

The Town of James Island held a Special Town Council meeting on Monday, March 30, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island. This meeting was also live-streamed on the Town's website: www.jamesislandsc.us/livestream-townmeetings and was held in accordance with the SC Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of James Island.

The following members of Council were present: Dan Boles, Lewis Dodson (via conference) Julia Drayton-Crumblin, Dr. Cynthia Mignano, Darren "Troy" Mullinax, Michael O. Williams, and Mayor Brook Lyon, who presided. Also: Brian Quisenberry, Town Attorney (via conference), Kristen Crane, Planning Director, Mike Hemmer, Finance Director, and Frances Simmons, Town Clerk. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Call to Order/Opening Exercises: Mayor Lyon called the Special Meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. She introduced the members of Town Council, Town Attorney, and Staff. Mayor Lyon led Council in prayer and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion/Consideration of Purchasing Real Estate at 1128 Hillman Street: Mayor Lyon stated that this Special meeting was called due to a time-sensitive opportunity that the Town could otherwise miss. She explained that, as Council is aware, the Town is in the process of building an Art and Community Center and regularly hosts events such as the Town Market and various festivals at the Town Hall. Parking is extremely limited and presents an ongoing challenge for current operations and future growth.

She shared that this past Friday, while behind the Town Hall, she noticed a flutter flag (not permitted in the Town) two doors down. Upon investigating, she saw a sign advertising an "open house" and realized that a property across the street from our Hillman lot was for sale and that she had not known it was on the market. Mayor Lyon stated that she spoke with the person hosting the open house who informed her that the house, though in very poor condition, was listed well below market value. He indicated there had already been significant interest, with approximately 50 prospective buyers looking and six offers already submitted, some exceeding the \$309,000 asking price, which is notably low for property on James Island.

Recognizing the potential importance of this property and given the Town's parking constraints and anticipated long-term growth, Mayor Lyon introduced herself and expressed interest for the Town. She explained that any potential action would require a vote by Council. She would need to call a special meeting of Council for discussion and a vote. She emphasized that this represents a rare and unique opportunity. The seller agreed to extend the offer deadline until later this afternoon (Monday, March 30). Following this meeting, she would need to contact him with the Town's decision. She has consulted the Town Attorney closely about this expressed appreciation to the Council members for adjusting their schedules to attend the meeting.

Mayor Lyon explained that real estate opportunities often require prompt action, noting that delays can result in losing a property. Normally a real estate purchase would not have been an urgent matter but emphasized that the property's close proximity to Town Hall and the below market price makes it a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. She stated that the only alternative to acquiring a similar property would be through condemnation, which is a slower, more expensive, and potentially unpopular process. A voluntary purchase would be simpler, more cost-effective, and more efficient.

Mayor Lyon expressed her belief that the planned Art and Community Center will serve as a significant asset to the Town, calling it "the Gaillard" of James Island but noted that parking remains limited. She has consulted with Kristen Crane, who provided a rough estimate indicating the property could accommodate approximately 20 to 40 parking spaces, depending on zoning. The Town Clerk has distributed the property disclosure information to Council and will include them in the public record.

Mayor Lyon reported that she conducted preliminary market research and consulted with the real estate professional who is actually a transactional broker; and is not representing the seller. She believes an offer of \$340,000 could secure the property along with a clean contract. She noted that while the seller prefers a quick closing, their primary interest is receiving an offer from a credible buyer. She explained as this involves public funds, the Town must complete its due diligence, including a survey and title search, and therefore could not close within two weeks. The seller has indicated a willingness to allow the standard 45-day closing. Mayor Lyon added that Finance Director Mike Hemmer has confirmed that sufficient hospitality funds are available within the current fiscal year's budget to cover the purchase. Approximately \$425,000 is in the budget for projects that will not be completed this year after all. She concluded that she believes all necessary considerations have been addressed and the Town is in a position to move forward, should Council choose to do so. Mayor Lyon asked for a motion and a second for discussion.

MOTION: Councilwoman Drayton-Crumblin moved to authorize the Mayor to offer up to \$340,000 for the Town to purchase the property located at 1128 Hillman Street to serve as public parking for the Town or alternatively to be used by the Town for any other public purposes. The motion was seconded by Councilman Williams.

DISCUSSION: Councilwoman Mignano stated that the proposal sounds like a good idea.

Councilman Dodson commented that the Town is building an incredible Art and Community Center, where parking is already limited, including at Town Hall. He described the purchase at that price as a “no-brainer,” emphasizing that the Town would be holding assets for its residents. Given the property’s close proximity to existing Town property, he noted that he sees no significant downsides. He also added that funds for the purchase are already included in the budget.

Councilman Williams concurred, stating that it is a great opportunity for the Town.

Councilman Mullinax expressed concern about the loss of potential affordable housing but after seeing the house’s condition realizes this would not be a factor and agreed that it is a good opportunity for the Town.,

Councilwoman Drayton-Crumblin agreed with the comments of the other Councilmembers. She noted that she had reviewed comments posted online and that we are not entering into real estate. She reiterated that this is a good opportunity for the Town.

VOTE

Councilman Boles	Aye
Councilman Dodson	Aye
Councilwoman Drayton-Crumblin	Aye
Councilwoman Mignano	Aye
Councilman Mullinax	Aye
Councilman Williams	Aye
Mayor Lyon	Aye

UNANIMOUS

Adjourn: 1:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Frances Simmons
Town Clerk