



City of Charleston
Committee on Public Works & Utilities
July 14, 2025

A meeting of the Committee on Public Works & Utilities was held this date beginning at 5:03 p.m. over video conference call.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

Present: Councilmember Waring, Chair, Councilmember Gregorie, Vice Chair, Mayor Cogswell, and Councilmember Parker. Chair Waring

Also Present: Matt Alltop, Jennifer Cook, Julia Copeland, Magalie Creech, Melissa Cruthirds, Elizabeth Dieck, Matthew Fountain, Anthony Giraldo, Tim Keane, Steve Kirk, Kaylan Koszela, Hampton Logan, Josh Martin, Sheila Smith, and Robbie Somerville

Link to meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLGStyHa9fE>

A. Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence provided by Chair Waring.

B. Approval of Public Works and Utilities Committee Minutes

1. June 16, 2025

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item B1.

C. Request to Set a Public Hearing

None.

D. Old Business

None.

E. Acceptance and Dedication of Rights-of-Way and Easements

- 1. Authorization to notify SCDOT that the City intends to accept maintenance of approximately 300 LF of a concrete multi-use path on Riverland Dr.(S-53) in conjunction with the Riverland Dr. MUP project.**

Mr. Keane explained the item.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item E1.

- 2. Authorization to notify SCDOT that the City intends to accept maintenance of approximately 90 LF of granite curb on Spring St. (S-3) in conjunction with project at 216 Spring St.**

Mr. Keane explained the item.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item E2.

3. **Authorization to notify SCDOT that the City intends to accept maintenance of a muted tide gate, check valve, and new box culverts on Central Park Road (S-67) and Riley Road (S-1753) for the City's Central Park Drainage Improvement Project.**

Mr. Fountain explained the item.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item E3.

4. **Retreat at Verdier Ph 2 – Claret Cup Way (55' R/W), Queenview Lane (55" R/w)**
 - a. **Title to Real Estate**
 - b. **Exclusive Stormwater Drainage Easement Agreement**
 - c. **Affidavit for Taxable or Exempt Transfers**
 - d. **Plat**
5. **Ashley Walk Townhomes (formally known as Rhodes Crossing Ph 1A – Twinleaf Ct (50' R/W)**
 - a. **Title to Real Estate**
 - b. **Exclusive and Nonexclusive Stormwater Drainage Easement Agreement**
 - c. **Affidavit for Taxable or Exempt Transfers**
 - d. **Plat**

Mr. Keane explained Items E4 and E5 and said the two Acceptances were for new streets in two developing neighborhoods off Bees Ferry Road. Ashley Walk was off Sanders Road and a small development of townhomes. On the other side of Bees Ferry was Verdier. The City reviewed with them the required process of submitting the necessary paperwork for the dedication of public streets. All associated inspections had been completed, and the City was ready for acceptance.

Chair Waring said because the discussion included Items E4 & E5 he hoped the motion would include both.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Items E4 & E5.

F. Temporary Encroachments Approved by The Department of Public Services (For information only)

1. **583 King St. (King 583 Hilton Vacation Club) – Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
2. **213 Claret Cup Way – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
3. **7135 Windmill Creek Road – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
4. **4009 Flatiron Drive – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
5. **1260 Midvale Ave – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**

6. **213 Claret Cup Way – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
7. **536 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
8. **532 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
9. **528 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
10. **524 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
11. **520 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
12. **516 Hayes Park Blvd – Installing brick pavers for driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
13. **4164 Westerly Lane – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
14. **206 King St. (INDOCHINO) – Installing signage and awnings encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
15. **22 Westedge St. (MUSC) – Installing signage encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
16. **4106 Collins Dr. – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
17. **351 Crystal Springs Rd. – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
18. **411 Queenview – Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**

Mr. Keane said all the items presented were standard encroachments and for information only.

G. Public Service Department Update

1. Director Updates

None.

H. Department of Development Services Update

1. **Request approval of Addendum 2 to the professional services contract with Ardurra (formerly WK Dickson) in the amount of \$100,000.00 to provide for continued 3rd party MS4 plan review support services. Approval of the contract will increase the project budget by \$100,000.00. Funding is allocated for this item in the Stormwater Operations Budget for FY 2025.**
2. **Request approval of Addendum 3 to the professional services contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., in the amount of \$100,000.00 to provide for continued 3rd party MS4 plan review support services. Approval of the contract will increase the project budget by \$100,000.00. Funding is allocated for this item within the Stormwater Operations Budget for FY 2025.**

3. Request approval of Addendum 2 to the professional services contract with Woolpert, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000.00 to provide continued 3rd party stormwater plan review services. Approval of the contract will increase the project budget by \$100,000.00. Funding is allocated for this item within the Stormwater Operations Budget for FY 2025.

Mr. Keane explained the items and said last summer, City Council approved agreements with three private engineering firms that would support the City on plan review and supplement the plan reviewers due to the extreme volume of work. The three engineering firms listed under H (Ardurra, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc., and Woolpert, Inc.) helped with the review work. This worked out to be a good decision as the firms were helpful given the extent of work. In anticipation of finishing out the remainder of the year 2025, each firm's individual contract amount would be increased by \$100k. The increase had been included in 2025 budget. Approval would be needed to adjust the individual contract amounts to be able to distribute reviews without bumping up against limits.

Chair Waring called attention to this process and said the pivot towards extending a hand to the private sector to help move the review process along had made a big difference. Mr. Fountain was involved too. Chair Waring said he received calls from developers thanking him for breaking the backlog. Recognition needed to be given for the changes that were implemented.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Items H1-H3.

I. Stormwater Management Department Update

1. Forest Acres Drainage Improvement Project Phase 2 – South Carolina American Public Works Association Project of the Year Award.

Mr. Fountain announced that the City's Forest Acres Drainage Improvement Project Phase 2 won the South Carolina American Public Works Association Project of the Year Award in the Environmental category.

The Committee congratulated Mr. Fountain and his team on their accomplishments.

Chair Waring shared some thoughts on the decades of flooding in the neighborhoods. He said the design of the project and the department's engagement with the neighbors really changed the area, and residents were raving about it. He said the remaining question as to whether it passed the 50-year test needed to be asked.

2. Approval to apply to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for \$1,000,000 in grant funding for the site assessment and preliminary design of a Newmarket Creek Restoration and Flood Protection Project. The City will provide \$500,000 in matching funds from the Cooper River Bridge TIF if the grant is awarded.

Mr. Fountain explained the item and said approval would be needed for a grant application with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the preliminary design and site assessment work for Newmarket Creek. They would be looking to add tide protection under Morrison, ecological restoration to the creek, and potentially bringing better public access into the system.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item I2.

3. Low Battery Phase 4 – Approval of change order #10 with Gulf Stream Construction Company, Inc., in the amount of \$200,461.32 for the removal and replacement of unsuitable soil on Murray Blvd.

Mr. Fountain said this item would be for the approval of change order #10 with Gulf Stream for just over \$200k. While finalizing road reconstruction on Murray Blvd. the contractor found unsuitable soils that would not hold the level of compaction needed to support the road long term. The soils would be removed and replaced with a bridge lift of stone with earth on top. This should be the final effort for the project other than aesthetic work. There would be a closeout deductive change to balance things out.

Chair Waring asked Mr. Fountain to set up a time for Council to visit the site.

Mr. Fountain said that this would be a perfect time as the construction site would be safe for visitors.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item I3.

4. Update on Work within the Small Project Allocation (Requested by CM Parker)

Mr. Fountain provided a visual presentation on the update of the work within the Small Project Allocation around the City. *Refer to the meeting video starting at the 17:18-minute mark.*

Chair Waring asked how they communicated with residents when they started working in their backyards.

Mr. Fountain said they communicated through neighborhood connections to make residents aware of the work being done. Neighbors tend to share information. The methodology they used would be to start downstream and work their way up. If they could get several properties on board at the initial site, they would work to restore part of the ditch, showing the progress to neighbors. That would bring on the next section of properties. Mr. Fountain said at times it could be challenging to move forward because you run the risk of having holdouts.

Chair Waring said they should attend neighborhood association meetings. Residents would reach out to others to attend meetings and learn about improvements.

Mr. Fountain said they could do that. It helped residents to see surveyors' drawings to understand how the work would look in their backyards.

Chair Waring said he would work on the neighborhood associations. He asked Mr. Fountain if he had kept a count of the number of small projects he just presented.

Mr. Fountain said 21 projects.

Chair Waring said prior to Mr. Fountain coming to the City, there was not a Small Projects List. Mr. Fountain suggested that they come up with one. It expanded from four or five to now 21, which did not include finished projects. The Small Projects allocation for 2025 was \$1M. Chair Waring asked if it would make sense to try to increase it for 2026. These small projects primarily helped older established neighborhoods plus, they were a big bang for not much money as residents saw the immediate impact. Chair Waring asked if they would have the capacity to doubling the budget.

Mr. Fountain said they would be able to increase the budget to \$1.5M for next year and then look at whether they could move to \$2M.

Councilmember Gregorie asked Mr. Fountain how he was doing on staffing.

Mr. Fountain said they added a Small Projects Manager who was helpful and the reason for the accelerated progress. They would have the capacity, even if they move through the projects and complete them over the next six months, to possibly increase the budget to \$1.5M next year. Several projects would be finished next year, then maybe the year after they would have the capacity to increase to \$2M or so. It may be a good way to stair step it a bit as they work through some of the backlog.

Chair Waring said the county would be displaying new signs with their road improvement projects. One of the signs would be half of a copper penny which was similar to a sign used in Charlotte years ago. He said the City should display signs for small projects. For example, a sign could be placed at a drainage project work site close to the road with a message "improving your neighborhood" that way keeping residents informed.

Councilmember Parker said it would be a great idea, especially on James Island where you are not sure if the county, city or town would be working at a site. She said Mr. Fountain's teams do an incredible job with community outreach. She thanked him for providing all the updates. She said it was difficult recruiting workers years ago, but Mr. Fountain had done a phenomenal job filling spots. She was not sure of the numbers but believed comparing current rates to previous rates and to other departments, Mr. Fountain's group was doing very well.

Mr. Fountain said they were almost fully staffed. It was just field ops where they were still working, that was always the most challenging. They had some ideas to be brought up again for the budget session. It had become better and stabilized a bit. He said that a great target for them would be to see it get all the way up to 5% vacancy.

Councilmember Parker said that Mr. Fountain had come up with great ideas including temp agencies and working with HR. She wanted to commend him because from her time with City Council this really improved.

Mr. Fountain said he thought it had definitely improved and wanted to thank everyone for their support, and continued support.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if he could repeat the playbook, for decreasing vacancies.

Mr. Fountain said yes and would present an organized plan that would be replicable.

Chair Waring said he really appreciated the diversity and the projects with the way they had been approached geographically and in making the improvements. It started with what used to be the school district and putting all the new schools over here and nothing over there. Fortunately, the City was not running into that with small projects. He also thanked him for the apprentice program idea so people who were in a labor-intensive area could see an upward mobile pathway towards employment. Chair Waring asked how things were coming along with HR.

Mr. Fountain said that things were being discussed and that he and Mr. Keane had scheduled a meeting with the new HR director to review the program. It would be something proposed again in the budget and hoped the new HR director would be excited about and be on board with.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if that would establish a career ladder.

Mr. Fountain said yes, a skill-based career progression for the department where staff would promote through as they learned new and different pieces of equipment and as staff acquired different CDL licenses.

Chair Waring said he would like to thank Councilwoman Parker for requesting the projects update.

J. Miscellaneous Business

1. **Request approval of a professional services contract with Thomas & Hutton Engineering Co. in the amount of \$198,725.00 for professional consulting, master planning, environmental analysis, and design services related to the Hagood Avenue Improvement Plan. This contract will be funded by contributions in the amount of \$92,400.00 and General Fund Reserves in the amount of \$106,325.00.**

Ms. Koszela said she had a presentation on behalf of the Mayor that would address questions some of the members had during the last meeting.

Chair Waring said that it would be fine for her to show.

Ms. Koszela provided a visual presentation on the Hagood Avenue Improvement Plan. *Refer to the meeting video starting at the 46:01-minute mark.*

Councilmember Gregorie said in reviewing what was in their package it appeared the language "reimagining Gadsden Creek" changed.

Ms. Koszela replied yes.

Councilmember Gregorie said as a result of the change it was something he always supported but did not want to continue the discussion and would need to get to work on it. He knew the group decided to use West Edge as the administrative component. When they spoke with the Mayor recently, he thought the Mayor was under the impression it should be under West Edge. He asked Chair Waring if he had the same impression.

Chair Waring said he did and as a matter of fact, they passed their appropriations October '23 to expedite it. Other stakeholders came with their portion, and the idea was to expedite it and run it through West Edge so it would not slow down the approval process. That happened prior to the Mayor being elected and taking office.

Councilmember Gregore said it was still on the Council agenda, and maybe that would be the time to pivot.

Chair Waring said he thought it would be taken off but the Mayor had to go out of town so he could see how that could have fallen through the cracks. If the pleasure would be to go through and approve it, why would we not as a committee approve it and then take care of that at Council.

Councilmember Gregorie agreed.

Chair Waring said this would be just to expedite it.

Chair Waring said they would be able to go in any direction at Council.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Parker, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item J1.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Sheila Smith
Clerk of Council's Office