

## City Council approves property transfers for construction of new Southside homes

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

## Transfers part of City efforts meant to encourage infill development across hundreds of scattered vacant properties



Four new single-family homes will be coming to the city's Southside after City Council unanimously approved a transfer of three properties to PEK Construction. Kenneth Morman, owner of PEK, plans to build four new homes on the parcels, all of which would have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and total 1200-1400 sq. ft. Once completed, the homes will be listed for sale.

Mr. Morman is a certified instructor who teaches the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core curriculum at the Spartanburg Community College Tyger River Campus. He also managed an apprenticeship that has allowed graduates of the NCCER program to participate in housing developments for PEK Construction. Working with Mr. Morman, the City will be able to combine this apprenticeship program with the construction of the homes to provide experience and training to local residents.

As part of the presentation for the property transfers, Community Development Director Martin Livingston gave Council an overview of the City's scattered site development strategy. In all, around 2,000 parcels were vacant in the city as of 2016, 200 of which were owned by the City. Of those 200 lots, around 100 were suitable for development. A substantial number of those still remain, with the City continuing to work to find developers capable and willing to take on these smaller neighborhood infill development projects.

Citing it as an example, Livingston said that the agreement with Mr. Morman will help the City to meet a longterm goal of reducing the total number of vacant and substandard local properties while supporting other goals such as increased homeownership rates and increased workforce training opportunities in historically underserved areas of the city. Arrangements like the one with Mr. Morman are critical to the City's future success in stabilizing and reinvigorating its neighborhoods, according to Livingston.

Also at Monday's meeting, Council unanimously approved new street sign designs for the city's two local historic districts, Hampton Heights and Beaumont Mill Village. The signs are similar in size and design to standard City streets signs, but will be black and white in color and a different size street extension compared to standard City street signs. Also, signs will have a topper designating the area as historic with

the date when the neighborhood was established. Staff has coordinated design efforts with the City's Traffic Engineering Department to make sure the standards for the recommended signs comply with City requirements.