



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
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**City of Cayce  
Regular Council Meeting  
Tuesday, August 5, 2025**

The August 5, 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 Hunter Sox and Byron Thomas. City Manager Michael Conley, Assistant City Manager Wesley Crosby, Municipal Clerk Mendy Corder, Finance Director Allison Barrs, Human Resources Director Keisha Brunson, IT Director Jamie Beckham and City Attorney Will Dillard 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. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that when Municipal Clerk Corder called and asked him to lead the prayer that night he began reflecting upon the past week. He stated that he received at church this past weekend when they were talking about prophetic affirmations and a prophetic affirmation was a positive declaration that affirmed one's identity as we are all children of God. He stated that they also discussed that later in life sometimes there were moments called a slingshot moment and the slingshot moment is where your affirmation that you made to someone early in life came back to be an encouragement to you. He stated that reminded him when he and his wife were eating out and a gentleman walked by the table, and said, you don't remember me, but I'd like to have a seat with you all, if you don't mind. He stated that the gentleman said as a young police officer, Mayor Pro Tem James recognized him many years ago in the Pocomo area of the City and later in the Hill View Apartments area and Mayor Pro Tem James pulled him to the side and put his arm around him and said you know, you do not have to go in that direction. He told him he was a fine young man and he could really do some wonderful things in life. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that the gentleman said he gave him direction at that time as a young Police Officer and he took that direction. He stated that the gentleman was Pastor Nicky Wilson of Brookland Baptist Church. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that was his slingshot moment. He stated that he did not recall that moment but he affirmed that young man. He asked who are we affirming every single day and did we have an opportunity to affirm people. Mayor Pro Tem James gave the invocation. Mayor Partin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the June 3, 2025, Public Hearing and Regular Council Meeting, June 18, 2025, Regular Council Meeting, July 8, 2025, Regular Council Meeting and July 15, 2025, Council Work Session meeting minutes as written. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

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

Ms. Kasey Lawson, Item III. B. Ms. Lawson stated that she was a resident of the Churchill Heights neighborhood and was speaking to raise concerns over the impact to their safety with the Fairfield Inn development in their neighborhood. She stated that the erosion of the neighborhood would decrease property values, which was likely to lead to an increase in crime, as shown by the existing motels just down the street. She stated that as residents of this neighborhood, they did not want this development, and felt that they should, at minimum, have been informed by Council prior to construction starting. She stated that if the project proceeded, they would require an eight (8) foot masonry wall to protect the safety and privacy of residents which should have been an option from the beginning, and was standard practice in these developments. Ms. Lawson stated that they felt put off by the Cayce government and that the needs of developers and the pockets of businessmen were being prioritized over the safety and well-being of their community. She stated that after having spoken with Mayor Partin, they realized that not everyone was being given the same information and those inconsistencies deepened their concern that the safety and well-being of their neighborhood was not being prioritized. She stated that Council Member Sox communicated with Mayor Partin via text that somehow the consensus that worked for everyone who commented was Thursday, August 14, in regards to the meeting for this development, despite residents asking for a meeting sooner, and when referring to communications in the neighborhood group, they were told the two (2) dates that worked for City staff were Thursday, August 14 and Monday, August 18. She stated that they found it curious that the first available meeting date, despite neighborhood members being willing to meet expeditiously, was 18 hours before the deadline for anyone who wished to run for the District Three Council seat. She stated that further deepened their concern as a community that there were other factors aside from their safety and well-being influencing decision making. Ms. Lawson stated that they looked forward to working together with Council and the Cayce Police Department to address these concerns.

Ms. Alice Rose, Item III. B. Ms. Rose stated that she wanted to thank the Cayce Police Department and Police Chief Bruce Wade. She stated that they were really amazing. She stated that she had lived in a lot of areas of Columbia, and felt very safe in her neighborhood, and knew that was in large part due to what the Police Department did and they did it in a way that she did not notice their presence, and she really appreciated that. She stated that she lived in Churchill Heights and was concerned about her safety with the development that was going in with strangers staying in such close proximity, not just to her home, but also her child's bus stop which was right next to the development. Ms. Rose stated that they had gotten very mixed answers as to whether or not there was

going to be a wall, what the wall was going to look like, and she was concerned about people being drawn to or staying in that hotel, and having access to her child. She stated that she lived in the neighborhood when Fay was taken and the City's law enforcement was amazing with what they did and how they handled the situation, and she was so grateful for them. She stated that was something that no one should ever have to go through. She stated that she had felt safe since then, and her safety was being called into question because of the proximity to crime and its motive and its opportunity. She stated that she was very concerned about things going downhill in her neighborhood, in spite of how amazing the local law enforcement was.

Mr. Paul Gregory, Item III. B. Mr. Gregory thanked Council for allowing them the opportunity to be able to speak and voice their concerns. He stated that like his neighbors, he shared the same concerns for the Churchill Heights community, where he and his wife just purchased a home in a little under a year ago. He stated that part of the reason they were drawn to the neighborhood was the quiet nature of it and the safety of it. He stated that with the development of hotels they did not know who was coming in and did not know how many people could be ending up back in the neighborhood. He stated that opportunity sometimes led to bad things happening and he agreed with his neighbor in saying that they demanded an eight (8) foot retention wall separating the hotel from the neighborhood be installed and at some point in time, he would like an answer from Council as to what they were going to do to ensure them of what they were going to do to keep them safe

### **Presentations**

#### **A. Presentation by Ms. Juana Saavedra on the Eternal Flame at the Cayce Police Department**

Ms. Saavedra stated that when she was the City's Victim Advocate she decided to have an eternal flame placed outside of the Police Department in memory and honor of Corporal Drew Barr. She stated that before Drew was killed in the line of duty, she had only been with the Cayce Police Department for about two months. She stated that throughout the week after Drew was murdered, she spent a lot of time with the Barrs and with his friends and family and heard many different stories of the kind of person that Drew was, how he was such a kind person, willing to drop anything that he was doing in order to help someone in need, whether that was a friend, a family member or someone he came across. She stated that he was described as being a light to everyone. She stated that eternal flames were used to memorialize, honor and remember those who had fallen and they served as a perpetual representation of the ultimate sacrifice individuals had given and served as a powerful symbol, dedicated to those who had died, particularly in the line of duty. Ms. Saavedra stated that the flame could also represent the transformation of destruction and renewal and that was why she chose the eternal flame. She stated that it gave everyone who comes to Cayce, whether it be to the department or to City Hall, if they see it, they were going to ask what it was for and that gave everyone an opportunity to talk about Drew. She stated that they could talk about the kind of

person that Drew was and how he helped everyone and the lasting impression that he left for everyone, as well as it was a continual light that shined for everyone, that same way that Drew did. She stated that she hoped it would be something to remind everyone to be kind, be a friend, be a light to someone else, just like Drew was.

Mayor Pro Tem James thanked Ms. Saavedra for the eternal flame and recognizing the memory of Drew as well as other officers, such as Bill Ellingworth, who died in the line of service. He stated that he could not think of anything better than the eternal flame to be able to keep the light shining. Mayor Partin stated that they missed Ms. Saavedra being with them. She stated that they spent a lot of time together, and some of the officers she was with at five o'clock in the morning with Drew's family in the hospital. Mayor Partin stated that was not the first time she was with Drew's family in the hospital, because he was shot in the line of duty two (2) years prior. She stated that his heart was serving and protecting. She stated that she was immensely grateful to Ms. Saavedra for all that she had done for Drew's family and for staff. She stated that she understood that the City's current Victim Advocates were getting up to speed on all the work that Ms. Saavedra had done and were going to do some other things to get the word out about the eternal flame.

#### B. Presentation by Police Chief Bruce Wade on the Cayce Police Department

Police Chief Wade stated that the Police Department was operating smoothly. He stated that when he began the position of Police Chief on April 15, the department had 14 vacancies and currently only had two (2) vacancies. He stated that three (3) certified officers were starting on August 7, two (2) more on August 14, and another two (2) on August 21. He stated that they were all certified, with the exception of one (1) that was bringing several years of law enforcement experience to the City. He stated that the two (2) vacancies were the Assistant Chief position and a Patrol Officer position. He stated that they had expanded their COPS/CAT team by adding five (5) officers to traffic that would focus on reducing traffic accidents, address DUI violations and improve speed enforcement in the City's neighborhoods. He stated that there were two (2) Streets Crime Officers who would concentrate on issues like guns, gangs and drugs and one (1) additional Officer to support Lieutenant West in Community Outreach.

Police Chief Wade stated that the City's Police Department response time had remained consistent at three and a half minutes. He stated that the recent Cayce Character Camp was a great success and thanked the School Resource Officers and community partners for making it a success. He stated that the Back to School Bash was well received and they distributed over 400 backpacks with school supplies. He stated that they were partnering with the Fire Department and other community organizations to host the Tales on the Trails event on Saturday, October 25. Police Chief Wade stated that they continued to enroll participants in the Cayce Assistant Seniors and Elderly program. He stated that they were currently working on the reaccreditation process and expected to receive their award September 5 and the assessors would be in the Police Department on August 19 and 20.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that they appreciated everything Chief Wade had done since he had been on board. He stated that the Character Camp had so many accolades from the kids, teachers and parents. Council Member Thomas thanked Chief Wade for coming out to the Riverland Park community meeting some months ago. He stated that they really appreciated him giving them his cell phone number and telling them they could call him any time and he would answer. He asked Chief Wade what his thoughts were on handling the traffic from school starting back and football games. Police Chief Wade stated that the first two (2) weeks of school were usually chaotic but they had Officers out there in the morning directing traffic and would have them there as well for football games.

Council Member Sox thanked Chief Wade for his work so far and for everything he had been doing for the City. He stated that he had recently witnessed a pretty bad car accident and ambulances were already on scene but he called it in to the Police Department and the Police were already on the way. He stated that the response times were phenomenal. Mayor Partin stated that she appreciated Chief Wade's team always inviting her to read to the kids during Character Camp. She stated that it was one of her absolute favorite things and she read from her kids' favorite books from when they were little and it was great to get to share that with all the students that the Officers protect and help grow into great people.

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

#### **A. Consideration and Approval of the Lexington County South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund (SCORF) Agreement**

City Manager Conley stated that this was a great spotlight for a tremendous staff member. He stated that Risk Reduction Manager Lindsey McDade and her Opioid Settlement Recovery Fund program was doing amazing things. He stated that this was a proactive attempt by Ms. McDade to get more funding so she could do more amazing things and she was already well recognized throughout the City, County and the State for her work. He stated that it was an agreement between the City and Lexington County for a grant but it was actually money that she would be using that Lexington County was not at this particular moment. He stated that the money would help Ms. McDade to get a vehicle and a horse trailer for her Therapeutic Equine Program, and expand her program and assistance.

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to approve the Fire Departments request to accept the opioid funds in the amount of \$309,000 and allow the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Lexington County. Council Member Sox seconded the motion. He stated that he had the privilege when he worked at the Institute of Medicine and Public Health to work with Attorney Otis and the Attorney General's office to write a guide on the approved uses for investing the opioid settlement funds and would have never thought that he would be there accepting funding for a therapy horse, which was very

interesting and amazing to have Muffin with the City. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

B. Discussion and Approval to move forward with the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application

City Manager Conley stated that Council had requested staff to continue to look for grant funding to address storm water needs in the Avenues and around the City. He stated that this was an opportunity and staff had started the process but wanted to make sure they were heading in the right direction for this process. He stated that staff initiated the process to apply for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and were working with the City's engineering firm and their design would have staff requesting approximately \$21.75 million which would require a match of \$7.25 million from the City. City Manager Conley stated that he wanted to make Council aware of that and see if they were comfortable with that. He stated that as staff moved forward, they would flex all opportunities to try to look at their partners and other avenues to help with that match in funding, but since it was such a large amount of money for the City, staff wanted to make sure they were heading in that direction. He stated that if staff continued with the grant application process, a funding source would be assigned in the future and would not at this time tie the City to any funding source. He stated that when the grant was awarded, staff would return to Council at that time for further direction. He stated that the application was due on September 1.

Mayor Pro Tem James asked if staff was saying the City would have to put up \$7 million if they wanted to get \$29 million altogether. City Manager Conley stated that was correct. Mayor Pro Tem James asked if these were things that the City would need to be doing either way. City Manager Conley stated that to continue the storm water improvements, this grant was a wonderful grant and would greatly help with that but it was a big match. Council Member Thomas asked if the City was awarded the grant but did not have the match could they accept a lesser amount or was it all or nothing. City Manager Conley stated that typically if staff asked for that amount and the City was awarded that, then that was the amount that had to be accepted. He stated that it was possible that the amount could be reduced and this number was the maximum. Mayor Partin asked if there was a particular plan since the write up was pretty broad. City Manager Conley stated that it would be the same program and design that the City had been working off of up until this point with American Engineering. He stated that it would be a continuation of that, especially down to the Railroad Avenue basin and would hopefully continue the project through all of the basins down by the riverside.

Mayor Partin stated that she had major heartburn about committing to anything where the funding source was not identified. She stated that the City did not have \$7 million sitting around, so she was not sure what that funding source would be. She stated that when she was first elected there was a commitment by Council to build the Cayce Tennis and Fitness Center and the City's portion of that plan was \$2 million but there was no conversation by the prior Council of where that money was supposed to

come from. She stated that they had to scramble to figure out where to get that money from. She stated that the City had a tight budget and did not give staff a cost of living adjustment last year so to find \$7 million seemed extraordinary. She stated that just a reminder for everyone in the room, it was typically the City's commitment that they were happy to coordinate the solution to storm water issues but the City was not the funding source. She stated that the City was the lowest funding entity of all the partners and the storm drainage did not usually come from the City but from roads which were either County or State owned, not owned by the City. She stated that they needed the County, State and Federal partners to help with the solution and the City would coordinate it. She stated that the City knew what made sense, and was good at navigating grants and projects but she wished the City's lobbyist would have said here are some suggestions on how we might be able to partner to figure out where to get the other \$7 million, or at least a portion of that. She stated that she did not know how they could put that on the citizens and asked Council if they had any other suggestions.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that Mayor Partin's concern was felt by everyone on Council. He stated that he knew they did not have all the answers to what they really wanted and he did not mind reaching out to the County to see what they were going to bear in this burden if the City was to do something like this to see if they would assist in any way. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to postpone this item to the August 20, 2025, Council Meeting. Council Member Sox seconded the motion. Mayor Partin asked Council to also talk to the City's lobbyists and stated that they could all talk to the City's State and Federal partners to see what kind of answers they might be able to get. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he would be happy to phone tomorrow the County and State partners. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

#### C. Discussion and Approval of Contract Award and Funding Source for the Riverwalk Boardwalk Repair

City Manager Conley stated that there was a 60 foot section of the boardwalk in the City's Riverwalk that had been down for some time. He stated that during a storm a sewer line broke and damaged the boardwalk. He stated that staff was submitting to Council a contract to approve 3D Dirt Works for the repair up to, but not to exceed, \$250,000, to repair this boardwalk section. He stated that the funds would be allocated from the TIF funding and they would get working as soon as possible. He stated that 3D Dirt Works was the City's on call contractor.

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to approve a contract with 3D Dirt Works to repair the boardwalk in a not to exceed amount of \$250,000 and to authorize the City Manager to execute the appropriate agreements. Council Member Sox seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that the City's Riverwalk was one of the many wonderful things the City had and that section had been closed longer than Council wanted it to be so as quickly they could begin working on it, the better. Council Member Sox asked if there was a timeline for the repair. City Manager Conley stated that there

was not a timeline and the contractors had to get in there to see the extent of the damage since the footings for that section of the boardwalk had to be entirely repaired. Mayor Partin asked that City Manager Conley let Council know as soon as he got estimates on time. She called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

#### D. Discussion and Approval to Amend the 2025 Council Meeting Dates

City Manager Conley stated that this was brought forward in early August as there were a couple Council Members that were unable to make certain meetings. He stated that there was one (1) Council Member that was unable to attend that night's meeting and another Council Member could not make the August 20, 2025, Council Meeting. He stated that it was brought to staff's attention that there was discussion of possibly moving the August 20 Council Meeting to August 27. He stated that would create two (2) back to back meetings but staff would work with Council to move the meetings. Mayor Pro Tem James asked if City Manager Conley was saying he wanted to move the meeting for staff. City Manager Conley stated that moving the meeting was brought to staff's attention and it did put staff into a crunch having two meetings back to back since having a meeting on August 27 they would also have a meeting on September 2, which was the next week. Mayor Partin stated that the other option could be to just not have a second meeting in August and just have one in September. City Manager Conley stated that since the Hazard Mitigation Grant Application was postponed to the August 20 Council Meeting and the grant application was due by September, a meeting before September was necessary.

Council Member Thomas stated that he spoke to the previous City Manager about trying to prevent doing back to back Council Meetings since he had heard it was a burden on staff. City Manager Conley stated that it was challenging for staff to have back to back meetings since it was a lot of information to turn around and have ready for the following week. He stated that it did get difficult for some citizens to follow the agendas along but staff was there to do it if Council said to do it. He stated that it was hard for citizens to follow when one agenda is put out and then staff immediately put out another agenda, almost before the first meeting took place but again, staff would do as Council would like.

Mayor Partin suggested having a Council Meeting on August 27 and not having the September 2 Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he was not available on August 27 but made sure to be available for the regularly scheduled meeting. Council Member Thomas asked if Council was going to start a precedent of moving meetings when one of Council could not make one. Mayor Partin stated that Council Member Thomas had asked for that. Council Member Thomas stated that he did not bring it forward. Mayor Partin stated that he emailed her about a November Council Meeting. Council Member Thomas stated that was correct but he never emailed anyone else nor did he bring it up in front of constituents. Mayor Partin stated that he told her he talked to everyone. Council Member Thomas stated that he could talk to people, but if he did not bring it forward, then that meant it was dead. Mayor Partin stated because



everyone voted in the conversations behind. Council Member Thomas stated that no one voted behind conversations and she could easily pick up the phone and call someone individually to ask how they felt.

Mayor Partin stated just for everyone to know what was going on, she and City Manager Conley and Council Member Carter met two (2) weeks prior and Council Member Carter said that he could not make the August 5 Council Meeting because he was on vacation with his family. She stated that she suggested to try to be courteous, that Council move that meeting and when they had suggested that, then something came up with her children, that was on August 20. She stated that the conversation hung out there for quite some time where they were not moving forward with what that meeting was, she then booked the thing to do with her children, so she could not attend the August 20 Council Meeting. She stated that was the conflict and she ran the meeting so she asked that the meeting be moved. Mayor Partin stated that an email went to all of Council that seemed to not have been read, or there was just not an interest in supporting it. She stated that she thought they were trying to do something for Council Member Carter but they were not in time to do that. She stated that the City Attorney gave them great advice, because they had not had the discussion before the last Council Meeting where they would have been together to change the August 5 meeting date so that was why they did not change it for Council Member Carter and now she was booked and would be doing something with her children on August 20. She stated that this was fairly consistent with the support she had gotten from Council so they could move on.

Council Member Thomas stated that he did respond in support of that however, once they were notified by the City Attorney that they could not move the meeting for Council Member Carter he felt it was fair that if Council Member Carter had to miss a meeting, they should not accommodate for someone else because they could not make a meeting. He stated that if they were going to set that precedent then they could set it but he wanted to be fair to Council Member Carter due to the City Attorney saying that they had to have the August 5 Council Meeting and that he was not going forward with moving the next meeting.

#### E. Discussion and Approval of Midlands Business Leadership Group Riverfront Rebranding Budget Allocation

City Manager Conley stated that the Midlands Business Leadership Group had been doing a lot of work in the area and had put together a rebranding effort for all the riverwalk from the City's future 12,000 Year History Park, all the way to the Lake Murray Dam. He stated that it had been in the works for some time and as they went through that rebranding effort, they requested some budget allocations from the City to pay their portion of that particular rebranding effort. He stated that Council had seen the presentation and a couple Council Members attended the presentation and one attended the public unveiling of the rebranding effort. He stated that it was live and citizens could look at it at this time. He state that staff recommended that Council approve the \$17,000 budget allocation to the Midlands Business Leadership Group for the rebranding effort.

City Manager Conley stated that it was part of the budget and was postponed because Council needed some more information.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he and Mayor Partin attended a meeting with the MBLG group and they presented their rebranding plan. He stated that some of the things that really made them excited about it was many people traveled to the Midlands, they did not know the Cayce Riverwalk versus the West Columbia Riverwalk versus the Columbia Riverwalk and at the end of the day, they were all connected. He stated that they were trying to make something that was regionally attractive and MBLG was hoping to promote the connected riverwalks as Three Rivers but the City would not lose their identity and signage would not change. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that initially Council was not sure where MBLG was headed with the rebranding so they did present to him and Mayor Partin and they communicated back with Council how much they liked the presentation. He stated that they were not there to present again, because they were presenting publicly and had presented to him and Mayor Partin. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to approve. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion. Council Member Sox stated that he attended the announcement at the Saluda Riverwalk with City Manager Conley and it was a great presentation. He stated that it was very unique and he was concerned about the name at first, but then he saw the way it was branded, and it changed his mind. He stated that he thought it would fit well with the City's branding. He stated that it was going to be great for the region. Mayor Partin called the question which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Mayor Partin stated that this was already in the City's budget that was presented at the end of the fiscal year, but it got pulled out separately as part of the ruse to try to keep money local with the chamber's a tax money so she was glad that it was back in there, because it was similar to the Swamp Rabbit trail and would create that kind of draw in the region.

## **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 – Second Reading**

City Manager Conley stated that this was the second reading of an Ordinance to annex the property located at 2140 Frink Street Tax Map Number 005758-01-023 into the City and assign a C-2 neighborhood commercial zoning designation. He stated that the applicant had requested the annexation of approximately a 5.94 acre parcel located at 2140 Frink Street, along with the C-2 designation which was intended to accommodate neighborhood scale businesses. He stated those were the lighter retail and business styles, such as convenience stores, salons and small restaurants that served local residents and were typically located near major roads or edges of residential areas. He stated that it was compatible with the City's future land use and comprehensive plan and was contiguous to existing C-2 zoning along Frink Street. City Manager Conley stated

that staff supported the approval of the annexation and rezoning based on its alignment with the zoning and the comprehensive plan and asked that Council approve the annexation and the C-2 zoning designation.

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to approve. Council Member Sox seconded the motion. Council Member Sox asked City Manager Conley to remind Council what use was and inform everyone on the need to fill donut holes around the City. City Manager Conley stated that the annexation of donut holes was part of the City's comprehensive plan and land use. He stated that the applicant was requesting to put a personal storage unit on the property at this time, but their future intention was to put some commercial space along Frink Street. He stated that it was a pretty wide berth property, so their intention was to use it in the future for commercial use. Mayor Partin stated that she had shared with City Manager Conley her concerns about Council approving this item that night for having a site that would just have or wanted to have a storage unit on it. She stated that they heard from residents that night who had concerns about a development, and it did not come before Council because it was already zoned that way. She stated that zoning was one of the few tools that cities had to be able to help guide what happened on a piece of property. She asked if they could wait a little bit and get more information on the storage unit and possibly connecting to the City's water and sewer without annexing in and being rezoned. She stated that she did not want to give up control that they might wish they had later. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he agreed and withdrew his motion. Council Member Sox asked if they could get the applicant to come to a Council Meeting to speak to Council or staff could contact them to see what their plans might be more fully thought out and not just storage. He stated that he did think the City needed to continue trying to fill the donut holes but thought Council probably did need to look at this a little bit more closely.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that Mayor Partin was right and zoning was one of the most powerful tools Council had and while they did not want to become business unfriendly, he thought this was an opportunity to find out what was going on before they just changed the zoning. Council Member Sox asked if there was a way to try to fill a donut hole and put a different zoning overlay on it that might be a little bit more dense. Mayor Partin suggested postponing it to the next meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James suggested postponing it to the September 2 Council Meeting since Mayor Partin would not be at the August 20 Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to defer this item for Second Reading to September 2. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

### **Committee Matters**

- A. Approval to Enter the Following Committee Approved Minutes Into the City's Record
  - Museum and Historical Commission – June 4, 2025
  - Planning Commission Work Session – June 16, 2025

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

**B. Appointments and Reappointments**

Board of Zoning Appeals – One (1) Position

Cayce Housing Authority – One (1) Position

Public Safety Foundation – One (1) Position

Mayor Partin stated that Mr. Philip Corley's position on the Board of Zoning Appeals expired in July, and he would like to serve again. She stated that he did attend meetings regularly. Council Member Sox made a motion to reappoint Mr. Corley. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Mayor Partin stated that Mr. Jack Sightler's position on the Cayce Housing Authority expired in August and he was not seeking reappointment after 30 years. She stated that the City had two (2) potential member applications on file in this order, Mr. Daniel Yackel and Ms. Kelly Wuest. Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to appoint Mr. Yackel. Council Member Sox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Karen Sanders' position on the Public Safety Foundation expired in July and she would like to serve again. She stated that she did attend meetings regularly. Council Member Sox made a motion to reappoint Ms. Sanders. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**City Manager's Report**

City Manager Conley stated that the Cayce Cool Down was a hit and the City's wonderful staff did a great job and he thanked the volunteers that worked as well. He stated that Glenwood Park's reopening was earlier that afternoon and everyone had a great time. He congratulated Deputy Clerk Amanda Rowan, who did a magnificent job of digitizing the City's Ordinances, so staff would have a much easier route to do a lot of the research that they did on a daily basis. He stated that there had been a lot of rain and there had been some closures on the Riverwalk due to flooding. He asked everyone to be patient with Parks staff in getting the Riverwalk cleaned and back open and make sure to check the City's website for closures before heading to the Riverwalk.

**Council Comments**

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that there was a press release that morning about Hattie's Crossing, located at 800 Lexington Avenue. He stated that the homes were coming together very nicely and the development was named after Miss Hattie Derrenbacher, who was the first principal at Cayce Grammar School. He stated that the former Grammar School was taken down to make room for these homes. He stated that the City's plan had always been to beautify the area while also trying to make it affordable for people in the workforce and he was pleased to be able to let everyone

know that many partners had come together to be able to assist with that. He stated that Cypress, the developer, was going to contribute \$5,000 towards a homeowner that is what they were calling a hero. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that heroes were police officers, firemen, teachers and nurses and people like that. He stated that an additional \$3,000 was coming from First Community Bank who was also going to work with the heroes for a lesser interest rate. He stated that City Manager Conley could vouch that many of the City's hard working personnel did not live in the City, because sometimes it was hard to find homes in the City that could fit their particular pocketbook so he was glad they were able to put something like this together.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that some of the assembly might have read in the paper that week about his future on City Council and it being time for him to step aside. He stated that he usually held things very close to the chest, but he wanted everyone to know where his love for the City of Cayce began. He stated that he had a huge desire and love for the City. He stated that his childhood home was on M Avenue and State Street and when he was 12 years old on the night of October 7, 1977, the doorbell began ringing late that night, and his mother came to his bedroom to get him up. He stated that she asked him to go to the door with her because his older brother was out that particular night, and as he and his mother went to the front door and she peered through the top glass, he heard a gasp and she said there were Police Officers at the door. He stated that the Cayce Police Officers came in and unfortunately, they were accompanied by a priest and at that time, his mother was told the news that his brother had been killed in a car accident. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that the moments that followed that were not only overwhelming, but life aligning for him, because some of those Officers who later mentored him, he recognized as they cared for his mother, he told himself that was what he wanted to do. He stated that he knew that he wanted to be a Police Officer as only God could design. He stated that a God wink came his way, and it was no coincidence, just a few weeks later, at Busbee Middle School, Police Officers visited the school to let the sixth graders know that there was a new program coming to the City of Cayce, and it was the Explorer Cadet Program. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he got on his bike and rode right down to the Police Department and that was where he began as a 12 year old cadet at the City of Cayce.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that those closest to him often heard him say that he was indebted to the City of Cayce. He stated that when his brother was taken, he did not really know the direction he would have gone in at that time, and that was why he was so passionate about the youth. He stated that he probably would have gone down the wrong path but thank God and the City of Cayce, they overwhelmingly provided him guidance and a career. He stated that for more than almost four decades now, he had the honor of being able to serve in some way, shape or form the City of Cayce, and it had been his honor whether it was in a volunteer capacity, as an employee or even as an elected person, and at each one of those levels, he had been grateful for the trust that had been placed in him and for the opportunity to be able to just give back a little to a community that literally raised him. He stated that God had blessed him with health and a heart of service, and he firmly believed as long as we are able, then we need to serve

others. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that holding public office had always been about stewardship and not ownership, and part of that stewardship was knowing when it was time to pass the torch and be able to allow somebody, maybe even someone younger, to be able to come in. He stated that after thoughtful prayer and discussion with his family, Gay, Taylor, Megan, Tanner and Grant, who all stood by him every step of the way, last January, they decided that it was time to make time for life. He stated to make time for life like they did in the City of Cayce. He stated that during his career as a public servant, he found it an honor to hold various positions, but not to keep them, just to move along and allow someone else to come. He stated that he heard last week, when you do that, and you allow someone else to be able to come in and kind of continue work, and you get to see your fruit blossom on someone else's tree, and that was so cool that one could do that. Mayor Pro Tem James stated that Council was in great hands and to the citizens that had shown a great deal of faith and support in him, he wanted them to know how precious they were.

Mayor Pro Tem James stated that he did not want to manipulate the golden rule which was treating others the way that you would like to be treated but his Mother used to say, why don't you treat others the way that you would like to see them treat your children. He stated that people who had children knew that they really did not care how you treated them, but don't mess with their children. He stated let's treat each other and the City like we want others to treat our children.

Council Member Thomas stated that the day after he won his election, Mayor Pro Tem James was the first person to call him to congratulate him and tell him that he would be honored to work with him. He stated that Mayor Pro Tem James took him to lunch and he had so many questions because he told his constituents that he was hungry, and if they gave him the opportunity, he would work and they would see the City of Cayce change in a positive direction. He stated that with Mayor Pro Tem James' guidance, because he knew he could call on him for anything, they were moving in the right direction. He stated that Mayor Pro Tem James' expertise with Police and Fire was immense and he had taken a bullet for the City. Council Member Thomas stated that he was so blessed to work and serve with Mayor Pro Tem James and was really going to miss him and his expertise. He stated that a lot of communities talked about development and the negative aspects of development and that was why the City was trying to work to be proactive, to work with developers and partners, and he trusted City Manager Conley and staff to work with them to make the best outcomes for the City. Council Member Thomas stated that when he first met the developers with Cypress, they told him they wanted to be a partner with the City and they put 12 houses on the Grammar School lot knowing that the citizens did not want a lot of houses going on that small lot. He stated that Cypress had been a developer that was truly about community and now they were wanting to help first responders, teachers and veterans to have an opportunity to live in what they built in the City. He stated that his constituents told him all the time that the City needed more restaurants and retail and developers looked at rooftops so if they continued to do the right thing, which he knew staff was doing with development, then the City would gradually get those nice restaurants and that retail that

only added to the amazing quality of life in the City of Cayce. Council Member Thomas stated that he partnered with Village Idiot Pizza and the Cayce West Columbia Library on a summer reading initiative. He stated that last year, 14 students completed the summer reading program and this summer 39 students completed it which was a 179% increase in student participation. He stated that little things could have a big impact. He stated that there was a community meeting at New Life Baptist Church last week and there was a comment regarding the African American cemeteries and he was proud to tell them that the City had not stopped working to finish the job. He stated that as he had said multiple times, the report said they needed to go back over the property and use ground penetrating radar to truly know what was down there and finish the job and find a way how they could allow these families to grieve at that site or the other sites around the City. Council Member Thomas stated that he took that very seriously, because they needed to allow people to show respect to their family. He stated that he hoped City Manager Conley would finish that job. Council Member Thomas stated that he was so excited about the reopening of Glenwood Park and he thanked staff and everyone that came out. He stated that the firemen beat him and the police officers in a game of pig. Council Member Thomas stated that at the July 8 Council Meeting, Mayor Partin made a comment regarding some constituents that contacted her about Council's vote concerning hospitality tax going towards a pocket park. He stated that the only park he was aware of that they voted on this year was Glenwood Park, which was in his district, and he was very vocal about getting it renovated. He asked City Manager Conley for clarification, to let the public know that those H Tax funds were legally used for the renovation of that park. City Manager Conley stated yes. Council Member Thomas stated that hopefully whatever constituents that had any concerns, would trust that the City was doing things the legal way and doing things the right way.

Council Member Sox stated that Mayor Pro Tem James was a true servant leader and the City of Cayce and the Greater CWC community and region was a better place because of him. He stated that he had taken the City and Chamber to new heights and had left his legacy and cemented it and he was honored to have served beside him. He stated that he had learned from Mayor Pro Tem James and had grown as a person and as a council member, because of him. Council Member Sox stated that the Glenwood Park reopening was great. He stated that he greatly appreciated the neighbors that spoke that night about the Fairfield Inn development. He stated that he had talked with a lot of people on social media, in person and on the phone that live in the neighborhood. He stated that it was an interesting situation where such a big development did not go through rezoning hearings because it was already zoned that way. He stated that the whole corridor all the way around from one end of the City to the other, was zoned commercial so by right, it could be developed that way. Council Member Sox stated that whenever he found out about the proposal, he put it in his District newsletter and started to share it as much as he could. He stated that the City was not privy to the County's timeline on approvals and realized quickly that they had approved everything once trees started coming down and a Facebook post went up in the Churchill Heights neighborhood group. He stated that he enjoyed working with some people a few years ago in Churchill Heights to set up and rejuvenate that neighborhood group and work to grow the

Facebook page, and sadly, the size of attendance decreased at the meetings over time, and then the meetings stopped happening. He stated that he thought this was going to be a great way to re-engage neighbors and hopefully get those meetings back started up. He stated that he pulled together a community meeting that the City was hosting on August 14 at 6pm and City staff, the developer, the City's Police Chief and DOT and others would be there, to talk through the project, to talk through the setbacks, the easements, the foliage that would be planted with the development, as well as the retention ponds. Council Member Sox stated that he got some calls about storm water issues through there, as the Six Mile Creek runs back there, and people were concerned about what was going to happen with the water that comes off the road. He stated that they were working on ways to mitigate a lot of the concerns that the neighbors had, and especially in the early phases where the development was really just in the land clearing and leveling phase. He stated that he looked forward to the community meeting and appreciated City Manager Conley providing the August 14 or August 18 dates where staff could be in attendance. He stated that he looked forward to discussing the development more, and hoped they could get some large scale print outs for people to look at, to see what trees would be planted and where and maybe even mark up with the developer in the event that they see the need to change the layout of a few different things to help protect the noise, the light pollution and foliage barriers to the neighborhood. Council Member Sox stated that he thought it was great for the corridor and MBLG in Lexington County, was working on landscaping improvements along the corridor from the Airport all the way to I26 valued at over a million dollars. He stated that next year, the repaving of Airport Boulevard from the Airport all the way to wrap around on Knox Abbott was taking place. He stated that he thought a lot of the concerns could be mitigated, and hopefully addressed, and definitely added light to the corner there to for some added safety, and hopefully they could work to get some cameras, as they had for some neighborhoods, in and out, to add for surveillance purposes and safety, and figure out different ways that they might be able to beef up the safety aspects of the development. He stated that he heard talk about fencing or a concrete barrier or masonry wall, and he believed that had been brought up to the developer as well. Council Member Sox stated that hopefully they could find some ways to make this a good development for everyone, including the neighbors that would live right behind it. He stated that he lived directly beside a commercial development as well and a Waffle House, and that was where he chose to live, but he understood that this hotel was not there, nor did the neighbors know that it was coming. He stated that he was excited for the improvements to the corridor and excited for the meeting next week.

Mayor Partin asked what the price point was for Hattie's Crossing. Council Member Sox stated he thought he saw that it was \$379,000. She stated that Council Member Thomas did ask her to clarify her comments at an earlier Council Meeting about the hospitality tax money spent on Glenwood Park. She stated that she knew that project was something that the Council Members pushed the prior City Manager to do and while they all wanted their parks to be the best that they could be and to increase recreational opportunities, they had to do it within the budget that they had. She stated that hospitality tax money was meant to bring people from outside the City into the City so that they



spend money in local restaurants and more and using that money for a pocket park that did not even have designated parking was not something that would bring people from outside the City into the City. Mayor Partin stated that they all did vote unanimously to use the money from the hospitality tax fund for the park and it was not until later that she recognized that this was not correct. She stated that she asked the City Attorney but he did not recall being consulted about that but she would ask the City Attorney and the City Manager to get together and to bring to Council at the next meeting a budget amendment to pull that money from the general fund, unfortunately, and replace it back in the hospitality tax fund. She stated that she had spoken with the attorney at the Municipal Association and he was concerned about that use of hospitality tax money for what is a pocket park. Mayor Partin stated that there was another problem when there was a Council that was so pro developer, that message did trickle down to staff and the pending hotel development on Airport Boulevard was a project that would erode the neighborhood. She stated that it was a fact that businesses follow people and if the surrounding homes lost property value because of the hotel development, then people would leave, and then the businesses would leave. She stated that developments in the City had to be ones that benefited this generation and the next and because that property was already zoned for commercial use, City staff did not do anything wrong. She stated that there were opportunities to protect the neighborhood and make the development better, and she hoped they still could. Mayor Partin stated she wanted to give some examples of how that worked. She stated that many years ago, the City's City Manager at the time, was dealing with the neighborhood Walmart coming into the City and it was not going to be in the overlay district. She stated that the City's overlay district was on Knox Abbott Drive and ran from Blossom Street Bridge up to 12th Street, and the overlay district required brick elements in the buildings because of the historic brick kilns and required certain things that made the development look better. Mayor Partin stated that the City Manager told the developer of the Neighborhood Walmart that they were not in the overlay district and technically did not have to comply with those requirements but the Walmart was on the City's main corridor and buildings affected this generation and the next. Mayor Partin stated that she and Council were told that there was a development hotel coming on the Airport corridor and it sounded like a great thing, but anybody who drove down Parliament Drive and turned onto Waterloo Way, their heart would break. She stated that the City was more customer service friendly than only having dates that were three weeks out and asked City Manager Conley if those dates were his idea. City Manager Conley stated that those were the suggested dates he made to a Council Member. Mayor Partin stated that was concerning, because the City needed to be more customer service friendly. She stated that when she was approached by the neighborhood, she reached out to City Manager Conley who quickly said they needed to meet with the developer and they met within days. She stated that she had a great conversation with the developer and explained to him that his development and investment was not going to retain its value if it eroded what was around it so she asked him if he could put together some plans for an eight (8) foot masonry wall that she wished they would have asked for in the beginning. She stated that the developer was putting together plans and she would be glad to communicate anything that she had to the neighborhood. She stated that the first she heard about what was going on and all the

trees that were coming down was a text from Council Member Sox and he sent the screenshot that the Churchill Heights' residents had that stated if anyone on Council got any calls about this, he was setting up a meeting with the neighborhood to address concerns and try to mitigate some of them with the developer. Mayor Partin stated that as the Mayor she was told none of this and then Council Member Sox texted her that Friday evening and stated that he wanted to let her know that he offered up a few dates to the Churchill Heights neighborhood for discussion about the hotel, and the consensus that worked for everyone who commented was Thursday, August 14 and he would be happy to have her there if she was available. Mayor Partin stated that she was invited and included as an afterthought.

Mayor Partin stated that she hoped the developer would come through and she would continue to make other calls. She stated that everyone heard what just happened, the lack of graciousness when Council had an email from the City Manager, asking if Council would move one meeting date. She stated that they had a conversation about moving the dates so she scheduled something with her children. She asked everyone in the assembly to come to the next Council Meeting to protect the City, because the last time she was out of a Council Meeting, Council tried to remove her from every single committee that she sat on. She stated that they did not do it well, but they tried.

### **Executive Session**

- A. Discussion of Cayce Police Department open criminal investigations
- B. Receipt of legal advice relating to claims and potential claims by and against the City and other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege
  - i. Claim for improvements to Taylor Street and New State Road
  - ii. Zoning Appeal Litigation (1028 Michaelmas Avenue)
  - iii. Drainage easement acquisition
  - iv. Fire truck litigation
- C. Discussion of Lexington County economic development projects relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses within the City

Mayor Pro Tem James made a motion to move into Executive Session. Council Member Sox 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. Other

There was no action in follow up to Executive Session.

**Adjourn**

Council Member Sox made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem James seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.

Mayor Partin stated that she would prefer the hospitality tax budget amendment that needed to come back before Council happen when she was there so maybe they could do that in September. She stated that they also had not received a rendering of the pond in Guignard Park.

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Elise Partin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Mendy Corder, CMC, Municipal Clerk

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK ON A MATTER APPEARING ON THE MEETING AGENDA, PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING.\* *THANK YOU.***

## COUNCIL MEETING SPEAKERS' LIST

**Date of Meeting**      **August 5, 2025**

[illegible]

**\*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.