

Community Development Committee

October 16, 2025

A meeting of the Community Development Committee was held on this date beginning at 3:02 p.m. at 80 Broad St. and over video conference call.

Notice of this meeting was sent out to the news media.

Committee Members: Councilmember Mitchell, Chairman, Councilmember Appel, Councilmember McBride, and Mayor Cogswell **Also Present:** Robert Summerfield, Geona Shaw Johnson, Rebecca Dail, Melissa Cruthirds, Hampton Logan, Magalie Creech, Josh Martin, Grace Riley, Elizabeth Dieck, and Patrick Carlson, recording.

The meeting opened with an invocation led by Chairman Mitchell.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember McBride, the committee unanimously approved of the September 18, 2025, minutes.

Public Participation

Anthony Bryant spoke against disparities in the judicial system.

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Presentation and approval of the transfer of fee-in-lieu funds from Courier Square to Star Gospel Mission for the development of affordable housing

Reverend Dr. Marion Platt III introduced himself as the Executive Director of the Star Gospel Mission, which was founded in 1904. As the oldest independent faith-based charity in the City, he said they had provided shelter, meals, spiritual guidance, and pathways to self-sufficiency for over 121 years. Dr. Platt said they were engaged in an expansion campaign to address the most pressing local needs which would benefit from a catalytic investment utilizing contributions from City fee-in-lieu funding. He said that the Charleston County School District system had reported 621 children in the district without a permanent nighttime residence, so the Star Gospel Mission planned to provide 21-25 private living spaces for families on the downtown peninsula. The homes they planned to build around 91 Nassau St. would be affordable program-based units in perpetuity to help families for generations to come. Some families were already living next door at the Star Gospel Mission campus while the adjacent final development stages progressed. He said Charleston County services lacked the proper number of facilities to house women, children, individuals experiencing addiction, and anyone not eligible for other programs. A contribution from the City would help them to fill this gap and demonstrate the City's commitment to collaboration and equitable development to help support some of Charleston's most vulnerable residents.

Mayor Cogswell asked Geona Shaw Johnson if the fee-in-lieu funds from Courier Square would have originally gone directly to the City.

Ms. Shaw Johnson said if the committee deemed it appropriate the funding would be redirected to Star Gospel Mission instead of coming to the City as originally intended.

Chairman Mitchell said Star Gospel Mission supported a variety of programming to address housing insecurity in the region and thought it would be an excellent idea to support their efforts in housing families in need.

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember McBride, the committee unanimously approved of transferring fee-in-lieu funds from Courier Square to Star Gospel Mission for the development of affordable housing.

2. Project 3500: Update on Charleston Housing Authority Partnership Request

Mayor Cogswell gave a presentation concerning a potential partnership with Charleston Housing Authority and the City. With multiple development proposals in the pipeline, he said it was important to look at the age of the existing Charleston Housing Authority housing so they could consider the most supportive path forward. He said nobody currently living in these existing developments would be displaced from where they currently live by moving them into brand new facilities a short distance away during the redevelopment period. By establishing partnerships with the WestEdge Foundation and Charleston Housing Authority to define a development plan, the City could establish a zoning classification for the expected properties that could be expedited through an entitlement risk. This would bring down the cost substantially to help attract developers but also allow the partners to really define what kind of housing would ultimately be built. The goal would be to take the existing Charleston Housing Authority property density of 20 units per acre and double that across the site-all at the lowest end of affordability. In addition, the market rate units would be approximately 80 units per acre to help address infill housing needs in a more responsible manner. The focus of this proposal concentrated on the downtown peninsula because that's where the biggest job hubs, public transportation, and existing Charleston Housing Authority property were all centered. The goal was to create permanent affordability on these sites based on zoning and proposed partnerships.

Chairman Mitchell asked if this partnership would follow the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines to replace any affordable housing property with another one so there was never any loss.

Mayor Cogswell said they would first build a facility on one of the empty sites for people to move into from the existing Charleston Housing Authority properties. Then they would replace the old properties with new affordable properties at an increased density so they would gain a significant number of affordable properties because of this development.

Chairman Mitchell said he wanted the other Councilmembers to be made aware of this proposal so they were all on the same page about what would be discussed in future committee and Council meetings.

Mayor Cogswell said his team would circulate the presentation and asked that every member of City Council review this information-with the understanding that this was a draft. He asked for input from everyone's perspective and would ask the same thing from the board members of the Charleston Housing Authority and WestEdge Foundation. He also said Chairman Mitchell could call for a special meeting of

the Community Development Committee to encourage all members of City Council to attend within the next 30 days.

3. Discussion regarding rural housing and Esau Jenkins Village (Requested by Councilmember McBride)

Councilmember McBride said he could answer his own question because he received an update from Leslie Williams from Superior Management. She said the certificate of occupancy for the new Esau Jenkins Village development had not been obtained so the transfer from rural housing into Esau Jenkins Village was delayed. Councilmember McBride said one of the reasons he asked was because several people had contacted him about volunteering to help move the elderly individuals from rural housing into this new development.

Mayor Cogswell said there was a City staff member who focused on expediting permit review and he was sure they could help, within reason, to expedite the certificate of occupancy.

Adjourn

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Patrick Carlson
Clerk of Council's Office