



City Council Work Session Minutes

December 2, 2025 at 4:00 PM

St. James City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL: Mayor Christopher Whitehead, Councilpersons: Susan Craig, Kathleen Hanson, Paul Harris, Stephen Lindee, Hannah Rushing

PRESENT: Mayor Christopher Whitehead, Councilpersons Sue Craig, Kathleen Hanson, Stephen Lindee

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Amanda Knoll, City Clerk-Treasurer Kris Hurley, City Attorney Mike Kircher, Building Official Harry Jenness, Code Enforcement Officer Brandon Showalter, and EDA Director Brianna Sanders

3. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Parking on 7th Street South from 605 8th Street South to 606 11th Street South. The City Council discussed concerns along 7th Street South. The primary issues involve properties with driveways that are too short to accommodate parked vehicles without obstructing adjacent sidewalks. This configuration results in overhanging or blocking the sidewalk, creating interference for pedestrians and posing accessibility and safety concerns. The shortened driveways were not the result of property owner modifications. The shortened driveways result from a state construction project that widened the street and added sidewalks. Driveway lengths are now insufficient for standard vehicles, causing significant overhang into the sidewalk area. Property owners with mobility challenges are limited from parking farther away or using on-street parking. Council members acknowledged that the situation was not caused by the residents and presents a unique hardship. Council members expressed general support for amending the current ordinance to allow an exemption for properties impacted by state-modified, shortened driveways.

B. Hazardous Building Process and Priorities. The council reviewed the city's current procedures for addressing hazardous buildings and discussed strategies for moving forward. Staff described the ongoing challenges associated with deteriorated or unsafe structures, including public safety risks, nuisance conditions, and the significant costs with remediation or demolition.

It was noted that the 2025 tax levy included \$20,000 to establish a demolition fund to support cleanup efforts for properties the city is able to acquire through tax forfeiture. An additional \$20,000 is included in the 2026 tax levy. Staff will develop a more detailed plan for use of these funds.

Discussion also included recent changes to the state's tax forfeiture law, which modifies the timeline and responsibilities assigned to local governments once a property enters the forfeiture process. Council members expressed general support to work collaboratively with the County following public auctions to address the four identified tax-forfeited parcels.

The Council further discussed the possibility of engaging with owners of hazardous properties prior to forfeiture to explore voluntary options, including the potential for property owners to deed their parcels to the city to facilitate remediation. Council members indicated interest in pursuing approaches that reduce neighborhood impacts while providing a clear, consistent, and affordable process for addressing unsafe structures.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned

Amand Knoll, City Manager