

Community Development Committee

November 20, 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, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember Parker, and Mayor Cogswell **Also Present:** Councilmember Shealy, Councilmember Seekings, Councilmember Waring, Councilmember Brady, Geona Shaw Johnson, Rebecca Dail, Malena Dinwoodie, LaTosha Jenkins-Fludd, Hampton Logan, Magalie Creech, Josh Martin, Deja McMillan, Trace Whetsell, Elizabeth Dieck, Jennifer Cook 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 Gregorie, the committee unanimously approved of the October 16, 2025, minutes.

Public Participation

None

Old Business

None

New Business

1. A 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 28 Cumberland Street, Charleston, South Carolina and having Charleston County Tax Map No. 458-05-03-086
2. A 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 32 Cumberland Street, Charleston, South Carolina and having Charleston County Tax Map No. 458-05-03-091

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the committee unanimously approved of certifying 28 Cumberland St. and 32 Cumberland St. as abandoned buildings.

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Parker, the committee unanimously approved of amending the agenda to immediately consider Item (6): Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Hope Center and the City of Charleston.

Mayor Cogswell said the memorandum was an agreement between the City and the Hope Center to extend their partnership for an additional two years. He said the draft document needed a few edits and asked the committee to allow the Legal Department to finalize those details and present the final document to City Council for final approval. He said the agreement lasted until the end of the lease in two years and the City was working on a path forward after that to help holistically address housing insecurity in the community.

On a motion of Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember McBride, the committee unanimously approved of the memorandum of understanding between the Hope Center and the City of Charleston, subject to the necessary legal edits.

3. Presentation of Project 3500: The City of Charleston Affordable Housing Strategy with participation by City Councilmembers. The Committee on Community Development may take action after the presentation.

Mayor Cogswell gave a presentation about potential affordable housing strategies that could be achieved by different City initiatives. He said City staff looked at a variety of publicly owned properties and ranked them according to different criteria such as access to public transportation, zoning, and height. He said many of the potential development sites fell on the downtown peninsula, but there was an assortment of opportunities across the entire City. To reach the goal of 3,500 new units the City would have to initiate the new development of 2,500 units across a variety of sites. He said the Charleston Housing Authority had managed the existing inventory of public housing for nearly a century and they needed to be updated. By partnering together, the City and Housing Authority planned to redevelop and expand the affordable housing inventory throughout the community. The guiding principle would be to properly manage any displacement by first building facilities on vacant land, moving the people living in public housing to those new facilities and continuing with the development throughout the rest of the site. That would help manage the population loss and still allow for the revitalization of existing and new affordable housing opportunities. They would also classify these sites as MU-WH3 with full entitlements which would permanently deed-restrict 50% of the units as affordable. By allowing half of the potential units to be offered at market-rate the entire area would become a mixed-income neighborhood with higher density units across three to five-story buildings.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if the total number of developed units would be 7,000.

Mayor Cogswell said they would potentially develop 5,000 units-half of which would be affordable. By learning from the existing built environment, development proposals could create mixed-income neighborhoods that reflected the height, scale, and mass of the surrounding area.

4. Discussion and potential action regarding affordable housing at WestEdge and negotiations with WestEdge Foundation

Mayor Cogswell said the development potential for the WestEdge area and adjacent Gadsden Green public housing complex could lead to a more cohesive neighborhood with increased accessibility and green space.

Chairman Mitchell asked what would happen to the existing housing stock at Gadsden Green.

Mayor Cogswell said the ultimate goal would be to replace nearly all the public housing stock on the peninsula.

5. Discussion and potential action regarding affordable housing at 993 and 995 Morrison Drive

Mayor Cogswell said that by committing to developing 80 units per acre they would be able to create nearly 800 units on the 6.3 acres property at 993 Morrison Drive that the City was under contract to purchase from the County. Another available site on Mount Pleasant St. near the top of the Lowline could accommodate additional affordable housing units. Finally, by partnering with the Charleston Housing Authority the City could support the redevelopment and expansion of Meeting Street Manor Extension, Gadsden Green + Extension, Cooper River Courts + Meeting Street Manor, and Wraggborough Homes + Extension properties. The partnerships between the Charleston Housing Authority, WestEdge Foundation, and the City of Charleston would produce different leadership teams with representatives from all three groups to help guide the projects, emphasizing the expertise and managing experience from City staff to guide development. By setting up three different Request for Proposals (RFPs), related to the previously mentioned partnerships across the peninsula, the City could initiate the development of multiple housing opportunities.

Councilmember McBride said he was impressed with the details of the plan, and he appreciated the flexibility in the phased approach.

Mayor Cogswell said they were attempting to deliver an achievable roadmap towards more housing.

Councilmember Waring said the financing structure needed to be worked out and asked if the Housing Authority would end up with any paid off properties.

Mayor Cogswell said any financial plan would be complicated and nuanced, but they needed to do something to address the housing need.

Councilmember Waring asked if the Housing Authority would have an appraisal of their existing properties that included the potential for vertical development.

Mayor Cogswell said they would have a market rate appraisal as if they were selling to the private sector.

Councilmember Seekings asked who would be putting the RFPs out into the community.

Mayor Cogswell said the proposed partnerships would put them out together.

Councilmember Gregorie asked if the Housing Authority would maintain ownership of all the affected units.

Mayor Cogswell said they would need to process it through the proper legal channels to ensure that was addressed.

Councilmember McBride asked if the proposed phased plan would be flexible throughout the progression of the developments.

Mayor Cogswell said it was flexible and open to suggestions from all their community partners to improve it as the plan matures. He said to move towards a partnership agreement, the City would have to address two different business items. The first item was considering purchasing the WestEdge Foundation land. In discussions with MUSCF, they would prefer to be bought out and proposed a valuation of \$25 million to be paid by the \$10 million in the existing WestEdge account with the remainder coming from a three-to-five-year payment plan at a 7% interest rate to be funded by a future private sector partner. Mayor Cogswell said the goal was for the City not to pay anything in terms of cash or borrowing capacity.

Councilmember Seekings asked about the origins of the \$10 million in the WestEdge account.

Mayor Cogswell said he believed it was revenue from property sales that was being held in a joint account.

Councilmember Waring said MUSC would be taking away some of their liquidity with this plan and should consider other options to help the City retain its share of the money.

Mayor Cogswell said it was just a plan that could take a variety of forms and wanted to figure out the best solution to move forward. He said that part of addressing the housing problem on the peninsula involved figuring out what to do with the negotiations over 993 and 995 Morrison Drive. Mayor Cogswell said the City was discussing potential options with Charleston County and asked the committee to consider two options for future involvement with the site.

Option A: reduce purchase price in existing PSA to \$27 million and add contingency that we work out access easement for LA Property prior to closing and collectively agree to remove the Tech Overlay, remove from Laurel Island Development Agreement + PUD, rezone to MU-WH3 (new) (same zoning proposed for CHA and WestEdge properties) and all current benefits of MU-WH with the addition of specific affordable housing requirements outlined in PSA.

Option B: terminate contract and have the County sell for their appraised value and we develop build-first strategy elsewhere within the TIF District, but we help County by collectively agreeing to reduce purchase price in existing PSA to \$27 million and add contingency that we work out access easement for LA Property prior to closing and collectively agree to remove the Tech Overlay, remove from Laurel Island Development Agreement + PUD, rezone to MU-WH3 (new) (same zoning proposed for CHA and WestEdge properties) that will include an added story of height, and all current benefits of MU-WH with the addition of specific affordable housing requirements outlined in PSA.

Mayor Cogswell said that option B would grant more cash to the City to develop property at other smaller lots and leave the site to be developed by the County and any of their private partners.

Chairman Mitchell said when they first met with the County about the property, he wanted to pursue a joint option, but they wanted to walk away with more money for other projects.

Mayor Cogswell said the good thing was regardless of if the City was involved there would be some affordable housing on the site.

Councilmember Seekings asked if the existing contract had any appraisal contingencies.

Mayor Cogswell said they had an open due diligence period, which would end on January 7, 2026, that did not specifically call out an appraisal. He also mentioned that if they pursued option A, they would

need documented assurances that Cool Blow Street, the road between the two parcels of land, would remain publicly accessible because the County did not own it.

Councilmember Seekings said if the County could get \$34 million from a third-party private sector developer with those conditions, which would include 50% of the units would remain affordable in perpetuity, and it became a taxable property, then the City should just let them do that.

Councilmember Waring said they should support the County in their efforts to build affordable housing on the site but should pursue development on other sites.

On a motion from Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Appel, the committee unanimously approved of recommending option B, of Mayor Cogswell's proposal, to the full Council.

6. Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Hope Center and the City of Charleston

Adjourn

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Patrick Carlson
Clerk of Council's Office