

**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025 – 1:00 P.M.
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
324 WEST EVANS STREET
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Lethonia Barnes, Mayor Pro Tempore George Jebaily, Councilman Chaquez T. McCall, Councilman Bryan A. Braddock, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman J. Lawrence Smith, II and Councilman Zach McKay

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager; Mr. Ronald Scott, City Attorney; Mr. Benjamin Zeigler, City Attorney; Mr. Luke Carter, City Attorney; Mrs. Casey Moore, Municipal Clerk; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department; Chief Allen Heidler, Florence Police Department; Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development; Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning; Mr. Adam Swindler, Director of Public Works; Mrs. Jennifer Krawiec, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Joshua Whittington, Director of Utilities; Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism; Mr. Glenn Bodenheimer, Interim Finance Director and Ms. Patrice Rankin, Administrative Coordinator

MEDIA PRESENT

Abby Ann Ramsey with the Post and Courier was present for the meeting.

Notices of this regular meeting of City Council were provided to the media and individuals requesting a copy of the agenda informing them of the date, location, and time of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barnes called the April 14, 2025 Regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:03pm.

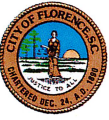
INVOCATION

Councilman Smith gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation.

Mayor Barnes acknowledged Councilman Zach McKay and welcomed him to Florence City Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Braddock made a motion to adopt the minutes of the March 10, 2025 Regular Meeting and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously (7-0) adopted.



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SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Mrs. Amanda Pope, Director of Marketing/Communications and Municipal Services recognized Niesha Johnson for 20 years of service with the City of Florence.

Mr. Allen Heidler, Police Chief, recognized Shannon McKenzie for 15 years of service with the Florence Police Department.

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

Susie Brown

Ms. Susie Brown appeared before the Council to address accessibility concerns at the Barnes Street Activity Center. While acknowledging that the facility meets ADA compliance standards, she noted that the existing handicap ramp is located a considerable distance from the main entrance. This poses challenges for seniors who use walkers or canes, as they must navigate a longer route to reach the entrance. Additionally, a curb directly in front of the entrance obstructs a direct path and raises safety concerns.

Ms. Brown stated that she has been in communication with city officials regarding this issue since at least March 2022. Initially, she was told the matter would be reviewed; however, in 2024, she was informed that a ramp would not be installed. While expressing strong support for the Barnes Street Activity Center and its recreational programs for seniors, Ms. Brown emphasized that the accessibility issues must be addressed. She urged the Council to consider installing a handicap ramp directly in front of the building.

Councilman McCall referred to an image of the center and asked for confirmation that the request was for a ramp directly at the entrance. Ms. Brown affirmed, explaining that the existing ramp is located halfway down the building, which is too far for some seniors to navigate comfortably.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Mr. Scotty Davis whether the facility is ADA compliant. Mr. Davis confirmed that it is. Councilman Smith then asked Ms. Brown if her request was simply to relocate or add a ramp in a more convenient location. Ms. Brown confirmed this, reiterating that while the building complies with ADA standards, it remains functionally inaccessible for some individuals.

Councilman McKay shared his personal experience, noting that during a recent visit to the Barnes Street Activity Center, his wheelchair was too wide to access the ramp and then maneuver to the front entrance. He added that reaching the ramp from the designated handicap parking area requires entering traffic, which could create both safety hazards and potential legal liabilities for the City.

Councilman Braddock remarked that the Council has not previously been in a position to fully understand such accessibility challenges until Councilman McKay's recent addition to the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Jebaily recommended that Councilman McKay and City Manager Scotty Davis meet to explore potential solutions for improving access at the Barnes Street Activity Center.

Mayor Barnes thanked Ms. Brown for bringing the issue to the Council's attention.



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ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2025-08 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to adopt the updated Downtown Design Standards for the City of Florence.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-08 on second reading and Councilwoman NeSmith- Jackson seconded the motion.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, if the Downtown Design Standards state that building owners are required to use a commercial contractor. Mr. Dudley said he doesn't recall this being included in the guidelines. Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development, said any requirements for commercial contractors would fall under the International Building Code. Any work being performed in excess of \$5,000 on a commercial building has to be done by a licensed commercial contractor. Mr. Moore said the International Building Code is separate from the Downtown Design Standards. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson said constituents informed her that they were told that they had to use a commercial contractor when doing work in the downtown area. She said when researching she found that there is no such thing as a commercial contractor in the State of South Carolina. She said she's concerned that this will make people believe that they have to use a certain type of contractor that doesn't exist. Mr. Moore said the type of work that is being done, downtown and city-wide, will dictate what type of licensing the contractor would have. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson said people are not aware of the process to do work downtown and said it can sound like a lot more than what a general contractor can do when the term "commercial contractor" is being used.

Pro tem Jebaily acknowledged Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson's question and asked Mr. Dudley and Mr. Moore if her question relates to the Downtown Design Standards. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson clarified that she was asking if anything in the Downtown Design Standards states the requirement for a commercial contractor.

Councilman McCall said after reviewing the minutes from last month's meeting, there was a discussion pertaining to the city's noise ordinance. He said Council is already voting to amend the Unified Development Ordinance and he would like to look at some further amendments pertaining to the Unified Development Ordinance.

Councilman McCall made a motion to defer Bill No. 2025-08 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

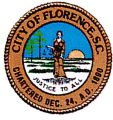
Pro tem Jebaily again asked for clarification that Bill No. 2025-08 only relates to the Downtown Design Standards and has nothing to do with the city's noise ordinance. Mr. Dudley responded yes. Pro tem Jebaily said Council can address the noise ordinance, but it does not relate to Bill No. 2025-08.

Pro tem Jebaily asked for clarification that the noise ordinance is a separate ordinance. Mr. Dudley said the noise ordinance is a section of the city's Unified Development Ordinance.

Mayor Barnes asked if Bill No. 2025-08 could be discussed in Executive Session to receive legal advice.

Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, asked for clarification on if moving this ordinance to Executive Session is to receive information related to procedurally how to proceed. Mayor Barnes said yes.

Mayor Barnes said this matter will be moved to Executive Session in order to receive legal advice.



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Bill No. 2025-12- Second Reading

An Ordinance to rezone from NC-15 to NC-6.3 the property located at Dexter Drive and Attwood Avenue, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00150-01-140.

Councilman Braddock made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-12 on second reading and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-12 was adopted.

Bill No. 2025-13 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to amend the budget for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

Councilman McCall made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2025-13 on second reading and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-13 was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2025-14 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend the Unified Development Ordinance regarding setbacks for communication towers.

Councilman Smith made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-14 on first reading and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

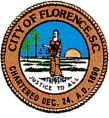
Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to discuss Bill No. 2025-14 in Executive Session.

Pro tem Jebaily requested that Mr. Dudley provide a brief overview of the various components of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), highlighting how these ordinances have historically been addressed individually rather than as a comprehensive package.

Councilman McCall raised a point of order, stating that Pro tem Jebaily's remarks were not germane to Bill No. 2025-14 but instead pertained to the broader history of ordinances. He noted that a motion and second had already been made to pass Bill No. 2025-14 on first reading, and no motion to defer the bill had been introduced. Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson clarified that she made a motion to discuss the bill in Executive Session. There being no objection to the motion, Mayor Barnes declared this item to be discussed in Executive Session.

Attorney Sarah Spruill, along with Mr. Patrick Bernier of Duke Energy and Mr. Caleb Jergensen, an engineer representing Duke Energy, provided Council with a presentation regarding Bill No. 2025-14.

Ms. Spruill explained that the current ordinance requires a one-to-one setback ratio—meaning a communication tower must be set back from the nearest lot line by a distance equal to its height. However, modern engineering standards have significantly improved tower design, making the traditional "fall zone" requirement outdated. Communication towers are now built to collapse inward rather than fall directly over, and the proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) would reflect this by basing the setback on the engineered fall zone rather than tower height. This amendment would apply specifically to residential lot lines.



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Mr. Jergensen elaborated on the technological advancements in tower design and modeling. Modern software allows engineers to identify and design structural stress points that ensure a tower folds in on itself in the rare event of a collapse—typically caused by extreme, non-weather-related events. A licensed professional engineer would be required to certify the fall zone.

Pro tem Jebaily asked why Duke Energy wished to place the towers closer to the right-of-way. Ms. Spruill clarified that the request stems from the need to replace outdated towers, installed prior to the current zoning code, with safer, modern structures. The amendment would enable Duke Energy to replace existing towers without being constrained by the outdated setback requirement, which is specifically problematic for residential uses, not general setbacks.

Pro Tem Jebaily then asked City Attorney Ron Scott whether the representatives needed to remain for Executive Session to provide legal input. Mr. Scott advised that their presence was not necessary for legal counsel and that clarification questions could be addressed during the open session.

Councilman McCall asked if other municipalities have adopted similar amendments. Ms. Spruill cited Sumter, Darlington, Charleston, Georgetown, and York Counties, as well as the Cities of Surfside Beach and Walterboro, as jurisdictions that had adopted comparable provisions.

Mr. Bernier explained that Duke Energy is planning to replace a 300-foot tower currently located on nonconforming land. The new tower would be placed adjacent to the existing one, allowing all communications infrastructure to remain within a single compound. To meet future capacity and reliability demands, it is necessary to upgrade these towers. Ms. Spruill added that even with the proposed amendment, any new tower would still be subject to the special exception process.

Pro tem Jebaily asked if there was a way to address Duke Energy's needs without amending the UDO. Ms. Spruill explained that the foot-for-foot residential setback is not waivable under current ordinance, meaning the request cannot proceed to the Board of Zoning Appeals without a formal amendment. The proposed amendment would only affect Paragraph 6 of the communications tower provision, allowing an application for special exception where the fall zone, as certified by an engineer, does not encroach upon a residential lot line. Pro tem Jebaily asked for confirmation that the amendment is intended to allow special exceptions. Ms. Spruill confirmed, stating the request is not permissible under the current code without amendment.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked whether the listed municipalities had adopted similar amendments. Ms. Spruill confirmed they had, using language comparable to the proposed text. In response to further questions from Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson, Ms. Spruill confirmed that tower height would be determined on a site-by-site basis, with the current proposal involving a 300-foot tower. Mr. Jergensen added that towers are engineered to fold inward by creating critical stress points in the center. Regarding the fall zone and setback, Ms. Spruill clarified that both are based on the tower's individual design and engineering. Mr. Bernier stated the towers are considered 50-year assets, designed to withstand high winds and ice, and the current tower being considered is approximately 50 years old.

Councilman Braddock sought clarification that the amendment would still require approval through the Board of Zoning Appeals. Ms. Spruill confirmed this. He also asked whether a 300-foot tower designed to collapse within 150 feet would require a 150-foot setback. Ms. Spruill confirmed, stating the setback would be determined by the engineered fall zone rather than total tower height.



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Bill No. 2025-15 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend the Summersett Acres Planned Development on Jefferson Drive.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-15 on first reading and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, said this property is part of an older Planned Development District adopted in the early 2000s, located between Jefferson Drive and Palmetto Street. The district includes a mix of zoning designations, ranging from single-family residential to multifamily and commercial, based on the 1999 Consolidated Zoning Ordinance. Any amendments or new developments within the district are reviewed under that original ordinance. One section of the parcel is currently zoned B-3, which permits a residential density of up to 6.5 units per acre. The property owner is seeking to develop this area with multifamily buildings at a higher density of 14.5 units per acre. To accommodate this, the owner is requesting a rezoning to R-5, which would permit the proposed density. The proposed change is consistent with adjacent property uses. Planning Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the amendment.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-15 was passed on first reading.

Bill No. 2025-16 – First Reading

An Ordinance to annex and zone NC-6.2 the property located at 1006 West Marion Street, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90060-13-005.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to pass Bill No. 2025-16 on first reading and Councilman McCall seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director, said that the property in question is contiguous with the city limits and is located near several of the city's redevelopment neighborhoods, including areas developed by Habitat for Humanity. The proposed zoning designation for the property is Neighborhood Conservation 6.2, which aligns with the zoning of surrounding properties and the city's future land use plan. Mr. Dudley noted that the property has been damaged by fire, and upon annexation, the owner intends to utilize the city's demolition program. This action supports the city's broader neighborhood revitalization strategy. Planning Commission unanimously (6-0) voted to recommend the proposed zoning designation.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-16 was passed on first reading.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2025-10

A Resolution to designate additional public spaces within the City of Florence in which the possession, sale, service, consumption and distribution of beer and wine at special events may be permitted.

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-10 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mrs. Victoria Nash, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism explained Resolution 2025-10 will allow approved groups and organizations to sell and distribute alcohol at specific areas within Timrod Park: the pickleball courts and their spectator areas, the tennis courts and their spectator areas, and the



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amphitheater and lawn. Permits would be required, subject to approval by the Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism Department. Additionally, groups must participate in the Officers in Blue program when hosting these events.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson asked if alcohol consumption would be limited strictly to the areas listed. Mrs. Nash confirmed it would, noting the City does not want alcohol near the playground or other open areas. She reiterated that only the specified areas would allow alcohol.

Councilman McCall inquired whether alcohol is permitted in other city parks. Mrs. Nash stated that it is currently allowed at the Lawton Chase House and lawn, the Soccer Complex, and Carolina Bank Field. When asked whether a similar allowance at another park would require Council approval, she confirmed it would.

Councilman Braddock asked if any of those parks have playgrounds or child-centered areas. Mrs. Nash said no. He also asked if alcohol sales would be limited to beer and wine, which she confirmed. Braddock raised concerns about changing the park's atmosphere, particularly given the presence of children, and said he was hesitant to support the Resolution. Mrs. Nash acknowledged his concerns and emphasized the requirement for Officers in Blue at all such events.

Councilman McKay asked who would cover the cost of the officers. Mrs. Nash said the event organizers would be responsible.

Councilman Smith asked about the City's ability to restrict alcohol use. Mr. Ron Scott, City Attorney, explained that restrictions would depend on the event setup, and the Council could direct the legal team to develop ordinances with specific limitations.

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, clarified that alcohol would be sold and distributed by private organizations, not the City. The City's role is limited to approving permits and requiring the presence of Officers in Blue. When asked if all events would require officer presence, Mr. Davis confirmed they would.

Councilman McCall asked for further confirmation that alcohol is allowed at Lawton Chase House and lawn, Carolina Bank Field, and the Soccer Complex, which Mrs. Nash confirmed. He also questioned why tennis and pickleball courts are included but not basketball or football fields. Mrs. Nash explained that organizations like the United States Tennis Association (USTA) sometimes request alcohol sales for tournaments, but a permit would still be required.

Pro Tem Jebaily asked whether event organizers must carry insurance. Mrs. Nash confirmed they must provide general liability insurance, name the City as the certificate holder, and maintain coverage of at least \$1 million.

Councilman Braddock reiterated his opposition, citing concerns about the park's residential setting and frequent child visitors. He noted that, unlike Carolina Bank Field and the Soccer Complex, Timrod Park is not a fully enclosed space, which raises liability and safety issues. He expressed that he could not support Resolution 2025-10.

Pro tem Jebaily asked for clarification on whether the tennis center currently allows alcohol sales. Mrs. Nash confirmed that it does. He expressed agreement with Councilman Braddock's concerns, noting that existing locations where alcohol is permitted are generally distinct facilities, whereas Timrod Park is situated within a residential neighborhood. Pro tem Jebaily also inquired whether the City had been



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directly asked to authorize alcohol sales for the listed locations. Mrs. Nash responded that the inquiry was more general—whether the City already had a policy in place, which it does not.

Pro tem Jebaily then asked if the pickleball tournament would proceed regardless of the Resolution's outcome. Mrs. Nash confirmed that it would. He followed up by asking whether a vote against the Resolution could deter future tournaments from choosing Florence as a host site. Mrs. Nash said she could not say for certain but noted that events such as "Jazz in the Park" have also proposed including wine service at the amphitheater.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson acknowledged that alcohol sales at tournaments could generate revenue for the hosting organizations. While she understood Councilman Braddock's concerns, she stated that she did not have an issue supporting the Resolution.

Councilman Braddock cautioned that approving this Resolution could set a precedent, potentially opening the door to alcohol sales at special events in other city parks also located in residential areas.

Mayor Barnes asked what the City's justification would be if asked why Timrod Park is being treated differently than other parks. Mrs. Nash responded that City staff would have to consider the unique characteristics of each park. She cited Lucas Park as an example, explaining that it is not designed for large-scale events or tournaments.

Councilman Smith asked whether the City would be responsible for clearly marking designated alcohol consumption areas. Mrs. Nash suggested that barriers could be used to define those zones. He also inquired about the tournament's timeline. Mrs. Nash stated the event is scheduled for next month, ahead of the May 12th Council meeting.

Council voted (4-3) in favor of the motion, with Councilman McKay, Pro tem Jebaily and Councilman Braddock voting against the motion and Mayor Barnes, Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson, Councilman McCall and Councilman Smith voting in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-10 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-11

A Resolution to proclaim April as Fair Housing Month in the City of Florence.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-11 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes presented the Resolution to members of the Pee Dee Realtors Association.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-11 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-12

A Resolution to adopt the Community Development Block Grant Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

(Note: Staff has requested that this item be deferred.)

Mayor Barnes said without objection, this item will be deferred. Without objection, this item will be deferred.



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Resolution No. 2025-13

A Resolution of Recognition for the Florence 10U All Star Boys Basketball team for winning the South Carolina Athletic Programs Championship.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-13 and Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Councilman McCall presented the Resolution to the Florence 10U All Star Boys Basketball team and coaches.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-13 was passed.

Resolution No. 2025-14

A Resolution of Recognition for the Florence 17U All Star Boys Basketball team for winning the South Carolina Athletic Programs Championship.

Councilman McCall made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-14 and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes and Councilman McCall presented the Resolution to the Florence 17U All Star Boys Basketball team and coaches.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Resolution No. 2025-14 was passed.

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

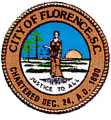
Mayor Barnes said this item may be discussed in Executive Session. Without objection, this item will be discussed in Executive Session.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Scotty Davis, City Manager, reported that he has received numerous inquiries about the AESC Plant and the associated traffic near Wilson High School. He asked Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utility Planning and Economic Development, to provide an update, as he has been assisting with the project, which is located in the County.

Mr. Hemingway presented a series of photographs to illustrate the progress of the new road construction along Energy Drive. This new roadway will serve as the main access point to and from the AESC facility, connecting to Highway 327. He explained that while the road is still under construction, the paved portion is already being used for transporting materials to and from the site. The road extends from the rear of the AESC facility on its western side to Highway 327 and connects Koppers Road at one end and Williston Road at the other. To accommodate intersection improvements at North Williston Road and Energy Drive, a temporary road closure and bypass will be put in place.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson inquired whether a stop sign or traffic light would be installed at this intersection. Mr. Hemingway responded that a stop sign will be used initially, but as traffic increases with the development of the Technology Park, a signalized interchange will be installed.



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Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson also asked whether the entire street will be closed during construction. Mr. Hemingway clarified that only a portion will be closed temporarily to meet South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) requirements. A temporary road will be in place during the closure. When asked about the expected duration, he estimated approximately 30 days, contingent on weather and other potential delays.

He then presented photos showing a stream crossing and ongoing bridge construction between Williamson Road and North Williston Road. Additional images displayed a paved section of the new road and the developing training facility. He noted that the first core space has been completed, and the final section is expected to be finished within the next month to align with the opening of the training center.

Councilman Braddock asked whether the state is funding the road construction. Mr. Hemingway confirmed that funding was secured through the South Carolina Department of Commerce.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson also asked whether traffic congestion near Wilson High School would be reduced once the training center opens. Mr. Hemingway explained that contractors are currently working on turn lanes at the intersection of Koppers Road and Old Marion Highway. While temporary traffic issues are expected to persist through the end of the year, the entire roadway is scheduled for completion by December 2025. He added that while there is peak congestion during school start and dismissal times, traffic is generally light during the rest of the day.

MAYORAL REPORT

Mayor Barnes acknowledged that April is recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, with April 30th designated as Denim Day. In observance, the City Center will be illuminated in teal. She also encouraged residents to participate in local clean-up efforts with Keep Florence Beautiful. Mayor Barnes noted that the recent cleanup on Clement Street was a success and expressed appreciation to the volunteers and lawn care services that contributed. Addressing recent community concerns, Mayor Barnes acknowledged reports regarding police profiling and asked Councilman McCall to address these concerns.

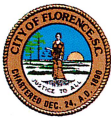
Councilman McCall shared that he has received several calls and emails on the matter. While emphasizing the community's shared commitment to prioritizing crime reduction, he stressed the importance of avoiding unnecessary targeting. He reminded residents that the Public Safety Citizen's Review Board exists as a safeguard for such concerns. Established in 2021, the Board provides oversight and is composed of members who undergo training with both the Police and Fire Departments. Councilman McCall noted that to date, the Board has received one complaint, which was not substantiated. He expressed gratitude for the Board's service and emphasized its role in ensuring accountability within public safety departments.

Mayor Barnes spoke in agreeance with Councilman McCall and reaffirmed Council's commitment to addressing crime and ensuring a safe community for all.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Development Committee, Chaired by Pro tem Jebaily

Pro tem Jebaily informed Council that the Business Development Committee received a report on the Florence Regional Airport from Mr. Brad Beadles, Executive Director. He then invited Mr. Beadles to provide a brief update directly to Council.



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Mr. Beadles introduced himself and spoke about the airport's potential and plans for expansion. He extended an invitation to Council and the public for Aviation Day at the Florence Regional Airport, scheduled for Monday, April 28th. He noted that Aviation Week is recognized annually in South Carolina to highlight the role airports play in the state's economic development. This will be the first Aviation Day hosted at Florence Regional Airport since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Beadles emphasized community involvement in the event and expressed a commitment to elevating the airport's presence in Florence and the Pee Dee region. He shared that American Airlines representatives will attend to discuss pilot recruitment. Additionally, raffle prizes for the event were created by students from Advantage Academy's Welding and Graphic Design programs. Mr. Beadles invited the public to reach out to him with any questions or concerns related to the airport.

Pro tem Jebaily asked if there are current considerations to add more flights from American Airlines or to introduce another airline. Mr. Beadles confirmed that such discussions are ongoing. He explained that the airport previously lacked the space to accommodate an additional airline due to the repurposing of a ticket counter for other infrastructure needs. However, he is in communication with both Delta Airlines and Breeze Airways and plans to attend an air service development conference in June to further those discussions.

Both Mr. Beadles and Pro tem Jebaily encouraged the public to utilize the Florence Regional Airport for upcoming travel and commended airport staff for their continued efforts.

Following the report, Councilman Braddock announced his resignation from the Business Development Committee. He recommended that Pro tem Jebaily consider appointing Councilman McKay to the committee, citing his strong background in commerce and economic development.

Community Development Committee, Chaired by Mayor Barnes

Mayor Barnes shared that she and Mr. Davis recently attended a Fireside Chat hosted by the Pee Dee Realtors Association. She expressed her appreciation to City staff for their continued support with the Fireside Chat events.

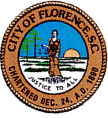
Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, Chaired by Councilman McCall

Councilman McCall reported that the committee received an informational update regarding the RFP award for the City auditor. He noted that only one proposal was submitted, from the firm that previously conducted the City's audit. The committee also reviewed the financial statements for February 2025. Additionally, Councilmen Smith and Braddock spoke about the continued success of the CARES Program and offered suggestions for its future implementation and improvement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Barnes said Council will be entering into Executive Session for a discussion regarding appointments to Boards and Commissions, to discuss a contractual matter regarding Project Urban Square, to receive an update regarding a pending lawsuit, for a discussion on a contractual matter regarding the purchase of property, to receive legal advice on Bill No. 2025-08 and Bill No. 2025-14.

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson made a motion to enter into Executive Session and Pro tem Jebaily seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously (7-0) to enter into Executive Session at 2:43pm.



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Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to resume open session and Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council resumed open session at 4:46pm and took action on the following items:

Bill No. 2025-08 – Second Reading

An Ordinance to adopt the updated Downtown Design Standards for the City of Florence.

The motion by Councilman McCall to defer Bill No. 2025-08, seconded by Councilman Smith is on the table.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-08 was deferred.

Bill No. 2025-14 – First Reading

An Ordinance to amend the Unified Development Ordinance regarding setbacks for communication towers.

The motion by Councilman Smith to pass Bill No. 2025-14 on first reading, seconded by Councilman Braddock, is on the table.

Pro Tem Jebaily stated that, upon approval of the first reading, it is his understanding that the ordinance can be amended by staff in between readings to narrow its scope. Mr. Moore confirmed this, clarifying that staff will amend the ordinance so that it is limited solely to public utility providers.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. Bill No. 2025-14 was passed on first reading.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Mr. Davis presented the packet of appointments to Boards and Commissions to Council.

Civic Center Commission

Councilwoman NeSmith-Jackson deferred her nomination to the Board.

Design Review Board

Councilman McCall deferred his nomination to the Board.

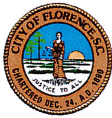
Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

Parks and Beautification Commission

Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to appoint Andrew Chaplin, III to the Parks and Beautification Commission and the motion carried unanimously. Andrew Chaplin, III was appointed to the Parks and Beautification Commission for a term to begin immediately and expire on June 30, 2029.

Planning Commission

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.



**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 14, 2025**

Veterans Park Committee

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Councilman McKay deferred his nomination to the Board.

Contractual matter regarding Project Urban Square

Mayor Barnes expressed that both the City and the community remain enthusiastic about the potential of Project Urban Square, recognizing it as a major investment in the area. However, she acknowledged growing frustration over delays, noting that the project has not progressed according to the original timelines established in 2020 and 2021. Given the significant public investment already committed, Mayor Barnes emphasized the City's strong desire to see the development move forward as swiftly as possible.

Mr. David Tuttle, Principal Developer of Project Urban Square, provided an update on the project's progress. He reported that the multifamily phase is advancing, though contractors encountered unsuitable soil that will require remediation. That process is expected to take place in the coming weeks. Mr. Tuttle also noted that construction is progressing, with ongoing design work for the office building and coordination with builders to begin development of the townhome phase. He expressed enthusiasm about the project's future and thanked the Council for the opportunity to provide an update.

Mayor Barnes noted that the City has already granted three extensions to the project. A fourth and final extension has now been approved, extending the deadline for the multifamily phase to October 1, 2025, and pushing all remaining deadlines in the incentive agreement by six months. She also announced that moving forward, Project Urban Square will be required to provide monthly progress updates to the Business Development Committee.

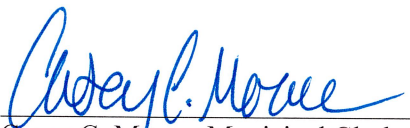
Pro tem Jebaily made a motion to approve the agreement with Project Urban Square and Councilman Braddock seconded the motion.

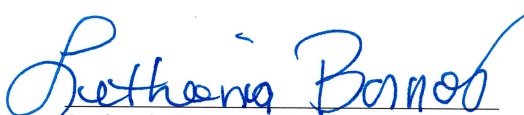
Council voted unanimously (7-0) in favor of the motion. The motion was passed.

ADJOURN

Without objection, the April 14, 2025 Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 4:54pm.

Dated this 12th day of May 2025.


Casey C. Moore, Municipal Clerk


Lethonia Barnes, Mayor