SESSION NOTES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY
(No Quorum Present, Listening Session Only)

Thursday, July 16, 2026 – 6:00pm
Mary C. Jenkins Community Center

Members Present:	Pamela Holder, Co-Chair, Council Member Randy Lytle, Co-Chair, MCJCC Board Member Edith Darity, MCJCC Board Member (via phone) Karen Darity, MCJCC Board Appointment (via phone) Victor Foster, MCJCC Board Appointment Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Members Absent:	Gary Daniel, Council Member Ella Jones, Citizen Member Morgan Monshaugen, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	Tyree Griffin, Community Center Director Shawnee Cummings, Assistant to the City Manager
Media:	Jonathan Rich

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Board Co-Chair Randy Lytle called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

B. Invocation

Mr. Foster gave the invocation.

C. Certification of Quorum

Assistant to the City Manager, Shawnee Cummings, did not certify a quorum, as there were only 3 voting members present in person.

D. Juneteenth Follow-Up

Mr. Lytle said the Juneteenth celebration was an awesome 3-day event like no other and a vast improvement from last year. Attendance was higher this year and many came from out of state. Mr. Lytle gave a brief recap of all the events. On Friday, Dr. Dionne Hoskins-Brown spoke on the Gullah Geechee culture and it was followed by a dinner served by Jerome and Kim Howell. For the trolley rides on Friday and Saturday, they did not expect the number of people that would want to participate and they even had to kick some people off the trolley due to some folks having

reservations and there being limited space. On Saturday, they had the big festival at Silversteen Park, a drum circle, entertainment, an inflatable for the kids to play on, and the Fire Department created a water feature for the kids. Unfortunately, the high steppers dance group was not able to make it. On Sunday, they held a service at MCJCCC, had a choir, and Jerome and Kim Howell prepared a dinner.

Mr. Griffin said Rodney Locks is a harsh critic who will let you know his thoughts, and he had nothing but positive things to say. Mr. Foster said he normally gets phone calls after the celebration, which can be mixed, but he did not get any bad phone calls. He added that people attended all 3 days because they did not want to miss anything. There were attendees that came from South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee, in addition to people who attended locally. Mayor Copelof said people loved the trolley tours, as it was something new and different. Mr. Foster said the first night is about history and dealing with the struggle, but they did not make it through without worship, so they like to tie in the worship component. He said everyone is looking forward to next year and it's a good feeling that people are already anticipating what will come next. They want it to be powerful and a staple of the community, as it brings people together regardless of race.

Ms. Karen Darity thanked the sponsors of the event including the City, NAACP, the Rotary, Bethel A Baptist Church, French Broad, and everyone who helped make this the best Juneteenth event yet. She added that they received a lot of feedback from people who normally do not say anything. They intend to bring the historical trolley tours back next year and Ms. Karen Darity thanked the Mayor for her comments. They had about 45 people ride the trolleys that weekend, many of which are residents in the County who did not know the history. They also had over 100 people attend the combined worship service on Sunday, which is their grand finale because Juneteenth is all about a celebration of culture, history, and unity.

E. MCJCCC Bathrooms

Mr. Griffin said Councilmember Baker brought up that the MCJCCC external bathrooms have been locked while he was out on paternity leave and that he wants the bathrooms to be more accessible. Mr. Griffin said during the summer, he has been able to keep the bathrooms open until about 8pm, but during the winter, the hours are usually 8am-5pm. He added that we requested a quote to add electronic locks to the bathrooms that would either be set on a timer or would allow Tyree to lock them remotely like the bathrooms at the Depot. Mr. Griffin said he has been opening and closing the bathrooms on the weekend, but starting next week, the police will start locking the bathrooms at night.

Mayor Copelof said when Councilmember Baker brought this up at the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee, he mentioned that there is no signage at Silversteen Park indicating that there are restrooms at MCJCCC. People who are not from here might not know the bathrooms are there. Mr. Griffin asked if he would need to get in contact with Planning regarding the signs, to which Mayor Copelof said yes, they

have rules for signage and we should follow our guidelines. Ms. Holder asked if this is supposed to take the place of bathrooms at the park. Mayor Copelof said no, they are not ADA accessible from the park and it is too far for little kids. Ms. Holder added that it is too far for anyone watching their kids from their porch and parents would not be able to take one kid to the restroom while another kid keeps playing. Mayor Copelof said it is an asset that needs to be better publicized and made available to the public, but it in no way replaces the need for bathrooms at the park.

Committee Comments

Mr. Foster mentioned that he wrote a letter last year about the 4th of July and the issue they had, and he wants to reiterate what happened this year. He stated that members of the community were out celebrating and lighting fireworks, but there were some people that were so upset, they called the police at about 9:30pm. Mr. Foster said the police came down and told the people that called the police that the fireworks are allowing the residents to enjoy Independence Day, they can light their fireworks, and there are people lighting fireworks all over town. The police told the community to go ahead and enjoy their fireworks and actually kept people from coming to disturb the residents while they were lighting off fireworks. Mr. Foster said the police did a good job. He added that some residents saved their money to buy fireworks and many could not wait for the sun to go down. Mayor Copelof said there were fireworks all over town and it is the celebration of our country. Ms. Holder said it could have gone another way if the police did not get involved.

Mr. Foster said last year, a deputy came down and told the people lighting off fireworks to shut it down. After that occurred, he brought it to the community center and they held a meeting with the Police Chief and the Sheriff. The Sheriff said they did not have any record of anyone calling in to one of his officers, so they believe someone may have called the officer's cell phone and the officer just took it upon himself to come shut down the community's celebration. Mayor Copelof said it is great now that we have our new Police Chief and we are not contracting with the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Foster said this year, Chief Wentzell was out patrolling and he was really impressed with how the police handled the situation.

Mayor Copelof said she will not be at the August meeting, but she intends to bring the final cost estimate for the Silversteen Picnic Pavillion and the bathrooms to the September meeting. Mr. Lytle asked if this means we have the money, to which Mayor Copelof said no, but it means we have a cost and design and at the September meeting, they can discuss how they plan to raise money for it. She added that Clay Sykes was unable to attend Juneteenth because he was in Europe. He will be back for a couple weeks in July and then will be out of town through November.

Mayor Copelof added that she asked Mr. Hooper to start looking at grants, including non-governmental grants, because we have an incredible story here. She added that the land was donated to the City by the church, it is in a minority and underserved area, the City put in a lot of its own money and completed two-thirds of it but needs

additional funding to complete the final third. She said if we can find a foundation that specifically funds underserved areas, that would be ideal and MCJCCC could even be the applicant as a 501(c)(3).

F. Public Comment

No members of the public spoke during Public Comment.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 6:00pm at the Mary C. Jenkins Community Center.

H. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

Notes Approved: August 20, 2026

X Pamela Patrice Holder

Pamela Holder, Co-Chair, City Council Member
Randy Lytle, Co-Chair, MCJCC Member

X Shawnee A. Cummings

Shawnee Cummings
Assistant to the City Manager