



Mayor  
Elise Partin

Mayor Pro-Tem  
Tim James

Council Members  
Phil Carter  
Hunter Sox  
Byron Thomas

City Manager  
Mike Conley

Assistant City Manager  
Wesley Crosby

**City of Cayce  
Regular Council Meeting  
Tuesday, July 8, 2025**

The July 8, 2025, Regular Council Meeting was held this evening at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Those present included Mayor Elise Partin, Mayor Pro Tem Tim James and Council Members Phil Carter, Hunter Sox and Byron Thomas. City Manager Michael Conley, Assistant City Manager Wesley Crosby, Municipal Clerk Mendy Corder, Finance Director Allison Barrs, Assistant Director of Human Resources Beth Poulos, IT Director Jamie Beckham and Police Chief Bruce Wade were also in attendance.

Mayor Partin asked if members of the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the FOIA. Ms. Corder confirmed they were notified.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Partin called the Regular Council meeting to order and Mayor Pro Tem James gave the invocation. Mayor Partin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Member Sox made a motion that the agenda be amended by rewording Item II. B. to read "Presentation by the Greater Cayce West Columbia Chamber and Visitors Programs on best practices and initiatives to promote tourism to the City of Cayce", adding Item IV. A. "consideration and approval of resolution declaring filing dates for candidacy for municipal elections," rewording Item VII. B. to refer to reappointments and adding Executive Session Item X. B. discussion of personnel matter relating to the exit of city manager. He stated that the purpose of this motion was to confirm an amended agenda that was circulated to City Council and the media at least 24 hours prior to the meeting but could not be posted to the City's website within that time frame. Council Member Sox stated as to the addition of item IV. A. "a resolution declaring municipal election filing dates." that motion was based upon finding of exigent circumstances because there was no other regularly scheduled City Council Meeting between that night's meeting and the opening date of filing on August 1, 2025.

Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion. Mayor Partin asked just for clarification, Council Member Sox said that all this was circulated with the media. Council Member Sox stated yes, the media and Council. He stated that it was just not published to the website before 6pm the previous night and therefore had to be amended.

City Manager Conley stated that the presentation language was amended because staff wanted to make sure that everyone really understood what the presentation was about. He stated that staff erred on the Resolution declaring filing open for the municipal elections therefore it needed clarification. He stated that the filing was

usually opened later in the month and the date caught staff off guard and there was not another Council Meeting before the filing opening so it had to be added to the July 8, 2025, Council Meeting agenda to make sure that it was transparent to everyone that filing for the election opened August 1.

Mayor Partin stated that she and City Manager Conley had a good conversation about his and her commitment to transparency, because this was the second meeting in a row where the agenda had been published and put out to the press, and then the agenda was amended and items had been changed in the agenda packet. She stated that was really hard on citizens, because the City had done a good job of building up trust and making sure that citizens knew what was going on. Mayor Partin stated that if the agenda came out and then one did not know what changes were made, then something important might be missed. She stated that Council and staff had been very good about that for a very long time, but there had been two (2) agendas in a row where this happened, so she wanted to make sure there was a commitment to make sure that the City did not end up in that position again, so that citizens could rely on what was being put out. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he agreed. Mayor Partin stated that two (2) of the changes had to do with Chamber changes, so she was glad that they all agreed. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the June 3, June 6, June 16, June 17, June 18 and June 23, 2025, Council Meeting minutes as written. Council Member Carter seconded the motion. Council Member Carter stated that he thought there was an issue with some of the minutes, Municipal Clerk Corder stated that the Council Meeting speakers list and Mayor Pro Tem James' and Council Member Thomas' recusal forms were not included in the June 3, 2025, nor the June 18, 2025, Council Meeting minutes so those minutes would need to be corrected and brought back before Council for approval.

Council Member Sox amended his motion to defer the approval of the June 3, 2025, and the June 18, 2025, Council Meeting minutes until the August 5, 2025, Council Meeting and approve the June 6, 2025, June 16, 2025, June 17, 2025, and the June 23, 2025, Council Meeting minutes as written. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the amended motion. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### **Public Comment Regarding Items on the Agenda**

Mr. James Stewart, Item VII. C. – Mr. Stewart stated that he was the Chair of the Cayce Museum Commission and he wanted to read a statement of support for the Commission's proposed amendment to their by-laws. He read "the Cayce Museum and

Historical Commission requests that the City Council approves the proposed amendment to the Commission's bylaws. This amendment would convert the existing African American Committee from an ad hoc to permanent status and sets up organizational and reporting structures to better coordinate the committee's work with the Commission. The text for the amendment was developed over several commission meetings and approved twice by unanimous commission vote before it was sent up for council approval. The African American Committee has worked as part of the commission since Curator Thomas started the committee in January of 2020 and over the last five years, the committee has been very active. They've helped curate the Museum's African American exhibit, manage an annual African American Legends of Cayce social media campaign, organized the legends of Cayce reception at the Lexington Two Innovation Center, helped decorate trees for the Museum's Christmas open house, and organized this year's inaugural Juneteenth Celebration, which was just featured in a June issue of the Lexington County Chronicle. The African American committee's volunteer efforts have made a strong, positive impact for the Museum and our community at large. During the 2020 Black History Month, the committee's legends program produced daily posts spotlighting the everyday stories, events, places and people important to the City's African American community. These posts are now shared on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during Black History Month and included important local histories that have been overlooked by the public record. These histories were also published as a trading card series, which was funded entirely by volunteer donations. The Commission considers their work vital to our mission of promoting preserving and protecting Cayce historical legacy. And the commissioners unanimously voted for this by-law's amendment. Now we ask the Council vote likewise, so that we can continue to support the work of the African American Committee."

### **Presentations**

#### **A. Presentation by American Engineering and McClam Construction on the Avenues Drainage Project**

Mayor Partin stated that the Director of Business Development from American Engineering Ms. Ali Walker and the Project Engineer from American Engineering Mr. Chris Waddell and Mr. Jesse McClam, the Project Manager from McClam and Associates, were to present on the Avenue Storm Drainage project.

Mr. Waddell stated that the presentation was going to be on Division A of the second phase of the Avenues Drainage Project, which was referred to as the Indigo outfall. He stated that the project corridor for the Indigo outfall started at Brookland Cayce High School, near the football stadium, and proceeded down Indigo Avenue to the intersection of Indigo and Honeysuckle Street and then proceeded down Honeysuckle Street to a new outfall at Guignard Park. He stated that they were going to review the project set up and talk about it in three (3) phases. Mr. Waddell stated that phase one was the work closest to BC High School and where the contractor

started work within the last month and then phase two was the work on Indigo Avenue and phase three was the work on Honeysuckle Street and the new outfall at Guignard Park. He stated that they started at BC High School through close coordination with Lexington School District Two to try to minimize the disruption to the school during the school year. He stated that they started in early June and the contractors had been working there over the last month and were still working at BC High School. He stated that the plan was to be off the school property and out of State Street by the start of school in August.

Mr. Waddell stated that phase two was the work on Indigo Avenue and also at Guignard Park and the contractor was going to work from State Street down Indigo Avenue towards Honeysuckle Street, and then simultaneously they were going to be working at Guignard Park so there would be two (2) different phases of construction going on there. He stated that they were going to work in about a 100 foot section at a time on Indigo Avenue to minimize disruption to the overall project area and they would be laying new storm drain. He stated as they moved along, they would restore the road where they were just working to limit the disruption to about 100 foot section at a time. Mr. Waddell stated that at Guignard Park, the work was going to be occurring off and on for the next year. He stated that the work would not take place in the whole park, but just a portion of the park and the playground and many of the walking trails at the park would not be impacted by the work. He stated that phase two would take about two (2) weeks, and then once the work got across State Street, they would work down Indigo Avenue. He stated that the third phase was on Honeysuckle Street and the contractor would start at the intersection with Indigo Avenue, and work down Honeysuckle Street toward Delisseline Road and Guignard Park. Mr. Waddell stated that as with Indigo Avenue, they would try to work in about 100 foot sections at a time to keep from disrupting the entire street. He stated that the contractor was going to work really closely with the property owners affected by the construction to make accommodations for their parking and any other needs that they had during construction. He stated that Mr. McClam would review more about the coordination with the property owners and how they were going to go about that.

Mr. McClam stated that he was with McClam and Associates. He stated that as Mr. Waddell mentioned, the work would move down Indigo Avenue toward Honeysuckle in 100 foot sections that was pretty much encompassing of their equipment and the actual excavation they were digging out with an excavator. He stated that there would be an excavation that the pipes were going in and then a backfill operation immediately behind that. He stated that it was only an eight (8) foot piece of pipe going in but took a large swath of area for that operation to take place. Mr. McClam stated that once they got across State Street, they would keep Indigo Avenue closed to through traffic while they were working on it from State Street to Honeysuckle. He stated that they would be working with the homeowners and businesses that had access on Indigo on their individual plans on how to get access. He stated that door hangers had been distributed and they also sent out specific to Indigo Avenue residents, a more tailored

door hanger with information about the detour and the road closure on their specific roads, with a contact number so they could reach out. He stated that the project team was also working with those people individually to make sure that they had safe access to their homes at all times during this operation.

Ms. Walker stated that she was going to review the project communications that they had implemented on behalf of the City. She stated that they had implemented numerous methods of communication to keep residents informed and engaged about the Avenues Drainage Project. She stated that the first communication that they implemented was a city-wide mailer that announced the start of the construction of the project which was mailed in conjunction with a peer to peer text or email to all known numbers and emails within city limits, encouraging residents to opt in to real time text and email alerts by signing up on the website. She stated that the next method of communication was the contractor door hangers that were placed by contractors to alert residents that they would be working in their area. She stated that the project information line and the QR code to sign up for the real time text and email alerts was at the bottom of the hanger and they would continue to do that throughout the duration of the project, for those that were going to be impacted by those areas where construction would be taking place. Ms. Walker stated that the next method of communication was initially a place keeper website that was created so that residents could sign up for the real time text and email alerts at the onset of construction. She stated that since then, an updated website had been created that would display all the most recent updates to residents, maps, a link to the Cayce Drainage Facebook page as well as media coverage that had taken place during the project.

Ms. Walker stated that the Facebook page talked about the project, had the updates that went out via the text and the email alerts, and those would change as each update gets put out to residents. She stated that they were encouraging residents to sign up for the real time text alerts because it was a really quick way to get an update of what was going to happen. She stated that they were proactive in making sure that they sent those out about a week and a half to two weeks in advance, so that people had plenty of time to make any changes to their daily routine if it was something that was going to be impacting them. Ms. Walker showed two (2) of the flyers that they distributed to businesses, as well as homeowners. She stated that they hand delivered the first flyer to all the businesses on State Street about a week and a half prior to the closure of State Street and that gave them an opportunity to ask questions and notify their clients or their customers about the construction taking place. She stated that they wanted to give them an opportunity to ask questions, if they had any questions about how they might be impacted. She stated that in addition to that, they put out a flyer for homeowners that would be impacted by the construction on State Street, and those were attached to the roll carts. She stated that those were sent out to homeowners from Knox Abbott Drive all the way to Frink Street and from Seventh Street all the way down to the river. She stated that they had posted approximately 57 signs throughout



the area, met with homeowners and contractors, distributed approximately 600 flyers, and had showcased the project via several broadcast and print media outlets.

Mr. Waddell stated that he was going to review the project benefits. He stated that the City's approach to addressing the flooding and drainage issues on the Avenues was a holistic approach and went back to 2015-2016 when they did a study for the entire Avenues. He stated that there were a lot of recommendations in that study and this project was a piece of that puzzle. He stated that there would be future phases to the project to fully implement the recommendations and address the flooding on the Avenues. He stated that the current project was going to make a beneficial impact on day one, once it was put into service since the drainage on the Avenues was pretty much cobbled together over the last 70 years. He stated that to implement a holistic solution, they had to start at the river and work their way up. He stated that the project would make a really good impact to the flooding issue on the Avenues, especially above BC High School and along Knox Abbott Drive. He stated that if Council had any questions, they would be glad to answer those.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he was hoping their presentation was going to be shared with the community, because it was extremely helpful to anyone that wanted to know a little bit more about it. He asked Mr. Waddell to go into detail about what was going on in Guignard Park and how big the retention pond was going to be there. He stated that he recognized that the project was a big operation but when people walked through a park that had been there for over 100 years and saw that 25 trees had been cut down, it was shocking. He asked if Mr. Waddell could help people to better understand exactly what the purpose was of cutting the trees down and what was going to be done to be able to bring it back to its original beauty.

Mr. Waddell stated that the outfall at Guignard Park was basically redirecting and diverting water from where the project started at BC High School to Guignard Park. He stated that the water already went to Guignard Park and there was a box culvert that came out from under State Street at the top of the park and that box culvert went back to the 1920s. He stated that it was a brick arch that was undersized, as was some of the piping up from that so they were basically just directing water around that through new piping and when they did that they did not want to damage the park or the stream in the park. He stated that at the outfall where the water was coming back into the park and merging back in with the existing stream, they were putting in a stilling basin and that stilling basin was essentially a place to slow the water down and take the velocity out of the water so that it did not damage the stream. Mr. Waddell stated that a natural type solution would be rock and vegetation and was appropriate for that kind of a location and that would stabilize that area and slow the water down. He stated that there would be a concrete head wall where the pipe comes out and basically it was just a place to slow the water down. He stated that it was a 72 inch diameter pipe that was going to discharge there via the head wall. He stated that a lot of water was coming out of that pipe so the stilling basin was sized to remove the velocity from the water to a

level that was appropriate to discharge back into the stream. He stated that the site size was in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration, which was the DOT standard. He stated that they hated to disrupt any part of the park and they kept the footprint of that stilling basin as small as they could to still be constructible. He stated that they tried to limit the size of the space in the park where work had to take place as much as possible and limit the impact to the park as much as they could.

Mayor Pro Tem James asked how big the retention pond was going to be. Mr. Waddell stated that it was going to look kind of like a rectangle and then it would merge back down into something that looked like a stream channel that would be narrower. He stated that right where the pipe comes out it would be two to three times the diameter of the pipe, so it would be six feet wide and at its biggest it would be 15-20 feet wide. He stated that it would be a permanent pool of water that would be a little over two feet deep and then at the end of it, as one got closer to the stream, it would narrow back up into something that looked like a stream channel. Mayor Pro Tem James asked if he could help him to understand why so many trees had to be taken out for something that size. Mr. Waddell stated that the width of the stilling basin was dictated by the design guidelines for the Federal Highway Administration. He stated that the velocity of the water coming out of the pipe dictated that the distilling basin had to be a certain width, length and depth to meet the design guidelines to really slow the water down so there was not a high velocity of water coming out and damaging and eroding the soil.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that State Street had to be cut off to be able to put the pipes through and there was 1,000 plus cars that traveled westbound on State Street every day and were now being diverted down Karlaney Avenue, which on a regular day might have 30 to 40 cars go down it. He asked if those neighbors had been communicated with regarding the increase in traffic. Ms. Walker stated that the roll cart flyers went out to the homeowners all the way down to the river and they also communicated with the apartment complexes Cayce Cove and the Avenir so their residents were aware. She stated they were not going to necessarily be impacted by State Street, but they would be impacted by the uptick in traffic on Axtell so they did reach out to their management and sent them maps as well as a digital version of the flyer that they could then forward out to their residents. Ms. Walker stated that she thought they touched everyone. Mayor Partin asked if it was Karlaney or Lafayette that people were coming through. Ms. Waller stated that Lafayette and Axtell was really where they went. Mayor Partin stated that she wondered if signs were not needed on Karlaney and some of the other streets that say local traffic only. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that Mayor Partin was right and asked City Manager Conley and Police Chief Wade to take a look at that and see what comments they might could give back to American Engineering about what could be done. He stated that if one had 50 cars that drove in front of their house every day, and all of a sudden, they had 1,050 cars, it was a dramatic increase for safety of children and for safety in general. He stated that he knew American Engineering were doing everything they could but sometimes, once a

project went into full action, one realized it was a little bigger than what they originally thought. He stated that they had yet to be able to take into consideration all of the students that live in student housing that would be coming back in about three weeks. Ms. Walker stated that should Council and staff decide they wanted to do a no through traffic sign and where they would like to place them that would not be an issue and they could absolutely do that. Mayor Partin asked if it was better to say no through traffic or just to say local traffic only. Ms. Walker stated it was whatever they preferred.

Mayor Pro Tem James told City Manager Conley that he would like for staff to think about some type of mediation efforts that could be done to make Guignard Park look even better once the project was complete. He stated that this was a great opportunity to do that and it was a beautiful park given by the Guignard family 100 years ago that so many people visited.

Council Member Sox stated that his grandparents lived near the park and he had communicated with them and some of their neighbors and they had some questions. He asked if there was a project schedule for the three (3) phases. He stated that they had discussed the first phase and it should be wrapped up in about a month but which area would begin next. Mr. Waddell stated that the schedule was to be out of BC High School property before school started, so by the first of August, and then Indigo and Guignard Park were the next phase and the work there should be through by mid-October and they would be finished with the work on the Indigo and Honeysuckle intersection. He stated that they would then work from State Street down to Honeysuckle and would try to get out of that intersection by around mid-October and then they would be working on Honeysuckle from when they finished it up probably mid-October through about mid-January getting out of Honeysuckle. He stated that then they would work on the intersection of Delisseline and Honeysuckle and it might be closer to possibly mid-March, before they were completely out of that intersection, because there was going to still be construction traffic coming in out of the work in Guignard Park.

Ms. McClam stated that from the contractor side, ground conditions currently were pretty good and they were progressing well and they wanted to get it installed as fast as possible so if the timeline started to speed up then they would be talking with American Engineering about getting notice out that they might be a little bit earlier. He stated that they had regularly scheduled progress meetings and talked a few times a week. Council Member Sox asked if there had been any boring samples done on Honeysuckle to specifically see if there was anything like granite that had been found yet. Mr. Waddell stated that they did a geotechnical evaluation and there was possibly some rock anticipated in certain areas. Mr. McClam stated that their drill and sub had some equipment issues but they were scheduled to be coming in the next couple of weeks. He stated that especially on the lower end, they really wanted to get a good profile. He stated that they would provide a geo tech report with the documents and they really wanted to go through it with a fine tooth comb to see what they were dealing



with there. Council Member Sox asked about safety around the retention pond and asked if there would be a fence around it and if so, what kind of fence and would that be the City's responsibility along with beautification efforts. Mr. Waddell stated that the slope into the pond would not be any greater than anything else along the stream in the park and it might have water in it all the time but it might dry up during dry weather. He stated that along the retaining wall there would be a handrail but other than that, they did not anticipate any kind of railings being needed. He stated that it was not going to be an abrupt drop off but a three to one slope down into the basin and then it might be a one to one slope there, so it would not be a ravine or anything like that.

Council Member Carter asked if they would be tying into the network by BC High School before heading into Guignard Park. Mr. Waddell stated that they were connecting to an existing 72 inch pipe that the School District put in probably 15 years ago. Council Member Carter asked if the columns and wrought iron at the school would have to be removed. Mr. McClam stated that the columns were getting rebuilt the following week and they along with the wrought iron would be reinstalled. Council Member Carter asked about the new brick color matching the existing brick. Mr. McClam stated that the School District's maintenance staff knew about the brick colors. Mr. McClam stated that he had his mason come out before they broke ground to take the columns down brick by brick and he was able to find that specific brick. He stated that they did have some extra brick if needed.

Mayor Partin stated that they said that the project would go through mid-March and that Guignard Park would be in construction, off and on. She asked if the trail would be open every moment that it was not in construction. Mr. Waddell stated that if they could reopen it, they would. He stated that they had to look at the sidewalk and make sure it was not damaged. He stated that currently there was going to be a long delay where they would not be digging in the park and they would try to get it reopened. He stated that he had to talk to the contractor to see whether that would work. Mr. Waddell stated that once they broke ground, they would excavate out and then they would build the head wall and then connect the piping to the head wall and put the soil back. He stated that it probably would not be safe to reopen that area until it was essentially finished because it was going to be an active construction site. He stated that portion of the trail would need to stay closed once they removed the sidewalk until the new sidewalk was put back in place. He stated that they were currently talking to the contractor about trying to get the trail reopened before they start actually digging. Mayor Partin stated that she was not aware that the park was going to be closed until March. She stated that it was so many people's favorite park and they liked walking loops, and they could not walk a loop. She asked if that meant they could not walk a loop until March. Mr. Waddell stated that was correct.

Mayor Partin stated that she was not aware of the scope of the retention pond and would like to see some drawings of what it was going to look like. She stated that aesthetically that was important. She stated that she would like to see what that was

going to look like as soon as possible. She stated that she knew they were working with the School District on paying for their portion of the scope, so they would look forward to that information so it did not impact taxpayer dollars for work on their property. She stated that she had signed up for the QR code and was not getting any alerts. Ms. Walker stated that they would check on that immediately.

Mayor Partin stated that residents complained about the sign that was at State and Indigo that blocked visibility because the height of it made it hard to see cars coming. She stated that this might be a great time to try to address that so that when Indigo opened back that corner would be safer. She stated that the City had committed to coordinating the solution to storm drainage but was not the responsible party. She stated that largely it came from roads and the City did not own any roads, they were either County or State owned. She stated that was why they had gone to the City's partners at all the different levels - the County, the School District, for their part, and that was how the City got a \$10 million grant. She stated that the City's partners stepped up. Mayor Partin stated that former Senator Nikki Setzler and Representative Micah Caskey, played a good role in helping with that. She stated that the City was coordinating the solution but was the lowest taxing entity of all of the entities involved. She stated that this was not in the City's budget. She stated that it was a \$10 million grant and the City's entire general fund was \$19 million. She thanked them for a great presentation.

**B. Presentation by the Greater Cayce-West Columbia Chamber and Visitor Programs on Best Practices and Initiatives to Promote Tourism to the City of Cayce.**

Ms. Christina Nelson stated that she was the Membership and Events Coordinator for the Greater Cayce West Columbia Chamber and Visitor Programs. She stated that she had overseen the tax funding applications for the last four (4) years for the Chamber. She stated that this was the first time they had been invited to present to Council and they appreciated the opportunity and looked forward to telling their story and showcasing the programs and initiatives of the Greater CWC Visitor Programs. She stated that they were small but mighty and all part-time, employee based program that included two (2) members that were graduates of the University of South Carolina Hospitality and Tourism school which was a nationally recognized program. She stated that they also had a member obtaining her degree in mass communications and a large group of volunteers that included restaurant owners, hotel managers and leaders throughout the CWC community. She stated that their Board Chair and Treasurer were always willing to discuss that and funding sources, if Council so wished.

Ms. Nelson stated that the Greater CWC and Visitor Programs worked to encourage visitors to look to local to shop, dine and explore and stay local, and to showcase the Greater CWC as the next weekend getaway. She stated that since 1957 the Greater CWC Chamber and Visitor Programs had been an integral part of greater

CWC and the Cayce community, with the primary goal to strengthen local business and tourism, so that the region surrounding the chamber and visitor center would be the premier place to live, work, connect and explore. She stated that since its inception, the Greater CWC had been a part of influential studies that had impacted tourism to the area, to include participation in a study on recreation in the area that later led to the creation of the Lexington County Recreation Commission. She stated that they also participated in a study about the CAE Airport and its viability for growth in the area, as well as being on a 1967 committee to determine the viability of a park along the area's riverbanks. She stated that in 1974 the Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens opened. Ms. Nelson stated that this partnership had continued into this most recent year, when the Chamber was part of the 50th Year Golden Ticket campaign that the zoo did and a large portion of that they split between the City of West Columbia and the City of Cayce. She stated that half of that program was dedicated to Cayce for tourism.

Ms. Nelson stated that the Greater CWC Visitor Programs mission was to promote growth and development of tourism in the area and they did that with additional funding from Lexington County and the City of West Columbia to continue their work to enhance the promotion of tourism to the area, support for community events and continue the high standard of operations at their visitor center. She stated that the visitor center was their brick and mortar located at 1006 12th Street and they had a lot of great promotional items at the kiosk there. She stated that they had a large variety of brochures and flyers and maps about things to do within the area. She stated that the visitor programs flyers were created in house and had a QR code that scanned back to their visitor programs website and also listed all of Cayce, West Columbia and Greater CWC events in the area. Ms. Nelson stated that the new Visitor Programs flyer had been sent out to local visitor centers, state welcome centers, national parks and more. She stated that they also received a wide variety of phone calls inquiring about an upcoming event or asking about access to the riverwalk or seeing what to do whenever they visit and where to stay. She stated that best practice had shown that social and digital media was the better means of advertisement for attracting visitors and they did that through their Love Local billboard campaigns that they started doing in addition to advertising and marketing outside the 50 mile radius. Ms. Nelson stated that they believed there was value in local marketing and some of the best recruiters for visitors were those that lived locally and reminded their friends and family of all the great things to do in the community and encouraged them to stay here versus out of town.

Ms. Nelson stated that they encouraged students from local universities and colleges to invite their hometown friends and family to love local in the greater CWC and they proved this through the fact that there were over 13,000 non-residents at the University of South Carolina this year, primarily from New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, and Massachusetts. She stated that they targeted those students that were out of state to let them know to stay local during school breaks and they had seen a lot of great return on that. She stated that another part of their advertising and tourism promotions were weekend getaway campaigns and they targeted these to Charlotte, Asheville,

Raleigh, Greenville, Winston-Salem, Chattanooga and more. She stated that they also had social media boosted ads that targeted markets outside of the 50 mile radius and geo targeted advertising that target those that were visiting the area for sports, games, outdoor activities and holiday events. Ms. Nelson stated that their recent active weekend getaway ads reached over 123,000 people, with unique opens of about 72,001. She stated that when the City of Cayce opened the new access point on the lower river, they knew that was a really great opportunity to team up with some small businesses like Palmetto Outdoor. She stated that Palmetto Outdoor already featured the Visitors Program QR code and all of their busses and shuttles had it as well, but now they had educated their guides to tell more about Cayce's new access point. She stated that they also worked to help promote the City of Cayce as part of the Congaree to Cayce Trail.

Ms. Nelson stated that in 2021 their social media had a reach of just 39,000 people and about 3,000 followers and the following year, it climbed to over 200,000 with followers at about 30,520 and in 2023 that number doubled to reach 598,000 people, with over 5,200 followers. She stated that in 2024 their reach hit 1.4 million with over 6,800 followers. She stated that they used social media to target out of state as well as locally, not just for community events, but for sporting events as well. She stated that everything the Greater CWC Visitor Programs did benefitted the City of Cayce. She stated that they were working with a Cayce business to create a series of tourism videos for the Greater CWC. She stated that the CWC's Holiday Parade of Lights had been going on for decades and to now work for the Chamber and see how much work it took for Cayce and West Columbia and for the Chamber and Visitor Programs to put on the parade was incredible. She stated that Parade Day started the morning of the parade in the Town of South Congaree and then went to the North Pole at the CWC Visitor Center and a holiday business shuttle that highlighted the business districts in the CWC. Ms. Nelson stated that it was the largest nighttime holiday parade in the Midlands and offered a weekend full of events from movie nights all the way down to the parade. She stated that they had over 100 businesses participating in the North Pole holiday business shuttle the past year. Ms. Nelson stated that they used cell phone technology to see how the visitors were coming and going throughout the day and they had over 4,600 visitors to the businesses in Parkland Plaza and over 250 units in the Holiday Parade of Lights, including over 1,000 walkers and two (2) marching bands. She stated that they used that same cell phone data to find that they had over 24,000 spectators along 12th Street from 5pm to 7:30pm and 31,000 between the City of West Columbia and the City of Cayce.

Ms. Nelson stated that Parade Day was the intersection of business promotion and tourism. She stated that they saw that if they were bringing that many people to 12th Street for the Holiday Parade of Lights, it just made sense to create an entire weekend of events, from the movie night at BC High School football field to the Parade Day in the different municipalities to encouraging folks to stay in the area for brunch the next morning. She stated that Ocean View Seafood Restaurant in Cayce had triple the

amount of visitors to the restaurant after the parade, which for the Visitors Program was one of the biggest wins from the event. She stated that for fiscal year 25-26 their visitor programs, website, visit CWCSC, which was separate from the chamber website, had a QR code that linked back so folks could see what was going on in the area. She stated that they had it posted at businesses, storefronts, hotels and there were even a couple of restaurants that had it on their menus. She stated that they recently purchased new software that allowed them to enhance their event calendar portal so community organizations and businesses could place their events on the calendar. Ms. Nelson stated that another thing that was coming up with input from their staff and volunteers, their board of directors had approved their next project. She stated that currently the Greater CWC had one (1) social media platform and they had proposed to separate that so there would be a platform just for the Chamber of Commerce and a platform just for the Visit CWC. Ms. Nelson stated that they could then focus more on tourism to the area without a lot of more information mainly for local businesses.

Ms. Nelson stated that they had implemented their Greater CWC what to do cards which was an idea from their Visitor and Tourism Committee. She stated that the card was made to fit into a key card envelope of every participating hotel and given to each person as they checked in. She stated that they launched this pilot program with the Residence Inn and TownePlace Suites with fantastic feedback, not only from the guests, but the staff as well. She stated that their plan was to fund and supply all the area hotels with what to do cards to make it easier to let guests know all about the great places to eat, shop and explore in the Greater CWC and was a great addition to the room rate discounts they already offered with some of their local hotel partners. Ms. Nelson thanked Council for allowing her the opportunity to come present and stated that she was very proud of the team and the Greater CWC Visitor Programs and what they had been able to accomplish over the last few years. She stated that they were consistently working to promote tourism in the area but also understood how connected that was to the small businesses as well.

Mayor Pro Tem James thanked Ms. Nelson for a wonderful presentation and stated that she did a great job. He stated that anyone who knew Ms. Nelson knew how passionate she was and that certainly came through with her presentation. He introduced Thomas Tafel with Lexington Medical Center and stated that he was their previous board chair. He stated that Mr. Tafel led the Chamber and Visitors Center through COVID, which was a very tough time, and his leadership certainly helped with everything that Ms. Nelson had talked about that night. Council Member Thomas asked Ms. Nelson if they put information out about the City's parks. She confirmed that they did.

Mayor Partin stated that she had a couple questions for the Chamber CEO and Executive Director and asked Mayor Pro Tem James to come down to the podium. Ms. Nelson stated that she was there to answer any questions for the Chamber and Visitor Programs. Mayor Partin stated that Mayor Pro Tem James could do it because he was

the Executive Director. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he did not think that was proper for him to do. Mayor Partin stated that it was perfectly legal because there was not a vote. She stated that she had checked with the Municipal Association attorney and it was fine for Mayor Pro Tem James to stand up for his chamber. Mayor Partin stated that City Manager Conley put together a great list for Council of all the things that they had been asking in Council Meetings and he was making sure to follow up on those things. She stated that one of the things he included stated that there was a request to arrange for a presentation for the next Council Meeting to show Council what the Chamber did with last year's Accommodations Tax money and particularly if they could put the receipts in the council packet so everybody could see it and then make them feel better because they had been in the middle of controversy over a vote from Council to give 100% of the A Tax money to the Chamber. Mayor Partin stated that she loved what Ms. Nelson shared in her presentation but the request was for the receipts of what was spent last year and for the budget. She asked where they were on that.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he had recused himself from Council so what Mayor Partin was speaking of had not come to his attention. He asked City Manager Conley if he had asked him for any of those documents. City Manager Conley stated that he had not. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that what Mayor Partin was asking him, he had no idea of. He stated that the Chamber's Treasurer was very happy at any time to be able to come to speak and present, if there were any questions whatsoever to do with the finances. He stated that would be the person who could be able to explain those to Mayor Partin. Mayor Partin stated if she could just get those receipts from last year. Council Member Carter stated that he had done a lot of research and every entity that received money did an annual report and he had reviewed everyone's annual report for the last several years, and they were exemplary. He stated that they told everything and they were available. He stated that staff approved those reports every year and he believed if there was a problem with the reports, there would never have been a recommendation brought forward this year. Mayor Partin stated that at the last Council Meeting Council Member Carter stated that none of those entities had submitted their end of the reports. Council Member Carter stated that was not what he meant. He stated that what he stated was the they had never required an entity to provide detailed receipts, for example, they purchased a billboard at exit six on I77. He stated that they did an annual report, as required by law. He stated that he did not mean to imply that they had not done the proper thing. He stated that staff reviewed them every year and asked City Manager Conley if that was correct. City Manager Conley stated that was correct and the City did have to submit an annual report to the Department of Revenue every year. Mayor Partin stated that she would like to see those if Council Member Carter had seen them and she would like those receipts. She stated that was what was shared in the last meeting so she was not sure where the confusion came from.

Council Member Carter stated that he was not sure where his report had anything to do with the presentation today, but any of the City's documentation was always available to any council member. Mayor Partin stated that the report City



Manager Conley gave Council read verbatim Mayor Partin asked City Manager Crosland to arrange for a presentation for the next council meeting to show Council what the chamber did with last year's money, and particularly if they could put the receipts in the council packet so everybody could see it and then make everyone feel better. She asked if there was a reason they could not get that. City Manager Conley stated that he put the budget on the agenda items, and that was pulled off of the agenda so there was no discussion for a budget this evening that he was aware of. Mayor Partin stated that he let Council know that that the Chamber had said they were not going to present about the budget, they were going to present about the best practices. She stated that they still needed the budget though. She stated that was what got Council out of the middle of all this controversy, knowing where that money was spent. She stated that the accommodations tax funds could only be spent on Cayce, it could not be spent on West Columbia or Columbia. She stated that it had to be receipts just for things for the City that benefitted the City of Cayce, and it could not be things that says when they were here, it had to be things that got them there. She stated that was what the law said.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he would refer the City Manager to the annual reports that the City required. He stated that not only did the city require the annual reports, but so did the other entities that any Visitor and Tourism Program had. He stated that the CWC Visitor and Tourism submitted an annual report to other entities, as well as the City of Cayce, before new funds were ever allocated. Mayor Partin stated that if the City already had them then she would like them in her inbox the following day. Council Member Carter stated that if he implied that all the entities that had received money in the past did not properly do their paperwork, he regretted making that statement. He stated that was not his intention. He stated that he was troubled that they wanted to get down that far into the weeds to Council checking invoices for billboards and radio ads and magazine ads. He stated that they had staff that were very capable and they did a fine job at that. He stated that if something had been incorrect in the past, it never would have been brought forward to Council the next year so did they really need to be checking invoices. He stated that if that was the direction they were going to go, then he was all for Council sitting down either in a work session or an open session and deciding that was the direction they were going to take. He stated that they had never asked anyone in the past to provide invoices.

Mayor Partin stated that she knew Council cared very much about the budgets that they passed and they were responsible for return on investment for the citizens. She stated that the reality was that if they wanted to lower citizens' tax burden, the way that they did that was to get others to spend money in Cayce, but that required that they got people to come there and that they have small businesses to spend money in. She stated that her concern was that with this drastic vote, that ignored the recommendation from the citizen committee, to give 100% of the money to the Chamber. She stated that Ms. Nelson was fabulous but she told Council her job was membership and events coordinator. She stated that Ms. Nelson had an important role for the businesses but

there was no one position at the Chamber that was focused on tourism. She stated that the professional expertise that Lake Murray Country and Experience Columbia had, the City was missing out on that. She stated that Lake Murray Country and Experience Columbia both got matching money from the State that made their money go further and the City missed out on bulk ad buys. She stated that she was all for the Chamber doing it, but Council had to make sure that the citizens and local businesses got that return on investment so yes, she would like to see the receipts.

Council Member Carter stated that Mayor Partin was saying that Council was going to require the entities that received money last year to submit their receipts. Mayor Partin asked if he wanted to go back a couple years. Council Member Carter stated that he did not want to go back period. He stated that he was not getting into their business and he did not think that was Council's job. He stated that their job was to allocate the money. Mayor Partin stated that Council's job, at the very least, was to make sure that they were not breaking the law. She stated that they did not have a budget for the a tax money that was required by State law so the least that they should commit to as Council was to make sure that they were complying with the law so they needed a budget for how that a tax money was going to be spent this year. She stated that Council Member Carter stated that he had seen them and she would like to see the receipts. Council Member Carter stated that he had seen the reports that they filed annually up to, of course, the current fiscal year that had not started. He stated that nothing had been allocated yet and he did not know if the last fiscal year reports had been filed yet, but he was sure they were imminent. He stated that he did not want to see receipts for some billboard but if Mayor Partin did that was certainly her prerogative. Mayor Partin stated that was what she asked for in the last meeting so she was not sure why they did not have it this meeting because she was hoping they were going to be able to move on from this. Council Member Carter stated that Mayor Partin spoke of a contentious vote but he was stunned that a City Mayor would continue to attack the local Chamber of Commerce. He stated that he did not know how to react to that, but Mayor Partin was a full member of Council and that was the information she requested and he supported her getting that information. Mayor Partin asked Council Member Carter if he could repeat how he just attacked her. Council Member Carter stated that he did not particularly attack her, he just said he could not believe the City Mayor continued to throw rocks at the local Chamber of Commerce. He stated that was something he was struggling with, but she had required information and he was good with her getting it and supported it 100%.

Mayor Partin stated then she was not sure why Council Member Carter was fighting with her. She stated that she was not trying to fight with him, just trying to clarify things. She stated that Council was supposed to be there for results for the citizens, and if asking for results for the citizens was something that they should not be doing, then she would love to hear that. She stated that she had gotten lots of calls from citizens who had been upset about this and she was hoping they were going to be able to get past this. She stated that the meeting was supposed to be about the receipts and

about the budget for this year so that Council could make sure they were complying with State law. She stated that she had heard from citizens that the vote Council took to use hospitality tax money for a pocket park probably did not comply with the law. She stated that they had a responsibility to get this right, and if getting it right was something that Council Member Carter saw as throwing rocks, then she did not understand that. Council Member Carter stated that they could just agree to disagree on this subject.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he wanted to make sure that the record reflected that he had completely recused himself from any communications regarding accommodations tax. He stated that he sat in Chambers that night as well as Council Member Thomas because it was a presentation and there was no intent for these type questions to come up, nor should he be in there with those type questions but he was asked to step to the podium. He stated that Mayor Partin stated that it was legal and she, as the Chair, asked him to stand there, but just for the record, he had recused himself from all others. Mayor Partin stated that Mayor Pro Tem James was perfectly in compliance and was absolutely fine to answer questions. She stated that he had two (2) different roles and he could answer in that role. She stated that they did not have a vote before them so there was no need to recuse himself. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that before he sat down, with that being said, he would like to commend again, Ms. Nelson for a great job with everything she did and how excited she was to be able to share everything that the Visitor Center did. Mayor Partin stated that she had one last question. She asked Mayor Pro Tem James to remind everyone what days the Chamber building was open. He replied Monday through Thursday. Mayor Partin stated so not on weekends when tourists most likely would be around. Ms. Nelson stated that they were open Monday to Thursday from nine to four and whenever they were not open, their QR code was posted on the outside of the building so people could scan what things to do. She stated that the only thing they were missing at that point was just a face to face of her telling them. Mayor Partin asked if that meant the kiosk was not open. Ms. Nelson stated that the kiosk was not open, but the kiosk was more robust online than it was in person.

## **Resolutions**

### **A. Consideration and Approval of Resolution Declaring Filing Dates for Candidacy for Municipal Elections**

City Manager Conley stated that the Resolution was required to declare that filing for the municipal election opened on August 1 and closed on August 15. He stated that it was important so the City's residents understood that filing for the election was open.

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to approve the Resolution. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

## **Items for Discussion and Possible Approval**

**A. Consideration and Approval of Contract Award and Funding Source for Demolition of Granby Gardens Park Pavilion**

City Manager Conley stated that Council approval was needed for a contract award and a funding source for the demolition of Granby Gardens Park pavilion. He stated that the park was heavily damaged during Hurricane Helene and the pavilion that was located in the back part of the park was completely destroyed by fallen trees. He stated that the City's on call contractor, 3D Dirt Works, submitted a quote for \$35,000 to completely pull all of the trees, the damaged structure and foundation out so the City could hopefully go back and revisit and reimagine what that area could look like afterwards.

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the City Manager to accept the quote from the City's on call general contractor to clean up Granby Gardens Park in the amount of \$35,000. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**B. Discussion and Approval to Ratify an Agreement Approved by the City Manager, Under the Emergency Powers of Sec. 2-146, with GH Smith Construction and Xylem Dewatering Solutions for Emergency Repair of a Sewer Main Failure**

City Manager Conley stated that Council approval was needed to ratify the City Managers action. He stated that in May 2025 there was some damage to a sewer line in Riverland Park and there was a little bit of sewer that was leaking into the river which required action to be taken quickly to get that repaired. He stated that it took a little while to get to Council because staff had to wait for all the invoices to come in, so they would know the total cost. He stated that this was approved by the City Manager at the time, so they were ratifying that particular action under the Emergency Powers Act.

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to ratify the City Manager's action executing agreements with G. H. Smith Construction, Inc. for \$83,760.29 and Xylem Dewatering Solutions, Inc. for \$18,039.12 for a total of \$101,799.41 and fund the expenses from the Utilities Wastewater Collection O and M Budget. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**Ordinances**

**A. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2025-06 Annexing Property Located at 2140 Frink Street (Tax Map Number 005758-01-023) and Assigning C-2 Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Designation – First Reading**

City Manager Conley stated that this was first reading of an Ordinance to annex a property located at 2140 Frink Street, tax map number 005758-01-023, into the City of Cayce and assign it a C-2 neighborhood commercial zoning designation. He stated that this property was a donut hole on Frink Street, almost at the end of Taylor and Frink and was almost six (6) acres. He stated that it was heavily overgrown and there were a couple of structures there a long time ago that had been taken in by nature. He stated that the new property owners had started cleaning the property and came to the City to discuss developing the property. He stated that they were only going to put a storage unit there for personal storage but were going to clean it up and take the dilapidated buildings off the property. He stated that they got into the conversation about annexation because for future use the owners would like to put some commercial space along Frink Street on that property. City Manager Conley stated that they would need utilities from the City so they did agree to annex into the City. He stated that with the C-2 zoning the City would be able to control the development when it moved forward..

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the annexation and C-2 zoning designation. Council Member Carter seconded the motion. Mayor Partin asked if it was a personal storage building or if the property owners wanted it to be commercial, would it go on the back of the property. City Manager Conley stated that they were putting the initial storage building on the back of the property. Mayor Pro Tem James asked if that was where they were taking the old house down that was back up in the woods. City Manager Conley stated that they were going to get that house removed. Mayor Pro Tem James asked if the property on Barnswallow that came off of Old Dunbar over to Frink Street was in the city limits now that it came up almost to where this property was. City Manager Conley stated that it was not. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### **Committee Matters**

- A. Approval to Enter the Following Committee Approved Minutes Into the City's Record
  - Planning Commission – February 24, 2025
  - Planning Commission Work Session – April 21, 2025
  - Museum Commission – May 7, 2025
  - Museum Commission – June 4, 2025

Council Member Sox made a motion to enter the Committee approved minutes into the record. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

- B. Reappointments
  - Board of Zoning Appeals – Two (2) Positions
  - Public Safety Foundation – One (1) Position

Mayor Partin stated that there were two reappointments for the Board of Zoning Appeals. She stated that Mr. Chip Salek's position would expire in July and he would like to serve again and Dr. Shirley McClerklin-Motley's position would expire in July as well and she would like to serve again. She stated that both attended meetings regularly and their applications were in the agenda packet for Council's review. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to reappoint Mr. Salek and Dr. McClerklin-Motley to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin stated that there was reappointment for the Public Safety Foundation. She stated that Ms. Barbara Corbett's position on the Foundation would expire in July and she attended meetings regularly and would like to serve again. She stated that Ms. Corbett's application was in the agenda packet for Council's review. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to reappoint Ms. Corbett to the Public Safety Foundation. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin reminded everyone watching the meeting online that there were a number of Committee openings and even if there was not an opening, one could still submit an application and then be in the queue for when there was an opening. She stated that the Events Committee had four (4) open positions so if there was anyone good at event planning that would be interested in helping to bring about some of the events such as the Cayce Cool Down then fill out an application on the City's website.

#### C. Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the Cayce Museum and Historical Commission By-Laws

City Manager Conley stated that Mr. James Stewart, the Chair of the Museum and Historical Commission, spoke earlier in the meeting and asked if Council could reexamine their by-laws. He stated that they had a wonderful African American ad hoc committee for a number of years and it was exciting for them to bring this into the fold as a formal standing committee so kudos to them for bringing it forward to Council.

Council Member Thomas made a motion to approved the amendment to the Museum and Historical Commission's by-laws. Council Member Sox seconded the motion.

Mayor Partin stated that this was a powerhouse committee and in addition to all the cool work that the Museum Commission did, this committee did some amazing work. She stated that if one did not know that there was a connection between the City of Cayce, the Smithsonian and the Vatican, one would have found that out at the last Legends Gala. She stated that there were so many amazing citizens in the City and that group did a wonderful job of highlighting all the amazing contributions and talent that was in the City. She stated that if anyone wanted to know the answer to the



connection between those three (3) things, it was an artist named Larry Levy, who lived in Cayce and his work was in the Smithsonian and in the Vatican and in the Cayce Museum.

Council Member Thomas stated that for those in the Cayce community that wanted to learn more about Juneteenth, the Commission did an amazing job with a duty program last month and he could not wait for future events that they were planning as well as the other great events the Museum Commission planned. He thanked the Commission for the great job they were doing and stated that sadly, other cities stories were not being told, but that was not the case in the City. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

### **City Manager's Report**

City Manager Conley stated that he did want to bring some information to Council. He stated that they had talked about this in the past, but he wanted to discuss the PER for the Utility Wastewater Plant. He stated that it did not formally have to come to Council, but he wanted to bring that information to them. He stated that they were all aware that the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant was coming to capacity and traditionally, when it comes into that 80% range, the Department of Environmental Services asked that the Utility start their PER process for expansion or to look at existing uses to expand. He stated that staff was using the City's on call engineers, American Engineering, to start that process and it was already budgeted. He stated that he knew the City's purchasers were wondering and he did want to make Council aware that staff had been in communication with them.

City Manager Conley stated that he did have follow up for some of Council's directives and questions to staff. He stated that Mayor Pro Tem James asked about what could be done with the Safe Streets Grant and Assistant City Manager Crosby did reach out to the contractor and did get the information that the City could work some new intersections into the existing scope and staff looked forward to continuing that process. He stated that Mayor Partin asked for information from staff about the Midlands Business Leadership Group and the rebranding of the Cayce Riverwalk and other riverwalks in the midlands. He stated that a gentleman reached out to staff that day to set up a conversation so he looked forward to continuing that conversation and see where it went with himself, Mayor Partin and Mayor Pro Tem James. City Manager Conley stated that Mayor Partin requested information about the Karlaney Avenue basin. He stated that staff was still working on that and had a draft to review and as soon as that draft was finalized, staff would get that to Council and see about getting that information out to the residents. He stated that Mayor Partin asked about the eternal flame at the Police Department and the City's Victim Advocates were a big part of that coming to fruition so he hoped to have them at the August 5 Council Meeting to tell Council that story. He stated that Mayor Partin asked about the Community Development Block Grants and what the City had gotten in the past. He stated that in

the past several years, the City had two (2) block grants – one was for the Lexington Avenue sewer line, which was a little over \$270,000 in 2024 and then the other was a State Street sewer line project in 2020 for little over \$180,000. He stated those were the only two community development block grants that staff could find. Mayor Partin stated that Community Development Block Grants were a very accessible source of money for cities for big projects, but they were about to be cut from the Federal Government so she asked Council Member Thomas to talk to his boss and tell him cities needed those CDBG's. Mayor Partin stated that she thought the State Street streetscaping was funded with CDBG monies. She stated that if that source of funding went away, it would have a drastic impact. She stated that the City's sewer line project had to get done and if there were not any CDBG funds then the money would have to come from the City which meant less to work with to do other things for the citizens.

City Manager Conley stated that Mayor Partin directed staff to look into the DOT street signs and staff had been working with Lexington County since they did the street signs. He stated that the County was way behind and asked staff to bring a small number of signs to them at a time and they would get them done. He stated that they recently got five (5) signs done a couple of months ago and staff would continue to do that work with them. He stated that they had already discussed the Chamber presentation earlier in the meeting. Mayor Partin asked if that presentation would be added to the next Council Meeting. Council Member Sox asked if it was a presentation or just reviewing the numbers. He stated that he thought it was just reviewing the numbers. Mayor Partin stated that it had gone on so long and she knew the Chamber wanted to get the good word out there, so if they could just put it out there for the public, then there would be no questions and they could move on. She stated that it was supposed to be in that night's Council agenda packet and the fact that it was not, she did not understand. She stated that she wanted it on the agenda for discussion at the next Council Meeting.

City Manager Conley stated that Council Member Carter mentioned the history of accommodations tax and stated that he would like staff to put together a document showing the process and how it worked. He stated that staff was working on that and hoped to have it to Council at the August 5 Council Meeting. He stated that staff would give Council a formal, written documentation of what the process was and possibly even some suggestions that could help staff move forward in a more positive way as well. City Manager Conley stated that staff had a directive from Council regarding the Naples Avenue construction schedule and he put that in Council's packet. He stated that the Naples Avenue entrance to the Riverwalk was closing July 14 as crews started demoing and doing some heavy work on that particular area. He stated that signs were up there directing people down to the Lyles Street entrance of the Riverwalk since it was the closest and the City informed the public about available parking in the Art Lot along with street parking. He stated that they also directed people to the Thomas Newman boat landing since there was boardwalk construction south from Lyles Street because of the damaged boardwalk there. He stated that the signage was up and it was very visible.

City Manager Conley stated that Mayor Pro Tem James had some suggestions for the Planning Commission regarding them discussing light pollution and short term rentals. He stated that staff believed that they could definitely get some surveys to the citizens to get some feedback on those two particular issues and have the contractors do a workshop with the Planning Commission. He stated that staff had already started working on some model Ordinances and some language to get to the Planning Commission and once the feedback was received from citizens, the Planning Commission could review the information. He stated that the Planning Commission would then give a recommendation to Council and all the documentations would come to Council for their review.

City Manager Conley stated that the Police Department was working hard on the Back to School drive that was open through July 25. He stated that the Police Department had their Back to School Bash at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church on July 31 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. He stated that the Cayce calendar photo competition was open and that there was not a particular theme this year, so it just had to be photos of Cayce places or people. He stated that the deadline to submit photos was August 11. He stated that the grand reopening celebration for Glenwood Park was August 5 and the Cayce Cool Down was July 26. He stated that the Cayce Museum had a free event on July 19 on the life of Thomas Sumter. City Manager Conley stated that a Council Work Session was scheduled for July 15 at 6:00pm. He reminded everyone that State Street would be closed between Indigo and Jansen for the next couple of weeks and asked everyone to sign up for the Cayce Avenues Drainage Project information at [Caycedrainage.com](http://Caycedrainage.com) for updates and text alerts. He stated that work was finally underway for the upgrading of Pump Station One which was great news.

### **Council Comments**

Mayor Partin thanked City Manager Conley for a really great first City Manager Report and stated that she appreciated him reviewing all the items to make sure that they were taken care of.

Mayor Pro Tem James thanked City Manager Conley as well for his report. He stated that a lot of the items he spoke on educated the community on what was being done every single day by City staff and also educated the community on what Council was asking staff to get done, whether it be street signs or the short term rentals or the light pollution. He stated that he recently spoke to a gentleman who told him the nightmares that were taking place because of short term rentals. He thanked American Engineering for their presentation. He asked staff to see if there was a work around for the walking loop in Guignard Park. He stated that there were a lot of people who loved that park and had been using it for years and would be grateful. He asked that staff get with Chief Wade regarding the additional cars using other streets in the Avenues while some streets were closed and adding 1,000 additional cars going down some roads.

Council Member Sox thanked City Manager Conley for the updates. He also thanked Ms. Nelson for a wonderful presentation and for all she did that was so impactful to the business community in Cayce and the Midlands.

Mayor Partin stated that she and Assistant City Manager Crosby had signed up for a free seminar on how US cities fund, govern and maintain parks and public spaces and it was a great opportunity through the Mayor's Institute for City Design. She stated that parks was something Council and staff were passionate about, so she was looking forward to what comes out of that seminar.

Council Member Thomas stated they had seen too many times where local government works with entities on projects and when the projects were completed there were many items that had to be fixed and then that process took longer. He stated that the Avenues Drainage Project would not be complete until Guignard Park was more beautiful and upgraded than they had ever imagined, because that was what the citizens deserved. He thanked Council for agreeing to have a Council Work Session and stated that was something that he had been trying to get since he was elected. He stated that he thought it was a big win for the citizens and staff and he looked forward to brainstorming and working together with his colleagues to continue to better the City. Council Member Thomas stated that the Fall Fest was a fun event and he would like to see if it was possible to consider offering a free transportation option to help citizens to get to and from the Fall Fest. He stated that it would not only get people to the event that might not have a way to get there but also minimize the traffic by the event. He thanked the Cayce West Columbia block party committee for allowing the Lexington County mobile library to come out to their awesome block party last month. He stated that it was amazing to see the excitement of the local kids running up to go check out a book. He stated that these small things made big impacts, because the young people were the future. Council Member Thomas stated that he would like to have a Hot Dogs and Handshakes event and have Police Chief Wade and City Manager Conley attend so residents could meet them and get to know them because he was a big believer in relationships. He asked them to give him some dates in the next three months when it got cooler and he would be honored to throw a nice little event.

### **Executive Session**

- A. Discussion of contractual negotiation and employment matters – City Manager's Contract
- B. Discussion of personnel matter relating to the exit of City Manager

Council Member Sox made a motion to move into Executive Session. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### **Reconvene**

After the Executive Session was concluded, Council Member Sox made a motion to reconvene the Regular meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Mayor Partin announced that no vote was taken in Executive Session other than to adjourn and resume the Regular meeting.

### **Possible actions in follow up to Executive Session**

#### **A. Approval of City Manager's Contract**

Mayor Partin stated that she and City Manager Conley had a great conversation and he knew ahead of time at the last Council Meeting that she was not going to vote for him, but they agreed to meet and talk. She stated that they had a great conversation and she told him that she wanted to come out and affirm him as the City Manager and share a little bit about his experience so people knew about him and could learn a little bit more about him. She stated that before he was with the City of Cayce, he was with Kershaw County in Camden and one of the things he did there was the Director of Planning and Zoning and the City had several city managers who had that background and it was a really great combination of knowing what really went into one of the most important parts of City government. She stated that City Manager Conley was in the United States Army and was a flight medic. She stated that staff was her absolute highest priority and she and City Manager Conley had some great conversations about supporting staff and that meant supporting him too. She stated that she would like to encourage everyone to work together so they could make sure that he was successful. She stated that since she had been Mayor the first city manager was there for nine years, the next one was there for seven years and she knew City Manager Conley wanted to be there for 10 years so they wanted him to be very successful.

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the City Manager's contract as discussed in Executive Session and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion. City Manager Conley thanked Mayor Partin for her support and thanked Council for the honor of the opportunity. He stated that he was truly honored and excited to step into the role of City Manager for the City of Cayce. He stated that his clear priorities were the growth and prosperity of the City and he was committed to empowering the team directly. He stated that meant providing the necessary resources, the technology support for all of the departments, offering leadership training for managers, and actively listening to Council and staff's insights to drive their collective success. He stated that he was proud of the City's recent achievements in economic development and community partnerships, their award winning culture initiatives and impactful public safety programs they were building for the future while honoring the City's rich history and heritage and preserving the City's natural beauty and unique character. City Manager Conley stated that he believed strongly in staff's capabilities and they would continue to build on their strengths together. He stated that he was committed to ongoing growth as a leader, continuously learning and adapting to best serve the City and its dedicated team as they worked

towards their shared goals. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**Adjourn**

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:51pm.

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Elise Partin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Mendy Corder, CMC, Municipal Clerk



**\*Appearance of citizens at Council meetings - City of Cayce Code of Ordinances, Sec. 2-71.** Any citizen of the municipality may speak at a regular meeting of the council on a matter pertaining to municipal services and operation, with the exception of personnel matters, by notifying the office of the city manager at least five working days prior to the meeting and stating the subject and purpose for speaking. Additionally, during the **public comment period** as specified on the agenda of a regular meeting of the council, a member of the public may speak on a matter appearing on the meeting agenda, with the exception of personnel matters by signing a speakers list maintained by the city clerk prior to the start of the public comment period. The number of speakers at a council meeting may be limited in the discretion of the mayor or presiding officer, the length of time for any speaker's presentation is limited to a maximum of five minutes, and a presentation may be curtailed if determined to be uncivil, contentious, or disruptive in the discretion of the mayor or presiding officer or by majority of vote of council.