

Historic Aiken Foundation
P.O Box 959
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

June 17, 2022

Honorable Rick Osbon
Mayor of the City of Aiken
P.O. Box
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

Re: Request for Meeting

Dear Mayor Osbon:

The Historic Aiken Foundation was established in 1974 to help the Aiken community preserve its historic heritage and significant buildings, encourage owners to preserve their property, support restoration, and initiate efforts to preserve sites that have historical significance. The Foundation's activities have contributed to enhancing the beauty and character of Aiken and its long-term economic health through an emphasis on its distinctive qualities. Aiken has been more fortunate than many other cities, which now have cause to regret drastic changes in their physical surroundings done for well-intentioned but short-sighted motives.

The deterioration of portions of Richland Avenue and the desire for economic growth have led the Council to pursue Project Pascalis, a project that would include a new hotel, apartments, a parking garage, and renovation of the Municipal Building. The Foundation enthusiastically supports a well-considered revitalization effort for the benefit of all citizens but contends that Project Pascalis as currently envisioned does not achieve the requirements for historic preservation, nor does it retain Aiken's charm. Our concern is two-fold. One is preservation values, and the other is following procedures and ordinances that so many people in Aiken, including the Historic Aiken Foundation, have worked so hard to put in place.

In 2019, the City engaged AECOM to assist in the development of an economic development strategy for Aiken that would suggest actions that could promote growth, investment, and opportunity for the community. The resulting Strategic Economic Development Action Plan, issued in 2021, contained many suggestions, one of which was "to partner with the Historic Aiken Foundation...to ensure that the downtown's charming historic character is preserved."

Consistent with that recommendation, I would like to offer the Foundation's support in your planning efforts to address the preservation issues. I request a meeting with you and your team to determine how we could partner on this effort for the benefit of everyone in Aiken. With respect to the issue of following procerus and ordinances, we feel a heavier obligation and reserve the right to take appropriate measures.

I can be reached at [redacted] or [redacted]

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Linda Johnson
President, Historic Aiken Foundation

Cc: John Boyette, Executive Editor, *Aiken Standard*