are only one tool, and it should be an optional tool. That is in process.

Another goal is a developmental written process for developers to have a private timeline to improve, expedite, and make more efficient the process for getting a project approved and improve communication and have a real time status for developers and property owners. He said he had talked to Dr. Hallman about this, and he has some great thoughts. He said they had been brainstorming about how best to do some things. He said the City Manager's Office and Planning had been receptive to changes in some processes. Mr. Bedenbaugh stated changes are within the confines of the existing ordinances. It is modifying administrative procedures and processes. Some changes may require ordinance changes.

Mr. O'Briant stated he had been pleased with the contact with developers. He noted that staff has been developing internally an extensive list of every aspect of every project in any way it could possibly go so when our team meets we can check off boxes. That will generate, as the system is being developed, a report which will follow up with the developer showing the items

that need to be met, approvals needed, etc. He noted there is a lot of work going on. He felt these meetings will be helpful for the developers. It was noted that the meetings had been very positive with the developers.

Marketing Aiken for Economic Development

Mr. Verenes stated that many things have been going on since the last meeting. He noted that the Executive Committee is part of the Marketing Committee. He pointed out that as a result of the publicity regarding the Pascalis Project, there have been questions. The Committee talked about a process that we can get some feedback and discussions along the way. He noted there was a phone conversation about getting Rainsco to start getting out into the community to talk about the project. Rainsco was contacted and some meetings were set up. He pointed out that they met with the Design Review Board and other groups. He said they were planning to meet with Mark Chostner to get details on the timeline for the Pascalis Project to see how they can couch the marketing plan with some general concepts of when things will be done.

Mr. Verenes stated their goals were:

1. Build support for the City's development or redevelopment projects through internal and external communication, which includes Project Pascalis, Williamsburg, Farmers' Market/Jackson Project, and other projects.
2. They want to market the parcels and buildings in the AMC footprint for location of businesses and also residential. They want to have a communication line to make sure the public is involved.
3. Website to keep the public informed and also get feedback as we go along.

Mr. O'Briant noted that the website is active with information about the Commission. He noted that if any of the committees or individual members have information they would like to put on the website as a news item or to inform people about action of a committee or a question for the community, please let him know.

Mr. Wood asked the Commission members to look at the website and make any recommendations on how we can improve and enhance the website.

WILLIAMSBURG STREET PROJECT

Mr. O'Briant stated the Williamsburg Street Project is moving forward with lots of activity. We are still trying to get easements from some properties or to be able to purchase those final pieces. He said Ms. Craig had done some work tracking down adjoining owners about an easement as we do the final stages of the engineering plans. We would like for the alley to connect to Park Avenue and go through the internal development and where Mr. McGhee is building. The city's contribution will be the roadway that will go through that will provide access. The City Engineering Department had a meeting last week with Cranston Engineering. Those plans are supposed to be essentially complete by the end of January or first of February. We hope to have bid documents out so work on lighting, stormwater, repaving, traffic calming, etc. can move forward in hand with the private development. All of that is on the western side of the Farmers' Market and Williamsburg. On the Jackson Petroleum project, we expect to have a work plan from Terracon which will involve the final cleanup of the property and remediation of any

contaminated soil. That should be completed by summer of 2022. We hope the property will be clean, and we will be able to start marketing it and try to work with partners to get the property redeveloped. It was noted that a presentation was made to the Design Review Board on the project. It was pointed out that if we sell the property, they will have to provide plans of what they plan to do with the property. Restrictions will govern what they can build there.

It was pointed out that when we develop properties, it is felt that we need to be defensive so we keep all of our options open. It was pointed out that the value of the properties will go up. We need to be careful.

RAINSCO VISIT RECAP

Mr. O'Briant stated Mr. Jameson was great in putting meetings together. He said Mr. Jameson took the opportunity to gather people together for fellowship and information with Rainsco. He said we tried to include people in different walks of life for diversity so we have people from different thoughts. Mr. Jameson stated there were five sessions, with a total of 57 people attending the sessions over two days. Mr. O'Briant stated there will be more meetings. The Rainsco people, the developers for the Pascalis Project, were in town and introduced themselves to the Design Review Board. He noted the Design Review Board will make very important decisions about the project. They did not show plans at this time, as they wanted to just introduce themselves. He pointed out that Rainsco has handled a large number of public-private partnerships throughout the South. They like to meet in small groups instead of having a large public session. They like to explain what they want to do and then take input and questions. They will be doing more sessions.

Mr. Jameson stated Rainsco was available the Tuesday after Christmas. It was not an ideal time, but people responded very well. The sessions were presented as a conversation with Gray Rains. Mr. Rains introduced himself, talked about his development philosophy, referred to some projects that he had done, what the obstacles were and how he had overcome them, and things that had worked smoothly. It was explained that there were no plans, renderings, and no site plan yet. They are in the beginning stages. Mr. Jameson stated people appreciated the fact that they got to look into the eye of the person that may become the master developer of this project. They got to see him early on and understand his philosophy. He said he received thank you notes from people who appreciated being included.

Mr. Bedenbaugh pointed out that the Design Review Board will be taking a tour of the Hotel Aiken building on February 1, 2022, at 4 p.m.

Mr. Jameson pointed out that Rainsco and his partners are very serious about the project. He noted that the group was back in town today with architects and engineers. They walked the site. Their team has a lot of energy.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

There were no additional comments from the Commission members.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF

There were no additional comments from city staff.

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. Gillam moved, seconded by Mr. Merry, 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 4:50 p.m.

After discussion by the Commission Mr. Gillam moved, and Mr. Merry seconded that the Commission come out of executive session. The Commission came out of executive session at 5:35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Sara B. Ridout
City Clerk