



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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lethonia Barnes, Lawrence Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Jerry Dudley, Annie Brown, Michelle Morgan, Mary DeLung

PRESENTERS: Jesse Wiles, Alyssa Richardson

MEDIA PRESENT: Emmy Ribero with Morning News, Dierdre Weaver-Currin with Post and Courier

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Lethonia Barnes called the meeting to order at 3:03pm.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilman Chaquez McCall made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2026, meeting. Mayor Lethonia Barnes seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

The Community Services Department, represented by Dr. Annie Brown, distributed a printed update outlining the status of current Neighborhood Revitalization and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. The report included updates on housing rehabilitation, demolitions, down payment assistance, lot acquisitions, homebuyer workshops, and neighborhood meetings.

Dr. Brown also provided an update on the planned demolition of the property at 215 E. Darlington Street. She explained that only a few procedural steps remain before demolition can proceed. Mayor Barnes acknowledged that several community members have expressed concerns about demolishing such an old structure. However, she stated that the building has sustained damage beyond restoration, and research determined that it has no historical significance. She added that restoring the property would cost millions of dollars, diverting funding from the city's efforts to construct multiple affordable homes.

Councilman Lawrence Smith expressed concerns about the appearance of the proposed diesel fuel tanks and the existing gas tanks on the adjacent city-owned property. Planning Director Jerry Dudley responded that the diesel tanks will be located at the rear of the site and that a landscaped buffer is planned to screen the tanks and improve the appearance of the property's frontage. Mayor Barnes encouraged the committee to begin discussing ways to preserve and honor the historical significance of the area. She suggested incorporating beautification features that would both enhance the site and recognize the history of North Florence.

Michelle Morgan provided an update on Building Florence Together. She reported that the organization is currently undergoing its annual financial audit, with preliminary results indicating that everything is in good order. Ms. Morgan also noted the continued high demand for affordable rental housing, with more than 150 individuals currently on the waiting list. She shared that an offer has been submitted on a home in South Florence for use as a rental property. If the offer is unsuccessful, Building Florence Together plans to construct two additional rental homes to help meet the community's housing needs.

Jesse Wiles of APD Urban Planning Management, along with Alyssa Richardson gave their presentation on the Florence Neighborhood Plan: Summary Report. Key topics mentioned in the presentation were:

- Historic locations & landmarks
- Previous plans and studies
- Community voices
- Housing gap analysis
- Catalytic project areas and area of concern
- Recommendations and marketing strategies

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:10pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 26th at 3:00pm.