

Council

Kevin Phillips
Mayor

Jorge Guerrero
Mayor Pro Tempore

Jerry Ashmore
Mary Beth Heyward
Darryl Owens



Van Willis
Town Manager

Brooke Plank-Buccola
Asst. Town Manager

Tim Ogden
Fire Chief

Jeffrey Meyers
Police Chief

Minutes

Council Workshop

Port Royal Town Hall, Yvonne C. Butler Council Chambers, 700 Paris Avenue

February 4, 2026

Members Present: Mayor Kevin Phillips, Council Member Mary Beth Heyward, Council Member Jerry Ashmore, Council Member Jorge Guerrero, Council Member Darryl Owens

Staff Present: Fire Chief Tim Ogden, Police Chief Jeff Meyers, Town Manager Van Willis, Assistant Town Manager Brooke Plank-Buccola, Planning Director Noah Krepps, Town Clerk Lisa Graham

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the workshop to order at 6:31 PM.

II. PRESENTATION

A. Parking Study – MRB Group

See presentation.

The following presentation was added at this time.

B. Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust – Claude Hicks

See presentation.

III. COUNCIL BRIEFING

Manager Willis gave an update on the following:

Drayton and Battery Park Roads – Applications for a speed limit change and installation of speed humps were submitted on January 8. Feedback requesting additional signage was received on January 13, and the materials have been resubmitted. A response on the permits is pending.

Villages (SCIIP) – Layout and depth verifications have been completed, and the project schedule is being finalized. Following a recent meeting with the contractor, work is anticipated to begin in early March with final completion targeted for May 20, 2026, reflecting the tight project timeline. Construction will take place in two alleyways as separate phases, and residents will be notified of the schedule along with anticipated parking accommodations during the work period.

Paris Avenue Streetscape CDBG Grant Project – This CDBG grant project is anticipated to receive a notice to proceed in early to mid-February. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with local businesses to review the plan of action moving forward. Given the project's scope, traffic control and signalization will present challenges, and construction logistics will be complex. Emphasis has been placed on proactive, consistent communication through social media, email, and other outreach efforts to keep stakeholders informed.

Sanitary Sewer Ribaut Road Master Plan – The Sanitary Sewer Ribaut Road Master Plan has been completed and was included in the briefing. BJWSA recently inquired about the status of the Ribaut Road project and noted that approximately \$1.3 million has been set aside over five years for Ribaut. In addition, roughly \$15 million is available through another program to address septic system conversions. Reapplication for CDBG funding for the Casablanca Circle/Ribaut Road project is under consideration to leverage these funds. The previous CDBG application for Casablanca was withdrawn due to excessive costs—estimated at more than \$6 million several years ago, likely higher today—but combining available funding sources may improve feasibility. A meeting with Charlie Stone is planned to further evaluate options.

Marsh View Park – Four Waters is coordinating the Phase I environmental assessment required for CDBG. A response is still pending from the second potential grant source that would provide the remaining funds previously discussed. If awarded, CDBG funds could be used as the match,

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resulting in minimal out-of-pocket costs. Updates will be provided as information becomes available.

Sands Beach Causeway – No significant updates on the Sands Beach Causeway project; however, installation of the shower rinse-off area remains a priority ahead of the warm season. Coordination with Town Engineer Michael Klink will continue to advance this item.

Splash Pad – Two bids were received and will be discussed later. A preconstruction meeting is scheduled for February 20. Capacity credits previously banked will be applied to satisfy the project's required credits. Coordination efforts with BJWSA have been extensive to address potential utility conflicts, and multiple on-site meetings have taken place alongside ongoing sidewalk work. While every effort has been made to identify and resolve conflicts in advance, unforeseen utilities may still be encountered once excavation begins.

STR & Development Permit GIS Database – The online viewer is currently available to staff. Plans remain in place to make it accessible to the public so projects can be viewed, and final details are still being coordinated.

Cypress Wetlands Path – Phase 1 has been completed, with Phase 2 under review and potential funding being explored. This will continue to be monitored.

Ritter Circle/Spanish Moss Trail Connection – The driveway at Pender is to be addressed, and signalization is nearing completion. Coordination is underway with the engineer to connect the path to Ritter Circle and Appleton Way. The contractor will complete this segment, and discussions with Dean Moss and the trail team are ongoing to finalize signage guiding visitors from Appleton Way through Ritter Circle and into Town.

TIF – A meeting with Safe Harbor was held a few weeks ago to review and update the TIF-associated capital projects and costs. The engineer has been engaged to refine the preliminary list and explore additional public projects that could potentially be funded through the TIF.

Battery Lane Stormwater Outfall – Significant erosion has been observed adjacent to the condominiums, threatening a critical property line. In 2015, work was completed on the outfall ditch off Marina Boulevard, which runs through the property near Integra Apartments and Battery Lane Condominiums. Prior erosion had already led to the removal of a pool at the complex. A pre-Christmas site visit with the engineer resulted in an assessment included in your folder. The HOA and some residents hold differing opinions, but visible cleaving and undermining of lower levels indicate active erosion. The HOA may hire their own professional, and coordination between the engineers could lead to a solution. While the outfall ditch itself is

small, high and low tides are exacerbating the erosion, and the affected area is nearing breach of the former stormwater retention area. Updates will be provided as progress continues.

Naval Hospital Sidewalk Ribbon-Cutting – The silk fencing has been removed, and the ribbon-cutting is scheduled for 4 PM on Wednesday, February 11. The Town Clerk circulated a list of potential invitees, and the public will also be invited.

Safe Harbor – A meeting is scheduled for the 24th to review progress, status updates, and TIF projects. Recent personnel changes have occurred among the project contacts.

Master Plan Effort for Marina Village – A working group was established including impacted property owners, the Town, trail representatives, and other stakeholders to address common issues such as garbage, trail access, roads, and parking. Initial meetings produced notes and a preliminary summary, with discussions focused on developing a concept plan that accommodates all parties while respecting existing obligations and easements. Key considerations include the red-lined development agreement, the Town's Lot G, the bow tie waterfront area, and Safe Harbor's inherited responsibilities for dumpster locations. Engagement of a consultant is underway to determine optimal trail routing, parking impacts, road interfaces, and placement of garbage facilities, including potential compactors, while ensuring space for the rebuilt processing facility to handle larger vehicles for loading and unloading. A draft plan is expected following the next meeting in a few weeks.

E-bikes – Deputy Chief Massey has drafted an ordinance for review and discussion, with staff currently evaluating its provisions. Similar ordinances are being considered in Goose Creek and Mount Pleasant, each adapting lessons learned from the other. The primary focus is addressing vehicles and bikes on sidewalks, aiming to create a practical and effective local ordinance. A proposal is expected to be brought forward in March.

Construction of the Shrimp Dock/Processing Facility – The applications have been submitted, with a request to clarify ownership. The concern was not Lot G itself, but the marsh in front of it. Permission from Safe Harbor, required to build the dock through this marsh section, has been granted, reflecting the original King's Grant associated with property formerly owned by the state port authority.

Capital Sales Tax – Gary Freeman was appointed last month and has expressed enthusiasm for the role. Meetings are planned to review capital project needs, particularly regarding roads, with coordination underway with County staff to schedule and compile relevant information.

Airbnb – Extended discussions with operators and consultation with both in-house and settlement attorneys are ongoing to resolve the remaining items.

Legal – Providing an update on the Gecy lawsuit concerning the road easement adjacent to Integra Apartments and neighboring riverfront properties. The matter is complex, with ongoing correspondence between legal teams. Additionally, Mr. Trask, who previously raised concerns about Forino, has filed suit against the Town and Forino. Progress will be reported as developments occur.

Incubator – The application has been submitted, and the mayor recorded a video to promote it. A few applications have been received so far. Efforts continue to resolve the liability insurance issue—initially quoted at an exorbitant rate by the carrier, alternative options are being explored in the private market, with questions being addressed to finalize coverage soon.

Rear Shed Building – The shed issue is under review, with a business plan expected soon. Updates will be provided as progress continues.

Compensation Study – A meeting was held with MRB to review a compensation study analyzing the organization’s positioning within the County and region. Gaps in the employee classification system are being addressed, and the compensation model is under review, including the current longevity-based structure. Existing employees would remain under the current system, while new hires would follow any updated model. The goal is to maintain competitive market alignment, keeping budgetary considerations in mind.

Plastics Update Ordinance – The two items have been added to the folder for review. Developments at the County and other municipalities are being monitored, as broad participation is important. Previous discussions focused on items such as straws and takeout containers and how they might be addressed—through market forces, regulation, or voluntary business practices. Further action will depend on ongoing discussions.

Shooting Ordinance – This was intended to accompany the discussion on the shooting near neighborhoods. The matter is currently under committee review, and the outcome remains to be seen. There are practical concerns with the proposed ordinance that may not align with local practices, particularly regarding how weapon discharge is handled outside residential areas, even though discharge within neighborhoods is already prohibited. Adjustments may be made when the ordinance reaches the local level.

Council added that the Town is excited about the upcoming VA clinic on Ribaut Road, which will provide convenient services for veterans and their families who previously had to travel to Charleston or Savannah. The site, formerly the Sea Island Apartments, was carefully selected to balance the needs of neighbors while maximizing public benefit. As a clinic, it will not operate 24/7, avoiding ambulances or overnight activity, and construction is expected to begin around May–June 2026 with completion in early 2028, weather permitting.

Council noted the project is anticipated to create 90–100 jobs, boost economic activity, and provide specialty and community care services locally, eliminating the need for veterans and families to travel long distances. Efforts are being made to communicate with surrounding residents about construction impacts, and opportunities to improve nearby infrastructure, such as Smilax access to the Spanish Moss Trail, are being considered while construction is underway.

Overall, Council emphasized that the clinic is a transformational addition to the Town, reflecting strong local support for veterans and thoughtful planning for both community benefit and residential impact.

IV. REVIEW AGENDA FOR THE FEBRUARY 11, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING

Manager Willis reviewed the agenda for the February 11th Council Meeting.

Director Krepps noted that a rezoning ordinance for 1628 West Paris Avenue should be added to the February 11th agenda, following the Planning Commissions recommendation to deny. Owner Randall Riley explained he plans to sell two Paris Avenue parcels and redevelop 1628, his residential homestead, with an addition. While the property does not conform to T5 zoning, expansions within existing setbacks are allowed.

V. IMPORTANT DATES

Manager Willis read the following important date.

- A. Thursday, February 5, 2026 – *Design Review Board Meeting* – 5:00 PM**
- B. Friday, February 6, 2026 – *St. Mark's Episcopal Church Oyster Roast* at Live Oaks Park – 5:00 PM**
- C. Saturday, February 7, 2026 – *Mardi Gras Golf Cart Parade***

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments at this time.

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VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Phillips adjourned the meeting at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Graham', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa Graham
Town Clerk

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the Town Hall's bulletin board and website www.portroval.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.

The Town of Port Royal does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission to, access to, or operations of programs, services, or activities. Qualified individuals who need accessible communication aids and services or other accommodations to participate in programs and activities are invited to make your needs and preferences known to the Civil Rights Coordinator. If at all possible, please give us at least a three to five day advance notice so we can adequately meet your needs. Civil Rights Coordinator at 843-986-2211.