

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 2, 2026 - MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Regular Meeting at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on June 2, 2026. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger were present.

City Attorney David Harris, Jr., City Clerk/Finance Director Christine Millard, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Police Chief Steven Dye, Fire Chief A.J. Fitch, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Parks & Recreation Director gave the invocation, and Alderman Hinton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

**PROCLAMATION/PRESENTATION**

**a. PROCLAMATION: "Summer of 56" Elvis on the Mississippi Coast**

Mayor Cox presented a proclamation recognizing June through August 2026 as the "Summer of 56" Elvis on the Mississippi Coast in the City of Ocean Springs. The proclamation recognized the cultural and historical significance of Elvis Presley's connection to the Mississippi Gulf Coast during the summer of 1956 and highlighted the educational, heritage, tourism, and economic benefits of the community celebration and exhibition being held at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center.

Chelsea Prince and Sarah Qarqish, Director of the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center, accepted the proclamation and provided information regarding the upcoming exhibits, events, and community partnerships associated with the celebration.

**b. PRESENTATION: Introduction of the 2026-2027 Mayor's Youth Council**

The 2026-2027 Mayor's Youth Council officers were introduced, including Kinsley Kilpatrick, President; Blake Sessums, Vice President; Mahi Patel, Secretary; and Caprie Wooden, Communications Officer.

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Thirty-three of the forty-one appointed members of the Mayor's Youth Council were present and introduced themselves to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. Mayor Cox welcomed the members and expressed appreciation for their willingness to serve the community and participate in City government activities during the upcoming year. The full 2026-2027 Mayor's Youth Council roster is included in the meeting packet and made a part of these minutes by reference.

A group photograph was taken with the Mayor, Board of Aldermen, and members of the Mayor's Youth Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. Palmetto Pointe Drive - PIDN: 62506020.000 - Palm Pointe Subdivision Phase 3 - Freddie Fountain on behalf of BJ2 Holdings, LLC - Requesting Sketch Plat approval for a 10-lot single family residential subdivision; PC recommends denial

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to open the Public Hearing.

The Planning Director explained that the request was for sketch plat approval of Palm Pointe Subdivision Phase 3, a proposed 10-lot single-family residential subdivision located south of Palmetto Pointe Subdivision and adjacent to Palm Pointe Phase 2. She stated that the property is zoned A-3 Agricultural Residential District and that the request represents the first step in the subdivision approval process. The Planning Director reviewed the proposed lot sizes, open space, sidewalks, and utility service provisions and noted that Palm Pointe Phases 1 and 2 were approved through Jackson County prior to annexation. She further stated that following a public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended denial of the sketch plat request.

Freddie Fountain, on behalf of BJ2 Holdings, LLC, was present to represent the case. He stated that the proposed subdivision meets or exceeds applicable zoning and subdivision requirements and addressed concerns related to access, roadway width, traffic, lot sizes, and open space. Mr. Fountain also submitted email correspondence regarding a prior offer to sell the property to representatives of the neighboring homeowners association.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to accept the submitted email correspondence into the record.

No one appeared to speak in favor of the request.

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the request: Kurt Kuhl, Deede Torrance, Kyle Widdows, Kyle Pearson, Michelle Collins, Wes Feldner, Jami Hamilton, Kathleen Patrick, Katie Widdows, Will Brancamp, and Kris Virga, most of whom identified themselves as residents of the neighboring Palmetto Pointe Subdivision. Concerns expressed included traffic and pedestrian safety, roadway width, increased vehicle congestion, neighborhood compatibility, access through an existing subdivision,

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preservation of neighborhood character, homeowners association concerns, the similarity between the proposed subdivision name and the existing Palmetto Pointe Subdivision, and the Planning Commission's recommendation for denial.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to close the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to uphold the Planning Commission's recommendation and deny the request for sketch plat approval of Palm Pointe Subdivision Phase 3.

**AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Rose, agenda item 8-j, expressed support for providing the Police Department with tools to assist in law enforcement operations but requested additional information regarding the proposed 30-day trial agreement with Interactive Data, LLC. He raised concerns regarding data security, access to information, and the types of databases and records that may be utilized through the service. He requested that additional information be provided prior to approval of the agreement.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Palm Pointe Phase 2 acceptance of Performance and Maintenance Bonds**

The Planning Director explained that the item was for acceptance of the performance and maintenance bonds associated with Palm Pointe Phase 2. She stated that the subdivision had already been approved and recorded, and that the bonds are held in the City's name to ensure completion and maintenance of subdivision infrastructure, including roads, utilities, drainage, and sidewalks. She further explained that the bonds remain in effect for a two-year period and that City staff inspects the subdivision prior to release of the bonds to ensure any deficiencies are corrected.

Alderman Blackman questioned whether acceptance of the bonds should be delayed pending further discussion regarding access, roadway issues, and two lots fronting Palmetto Pointe Drive. The Planning Director explained that the bonds relate only to the subdivision infrastructure and maintenance obligations and do not affect future consideration of Phase 3 or other development matters.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to table acceptance of the Palm Pointe Phase 2 Performance and Maintenance Bonds until the June 16, 2026 Recess Meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Adoption of 2024 International Building Codes and Related Local Amendments**

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The Building Official explained that adoption of the 2024 International Building Codes and related local amendments are necessary to maintain compliance with applicable state requirements and program standards. He stated that the proposed local amendments include several provisions currently enforced under existing codes and exemptions commonly adopted by jurisdictions throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Alderman Pfeiffer expressed concern regarding the volume of material provided and several proposed amendments, including permit requirements, penalty provisions, and other substantive changes. She stated that additional time was needed to review the proposed ordinances before adoption.

Alderman Messenger expressed concern regarding provisions addressing weeds and grasses and their impact on private property owners.

Discussion followed regarding the adoption timeline, existing code requirements, and the potential impact of delaying adoption until the next meeting.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer and seconded by Alderman Messenger, to table consideration of the 2024 International Building Codes and related local amendments until the June 16, 2026 Recess Meeting. The motion carried with Aldermen Stennis, Pfeiffer, Messenger, and Hinton voting aye and Aldermen Tillis, Wade, and Blackman voting nay.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Alderman Messenger pulled items e and t; Alderman Pfeiffer pulled items h and j; Alderman Tillis pulled item r; and Alderman Stennis pulled item u from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of items e, h, j, r, t, and u.

**Mayor/BOA:**

- a. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for St. Alphonsus Corpus Christi Procession on June 7, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Route will be from the front of St. Alphonsus Catholic Church south to Jackson Ave. to Ocean Ave, to Washington Ave to Porter Ave and back to Jackson Ave ending in front of the church, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- b. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the 250th Art Block Party on July 2, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in the parking lot behind the Library and adjacent to the Senior Center and Community Center; this is a City partnership and overtime costs could be incurred
- c. Authorize advertisement for vacancies on various Boards and Commissions due to expiring terms on July 31, 2026

**Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center (MCOKCC):**

- d. Authorize the Mayor and the MCOKCC Director to execute the Memorandum of

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Understanding (MOU) and Hold Harmless Agreement with Suzanne Stafford -  
Elemental Design LLC

- e. Authorize the Mayor to execute the MCOK Landscape Maintenance Services Agreement

Alderman Messenger stated that she had previously requested additional information regarding the quotes received for landscape maintenance services and questioned whether all quotes submitted were valid and available for consideration. Discussion took place regarding the quotes received, previous maintenance arrangements, irrigation system responsibilities, and the scope of services proposed.

Alderman Stennis reviewed information she received from a prior contractor regarding previous maintenance services and contract discussions. The Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center Director explained the maintenance needs of the property and discussed the qualifications of the vendors who submitted quotes.

Board members discussed whether additional quotes should be solicited to ensure a fair comparison of services and pricing.

A motion was made by Alderman Messenger, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to solicit additional quotes for landscape maintenance services for the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center.

**City Clerk:**

- f. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting May 5, 2026 - AMENDED
- g. Approve Minutes: Work Session Meeting May 6, 2026
- h. Ratify check 136277 for \$13,504.43 to Mustang Alley for Public Works vehicle repairs

Alderman Pfeiffer requested additional information regarding the payment to Mustang Alley. Staff explained that the repairs were for a Public Works vehicle that was damaged in a collision with another Public Works vehicle. It was explained that the City had received insurance proceeds to cover the repairs. The payment was issued prior to Board approval, so the vehicle could be repaired and returned to service without waiting until the next Board meeting for authorization.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to ratify Check No. 136277 in the amount of \$13,504.43 to Mustang Alley for Public Works vehicle repairs.

- i. **ADDED:** Accept May 2026 Aged Receivables Report

**Police Department:**

- j. Authorize PD to enter into a no-cost 30-day trial agreement with Interactive Data, LLC for the use of their services

Alderman Pfeiffer requested additional information regarding the proposed no-cost 30-day

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trial agreement with Interactive Data, LLC. The Police Chief explained that the software is a data platform used for criminal investigations, background checks, locating next of kin, and other law enforcement purposes. He stated that the Department currently uses a similar platform and that the trial would allow staff to evaluate whether the proposed software is more user-friendly and cost-effective.

The Police Chief further stated that access to the system would be limited to authorized personnel, audit logs are maintained, and Department policies govern the use of investigative tools and data systems. Discussion also took place regarding training requirements, data sources, evaluation of the trial period, and potential future costs should the Department choose to move forward after the trial.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to enter into a no-cost 30-day trial agreement with Interactive Data, LLC.

**Fire Department:**

- k. Authorization for Out-of-State Travel for Employees #2235 & #1630 for training in Pueblo, CO on June 21 - 27, 2026; all travel expenses funded by FEMA/DHS

**Human Resources/Risk Management:**

- l. Accept resignation of Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia, effective June 5, 2026; authorize beginning the process of filling the vacant position
- m. Authorize promotion of Beautification Laborer Andrew Harris to Beautification Supervisor, effective June 6, 2026; \$20.69 hourly rate; six-months probationary status
- n. Authorize employment of Joshua Lyons, Beautification Laborer, effective June 3, 2026; \$15.45 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- o. Authorize employment of Johnathan Thomas, Parks Maintenance Worker, effective June 8, 2026; \$15.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- p. **ADDED:** Authorize promotion of Parks Assistant Sara Stevenson to Utility Billing Supervisor, effective June 6, 2026; \$21.72 hourly rate, six-month probationary period; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

**Planning Commission (PC):**

- q. Approve the request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 703 Ward Ave - PIDN: 60130110.000; PC recommends approval
- r. Approve the request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 9609 Iroquois Drive - PIDN: 610590003.000; PC recommends approval

Alderman Tillis made a motion to deny the short-term rental application at 9609 Iroquois Drive. Alderman Pfeiffer seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

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Alderman Hinton recused himself from the discussion and vote and left the Boardroom at 7:26 p.m.

Alderman Tillis stated that he had received opposition to the proposed short-term rental and expressed concern that it would be the first short-term rental within the subdivision. He stated that while he respects property rights and the Planning Commission's recommendation, he believes the Board should consider whether the use is appropriate for the location and surrounding residential neighborhood.

The Planning Director stated that one letter of opposition was received and three residents spoke in opposition at the Planning Commission meeting. She further noted that the proposed short-term rental would be the first within the subdivision and that only two approved short-term rentals are located within approximately one mile of the property. The Planning Director also advised that the applicant had revised the parking plan to reduce parking from seven vehicles to four vehicles. She noted that approval of the application would result in 55 approved short-term rental permits within the citywide district.

Discussion also took place regarding prior litigation involving short-term rental denials and the legal basis for denying applications that meet the requirements of the ordinance.

The motion to deny the application failed with Alderman Tillis voting aye and Aldermen Stennis, Wade, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger voting nay.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade and seconded by Alderman Stennis to approve the short-term rental application for 9609 Iroquois Drive. The motion carried with Aldermen Stennis, Wade, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger voting aye and Alderman Tillis voting nay.

Alderman Hinton returned to the Boardroom at 7:30 p.m. following the conclusion of the discussion and votes.

**Grants Administration:**

- s. Authorization to Execute Amendment #4 for Brown, Mitchell, & Alexander, Inc. to include Engineering Services Related to the Intersection of Deana Road and Bienville Blvd. – Deana Road Improvement Project – Funded with MDOT MOA –no additional funding required
- t. Authorize Execution of Contract Amendment #1 with Dale Partners for Stabilization of the Community Center Foundation in the Amount of \$116,700– Funded by HB1353(hh)

Alderman Messenger requested clarification regarding the procurement process for the proposed professional services amendment and whether the work was subject to competitive bidding.

The Project Manager explained that professional services are selected based upon qualifications and experience rather than cost and that the consultant had previously been engaged by the City on the project. She stated that additional services are necessary to

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investigate the cause of the building settlement and structural issues and will include geotechnical engineering, structural engineering, and historic preservation consultation due to the historic nature of the facility. She further explained that the additional work will provide the information necessary to prepare plans and specifications for future construction bids.

Discussion also took place regarding the increase in contract cost, available grant funding, and the need to proceed with the project due to continued deterioration and cracking at the facility.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement for the Ocean Springs Community Center Stabilization Project.

**Project Manager:**

- u. Authorize the execution of a One-Year Contract Extension for the following Term Bids: Video and Cleaning Utilities, CIPP Lining, Maintenance, Maintenance – Alternate, and Striping

Alderman Stennis requested clarification regarding the expiration dates of the contracts proposed for extension.

The Project Manager explained that the contracts were originally competitively bid and included provisions allowing for three one-year extensions. She stated that the proposed action would authorize the second one-year extension for the listed contracts and noted that one contract expires on June 3, 2026, with the remaining contracts expiring later in June and August. She noted that one additional one-year extension option will remain available through 2028.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute one-year extensions for the annual service contracts as presented.

- v. Ratify authorization of execution of a One-Year Contract Extension for the Asphalt Maintenance Term Bid

**Building Department:**

- w. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through May 26, 2026
- x. Accept Code Enforcement Report through May 28, 2026

**Parks & Recreation Department:**

- y. Accept Parks Advisory Board Minutes from May 27, 2026

**Public Works:**

- z. Approve the 2025 Water System Emergency Response Plan and authorize its

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execution and implementation as required by applicable state and federal regulations

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- a. Finance: Approve payment: Docket of Claims, all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the Minutes

Alderman Blackman left the Boardroom at 7:34 p.m. and was not present for the following Department Reports votes.

Alderman Messenger requested additional information regarding a payment for meter transmission units (MTUs). The Public Works Director explained that the MTUs are used to read water meters and that staff is currently replacing malfunctioning units to improve meter accuracy and billing.

Alderman Messenger also requested information regarding a payment to Hancock Whitney for refunding services. The City Clerk/Finance Director explained that the payment was associated with a bond refinancing transaction. She stated that the original bond proceeds were used for the Sportsplex, Police Department, and Fire Department projects and that the debt had subsequently been refinanced to obtain a lower interest rate.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and carried to approve the Docket of Claims and spread the summary thereof upon the minutes, finding all expenditures to be appropriate and authorized by law. Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, and Messenger voted aye. Alderman Blackman was absent.

- b. City Clerk: Accept the Monthly Budget Report

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and carried to approve the Budget Report and spread the summary thereof upon the minutes. Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, and Messenger voted aye. Alderman Blackman was absent.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Alderman Blackman returned to the Boardroom at 7:39 p.m.

Elizabeth Feder-Hosey addressed the Board regarding the May 19, 2026, motion concerning participation in executive sessions. She expressed concerns regarding the legality of the action, cited opinions of the Mississippi Attorney General, and discussed transparency, governance, and executive session practices. She also referenced prior actions involving the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center and urged Board members to exercise independent judgment in carrying out their duties. Ms. Feder-Hosey submitted written correspondence for inclusion in the record.

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Leila Handen, a resident of Lola Road, expressed concerns regarding conditions at a neighboring property located at 1209 Lola Road. She stated that construction vehicles, equipment, trailers, dumpsters, and other materials associated with a construction business have been present on the property for an extended period of time and requested that the City review the matter for potential code enforcement and nuisance concerns. Ms. Handen submitted photographs for the Board's consideration.

Bill Moore invited the public to attend the upcoming Red, White & Blueberry Festival and thanked the Fire Department for its assistance with maintenance efforts at the L&N Depot Museum and support provided to the YMCA's new outdoor pool project.

Katie Widdows discussed development approvals associated with Palm Pointe Phase 2 and expressed concerns regarding notification requirements for developments initiated in Jackson County prior to annexation. She encouraged the City to utilize its notification procedures whenever possible and requested further review of Phase 2 approvals and applicable county requirements.

During Public Comment, Alderman Messenger requested that the City Attorney research and provide documentation regarding the process by which developments initiated in Jackson County prior to annexation continue under county approvals.

**MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM**

Alderman Messenger discussed ongoing efforts to place automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at City parks and requested an update from Fire Chief Fitch regarding available grant opportunities, costs, maintenance requirements, and potential placement locations. Fire Chief Fitch reported that staff is researching grant funding, equipment options, lockbox systems, and liability considerations associated with public access AEDs. He stated that a FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant may provide funding for approximately seven AED units and associated lockboxes.

Alderman Messenger requested clarification regarding permit requirements for trimming protected trees and expressed concern regarding recent tree trimming activity at commercial properties. The Building Official reviewed the requirements for tree trimming permits and Board approval thresholds. Alderman Messenger also discussed flooding concerns in Ward 6, particularly along Old CCC Camp Road, Burwick Court, Southwark Drive, and Helmsdale Drive, following recent heavy rainfall. She expressed concern regarding drainage conditions, potential impacts from nearby construction activity, and the risk of residential flooding. Discussion followed regarding existing drainage studies, ongoing drainage improvements, the effects of rainfall and tidal conditions, and the need for long-term planning. Alderman Messenger requested that a work session be scheduled to review drainage issues, studies, and potential solutions. Alderman Pfeiffer expressed support for a comprehensive, long-term approach to drainage planning. The Mayor directed staff to coordinate a future work session for Board discussion of drainage matters.

Alderman Blackman discussed a low utility line on Pitman Road that prevented trash collection. The Public Works Director reported that City crews used a bucket truck to raise

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and secure the line, allowing access to the street, and stated that follow-up would be made with the waste collection contractor regarding service. Alderman Blackman also requested that Public Works monitor an area south of the recently repaired pothole on Hanshaw Road and investigate signs of additional pavement settlement.

Alderman Pfeiffer discussed safety concerns at Clay Boyd Park and referenced recent armed robberies reported in the area. She proposed closing a section of roadway located between two ballfields and stated that she had met with City staff to discuss the concept. Discussion followed regarding the roadway, traffic circulation, public safety considerations, and potential alternatives. The Mayor suggested further discussion of the matter at a future work session. Alderman Pfeiffer also expressed concern regarding communication and coordination related to security cameras at City facilities and suggested that camera locations and available footage be more readily identified during criminal investigations.

Alderman Pfeiffer requested an update on roadway striping at the Hanley Road intersection and East Beach Drive. The Public Works Director reported that the Hanley Road striping is planned and that he would follow up with Jackson County regarding striping responsibilities on East Beach Drive. Alderman Pfeiffer also requested an update on the Holcomb Boulevard-Davidson Road drainage project. The Project Manager reported that construction remains underway and that, weather permitting, the project remains on schedule with work continuing on the drainage improvements and related infrastructure.

Alderman Wade requested that Public Works clean and improve drainage at 104 Bradford Drive. He specifically requested that the culverts be cleared and that work be performed as necessary to improve water flow through the drainage system.

Alderman Stennis requested an update regarding security cameras for Little Children's Park following recent vandalism to the restroom facilities and other park property. Discussion took place regarding obtaining quotes and moving forward with camera installation. Alderman Stennis commended the Public Works Department for its prompt response to a drainage issue on Lovers Lane, noting that staff quickly addressed the problem and helped prevent flooding of a residence. Alderman Stennis requested an update regarding drainage concerns at a property in Maurepas Landing. Staff indicated they would revisit the site and review the drainage conditions.

Alderman Stennis also discussed ongoing concerns regarding conditions at 1209 Lola Road, including the use of the property for storage of construction equipment, vehicles, trailers, dumpsters, and materials associated with construction activities. Discussion followed regarding demolition permits, code enforcement efforts, nuisance concerns, and possible violations of the Unified Development Code. A neighboring property owner addressed the Board regarding the impacts of the activity on surrounding properties.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to refer concerns regarding 1209 Lola Road to the City Attorney for review and recommendation regarding available legal remedies and enforcement options.

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Alderman Pfeiffer stated that if violations of the Unified Development Code exist, the applicable provisions should be enforced. She further expressed concern regarding compliance with demolition permit requirements and ongoing use of the property.

Alderman Tillis encouraged citizens to attend the City's Friday at the Fort events and highlighted the community participation, live entertainment, and food vendors featured at the events. He thanked Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso for his responsiveness and assistance with City matters. Alderman Tillis also reported that, after reviewing the Docket of Claims with the City Clerk/Finance Director and working with the Public Works Director, the City was able to renegotiate certain contracts resulting in an estimated annual savings of approximately \$10,000. Alderman Tillis thanked Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia for her service to the City and wished her well in her future endeavors.

Alderman Hinton requested an update on paving improvements for Russell Avenue. The Project Manager reported that utility work is nearing completion and that paving is expected to proceed once the current construction activities are finished. Alderman Hinton expressed concern regarding the length of time residents have been impacted by the project. Alderman Hinton also discussed drainage concerns at a residence on Russell Avenue where sinkholes and standing water have developed in an area associated with a previously covered drainage ditch. Staff indicated they would review the matter and evaluate potential drainage improvements. Alderman Hinton thanked City staff for their continued service and dedication to the community. Alderman Hinton thanked Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia for her service to the City and wished her well in her future endeavors.

Mayor Cox thanked Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia for her service to the City and expressed his appreciation for her contributions.

**a. Mayor: Discussion of the Lovelace Tree Replacement**

Mayor Cox then discussed replacement options for the Lovelace Oak and reviewed four potential tree donation proposals submitted for consideration. The options included a live oak donated by Larry Tucei, a live oak from Ducote's Tree Farm donated by local residents, and two mature live oaks offered for relocation from private properties. Discussion took place regarding the size, condition, transplant feasibility, maintenance requirements, historical significance, and proposed placement locations for the various trees. It was also noted that replacement trees may be needed at Little Children's Park due to the removal of two existing trees.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton and seconded by Alderman Blackman to accept the donation of the Ducote's Tree Farm live oak for placement at the Lovelace Oak location and the Josephine Stewart Oak donated by Larry Tucei for placement at Little Children's Park. Alderman Pfeiffer expressed opposition to the proposed recognition associated with one of the donated trees and stated that she did not support establishing naming or memorial designations in connection with the tree donation.

The motion carried with Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Blackman, and Hinton voting aye and

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Aldermen Stennis, Pfeiffer, and Messenger voting nay.

Alderman Messenger noted that she would have preferred separate consideration of the two tree donations rather than a single motion encompassing both proposed locations.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

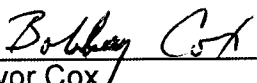
A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of going into an executive session.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Tillis to remain in executive session to discuss the purchase of land, lease of land, and litigation update regarding City of Ocean Springs v. Garriga. The motion received aye votes from Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Blackman, and Hinton and nay votes from Aldermen Stennis, Pfeiffer, and Messenger.

The motion failed to receive the three-fifths vote required by Mississippi Code Section 25-41-7 to enter executive session; therefore, the Board did not enter executive session and no executive session was held.

**RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on JUNE 16, 2026**

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to adjourn until June 16, 2026.

  
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Mayor Cox

  
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City Clerk Millard

