

# North Augusta



*South Carolina's Riverfront*

## MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2022

*Briton S. Williams, Mayor*

*J. Robert Brooks, Councilmember  
Pat C. Carpenter, Councilmember  
Jenafer F. McCauley, Councilmember  
David W. McGhee, Councilmember  
Eric H. Presnell, Councilmember  
Kevin W. Toole, Councilmember*

The Leadership Planning Retreat of the City Council of the City of North Augusta having been duly publicized, convened on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 9:06 a.m. at the Newberry Firehouse Conference Center at 1227 McKibben Street, Newberry, South Carolina and adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Per Section 30-4-80, (e) notice of the meeting by email was sent out to the current maintained "Agenda Mailout" list consisting of news media outlets and individuals or companies requesting notification. Notice of the meeting was also posted on the outside doors of the Municipal Center, the main bulletin board of the Municipal Center located on the first floor, and the City of North Augusta website.

Members present were Mayor Williams, Councilmembers Carpenter, McCauley, McGhee, Presnell, and Toole. Councilmember Brooks was absent.

Also in attendance were James S. Clifford, City Administrator; Rachelle Moody, Assistant City Administrator; Thomas C. Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works; John C. Thomas, Director of Public Safety; James E. Sutton, Director of Public Services; Richard L. Meyer, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Thomas L. Paradise, Director of Planning and Development; J.D. McCauley, Manager of Human Resources; Ricky L. Jones, Manager of Information Technology, and Sharon Lamar, City Clerk.

A member of the media was also present.

Matt DeWitt, City of Newberry City Manager, welcomed the North Augusta group to the Newberry Firehouse Conference Center and shared some of the history of the venue.

Emory Langston, Planning, Community and Economic Development Administrator, for the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, led Council in a facilitated discussion over five areas to be impacted by current growth patterns that have been "*Set in Motion*" in the City of North Augusta.

Ms. Langston opened the discussion with a review of the City's Vision Statement. Council added thoughts and support for the statement and found it to still be viable.

The following questions were discussed before lunch:

1) What transportation needs does the City of North Augusta need to address? (This included both current and future needs.) After much interaction, Council agreed the most important area related to transportation needs at this time are implementing some of the strategies suggested in the recent Martintown Road Study and Exit 1. They also agreed to continue to encourage interconnectivity among new and existing developments.

2) What are the top development and/or redevelopment activities the City should undertake to expand and improve City of North Augusta park facilities? (Note: this question referred to greenspace and infrastructure, not athletic or other types of programming) Council concluded the RFP should be advertised for the Parks Master Plan including the former North Augusta Country Club property. The Greenway connection to the reconstructed James U. Jackson Bridge/ Thirteenth Street Bridge is still a priority to be followed closely.

3) What type(s) of residential development do you think is necessary for City Council to encourage to meet future housing needs? (This could include any combination of: single family housing and multi-family housing such as apartments, condos, townhomes and senior.) Mayor Williams discussed a list of projects that are under construction or under review for areas throughout the City. Council agreed diverse options are paramount as plans are made for the next 10-15 years. Yet there were many concerns expressed about the number of proposed apartment complexes. There was overall agreement that annexing additional property into the City is not necessary at this time.

During lunch, Foster Senn, Mayor of Newberry, spoke to Council about some of the innovative projects the City of Newberry has accomplished in their downtown area and how the City is fostering economic development. Mayor Senn then led Council and City leadership on a tour of the Newberry Opera House and several other businesses/attractions in the downtown area including the Newberry Museum.

Following the tour, Council and City leaders returned to the Newberry Firehouse Conference Center.

These questions were discussed after lunch:

4) What commercial development needs do you see as essential for supporting North Augusta's growth populous and expanding the tax base? This could be specific businesses or types of business and industry. There was a general consensus there needs to be a balance of commercial/business development to support the growing residential surge. Mayor Williams offered the idea of an appointed Municipal Development Commission modeled after the City of Aiken's recent addition. Councilmember McGhee suggested Council revisit this discussion at a future Study Session and discuss incentives for business recruitment and development.

5) Significant investment and attention has been focused on Riverside Village over the past few years, and more recently, Council has additionally prioritized investment and attention in downtown through the Greenway connector, amenity installation and event promotion. What strategies can the City employ to further integrate the downtown and Riverside Village area into a more cohesive tourism destination? The group was most supportive of multiple festivals each year, continued and more frequently use of the City's trolleys, and completion of the Riverside Village boat dock.

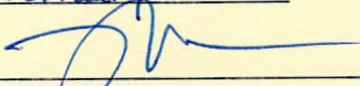
To wrap up the day's discussion, Ms. Langston posed the following statement for Council to complete – "Wouldn't it be fantastic is in 10 years \_\_\_\_\_....." These are some of the answers:

- we are still growing, but maintaining our hometown feeling
- our young adult children want to come home
- people have places to eat, stay and shop
- there are no empty buildings

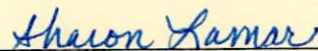
Please see ATTACHMENT #1 for Council's written responses to the retreats discussion question.

The Leadership Planning Retreat adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 7<sup>th</sup> DAY OF  
February 2022.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Briton S. Williams  
Mayor

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Lamar  
City Clerk

## **North Augusta: Set in Motion**

*Leadership Planning Retreat*

*January 26, 2022*

### Discussion Questions with Responses

#### **1. Transportation:**

**What transportation needs does the City of North Augusta need to address? This includes both current and future needs.**

- I am not sure where Best Friends goes in our city, but I feel if we had more transportation in area that are maybe Section 8. Lot of People in these areas have no transportation. Also Senior Citizen going to appointments or grocery shopping. (Carpenter)
- There are many needs for transportation in North Augusta. First we should consider additional funding for the current buses that now serve our Seniors. LSCOG buses and Aiken County Council on Ages buses. Almost daily one may see one or both buses in North Augusta in shopping centers, grocery store pick-up riders, professional offices like doctors, dentist, pharmacies, etc. I do not believe we should try to re-invent bus service while it is already here. Let's help improve it thru funding. We must remain very active in the ARTS, for project funding in North Augusta. The "squeaky" wheel gets the grease so we need to get as greasy as we can, always working to be out front on all CONA roads, bridges, lighting, sidewalks, Greeneways, etc. (Brooks)
- Possible shuttle service in and around downtown (Presnell)
- This issue is about traffic flow to me. With Exit 1 being the next domino of growth to fall in my opinion we need to make sure we have a good understanding of the Martintown Rd Study that was funded by the ARTS, approved by the PC and initially reviewed by the previous council. Are we in agreement that the types of traffic designs recommended in that study are what we want to use not only for Exit 1 but for other Exits-for example traffic loop on ramps (roundabouts). We need to begin to look at how we want to fund each of the top 5 priorities listed in that study. Do we use impact fees from the development of Hamrick Farms, bond debt, T do we look for ARTS money, do we give our Lobbyist specific guidance for a particular priority?

With the ongoing growth on Exit 5 what issues will we have to deal with there in 10 years? The amount of traffic that will be flowing down Austin Graybill Road both toward Exit 5 and coming out at Fire Station will increase dramatically as the Austin Heights neighborhood is built out as well as the growth from land where Storage Buildings, 24 ER Building and Hotel will be built.

The Ga. Ave Traffic Calming study will be very helpful when that begins in 2022. But how long will it take for the study to be done and then without knowing what it will say it's hard to plan specifically. But we can guess that cross walks will be a part of the solution and if so then let's address investing in high quality cross walks-not what we have now. We can look at what Fort Gordon is using as a guide. (Williams)

Ensuring that our road infrastructure can manage both the current and future demands needs to be a high priority. As was most suburban communities over the past several decades, North Augusta has been developed around the vehicle. I'd like to see our development code incentivize more pedestrian-friendly development going forward, but the stress on our main arterial roads will still be significant as the city continues to grow. The addition of bike lanes, the expansion of the Greenway, and the development of more pedestrian focused, multi-use type communities can help, but I'm not convinced that it can do so to a substantial degree. Continuing to work with ARTS and SC DOT should be a priority. (Toole)

- Ultimately, I will always boil to trying to do more research and see what is working in other successful towns similar to ours. We should probably focus on transportation needs for a population 50,000 or less. I found the website below and found it helpful in formulating some thoughts. Some of my first thoughts after a little research would be:

- Continuing to ensure we have a transportation options for our elderly. A dial-a-ride option and a non-emergency medical transportation

- Bike transportation and walkability can be a big focus for us. There are bike rental options and numerous walkability options we could create in our city. Bike sharing options are becoming popular.

- Ensuring transportation options for our lower income areas. Such as volunteer based programs, ride sharing incentives, or availability to the dial-a-ride options

- Not sure this fits here, but we also need to find ways to have electric car charging stations.

- Golf Carts. How do they fit in our city and in our parking plans?

I referenced this website as well:

[https://learn.sharedusemobilitycenter.org/learning\\_module/rural-and-small-town-transportation/](https://learn.sharedusemobilitycenter.org/learning_module/rural-and-small-town-transportation/) (McCauley)

- I not sure we have any current transportation needs. I think that we have done a good job providing the Trolley bus during special events and would like to make sure we continue using for special events. We should consider creating a possible once a week or weekend schedule that would cover outer areas of town with routes to the downtown and riverfront areas.

In the future we may consider and regular weekly schedule. I don't think we are or will be large enough city to consider any public transportation. (McGhee)

## **2. Parks:**

**What are the top development and/or redevelopment activities the City should undertake to expand and improve City of North Augusta park facilities? (Note: this question refers to greenspace and infrastructure, not athletic or other types of programming)**

- I feel we need more passive parks. Maybe a walking track at Summerfield Park. (Carpenter)

- I believe the top development in parks is to move forward with the PRTM Master Plan as programmed in the latest Sales Tax project. This would include the NA Country Club property. Now is the time to. Do a Master Plan because new housing developments are now underway as well as being planned. The Master Plan would follow all established regulations for public open space to be set aside for new green space, neighborhood parks with playgrounds, etc. Current developments would be Hamrick Farms, Rushing Waters off 5 Notch Road, Crystal Lake, Oak Creek, Gregory Landing, plus others. Additional boat landings on the Savannah River to include a new park on city property in and around the 5th street ponds. Work with SCDOT for demolition of the old, no longer used, section of the 5th Street Bridge. Crushing of the old concrete and create new concrete products at the adjacent NA Concrete Company. Finally develop Trail Heads at entrances to the Greenway locations such as Ascauga Lake Road, the beginning of the Palmetto Parkway Greenway and one at its terminus on SC Hwy 1. A plan was developed and proposed maybe 12-18 months by Studio Main LLC, Blake Sanders. Pursue the completion of the Greenway to Little Horse Creek as planned on the overall North Augusta Master Plan for the Greenway. Additional Greenway connectors into neighborhoods are needed as well. (Brooks)
- Include playgrounds/greenspace in residential developments (Presnell)
- The most common question I have gotten over the last 8 months as to do with the old NA Country Club property. Do we keep it for ourselves and then use if for one or several purposes-such as Parks & Rec, Public Safety, and Public Services? Do we have sufficient land for our internal growth needs to provide the quality of life expected from our residents? Do we develop it and if so what does that look like and what would be the cost to make it into a residential development? Or do we sell it and use the money for other needed improvements? Council needs get clarity on this. (Williams)
- I don't see the development of new, active parks as being a high priority for the city. I do, however, believe that we ought to continue to invest in and improve the facilities that we have; especially Riverview Park, Summerville Park, and the Greenway. I would like to see us focus more on passive parks and greenspace going forward. I think that the former NA Country Club property offers a great opportunity to provide a more natural, passive park with nature trails and greenspace that is lacking in North Augusta. Flat Rock Park near Hendersonville, NC would be a great example to consider for the future development of this property. (Toole)
- 1) North Augusta Country Club - I think we have a lot of opportunity here to be creative. A few ideas:
  - Cherokee Veteran's Park <https://www.playcherokee.org/224/Cherokee-Veterans-Park>
  - The Park at Flat Rock [http://villageofflatrock.org/index.asp?SEC=A7A15169-388E-4CEE-8BD9-439C4236F2C9&Type=B\\_BASIC](http://villageofflatrock.org/index.asp?SEC=A7A15169-388E-4CEE-8BD9-439C4236F2C9&Type=B_BASIC)
  - First Tee or YMCA options
  - Cross Country Courses

Ultimately, I think the Country Club property is going to be sitting in a sub pocket of North Augusta. It would be great if we built recreation space different than we already have. That way, people who live out there will still come in-town and those in-town will want to go to this park. Creating cross marketing....
- 2) Continued expansion of the Greenway throughout the city and downtown
- 3) Greenway Improvements

- 4) 5th St Bridge Connection - possibly
- 5) Shade Sails - It's hot, let's make our playgrounds useable.
- 6) Pavilion at Riverview Park Playground
- 7) Bike Rentals (McCauley)

- I think with our upcoming masterplan update we can address many items.

- 1) Expansion of Greenway to accommodate the 5<sup>th</sup> street bridge walkway. We have an immediate need to address how we are going to connect, or not connect it to the Greenway. Create a Parking Area and Security are major concerns.
- 2) We need to update the Greenway map trails on our website, for better accessibility with more detail.
- 3) I am excited about getting miracle Field facility started.
- 4) We need some park areas on the outer edges of the city limits. (McGhee)

### **3. Residential Housing Development:**

**What type(s) of residential development do you think is necessary for City Council to encourage to meet future housing needs? This could include any combination of: single family housing and multi-family housing such as apartments, condos, townhomes and senior living.**

- I would like to see more affordable housing, not necessarily government run house, but housing similar to Habitat housing. Definitely more Senior living housing. (Carpenter)
- Residential housing needs have not changed. Single family, apartments, condos, townhouses, and SENIOR LIVING — the greatest need that is affordable in nice neighborhoods where families of all ages live, work, play, dine together. New housing developments must have a minimum of two entrances and exits in its development. This would be a great access for Public Safety vehicles, ambulances, service vehicles, as well as Public Works and Sanitation vehicles. In addition main thoroughfares in these new developments should be at least a minimum of 30 - 35 feet back to back. Side streets may be less. My thoughts only on this matter: City limits expansion are already limited now with regards to Augusta and Burnetown. Our major area for expansion is in Edgefield County. Mayor and Council should study our current city limits, review vacant undeveloped properties that currently are in the city. Have a round table discussion and involve the planning commission and city staff, as well as the BTZ in an open meeting. City staff may know what is planned for these properties but Mayor and Council, Planning Commission & BTZ may not. This knowledge would definitely influence the future city limits in my mind. From this we can discuss the potential northern most limit and eastern most.

My limits:

Northern most - Martintown/ Murray Road; Five Notch Road/Murray Road; US Hwy 25/ Sweetwater Road.

Southern most- Savannah River

Eastern Most- Us Hwy 1/ Clearwater

Western most - Portions of Savannah River/ Martintown Road

Central most - properties adjacent to US Hwy 25 to include Belvedere

(this would include joining our existing city limits as it meanders thru this area)

Stand alone would be the already annexed Palmetto Parkway with its adjoining properties. e.g. new Aiken County Middle and Elementary schools plus housing developments along the Parkway. (Brooks)

- All aspects, condos, single family large and small lots (Presnell)
- We have a segment of our population that will continue a trend of wanting to downsize due to age and empty nests. I think we need to focus on residential that comprises single family residences and town homes primarily and then sprinkle in condos where appropriate. What Charles Blackston has built on Exit 5 as well as the Village at Riverview are perfect examples. (Williams)
- My most significant thought is that we ought to do whatever we can to encourage development that protects the tree canopy and avoids the mass grading of land that is becoming far too prevalent. I'd also like for us to have a conversation about impact fees to determine if those would help the city mitigate some of the infrastructure demands that the new developments will create. Personally, I'd like to see more mixed-use type developments encouraged with narrower streets, protected green space, and a focus on pedestrian traffic over automobile traffic. Incentivizing a mixture of affordable housing and higher-end housing within the same development should also be considered. This can be done by making sure that zoning allows for the ability to build duplexes, triplexes, and Accessory Dwelling Units in "traditional" neighborhoods. (Toole)
- I think our city needs a combination of all housing developments. Our developments within the city limits should focus on keeping green space and connectivity. Possibly avoid clear cutting certain areas if possible. I know personally we are lacking inventory for single family housing within our downtown area. I think the multi-family housing options are good, but should be dedicated to spaces where we believe higher density makes sense. (McCauley)
- 1) I think we need to encourage, single family housing like condos and townhomes.  
2) There continues to be a great demand for short term rentals, and apartments.  
3) I would like to encourage some revitalization of our older neighborhoods. (McGhee)

**What are your thoughts on expansion of the city limits to accommodate residential development?**

- I would love to see city limits expanded. (Carpenter)
- Okay with it as long as there is sufficient commercial development to offset costs (Presnell)
- I think we have to be careful with the amount of multi-families such as apartments as we build out in these future developments such as Blanchard Track and Hamrick Farms. It will be necessary to have apartments as a part of the development but it needs to be a smaller percentage. I am not in favor expanding the city limits to accommodate residential development at this time-there



would need to be a really big strategic advantage to consider it. We will have plenty of work to do just in maintaining the services citizens will expect once the Blanchard Track, Hamrick Farms and Mealing track as well as the Kellogg Track are completed. (Williams)

- I am not opposed to expanding city limits, but it would not be a high priority for me. I'd prefer that we prioritize filling in the "doughnut holes" and infill development over expanding city limits outward to mitigate some of the infrastructure demands that outward expansion will require. (Toole)
- I think we need to look at opportunities to expand city limits for residential development. (McGhee)

#### **4. Commercial and Business Development:**

**What commercial development needs do you see as essential for supporting North Augusta's growing populous and expanding the tax base? This could be specific businesses or types of business and industry.**

- I, as with rest of the town to see affordable dining for all citizens. Sit down restaurant. Have some type incentive to make them want to come to North Augusta. I would like to see skating ring, Putt Putt, movie theaters. One of biggest complaints in North Augusta is, there is nothing to do. More family outing to go to, besides going to a sporting event. Also someone specifically selling our City! (Carpenter)
- The city must continue to work with agencies such as Aiken-Edgefield-Saluda Economic Development Partnership plus the Augusta Economic Development Authority to create new strategies for development of 1-20/I-520 interchange. With new cyber facilities both in Augusta and at Fort Gordon. We need to provide incentives for spin offs for professional office space for SRS; medical business developments for doctors, dentists, etc. and SENIOR LIVING DEVELOPMENTS like SUN CITY near Beaufort and Hilton Head. (Brooks)
- Office space, restaurants, Mom & Pop shops (Presnell)
- I think for our larger developments such as Blanchard Track and Hamrick Farms we need to look for specific types of businesses/industries. With a population of 25,000 we need more than a single Lowes. A Home Depot and/or Hardware type store would fit perfectly into fulfilling one of our needs. Our seepage of dollars going outside NA for food is alarming and we have to target non fast food restaurants such as larger conglomerate chains. However, we also need to address how to create the environment that spurs small business restaurants like a Larder or Manuel's. In a perfect world we would have both. I know strip centers are popular infill developments but we need to be careful about just how many of those we need. Besides the future developments mentioned we need to decide about a number of large empty buildings such as Channel 12 and the old radio station next to it as well as the Carpet Shop. These types of targeted projects along with other infill available land makes the need for an Economic Development Authority a priority for us to consider. We need to be intentional getting certain types of projects completed and this

fits into the role of what an EDA can do for us. We have already gotten some preliminary information from what Aiken has done. (Williams)

- Commercial development should be diverse. We need a mixture of national, chain-type businesses (Target, Trader Joe's, Mast General, sit-down restaurants, entertainment venues, etc.) as well as locally owned businesses. I'd also like us to understand our capacity for more light industrial growth. I don't believe that there is any significant space remaining at the industrial Park but are there other parcels in other appropriate areas of town that could support this? (Toole)
- Commercial business is not an area of expertise for me, but I recognize it's needed economically. If expanding the city limits helped us secure appropriate commercial developments I would be open to hearing options. As far as other business development; I believe North Augusta is designed to encourage the local small business owner to open. I think we should continue focusing on making downtown and riverside village an environment where these businesses can thrive. We need to help these businesses with parking, environment, events, and aesthetics. (McCauley)
- 1) We can always use more retail, and restaurants. I think we need to pursue industrial opportunities for our industrial park and near exit 5 and I-20.  
2) Exit 1 needs to be a continued effort for retail  
3) I always thought would be good if we could an outlet mall. We are perfectly placed between Charlotte and Atlanta. (McGhee)

#### **What are your thoughts on expansion of the city limits to accommodate commercial development?**

- A partial of land could be the old Seven Lakes Golf course, adjacent to both US Hwy 1 and Palmetto Parkway. Yes I would support extending city limits for commercial growth. (Brooks)
- I'm for it (Presnell)
- I am not open expanding the city limits to accommodate commercial development. (Williams)
- Depending on the project, I'd be open to expanding city limits, but much as is the case with residential development, I think we ought to focus on what is already within city limits; especially in redeveloping some of the currently vacant or under-utilized properties. (Toole)
- I would agree to expand the city limits for commercial development. (McGhee)

#### **5. Tourism:**

**Significant investment and attention has been focused on Riverside Village over the past few years, and more recently, Council has additionally prioritized investment and attention in downtown through the Greenway connector, amenity installation and event promotion. What strategies can the City employ to further integrate the downtown and Riverside Village areas into a more cohesive tourism destination?**

- I love our downtown but not much to do for a family other than eating. I would love to see something similar to Hobby Lobby, Toy Store, theater (as older days), and clothing stores. Anything to bring people downtown. (Carpenter)
- Several positive steps for tourism have recently taken place by new hires. Promotion of the city's parks, recreation facilities, Greenway, historic homes, SRP park, plus other new facilities currently under construction and those immediately waiting. We must highly promote Public Safety's new Station 1 plus Headquarters and Courtroom. Keep the neighborhoods up to date and involved as much as possible. Mayor and Council have spoken numerous times about neighborhood involvement in both of these projects so let's meet that fulfillment. Promote the City's riverfront, especially Boeckh Park and its amenities, such as the Greenway. Many of our residents do not go to Boeckh Park since they think it belongs to the development. That is why public promotion of parks is essential because we do have a "Hidden Jewel" in Boeckh Park. Numerous plans have recently been presented to Mayor and Council with promotion strategies in mind. We invested in the Main Street Program with NAF, neat ideas were presented for joining the downtown area with Riverside Village and SRP Park. Another program and source of promotion is the NA Arts and Heritage, Nancy Carson Library, Living History Park, our own beauty spots and entranceways as maintained but city forces, our own NA Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, and Sharon Jones Amphitheater, etc. How do the Performing Arts fit in? We need to become better affiliated with each as we move forward.

My personal vision is to have a town square where major functions take place with stores open for folks to shop and eat. 3rd Thursday is a great beginning but we must improve on it. Calvin's Coffee has a very nice square for his business. Why can't the city do something on a larger scale with the construction of an open air market facility? Location would be Carolina/ Jackson with the removal of the playground that now exists and not heavily used.

OR

Build the Square on Top of the Medac Parking Deck. BTW, we need to rename that deck. Parking below, deck on top. We can do it. (Brooks)

- Something to keep people staying here. Bike rentals, canoe/kayak rentals, cafes, coffee shops and shopping (Presnell)
- I think once we get a MOU locally (not what we approved by Resolution that was required by MASC) completed with NA Forward for Main Street real synergy can happen. For example, the City/Tourism can focus on adding big events so we have something at least 4 times a year-rather that's quarterly or seasonally to be determined. We then have the Main Street folks work on a monthly type downtown event like a Food Truck Festival and/or a concert for example-think the fundraiser for Bark Park at Jackson Square several years ago.

Connecting the downtown and the river is so important for us. Our tourism team, the Arts and Heritage Center and Main Street can work toward place making art along Center Street as well as branding the art throughout the city-think the Horse Sculpture Art on street corners in Aiken.

We cannot wait till the DGC is completed up Bluff Ave to focus on moving it into our Alley system. We need to strategically begin working toward that now.

Hammonds Ferry through Manuel's has done a great job with their Clay Farms. There is land available behind Veterans Park that would be ideal for a community garden. This initiative is organic tourism that helps quality of life but still fits into how to make downtown better. Asheville has done a wonderful job with this concept. (Williams)

- I believe that some of the guidance provided by Main Street in developing the connecting parcel currently owned by NAF and the Greenway expansion could help a great deal with this, but the primary obstacle that I see is the traffic pattern on Georgia Ave and the fact that our downtown is not pedestrian friendly. We can certainly continue to do things to further calm traffic (traffic circles, narrow Ga Ave, change parking arrangement), but we are going to be limited based on what SC DOT allows and the fact that it is the main artery into Augusta and the hospitals. Calming traffic sounds great until I or a loved one is in the back of an ambulance trying to get to the hospital. Events like 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday and the Jack-O-Lantern Jubilee are great and we should do more of those and utilize both RV and downtown. Making sure that code encourages the redevelopment of underdeveloped parcels and is done in such a way that is more conducive to pedestrians should also be a part of the conversation.

Something missing from each of the above focus areas is any sort of connection with the Arts, whether that be the installation of public art (murals, sculptures, etc.) or performing arts. It is interesting that we are holding this session in Newberry; a city that has made itself a destination with the Newberry Opera House. I am not at all familiar with the city except to know that the Opera House exists, and that Newberry College is there. I'd like to see us look at ways to enhance and encourage the Arts and that should be a part of the discussion around downtown development. I believe that making the arts a focus would drive both tourism and help spur downtown development. (Toole)

- I think we need to collaborate and have a better connection with our downtown to Riverside Village. I think our trolleys should run both Riverside Village and Downtown. And/or make it all considered downtown? We have to find a way to make a walk seem easy if you are eating in Riverside Village and wanting to shop downtown. We need a Saturday market and other events that drive people to the area. I think we are beginning the digital steps with social media and a new website. Collaboration with the Main Street plan will be huge. We can look into Sports Tourism and hosting events. They might not scale to the Peach Jam, but there are opportunities with our river and sports attractions. Finally, investing in our Arts center and Art initiatives can be an economic driver as well. (McCauley)
- 1) We need to encourage the development of the downtown and Riverside Village with some possible tax incentive or additional grants for new and existing businesses.  
2) I believe the 13<sup>th</sup> street bridge rebuild will increase downtown business. With increased foot traffic. (McGhee)