

Minutes for June 2002 Meeting
of the Aiken County Republican Party
by Vicki L. Simons

The regular monthly meeting of the Aiken County Republican Party was held on Thursday, June 13, 2002, at the Aiken County Council Chambers. The following officers were present:

- * Chairman, David Nix,
- * Vice Chairman, Rachael Meehan,
- * Executive Committeeman, Ginny Allen,
- * Treasurer, Jan Carpenter, and
- * Secretary, Vicki Simons.

Chairman David Nix:

- * Offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- * Indicated, in the absence of a quorum of Executive Committeemen at the called Executive Committee meeting, that he may make an executive decision regarding the item on the agenda: funding the party's Internet website.
- * Asked for a motion to approve the April 2002 and May 2002 meeting minutes, which had been mailed to Executive Committeemen. The motion was made and seconded. Those in the Executive Committee who were present voted unanimously to approve the minutes. Therefore, the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.
- * Reported that the Treasurer's report showed a balance ending May 31, 2002, of \$3991.76, saying that monies that had come in were from dues and filing fees;
- * Introduced the speakers for the evening, candidates for Aiken County Council.

Eight candidates are running for Aiken County Council. Three candidates were present and drew numbers to determine the order in which to speak. Our guest speakers were:

- * Joel Randall,
- * Scott Singer and
- * Fay Hatcher.

Each candidate provided a brief overview about himself or herself:

* Joel Randall said he has been serving District 6 on County Council since 1994. Among his goals and concerns are to keep taxes as low as possible. Unless there is a disaster, there should be no tax increase. He wants the Aiken County economy to stay strong, keep jobs here, keep relocations down and build a strong county. During his time in office, the research and industrial parks have been built, there is a new jail and a new solid waste facility. Compared to the early 1990's -- when the County didn't know if it could make payroll -- the County now has \$10 million in reserve. He believes in treating everyone fairly with no regard to financial background, since we're all created equal. He said he is conservative and that he hopes to prosper the county. The population has grown from 132,000 to 142,000 people. We need better quality school teachers. He wants to do what is best for the county. He would appreciate support on July 23.

* Scott Singer, who introduced his wife Mary and nephew David Rutherford, said he is running for District 2. He believes he is applying for a job. Employed by Regions Financial Corporation, he is required to match the qualifications of the employee with the job. He has extensive banking experience and provided details about his employment background. He is currently responsible through Regions East for a 4-state area. He works with city and state governments for economic and community development. While the state has grown by 1%, Aiken County has grown by 0.25%. He asked why we have a lag. We should be proactive in planning and addressing issues. Yet, he wants to retain the character of Aiken; he does not want us to become Columbia. Concerning civic involvement, he has just rotated off from being State Chairman of the American Red Cross. He said that he will say what he means and do what he says. Both Ronnie Young and Howard Sellers have endorsed him. He asks for votes on July 23.

* Fay Hatcher spent 8 years on County Council 24 years ago. At the time, she successfully unseated a veteran. The Board deals with law, which is common sense, she said. She previously worked hard for District 1. Her purpose for running is not to run against Joel. Since she was on Council, they have gotten "home rule." She said she will represent the citizens of Aiken County, will speak her mind and usually says what comes to mind. An example of what she would like to see changed is the "eyesore" of the Aiken County Courthouse. The front is roped off with police tape, the bulletin board is at the front and persons who have business to transact have to figure out how to get in and out. For seniors who use the probate court, it is an inconvenience for them the way it is. She is running and asked for folks to preferably vote for her.

The names of some other County Council candidates and the districts they wish to represent were mentioned. Distinctions were made between two Al Brodies and two Fay Hatchers. Regarding the School Board race, filing is done by petition on a non-partisan basis. Chairman Nix said he wishes that the School Board race was partisan. Dick Smith asked for an opportunity to ask County Council candidates questions. The following questions were asked:

- * Vicki Simons: What is the definition of "home rule"?
- * Dick Smith: How do the candidates feel about the overlay district to coordinate land use, particularly the growth on Whiskey Road and the blending of city and county plans?
- * Dr. Beard: In that zoning hasn't changed the situation, what comments do the candidates have on zoning, particularly as it applies to junkyards?
- * David Nix: What about the overlay for the cities of Aiken and North Augusta?
- * Karl Overcash: Is there a need to change contractors to develop areas, such as in one subdivision where houses are built ten feet apart and the surrounding land, which used to be a wetland, was cleaned up during the night?
- * David Allen: Concerning private property rights, will zoning restrict the best use of land?

Arthur Andersen provided highlights of the May meeting of the Aiken Republican Club at which Tom Coones presided. He said good info was shared, the meeting went smoothly and they learned a lot. One hundred thirty seven people attended a meeting where six out of seven [gubernatorial] candidates spoke. He said the meeting was well organized and mentioned specific people responsible for it.

Mr. Andersen also stated that the next meeting was scheduled for Monday night [June 17] at 6 p.m. at the Municipal building. The room will hold 165 people, so they have room for more. Bobby's Bar-B-Q will be catering the event. As many [runoff] candidates will be speaking as possible, including Gresham Barrett, Ed McMullen, David Thomas, Mark Hammond, Larry Richter and Henry McMaster. Keith Coones will be recording the [gubernatorial] debate [between Bob Peeler and Mark Sanford] at 7 p.m., which would be replayed at 8 p.m. for those at the dinner.

An event for Gresham Barrett, to be held at 4 p.m. in the Alley that same day, was also mentioned.

Chairman Nix asked for a motion to adjourn, which was provided, seconded and passed unanimously.

Minutes approved by: _____

on: _____

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____