

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
RECESS MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2026 - MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Recess Meeting at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on February 18, 2026. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Blackman, and Messenger were present. Alderman Pfeiffer attended the meeting by teleconference pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated Section 25-41-5. Let the minutes reflect that a speakerphone was present in the meeting room and that all persons in attendance were able to hear Alderman Pfeiffer.

City Attorney David Harris, Jr., City Clerk/Finance Director Christine Millard, Police Deputy Chief Matthew Morvant, Fire Chief A.J. Fitch, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Planning Office Administrator Rae Williams, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Parks & Recreation Director gave the invocation and Alderman Tillis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to accept the agenda.

**PROCLAMATION**

a. Honoring the Ocean Springs High School Theatre Department

Mr. Chris Permenter, Theatre Director at Ocean Springs High School, accepted the proclamation from the Mayor.

**AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Agenda Item 5-a:

Haley Hill, James Lewis, Nancy Peterson, Brian Rose, Dave Lapointe, Paul Oberg, and Adam Lease spoke in opposition to the request for Sketch Plat approval of the Holly Grove Subdivision, a 123-lot townhome subdivision, citing concerns related to traffic, Unified Development Code (UDC) discrepancies, and infrastructure issues.

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**OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Southeastern Construction & Remodeling, LLC – Pabst Rd – PIDN: 60127170.000 – Requesting Sketch Plat approval of Holly Grove Subdivision, a 123-lot Townhome Subdivision; PC recommends approval

The Planning Director distributed a memorandum and opposition letters received for inclusion in the record. She explained that consideration of the sketch plat for Holly Grove Subdivision represents the first step in the subdivision approval process. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the sketch plat. The Board of Aldermen held a public hearing on January 6 and deferred the item until this meeting.

At the conclusion of the January 6th Board of Aldermen meeting a motion was made to table the Holly Grove sketch plat to allow Aldermen to submit questions for further consideration. Due to not receiving many questions, the Planning Director compiled a few of the opposition's concerns and summarized the discrepancies found within the UDC and fire code. The discrepancies included right-of-way (ROW) widths, cul-de-sac versus hammerhead turnaround requirements, and open space percentages.

The proposed development includes 50-foot rights-of-way with private streets. The UDC references both 50-foot ROW requirements for minor streets and 60-foot ROW requirements for thoroughfares. She also noted that the UDC language conflicts with the Fire Code, which promotes hammerhead turnarounds rather than cul-de-sacs. Additionally, the UDC references both 5% and 20% open space requirements. She stated that this discrepancy was identified early in the process, and the developer has proposed 21% open space. She advised that remaining technical concerns would be addressed at the preliminary plat stage.

The Planning Director provided the Board with options for consideration: approve the sketch plat as submitted; remand the sketch plat back to planning commission with any recommended revisions, approve the sketch plat with specific conditions to be verified at preliminary plat; or deny the request. She further stated that the identified UDC inconsistencies are scheduled to be reviewed by the UDC Review Committee.

Erich Nichols, representing the applicant, addressed the Board. He reiterated that the discrepancies would be more appropriately addressed during the preliminary plat stage. He stated that the development is permitted by right under R-1A zoning and includes 123 lots, 50-foot rights-of-way, designated access points, buffers, and green space exceeding minimum requirements. He discussed the prior deferral by the Board and expressed the applicant's willingness to work with the City to resolve any concerns.

Alderman Blackman questioned why the developer would pursue development in light of significant public opposition and stated that he could not support the project.

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Alderman Hinton stated that the City has a responsibility to ensure infrastructure capacity for a development of this size and that an impact study would be appropriate to evaluate feasibility. He further noted that the property has been zoned R-1A for approximately forty years.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton and seconded by Alderman Wade to remand the Holly Grove Subdivision sketch plat to the Planning Commission for further review to address UDC conflicts and inconsistencies. The motion failed with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Wade, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

Nay: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Messenger

A motion was then made by Alderman Pfeiffer and seconded by Alderman Tillis to deny the Holly Grove Subdivision sketch plat based on inconsistencies within the UDC, including street standards, cul-de-sac requirements, and open space requirements. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger

Nay: Alderman Wade, Alderman Hinton

- b. Adopt Ordinance: An Amendment to Ord 2020-06 Appendix A – Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance of the Unified Development Code of the City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi; To Clarify Variance and Appeal Procedures In Article 6, Including the Recommendation Role of the Zoning & Adjustment Board and Final Decision Authority of the Board of Aldermen**

The Mayor stated that additional revisions are needed to the ordinance. A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Wade to table adoption of the ordinance to allow for further changes. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

Nay: Alderman Messenger

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Appeal of Short-Term Rental Permit Renewal Denial - 1238 Iberville Drive (STR Permit No. R-29)**

Aldermen Stennis and Hinton recused themselves and exited the boardroom at 6:53 p.m.

The Planning Office Administrator stated that the owners of the short-term rental (STR) located at 1238 Iberville Drive were appealing the denial of their STR renewal application. She explained that the permit expired on January 3, and the owners did not submit a renewal application or complete the required inspections. On February 2,

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the Planning Department issued formal notice of termination of the STR permit and a stop work order. She further stated that renewal notices were sent on December 1, December 15, and a final notice on December 30. She noted that the owners had not provided updated contact information for email or mailing address. The February 2 notice was received, after which the owners requested an appeal citing illness.

The Mayor stated that he had been informed the owners did not receive prior notices due to illness, email issues, and the cancellation of their post office box. He further stated that there have been no complaints regarding the STR during the time the permit was active.

Donald and Dianne del Cid addressed the Board and cited complications with digital communications that prevented emails from being received, along with significant health and family challenges. They apologized for the lack of communication. They stated that the STR is a tiny house located on their primary residence property and requested reinstatement of their STR permit.

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis and seconded by Alderman Wade to approve the appeal and reinstate STR Permit No. 29 for the property located at 1238 Iberville Drive. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman

Nay: Alderman Messenger

Recused: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Hinton

Aldermen Stennis and Hinton returned to the boardroom at 7:10 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to approve the consent agenda, except item 7-cc pulled by Alderman Messenger.

**Mayor/BOA:**

- a. Ratify the rescheduling of the February 5th American Red Cross's blood drive to Wednesday, February 18, 2026, due to unforeseen circumstances that prevented the blood drive from taking place; to advertise the resources of the city
- b. Authorize the \$1,000 table sponsorship for the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet at the Beau Rivage on February 26, 2026
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Mosaic Student Ministry Kickball tournament on March 27, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at Freedom Field at no cost to the City; the applicant pays the associated event cost

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- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for First Presbyterian Church Easter Sunrise Service on April 5, 2026, from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., at Fort Maurepas, at no cost to the City; the applicant pays the associated event cost
- e. Authorize and waive all associated rental fees for the Mississippi Senior Games to host a qualifying tournament at the Ryan Youth Center for the National Senior Games being held in Tulsa, OK, on Friday, April 17, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; to advertise the resources of the city

**City Clerk:**

- f. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting January 20, 2026
- g. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting February 3, 2026

**Police Department:**

- h. Accept OSPD monthly report for January 2026

**Fire Department:**

- i. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for January 2026

**Human Resources/Risk Management:**

- j. Accept the resignation of Civil Service Commissioner Nicole Sullivan, effective March 1, 2026; authorize advertisement of the vacancy
- k. Authorize DOD SkillBridge Patrolman Internship for Levi McCoy Rainbolt, effective February 19, 2026; six-month unpaid term, contingent upon completion of all pre-internship requirements
- l. Authorize promotion of Police Lieutenant Brian Kestner to Captain, effective February 28, 2026; \$32.22 hourly rate; six-months probationary status
- m. Authorize employment of Jessica Lynn Torries, Patrolman, effective February 19, 2026; \$24.72 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- n. Authorize employment of Connor Allen Johnson, Patrolman, effective February 19, 2026; \$21.00 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- o. Authorize employment of Rodney Beasley, Part-time Patrolman, effective February 19, 2026; \$20.00 hourly rate; pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- p. Accept resignation of Custodian Michael Calderon, effective February 2, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

**Planning Commission (PC):**

- q. Accept PC Minutes for January 13, 2026 Meeting

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**Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB):**

- r. Accept ZAB Minutes for December 17, 2025 Meeting
- s. Approve a variance for a side setback from 10' to 6' on the southwest side of the property to construct a 6' x 53' elevated platform, connecting the front and rear porch for the purpose of elevating the HVAC and electrical system located at 1217 Sunset Ave — PIDN: 60119030.110; ZAB recommends approval

**Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):**

- t. Accept HPC Minutes for the January 15, 2026 Meeting
- u. Approve a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to construct a 750-square-foot concrete addition to the existing driveway at 1315 Bowen Avenue - PIDN: 60137066.000; HPC recommends approval

**Grants Administration:**

- v. Authorize Amendment #1 for Construction Contract for the STORM DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS: WEEKS BAYOU, HALSTEAD BAYOU – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) / MS Municipality and County Water Infrastructure Grant (MCWI) – MDEQ Agreement # 470-2-SW-5.6 – Couvillion Group, LLC – Inclusion of Required Contract Attachments
- w. Adopt a Resolution for Right-of-Way Purchase: Riley Road Improvement Project – Jamile & Milo Hugh Pepper – PID# 61262027.030 in the Amount of \$767.00 – **RES 2026-005**
- x. Adopt a Resolution for Right-of-Way Purchase: Riley Road Improvement Project – Victory Full Gospel Baptist Church – PID# 60123050.050 in the Amount of \$1,460.00 – **RES 2026-006**
- y. Adopt a Resolution for Right-of-Way Purchase: Riley Road Improvement Project – St. Elizabeth Seton's Catholic Church/Joseph Brunini Trustee – PID# 61104041.000 in the Amount of \$6,075.00 – **RES 2026-007**

**Project Manager:**

- z. Authorize Summary Change Order and Project Closeout – Jackson Brothers Construction Services – Taconi Gym Window Replacement – Funded with State Appropriations in HB1353

**Building Department:**

- aa. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for January 2026
- bb. Accept the Code Enforcement Report through February 12, 2026
- cc. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through February 12, 2026

Alderman Messenger questioned the Building Official as to whether the determination

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that the tree was dying had been made by a professional. The Building Official responded that the applicant is a professional tree service. A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through February 12, 2026.

**Parks & Recreation Department:**

- dd. Authorize and waive rental fee to allow Ocean Springs Chamber – Main Street to use the Senior Center during the Spring Art Festival March 27- 29, 2026

**Public Works:**

- ee. Adopt a Resolution for the Sale of Surplus Personal Property with a Value Less than \$1,000.00 – **RES 2026-008**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- a. City Clerk: Approve payment: Docket of Claims, all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the Minutes

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to approve the Docket of Claims, excluding the mileage reimbursement submitted by Alderman Pfeiffer, which was pulled by Alderman Pfeiffer to resubmit at a later time, finding that all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law and ordering that the summary be spread upon the minutes.

- b. City Clerk: Authorize the adjustment of water/sewer accounts due to a finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and the excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to adjust the water/sewer accounts listed, with the finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

James Lewis commended the Board of Aldermen on the STR process. He stated that School Street still does not have a sidewalk and that he had previously been told a sidewalk would be constructed. The Mayor responded that the project is not yet complete and that the sidewalk will be connected to the roadway and constructed as a three-foot asphalt walkway rather than concrete.

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**MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM**

Alderman Tillis continued the discussion regarding the School Street sidewalk and expressed concerns about the appearance and cost. He asked whether, when funding becomes available in the future, the City could consider installing a concrete sidewalk. Alderman Pfeiffer agreed that there are issues with the current sidewalk and stated she would like to look for funding opportunities to address safety concerns.

Alderman Stennis reminded everyone about the upcoming tree plantings at Clay Boyd Park, Halstead Park, and other locations over the next few days. She requested future discussion regarding the possibility of adding additional public restrooms in the downtown area within the next year. She also reminded everyone that the St. Patrick's Day Parade will be held downtown on March 14. In addition, she stated that the Aldermen received notification that the Tunica City Library burned down and is in need of book donations.

Alderman Wade thanked the Police Department, Public Works Department, and Fire Department for the success of the recent parade and the cleanup afterward. A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Blackman, to maintain attorney–client privilege regarding information received from David Harris concerning the Request for Proposals (RFPs) for City Attorney. The motion carried with Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Blackman, and Messenger voting aye, and Alderman Pfeiffer voting nay.

Alderman Pfeiffer provided additional information regarding the tree planting events, stating that the Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) thanked the Parks & Recreation Director and the Public Works Director for their assistance. She stated that holes have already been dug and dirt and mulch are on site for residents to plant the trees. She announced that eight trees will be planted tomorrow at Clay Boyd Park and six trees at Halstead Park; trees will be planted Friday at Gay Lemon Park and Saturday at the Highway 57 Sports Complex beginning at 9:00 a.m., and residents are encouraged to bring shovels.

Alderman Blackman congratulated Police Captain Kestner on his promotion.

Alderman Messenger stated that the Harlem Wizards game fundraiser was well attended and raised \$1,000 for each participating organization. She also thanked the Public Works Director for placing the sign at the Trentwood subdivision.

Alderman Hinton thanked City staff for the quick cleanup following the night parade. He asked the Grants Administrator and Project Manager about funding opportunities for sidewalks. The Project Manager responded that there is currently no sidewalk list and that once the paving list is completed, she will request that the Aldermen submit sidewalk priorities so they can be compiled.

The Mayor complimented Alderman Messenger on her participation in the Harlem

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Wizards game and stated there was a good turnout and that everyone had a great time. He thanked the City staff who participated in the event. He also stated he was honored to serve as Grand Marshal for the Night Mardi Gras Parade and thanked Public Works for the quick cleanup and the Police Department for ensuring safety during the parade. The Mayor announced that the Mayor's Gumbo Competition will be held Saturday, February 21 in Gulfport and invited everyone to attend and support Ocean Springs.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of going into executive session.

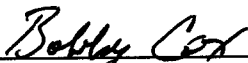
The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to go into executive session for the purpose of a litigation update regarding Rosenberg vs. Ocean Springs.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to come out of executive session, where no action was taken.

**ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on MARCH 3, 2026**

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 7:53 p.m.

  
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Mayor Cox

  
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City Clerk Christine Millard

