

Community Development Committee

May 15, 2025

A meeting of the Community Development Committee was held on this date beginning at 3:01 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, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember Parker, and Mayor Cogswell **Also Present:** Councilmember Bowden, Robert Summerfield, Rebecca Dail, Geona Shaw Johnson, Julia Copeland, Magalie Creech, Melissa Cruthirds, Adrian Swinton, Katie Dahlheim, Tiffany Pressley, Josh Dix, Elizabeth Dieck, and Patrick Carlson, recording.

The meeting opened with an invocation led by Chairman Mitchell.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2025, meeting.

Public Participation

Anthony Bryant spoke about a conflict between his company and the cities of North Charleston and Charleston.

Carol Jackson spoke about a comment she had submitted to the committee that opposed any changes to the establishment ordinance of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission (HARCC).

Old Business

None

New Business

1. Resolution Certifying One (1) Building Site as an Abandoned Building Pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act of 2013, Title 12, Chapter 67, Section 12-67-100 et seq., of the Code of Laws of South Carolina (1976), as amended, regarding property located at 82 Radcliffe Street, Charleston, South Carolina, and having Charleston County Tax Map No. 460-15-02-051

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the committee unanimously approved the resolution.

2. Discussion and potential vote on how to move forward with the City's investment in WestEdge

Mayor Cogswell said the City had engaged in multiple conversations with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and the Medical University of South Carolina Foundation (MUSCF) to develop the

WestEdge district with more mixed-income housing and commercial spaces. An appraisal of the property valued the site at approximately \$100 million, and the City already owned 65% of the land. Mayor Cogswell proposed using \$10 million from the WestEdge Foundation account and between \$15 million and \$20 million in bonded TIF funds to give the City full control over the development of the property. The Foundation board would remain in place after eliminating the three seats currently appointed and controlled by MUSCF.

Councilmember Gregorie said he was concerned about using TIF funds to acquire the property because it could jeopardize the City's ability to vertically develop all the real estate the City had acquired in recent months. He also supported developing housing first to help retain the existing residents that would need to be rehoused if the Gadsden Green Homes housing complex was taken down.

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the committee voted to recommend approval of buying out MUSC from the WestEdge Foundation at a price not to exceed \$25 million with the understanding that \$10 million would come from cash on hand and the balance to be paid out over time. The vote was not unanimous. Councilmember Parker abstained.

3. Presentation on the Missing Middle -- Josh Dix, Charleston Area Board of Realtors (CRE)

Mr. Dix gave a presentation about the need to develop more housing and transit-oriented development to certain corridors throughout the region. He said the cost of housing in Charleston County had increased 87% between 2012 and 2022-but the median income had only increased 27%. In addition, over 51% of Charleston area renters and 25% of existing homeowners were all cost burdened. To combat this rising need, he proposed developing more middle housing that included a variety of building styles from duplexes to townhomes. He said that building these types of properties would promote community, sustainability, and help build equity.

Councilmember McBride said he supported this study and was glad to discuss the proposed solutions to help alleviate local housing pressures. He asked how they could protect against overdeveloping and disrupting the supply and demand dynamic and what could be done to improve coordination efforts with South Carolina and Charleston County projects to improve infrastructure that matched the proposed development projects.

Mr. Dix said they should focus on infill redevelopment along existing corridors instead of sprawling communities farther out and stressing the current network of roads. They also would take nearly a decade to build enough housing to meet the demand that existed currently, so they were not in danger of overdeveloping any time soon.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if they would incorporate affordable living consideration into the study.

Mr. Dix said affordability was being considered on a broad community-wide scale.

Councilmember Parker asked if there were any existing redevelopment incentives.

Mayor Cogswell said the Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, and TIF proceeds were all good examples of encouraging infill development on older properties.

Geona Shaw Johnson said that parking incentives were another example of encouraging infill development. She said another approach was to study more comprehensive strategies that could be incorporated into the zoning code update.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if the City was looking to incentivize and potentially increase fee-in-lieu structures.

Ms. Shaw Johnson said they could go higher and more limiting than the structure the Council approved two and a half years ago.

Councilmember Appel said he enjoyed the presentation and saw a potential solution in removing the suburban zoning ordinances that had been applied to the more developed areas throughout the City during the 20th century.

4. An ordinance to amend Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV (Boards and Commissions), Division 11 (Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation) of the Code of the City of Charleston

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the committee unanimously approved to defer consideration of the ordinance and extend HARCC until September.

Adjourn

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Patrick Carlson
Clerk of Council's Office