



City of Charleston
Committee on Public Works & Utilities
September 22, 2025

A meeting of the Committee on Public Works & Utilities was held this date beginning at 5:04 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, Councilmember Gregg and Councilmember Seekings.

Also Present: Matt Alltop, Ron Bucci, Philip Clapper, Julia Copeland, Magalie Creech, Elizabeth Dieck, Matthew Fountain, Tim Keane, Hampton Logan, Sheila Smith, and Robbie Somerville.

Link to meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52rl52jWZ-k>

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. August 18, 2025

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, 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 SCOOT that the City intends to accept maintenance of 49 LF of rubber curb along the north side of the Brasell Street / King St. Extension (US-78) intersection, 38 LF of rubber curb along the south side of Braswell Street / King St. Extension (US-78) intersection, 49 LF rubber curb along the north side of the Milford Street / King St. Extension (US-78) intersection, and 37 LF along the south side of the Milford Street / King St. Extension (US-780) intersections in conjunction with the Magnolia PUD Phase 1A project.

Mr. Bucci said the item was for the acceptance of maintenance over rubber curbing within the SCDDOT right of way. It was a requirement of the Norfolk Southern Railroad that they had rubber curbs adjacent to their right of way and why the City had 200 linear feet in that location.

2. **CCSD West Ashley Campus Subdivision -Sanders Rd. (R/W varies from 50 to 65 ft), West Wildcat Blvd. (50 ft R/W)**
 - a. **Title to Real Estate**
 - b. **Exclusive Stormwater Drainage Easement Agreement**
 - c. **Affidavit for Taxable or Exempt Transfers**
 - d. **Plat**

Mr. Bucci said the item was for the Charleston County School District (CCSD) West Ashley Campus subdivision dedication package from Sanders Road to West Wildcat Boulevard and included a roundabout in that location for the West Ashley School.

3. **Acceptance of a temporary construction easement at 421-05-00-001 for the Windermere Drainage Improvement Project.**

Mr. Fountain said the item was for a temporary construction easement in the CCSD parking lot. A gratis easement with restrictions including that the City would work only when the school was not in session, basically the summer session, and then would restore everything back to pre-existing conditions following the work. It would include substantial asphalt reconstruction in the parking lot with the intent to reserve some of the trees and buffer the space between the school and the adjacent properties at the request of TRC.

4. **Authorization to notify SCOOT that the City intends to accept maintenance of Box Culverts crossing Windermere Boulevard, Box Culverts along William Ackerman Lane (S-1807), Box Culverts Crossing Chadwick Drive (S-402), Box Culverts and Roadway of Culbertson Drive (S-2292) between Chadwick Drive and Campbell Drive.**

Mr. Fountain said the item was for the maintenance agreement with SCDOT for the SCOTD encroachment permits on the Windermere Project. It was to maintain the culverts the City would install, which was typical. The only item of note was that the City would take over the Culbertson Drive right-of-way, the whole section of the road, and would place a culvert under the section.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell and to take all items together, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Items E1-E4.

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

1. **829 Condon Dr. - Installing oyster shell tabby encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
2. **3 Murphey Court - Installing specialty finish driveway encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
3. **492 Creek Landing St. - Installing specialty finish driveway and irrigation encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
4. **765 Lesesne St. - Installing irrigation encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
5. **513 Old Compass Rd. - Installing irrigation encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
6. **149 Captains Island - Installing irrigation encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**

7. 89 Fishburne St. - Installing permeable pavement encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
8. 223 Meeting St. - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
9. 316 Blowing Fresh Dr. - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
10. 1522 Chastain Rd. - Installing wood fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
11. 1494 Seabago Dr. - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
12. 715 Majestic Oaks Dr. - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
13. 38 King St. - Installing handrail at front stoop encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.

Mr. Bucci explained that all the items presented were for information only.

G. Request for Permanent Encroachments

1. None

H. Public Service Department Update

1. Director Updates

Mr. Alltop said new garbage trucks would be out and running in the next day or so as well as new knuckle booms. The department had started the repairs to the historic column which should be done by the end of the week. The Broad Street project was progressing. The LiDAR scan was done. Mr. Alltop and Mr. Most would walk the area, confirm everything, and the project would be put out to bid.

I. Department of Development Services Update

1. Revisions to the 2020 Stormwater Design Standards Manual [Ordinance]

Mr. Keane said Mr. Bucci would make a brief presentation regarding the amendments to the manual but he wanted to share a few things before he began. 1.) When the Stormwater Design Standards Manual was enacted in 2020, the idea was to update it every 5 years. To proceed with what was anticipated which would be to enact, work with, experience, and adjust the manual along the way as they saw fit. They felt more frequent refinements to the manual were needed. 2.) Meetings were held with private engineers who used the manual and were typically customers. The proposed amendments were discussed, and the City found the feedback very helpful. Several of the meetings were very technical, and it was noted that the City should proceed with the amendments but with more frequent refinement. One of the main concerns the City had was keeping their high standards in tact because of its uniqueness with flooding and stormwater. While considering these standards, the manual would be simpler in use for applicants and staff while being less ambiguous. The manual would also be more consistently and predictably enforced. The team had the opportunity to use the amended manual based on what would be presented and tested it with a couple of sites. The manual was found to be extraordinarily helpful. Mr. Keane said the set of amendments in the revised manual were very important and would be helpful to everyone who used it, including staff and applicants. He strongly recommended the amended manual to the Committee and invited Mr. Bucci to present the slideshow.

Mayor Cogswell said before Mr. Bucci started, he wanted to take a minute to compliment Mr. Keane, Mr. Bucci and the staff who rolled up their sleeves and dug into the project. The amendments did not lessen or reduce the City's stormwater requirements but made them more user-friendly and established cleaner and clearer lines of communication and expectations. The Mayor complimented the team on the hard work that went into the thoughtful and organized approach and recognized staff on a job well done.

Mr. Bucci thanked the Mayor, Mr. Keane and the staff involved with the manual including Stormwater, Mr. Fountain's team, and the team under Development Services. Mr. Bucci shared his screen with the Committee and began the presentation of the Stormwater Design Standard Manual 2025 Revisions. *Refer to the meeting video starting at the 10:22-minute mark or by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/52rl52jWZ-k?t=622>*

During the Questions portion at the end of the presentation, Councilmember Gregorie said that he had a question having less to do with new development and more to do with existing old-line neighborhoods that did not flood at one point but now they did. He asked if the manual addressed those concerns in existing neighborhoods. He said he knew there would be something with new developments and how old and existing would be affected. He was not talking about that but rather how things were changing, and that water had reclaimed certain places where filling had been added but should not have been. He wanted to know what they planned on doing about it.

Mr. Bucci said from a manual standpoint a lot of them were only applied when there was new development but, on the initial go around in 2020 a good effort accounted for the sea level rise and the increased rainfall. They put into account a two-foot sea level rise in all city designs. The rainfall was pulled from NOAA data, and their plan was if the NOAA Atlas updated its rainfall data, the manual would also update its rainfall data. Again, from a manual standpoint it would only be applied when a project came in for new development. If it was for something done for existing flood conditions, it might fall under Mr. Fountain's stormwater group.

Mr. Keane said most of what they had spoken about referred to new development, but the manual would affect many projects within Councilmember Gregorie's district and within existing neighborhoods because it was not for just new development on a green field somewhere, it would constantly affect redevelopment. So, from a manual and regulatory perspective, the manual would incrementally improve conditions even in existing neighborhoods because they would address the manual and City standards as they could on a site-by-site basis, as redevelopment happened. They were making conditions better. But, as Mr. Bucci alluded to, to address broader issues, whether small or big capital projects, it would be Mr. Fountain of course. because of the City, the Mayor, and City Council's efforts Mr. Fountain's team made a portfolio of improvements larger than ever before.

Councilmember Gregorie said that he understood but what answer could he give his folks on Gordon Street who could not come out of their homes for 12 hours until the water came down.

Mr. Keane said there would be flooding all around the City.

Councilmember Gregorie said that he inherited the consolidation, parts of the City that consistently flooded. Small Projects that Mr. Fountain and his team addressed through maintenance and small projects made a difference in some areas. Some of the areas were not small projects and the City needed to find \$40, \$50, \$60M to address the issues because people's lives were affected. He wanted to put it on the table although it may not be the appropriate place, but he wanted it used as an excuse so it could be put on the table. They had better think about places, not just on the peninsula, citywide, but on the peninsula where people had suffered 50, 60, 70 years.

Chair Waring said he agreed but it probably was not the right place. They needed to have the discussion sometime in the future. Maybe the small projects methodology needed to be reviewed again. The City did not have a small projects methodology until Mr. Fountain came on board.

Mayor Cogswell said Chair Waring and Councilmember Gregorie brought up good points. All of it had been the result of a great deal of effort but was still a work in progress. It would need to evolve as the City's needs became more defined. It would allow for flexibility and the staff's commitment to update the manual regularly on critical issues like the one Councilmember Gregorie rightfully brought up. The manual should be supported by understanding that again it was a work in progress.

Chair Waring said at a previous meeting, he mentioned inland title flooding. When the City looked for funding in a big way, it should be as important to include the battery inland title flooding. Councilmember Gregorie brought the issue to bear with the people in those districts. So much information was available on perimeter protection. Inland title flooding should be as important because it affects so many on and off the peninsula. None of the older areas had been looked at but now these areas were being considered and why there was a greater need to find larger dollars to be in that comprehensive fix. He said the Mayor had pulled the process together – members from the private sector, individuals from private sector firms, region and state meetings with top stake holders, and the City's staff. It was a private public collaboration that probably would never hit the headlines. Private sector business leaders came from the workplace and said they had used the manual and found the City's staff to be open-minded about hurdles they ran into. They also listened to what City staff had to say about the things they wanted to prevent or achieve with better practices moving forward. The Mayor was the one who brought it all together.

Mr. Bucci asked the members to continue to update him on things they had heard. The team would like to keep the manual updated more frequently.

Chair Waring said there was a time when a message went to the private sector and folks hesitated to respond for fear their project would not move forward and why it had been important for all to sit down at the same table and talk about the many good things that had come about.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item 11.

Chair Waring said normally the item would wait two weeks to come forward to City Council. He asked that it be brought forward to City Council tomorrow. It had not been on that agenda, so it would take 65% of Council to have it. It was on the agenda and had been advertised to the public but could not understand why they should wait to carry it forward. He thought it should be brought forward to the meeting as part of the report and reproved gave it first reading at the next Council meeting.

Councilmember Gregorie asked what the Clerk of Council or Legal thought about it.

Ms. Copeland said to amend the agenda they would need a two-thirds vote, a statement of exigent circumstances. She said it would be by ordinance. So, three readings were needed.

Chair Waring said yes, three readings. Give it first reading.

Ms. Copeland said they would need to amend the agenda with a two-third vote.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg. The Committee voted unanimously to amend September 23, 2025, City Council Meeting Agenda due to exigent circumstances with the Approval of Revisions to the 2020 Stormwater Design Standards Manual (ordinance).

J. Stormwater Management Department Update

1. Church Creek Project Update (Requested by Councilmember Waring).

Mr. Fountain said the item was for updates on The Church Creek projects on Mowler and Wolk Drive. Those were the City's retrofit projects where they acquired and demolished six flood prone homes with FEMA funding then used the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant to design and permit stormwater storage and conveyance improvements. Slides were shown of the area during yearly flooding from 2015-2018 then slides were shown of the completed site with no reported structure flooding since the projects went in. There was still some flooding in the roads, but the roads drained faster, and water was not getting into homes.

Mr. Fountain continued and said the Bridge Pointe project was the larger site where 32 flood prone townhomes were acquired and demolished again with FEMA funding. It was about a 5-acre property that was designed and installed with stormwater storage conveyance improvements with NFWF funding. They called it an ecological park. The site was presented a number of times. Slides were shown of the flooded and completed areas. The ecological park built back a wetland ecosystem that was interconnected with stormwater ponds that stored water and then slowly drained it out in the area. It currently served and would serve as passive park space. They built the civil infrastructure and in the next step come back and work with the Parks Department to install playground equipment on top of pads, bathroom facilities, a water fountain, and walking trail improvements. The work should be completed sometime during the middle of next year.

Mr. Fountain said Crosstowne Church was the last of the current projects. The primary canal ran under the CSX railroad and then down into the more naturalized section of Church Creek near Highway 61. Churches lined the canal property. On the other side of the property, the future fire training complex for the City would be located. It was another NFWF design of improvements. They worked through the purchase of sales agreements with property owners to acquire both feasible property and easement across wetland complexes. The purchase sale agreements were complete. They worked through closing with the owners. The design was primarily completed and were into permitting on the design to restore some of the drainage connections from the canal into the adjacent wetlands. Debris that accumulated over the years in the wetlands was removed. Wetland ecological enhancements were completed, and they burned around structures to allow the wetlands and storage properties to flood deeper without harm to the buildings. The work was again funded through permitting. They need to come back sometime in 2026 (depending on final permitting efforts) to complete the construction work that was funded out of the TIFF.

Mr. Fountain said lastly Chair Waring asked for an update on the TIFF. Ms. Wharton put together the updated bonding capacity based on development in the area to date, the increments in the area, and estimated bonding capacity of just over \$11M. Again, that worked towards the Cross Towne area construction but also had the available capacity for additional stormwater projects once the Cross Towne was moved out of design and permitting and into construction. Typically, in the area, they would shift on the capital improvement plan and would bring a new project into preliminary engineering and would continue the project pipeline so something would always be in design and permitting and something always in construction.

Chair Waring asked was Bob Horner's group that did the study Weston & Sampson?

Mr. Fountain said yes, the firm was Weston & Sampson.

Chair Waring asked if any results came out of it as far as action steps that could be taken in the future.

Mr. Fountain said that some of the flood storage projects with Crosstowne Church, especially, and Bridgepoint, to some extent, were envisioned within the study. They had a few other project concepts like Hickory Farms diversion channel, a section of work in Lake Dotterer, a section in West Ashley Circle, as well as some tide protection under the CSX Railroad. All were taken into preliminary engineering and unfortunately none showed significant benefit for flood conditions in the basin.

Chair Waring asked if he and Mr. Fountain could talk about it a little later.

Chair Waring thanked them for pulling the information together on short notice. It was good to know that money had finally come into the tiff and asked what the actual name of the TIFF was.

Mr. Fountain said that he believed it was called the Church Creek Basin TIFF.

2. Forest Acres Phase 2 - Approval of Change Order #11 with Gulf Stream Construction Company in the amount of \$128,750.30 for Additional Channel Bank

Mr. Fountain said the item was for a change order for Forest acreage project. On one of the first change orders of the project there was a cost reduction of \$796k to remove some of the more aggressive slope stabilization methodologies. They came up with different approaches looking to do cost reduction on the project while keeping the slope stable and of high quality. This change order was to add back \$128k to one area where the slope had not stabilized with the revised methods. They would need to add rip wrap to support that toe and would end up with the net savings of \$667k. It was a good collaboration with Gulf Stream, the contractor, Thomas & Hutton, the engineering firm, and City project managers who came up with different approaches. They knew going in there could be the chance of an increase if they tried to make an aggressive cost reduction. That was the final change order other than the last punch list items. As mentioned, it had been completed for some time. All they would have was potentially a zero-out change order should all stabilize properly.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item J2.

K. Miscellaneous Business

1. Approval to add 56 State Street undergrounding project to the City's Non-Standard Service Fund construction list.

Mayor Cogswell said it all came about when the hotel was approved and ready to start construction on Cumberland and State Street. They developed an issue with the Dominion power lines that ran down Cumberland Street. The lines came right off the building, and it was almost impossible to deal with the logistics of moving them. The number of power lines on Cumberland was overwhelming. City staff worked with the hotel property owner and other property owners along Cumberland to not only get the lines buried there but also down Concord and over to the Four Seasons. It made a more attractive thoroughfare for pedestrians and vehicular traffic that created a reimagined Cumberland Street. A similar effort was being made on Market Street where a plan to take all the power lines underground looked to redesign a lot of the public realm there. Of course, it did all in partnership with the businesses that line those streets and that contributed to the expense and the coordination of the plan. The State Street hotel group would like to go ahead and were willing to fund their prorated share.

Ms. Copeland said if the hotel group was added to the list, Dominion would pay 50% and they would draw 50% from the City's account and they would reimburse the City with the cash to cover the City's share.

Mayor Cogswell said it would be somewhat like a temporary bridge for the City. As it was related to the non-standard service agreement, it was primarily focused, and they would like to prioritize neighborhoods, but it had proved to be difficult to obtain all the signatures needed and all the transformer locations in neighborhoods. The Mayor said he wanted to be very clear about it, that they remain very committed to prioritizing neighborhoods. If they could while waiting on those neighborhoods that were on the list and a priority while waiting for signatures, if they could bridge another project to get power lines buried it would be a smart use of public funds that were just waiting to be tapped. The undergrounding projects had proved to be very expensive with the cost going up. It would be a short-term bridge of funds while the developer would pay the City's share. The other component was that the

City was in the middle of discussions with Dominion about expanding the non-standard service agreement allowing for an additional number of projects and additional money from Dominion. It was a positive step forward. None of it had been finalized yet and would have to come back to the Committee as they worked through details.

Councilmember Seekings questioned what the ask was on the particular item.

Mayor Cogswell said that it would allow them to be an applicant for the non-standard service agreement because the list was full and capped. The four on the list do not have all the signatures or locations needed. Was that correct?

Ms. Copeland said that was correct. They went through and paid for the design phase and did the necessary easements so they would be added to the construction list.

Councilmember Seekings asked if it was fully designed.

Mayor Cogswell said yes.

Councilmember Seekings asked so if they came off the design list, we could still put more on the design list if we were to expand it. They would not occupy a space on the design list.

Ms. Copland said that was correct.

Councilmember Seekings said that he thought it was important as they talked about expanding the design list and looked at the non-standard service fund and how they could get projects in line. Ansenborough was a perfect example. It had been a slow road to get it going. It was a bigger project and one property away from getting the signatures needed. He wanted to make sure they had not slowed anything that had sat on the waiting line for a decade or more.

Mayor Cogswell said they had been very respectful, particularly of Ansenborough who had been very patient. One of the things they wanted to look at were ways that would make it more achievable for neighborhoods. It would not necessarily, in the future, not need to be an entire neighborhood. It could be just one street. They needed to work through various options to become more feasible based on the lessons they had learned to date. A lot of work still needed to be done on those details so the process could be made easier to get more power lines buried.

Councilmember Seekings said anything that could be done on the non-standard service side with Dominion that made it easier to get on the list, designed, and into the queue so there was funding to help those who wanted to do similar projects. This had been one that was sort of on the edge of both commercial and residential and as they looked at the market that combination literally would be to the benefit of so many people. Having expanded the list and allowed designs to go forward to be ready when they had money was something they could have a hand in and encouraged them to do so.

Ms. Copeland said on MOU itself, she asked for the language to be amended, and “telecom” or “telecommunications wires” be removed. That would be a separate agreement the developer would have to enter into with the telecommunications companies. So, someone should note that amendment prior to adopting or approving the MOU.

Chair Waring asked, was that something that they needed to do today?

Ms. Copeland said yes, if they moved to approve the MOU or authorized the Mayor, she asked that it be approved.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell to approve the MOU as drafted with the amendment to remove the telecommunications language, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item K1.

2. **Authorization for Mayor to execute Agreement Regarding Underground Electric on behalf of the City of Charleston with 56 State SC Property, LLC detailing the intent of 56 State SC Property, LLC to fund the City's share of undergrounding along Cumberland, Concord, and Market Streets.**

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item K2.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if Weston was still on schedule for the underground wiring in Hampton Park Terrace.

Mayor Cogswell said they would check that for him.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Sheila Smith
Clerk of Council's Office