



## **COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

---

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and the following members were present: The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Will Brennan, Mayor Pro-Tempore, The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, The Honorable Peter M. Brown, The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey, and The Honorable Samuel P. Johnson. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

### **INVOCATION**

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Brown, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

1. Update on the Lourie Center - Mr. Andrew Boozer, Executive Director / Senior Resources - *Received as information.*

Mr. Andrew Boozer, Executive Director / Senior Resources provided a two-year update on the Lourie Center, since the August 2023 merger that created a one-stop senior services hub. He reported that a \$450,000 city investment leveraged over \$700,000 in additional funding, fully renovated the 17,000-square-foot facility, reduced administrative costs by more than 30%, and produced a balanced budget for the first time in over a decade. He highlighted expanded programming, Medicare Advantage revenue, over 2,200 class sessions, a fully utilized gym, and a 263% increase in memberships. He added that the organization is working to close a remaining \$75,000 funding gap to maintain a balanced budget in the next fiscal year.



## **COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

---

There was discussion regarding the rising senior population; Medicare data; Richland County annual funding; financial pipelines for surrounding counties; transportation partnership with The COMET; and eligibility criteria for services beginning at age 50

Ms. Sandra Berger praised the facility renovations, expanded programming, noting improved scheduling, higher attendance, and strong member response. She also highlighted a successful partnership with The Nickelodeon Theatre that led to sold-out documentary screenings and increased downtown activity.

Ms. Mahi Abedin shared that the Lourie Center helped her heal and reconnect after losing her husband and provided socialization, exercise, and community. She described the Center as her happiest place and credited it with improving her mental and physical well-being.

Mr. Joseph Adams shared that he joined the Lourie Center after struggling to find a gym that worked for him. He felt welcomed and supported. Through regular participation, healthier habits, and consistent exercise, he has experienced significant weight loss and major improvements in his health.

2. Redevelopment of the former I-277 Right-of-Way at North Main Street and River Drive - Mr. Justin Steinmann, Director / Planning & Development Services; Ms. Lucinda Statler, Planning Administrator / Planning and Development Services; Mr. Howard Kozloff, Founder and Principal / Agora Partners; and Mr. Ben Donsky, Principal / Agora Partners – *Received as information.*

Mr. Justin Steinmann, Director / Planning & Development Services, described the project as an opportunity to reclaim former freeway land, reconnect neighborhoods, and improve health and mobility through greenway infrastructure. On average, greenway projects in the Southeast generate a strong return on investment. For every dollar the public invests in a greenway, about eight to ten dollars of private development typically follows nearby. Homes located along a greenway also tend to be worth significantly more, with property values increasing by as much as 40 percent.



## **COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

---

Ms. Lucinda Statler, Planning Administrator / Planning & Development Services explained that the City acquired 31.32 acres from SCDOT in 2022, with the project focusing on 19 acres originally condemned for I-277. She noted that a May 2025 community design workshop hosted by Councilwoman Herbert drew nearly 100 participants and produced shared priorities, including integrating the Vista Greenway, preserving open space, balancing density with neighborhood scale, and reconnecting surrounding neighborhoods.

There was discussion about the recommendation of the additional football fields from the workshop.

Mr. Howard Kozloff, Founder and Principal of Agora Partners discussed the importance of defining and maximizing the value of public spaces while creating strong place identity and revenue-generating opportunities for the City. He explained that the project approach is grounded in community-informed master planning, combining public workshops, multiple conceptual development options, and shared themes identified through community input. He also presented a market snapshot and construction cost benchmarks to help frame the project's economic feasibility and development potential.

There was discussion about clarifying ongoing operating costs; recommended density levels; zoning considerations; use of a development agreement or a request for qualifications; and opportunities for home ownership.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Bailey, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2: 16 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 3** through **5**.

3. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)
  - *Former I-277 Right-of-Way at North Main Street and River Drive*
  - *BullStreet District*
  
4. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)
  - *Busted Plug*



**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

---

5. Discussion of the employment of an employee pursuant to §30-4-70(a)(1)

- *Municipal Court Judges*

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM  
City Clerk