

January 2004
Vol. XI, Number 1

CITY COUNCIL

Lark Jones, Mayor
Jimmy Adams
Carolyn Baggott
Pat Carpenter
Phil Mottel
Ken McDowell
Arthur Shealy

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

are held every first & third Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers on the second floor of the Municipal Building, 400 East Buena Vista Avenue. Citizens are encouraged to attend these meetings.



North Augusta
South Carolina's Riverfront

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North Augusta

FORWARD

A Publication for the Citizens of North Augusta, South Carolina

CITY OUTGROWS OFFICE


Space



North Augusta Municipal Building, 400 East Buena Vista Avenue.

Since its incorporation in 1906 the city's administrative offices have been housed in three different locations. As the city grew so did the need for workspace and storage of public records. The first city building was the old "Fire Barn" on the east side of Georgia Avenue in the 500 block. In 1955 the city offices, including police and fire, were moved to the building on East Buena Vista Avenue where the Public Safety Department is currently housed. The 10,000 square foot municipal building at 400 East Buena Vista Avenue was built in 1984. Designed to house a maximum of seventeen people, the municipal building now provides office space for twenty-two employees.

Since 1984 the city has met the increasing need for space through a number of renovations and adaptations to both the public safety and municipal buildings. In 1994 one of the municipal building's two stairwells was converted to storage space to meet state records retention requirements. In 1996, the first floor hallway was converted to office space. In 1998 and again in 2002 the public safety building was remodeled to accommodate increased space needs for municipal court operations and the Criminal Investigations Division. Also in 2002, to free up needed space, the five employees in the Building Standards Department were relocated from the second floor of the municipal building to the old "Drivers License" building across the street. Shortly afterwards, however, the free space on the second floor was reorganized to provide office space for a Stormwater Manager, Code Compliance Officer and a planning position in the Department of Economic and Community Development.

In 2002, to address the growing need for office space, the City Council authorized the first phase of a multi-year effort to design and construct a new municipal complex and funds were included in the 2003 budget to begin the process. Completion of the new building is scheduled to coincide with North Augusta's centennial celebration in early 2006. 

CITY PLANS NEW MUNICIPAL *Complex*

To best serve the needs of the community and to make the best use of available funds, the design and construction of a new municipal administration complex will be carefully planned. The City Council approved a three-year, multi-step process to plan and build the new "City Hall." The first step was to hire highly qualified professionals to assist with the design. The second and third steps include programming future space needs, identifying the best way to deliver services to the community through the new facility, and selecting the best site to meet the needs and deliver services.

The fourth step in the process is to design the building based on the space needs program and to fit the selected site. The final step will be construction. A goal of the City Council for the new municipal facility is a building or group of buildings that will be able to grow with the city through the coming century. Additionally, the Council will be evaluating the possibility of planning for other uses to be housed in the new complex. Some additional uses include a museum and cultural arts area, office space for other community organizations, office space for lease, coffee shop or restaurant and others.

Step one is complete. The process of selecting a professional team to manage the design process was started last summer. Twenty-seven firms submitted qualifications and letters of interest. All were well qualified. Twelve firms were short listed to submit detailed proposals and then five were selected for for-

mal interviews. It was a difficult decision. After the interviews the City Council selected The Boudreaux Group of Columbia, South Carolina, to manage the design of the new municipal offices.

The Boudreaux Group started work last October on the space needs analysis and alternative site evaluation. A public meeting and design "charrette" was held Thursday, January 8, 2004 at the North Augusta Community Center. Charrette participants

were asked to advise the architects on the possible additional uses that should be included in the building, potential sources of funding to construct space for additional uses, the general area where the complex should be located, and the kind of image the new facility should present. Using the input received at the charrette the architects will develop preliminary designs for the City Council to consider.



Riton Rizzo, Creative Sources, Inc.

The Boudreaux Group was recently recognized by industry professionals for its well-integrated design of the headquarters of the Municipal Association of South Carolina, located on Gervais Street in downtown Columbia.

The preferred preliminary design will then be developed into the final design before the end of 2004 so that construction can begin soon thereafter. The ribbon cutting on the new municipal facility will be scheduled as part of the city's centennial celebration in 2006.

Future editions of *North Augusta Forward* will provide additional details and updates on the design process and construction of North Augusta's 21st century municipal complex.



CAPITAL PROJECTS SALES TAX

Update

In November 2000 the voters of Aiken County approved a county-wide one-cent Capital Projects Sales Tax. The tax added a penny to the five-cent retail sales tax in Aiken County. Proceeds from the tax, initially estimated at \$54.6 million over seven years, were allocated to specific capital projects, including road improvements, drainage projects and recreation facilities in North Augusta, Aiken, Aiken County and the county's smaller municipalities. It is now evident that the \$54.6 million will be collected much sooner, in approximately five years.

Just over \$7.5 million of the total was allocated to projects in North Augusta. Those projects include an expansion of the Material Recovery Facility, major improvements to several city parks, continued expansion of the Greenway, street paving and reconstruction, drainage improvements, sidewalk construction and downtown streetscape improvements.

The city has been receiving funds from the tax quarterly over the last two years. Most of the projects on the sales tax list have been initiated and some are complete. The following list summarizes the status of many of the projects.

PARKS

Sales tax proceeds were utilized in 2001 to make major improvements to Summerfield Park on Old Edgefield Road and to construct Walnut Lane Neighborhood Park in Walnut Grove. A playground, practice fields, picnic shelter and restrooms were added to Summerfield Park. The Walnut Lane Neighborhood Park includes a picnic shelter, playground and a paved jogging and biking trail. In 2002 a paved trail, part of the citywide Greenway system, was built to connect the loop trail and playground in Walnut Lane Neighborhood Park to Walnut Lane. The Capital Projects Sales Tax provided a portion of the funding for both parks, \$130,000 on Summerfield and \$80,000 on Walnut Lane.

Major enhancements in Riverview Park are currently being designed and will be implemented in 2004. The first portion of the riverfront extension of the Greenway through the Hammond's Ferry development and along the Savannah River will also be constructed in 2004. The riverfront park on the river is in the design

phase and will be constructed in conjunction with the Hammond's Ferry commercial area. (See the September 2003 edition of *North Augusta Forward*.)

MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY

In 2003 a new conveyor system was added to the material separating process at North Augusta's Material Recovery Facility (MRF), the center of the city's recycling program. The \$150,000 sales tax funded system will enable the facility to process more recyclable materials faster. Although the Sanitation Services Department had planned the system upgrade for several years, the timing of the improvement is significant. Much of the labor at the MRF is provided by inmates from state correctional facilities. To offset a portion of its budget shortfalls the South Carolina Department of Corrections has increased the daily rate it charges local governments for inmate labor, essentially doubling the city's annual labor costs at the MRF. The increased efficiency provided by the new conveyor system helps to offset the cost increase.

STREET RECONSTRUCTION

The Capital Projects Sales Tax ballot also included the reconstruction of 2.4 miles of North Augusta streets. The streets listed are unsafe or inefficient and require substantial improvements. The planned improvements, at a cost of approximately \$1,200,000, include the installation of curb, gutter and storm drains, resurfacing and, in some cases, the construction of sidewalks. Design is essentially complete and construction will begin next summer. Completion will require approximately four months. The streets to be reconstructed this year are:

<u>Street</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Lake Avenue	Woodlawn Avenue	Highview Avenue
Woodlawn Avenue	Crestview Drive	East Avenue
West Summit Avenue	West Avenue	Carolina Avenue
Arlington Heights	Georgia Avenue	Lake Avenue
Alta Vista Avenue	Pershing Drive	Crystal Lake Drive
Forrest Avenue	Georgia Avenue	East Avenue

Future editions of *North Augusta Forward* will highlight other projects made possible through Capital Projects Sales Tax funding. 

EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED

The City of North Augusta Employee Recognition Committee recently recognized Frank Williams, crew leader at the North Augusta Community Center, as Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2003.

Williams has worked for the city since October 1975 and was recognized for his attention to detail, flexibility and patience. He has been the recipient of numerous customer compliments on his kind, respectful and helpful disposition and his ability to handle sometimes delicate situations with the utmost professionalism.

North Augusta's Employee Recognition Program was established in 1996 to honor employees who distinguish themselves through unique accomplishments, cost-saving efforts, customer service and consistent performance above normal expectations. A committee of city employees accepts nominations from city employees and citizens and selects an outstanding employee each quarter. For more information or to nominate an employee, please call 441-4301.




ACTIVITIES CENTER FEES

Increase in 2004

The city budget for 2004 recently approved by the City Council includes an increase in Riverview Park Activities Center membership fees. The increase will be effective January 1, 2004, and is necessary to offset the difference between revenues and steadily increasing expenses. In approving the fee increase members of the Council stated that it was needed to maintain the high level of service provided at the Activities Center.

Currently, 5,533 Activities Center members generate \$219,895 in annual membership fees. An additional \$180,757, representing 3.77 mills levied specifically for the Activities Center, is allocated from the General Fund to support center expenses. Operating expenses for 2004 are expected to total \$482,390, an amount that exceeds the total of fees received and the earmarked mill levy by \$89,018. The city will continue to support the Activities Center with an annual General Fund appropriation of approximately \$180,757. The fee increase is projected to generate an additional \$80,000. Cost cutting in center operations will make up the difference.

A comparison of the existing and new fees is show in the following chart. 

Membership Category	Current Fees	2004 Fees
Individual – City Resident	\$35	\$50
Individual – Nonresident	\$70	\$100
Individual – Out of State	\$140	\$200
Family – Inside City	\$105	\$150
Family – Outside City	\$210	\$300



Aerial view of Riverview Park.

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TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

POLICE & FIRE EMERGENCY	911
PUBLIC SAFETY	
Non Emergency	279-2121
Administration	441-4251
Records/Court Services	441-4271
Investigations	441-4274
PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE SERVICES	
Riverview Park Activities Center	441-4300
Activities Coordinator	441-4311
Community Center	441-4290
GENERAL SERVICES & FINANCE	
Taxes	441-4215
Utility - New Service/Disconnects	441-4219
Utility Billing Services	441-4212
Business Licenses (Non-Contractor)	441-4214
Human Resources	441-4205
ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS	
After-Hours Emergencies	279-2121
Engineering	441-4223
Building Standards	441-4227
Permits	441-4227
Business Licenses (Contractors)	441-4227
Animal Control	441-4227
Sanitation Services	441-4223
Sanitation - New Service	441-4219
Stormwater Management	441-4246
PUBLIC UTILITIES	
After-Hours Emergencies	279-2121
Utility - New Service/Disconnects	441-4219
Utility Billing	441-4212
Water and Sewer Repairs	441-4240
Streets and Drains Repairs	441-4240
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	
Economic Development	441-4221
Planning	441-4221
Zoning	441-4221
Code Compliance	441-4258
ADMINISTRATION	
Mayor	441-4202
City Administrator	441-4202
OTHER FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS	
North Augusta Chamber of Commerce	279-2323
Nancy Carson Library	279-5767
North Augusta Health Center	278-3621
Comcast (cable)	706-733-7712
S. C. Electric & Gas	442-2000
BellSouth	780-2355
S. C. Department of Transportation	1-800-442-1368
Magistrate	202-3580

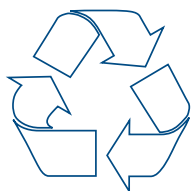


CITY of NORTH AUGUSTA
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 North Augusta, SC 29861-6400

www.northaugusta.net

North Augusta Forward is mailed quarterly to every city water customer. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please write to:

North Augusta Forward,
 P. O. Box 6400, North Augusta, SC 29861-6400
 or call 803-441-4221.



NORTH AUGUSTA
Recycles