



**MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026 – 3:00PM  
CITY CENTER – PECAN ROOM (4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR)  
324 WEST EVANS STREET  
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lethonia Barnes, Chaquez McCall, Lawrence Smith (by phone)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jerry Dudley, Annie Brown, Michelle Morgan, Amanda Pope, Scotty Davis, Mary DeLung

**MEDIA PRESENT:** Emmy Ribero with Morning News

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Lethonia Barnes called the meeting to order at 3:06pm.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Councilman Chaquez McCall made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 25, 2026, meeting. Mayor Lethonia Barnes seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**ITEMS DISCUSSED:**

Mayor Barnes requested an update on the Affordable Housing Ad Hoc Committee. Jerry Dudley recommended postponing the formation of the committee until the Neighborhood Revitalization update is completed, which is anticipated in June or July. He noted that both the update and the Housing Study will serve as key guiding documents for the committee's work.

Mr. Dudley also stated that he could consult with the individual conducting the update—who originally recommended the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee—to gather additional insight on its structure and direction.

For now, members of the Community Development Committee may begin considering potential candidates for the Affordable Housing Ad Hoc Committee. Councilman McCall reiterated that the committee would include representatives from the Housing Authority, the Association of Realtors, the Home Builders Association, a developer, city staff member, and two at-large community members.

Jerry Dudley provided an update on the status of the eminent domain property at 215 E. Darlington Street. He reported that he has spoken with the attorney handling the case, who has filed with a judge to proceed to the next step in the process—issuing public notice. Mr. Dudley noted that he is uncertain how long this phase will take, but based on his experience, it could take up to 90 days.

Director of Marketing & Communications, Amanda Pope, provided an update on efforts to improve communication surrounding water infrastructure projects. Mrs. Pope reported that she has been collaborating with the AECOM Communications Team to develop a one-page, user-friendly reference guide for the public. This guide will include brief project descriptions, mapped locations, and current statuses for stormwater, water, and sewer projects.

Mrs. Pope also shared that she is working on branding for the utility communication strategy aimed at strengthening engagement with residents. As part of this effort, materials are being organized for a phased rollout designed to be easily understood by the general public. Planned initiatives include website updates, the creation of graphics and educational campaigns, and increased community outreach through venues such as the City Market, E-Newsletter, and various City social media platforms. QR codes will eventually be incorporated to provide convenient access to more detailed information.

Dr. Annie Brown distributed a printed update from the Community Service Department outlining current Neighborhood Revitalization and CDBG-funded projects. These include housing rehabilitations, demolitions, and down payment assistance programs. The update also highlighted ongoing housing-related activities such as lot acquisitions, homebuyer workshops, and neighborhood meetings.

An open discussion followed among committee members, Dr. Brown, and Mr. Dudley. Councilman McCall asked whether any measures are in place to protect developers in the event that newly constructed homes do not sell. Mr. Dudley explained that the City has established a buyback program for this purpose. He noted that the program has not yet been utilized, as there have been no issues with selling the homes to date.

For the final agenda item, Michelle Morgan provided an update on Building Florence Together. Ms. Morgan shared photos and the final program from the “You Can Own It” Homebuyer’s Conference, noting that the event was a significant success. She also presented statistics and participant feedback collected during the conference.

Ms. Morgan concluded with a housing update, reporting that two newly constructed homes are currently under contract and scheduled to close within 15 days. She also shared financial updates, including an increase in her line of credit, as well as grants that have been approved and others that are currently pending.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:42pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm.