



City of Harrisonburg

City Hall
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The Harrisonburg Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday February 11, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 409 South Main Street.

2. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Members present: Richard Baugh, Chair; Councilmember Laura Dent; KC Kettler; Rob Jezior, and Randy Seitz. Shannon Porter, Vice Chair, and Heja Alsindi were absent. Also present: Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development; Thanh Dang, Deputy Director of Community Development; Meg Rupkey, Planner; Wesley Russ, Deputy City Attorney; and Nyrma Soffel, Acting Secretary.

Present 5 - Richard Baugh, City Council Representative Laura Dent, Kenneth Kettler, Randall Seitz, and Stanley Jezior

Absent 2 - Heja Alsindi, and Shannon Porter

3. Approval of Minutes

3.a. Minutes from the January 14, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

Chair Baugh asked if there were any corrections, comments or a motion regarding the January 14, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Kettler moved to approve the January 14, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Jezior seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the January 14, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes passed by voice vote (5-0).

A motion was made by Kettler, seconded by Jezior, that this Minutes be approved. The motion carried by a voice vote.

4. New Business

- 4.a. Consider a request from The Edge Realty Partners LLC for variances from the Subdivision Ordinance related to street design standards for an undeveloped portion of Franklin Street located between parcels addressed as 625 and 630 Franklin Street

Please see attachment 8 in Legistar for the full minutes extract.

Click here to enter the action/summary (insert the summary from the memo here

Yes: 5 - Baugh, City Council Representative Dent, Kettler, Seitz and Jezior

No: 0

Absent: 2 - Alsindi and Porter

6. Public Comment

None.

7. Report of Secretary & Committees

7.a. Rockingham County Planning Commission Liaison Report

Chair Baugh reported on the February 3, 2026 Rockingham County Planning Commission meeting. The following items were on the agenda:

- Public hearing request from Rockingham County staff to amend Section 17-1003.02 of the Rockingham County Code to allow three years for the commencement of solar projects, energy storage projects, and residential projects approved by Special Use Permit, as mandated by updates to Virginia State Code.-Approved (3-0)
- Public hearing request from Rockingham County staff to amend Table 17-606 and Section 17-607 of the Rockingham County Code to amend the supplemental standards for the use Large solar energy facility, and to amend the land use table for the uses Large solar energy and Large solar energy installed over impervious surfaces-Approved (3-0)
- Public hearing request from Rockingham County staff to amend Section 17-607 of the Rockingham County Code to amend the setback requirements for agricultural uses in and in the near vicinity to urban growth areas.-Approved (3-0)

7.b. City Council Report

Councilmember Dent reported that there were no public hearing items from Planning Commission that were presented to City Council on February 10, 2026. Ms. Dang added that Planning Commission items from January 14, 2026 will be presented to City Council on February 24.

8. Other Matters

Ms. Dang said if you remember a few months ago, we had some issues with scammers scraping information off of our agendas and impersonating our office to contact applicants and their representatives to demand payments. Fortunately, as far as I am aware, folks who have received emails from people impersonating the City of Harrisonburg have called our office and talked to our staff and we have advised them not to make those payments. This is something that has been happening in other communities in Virginia and across the Country. To help reduce that type of thing happening, we are now redacting contact information from applications we are posting on Legistar. We are removing applicant and their representative's phone numbers, email addresses and physical addresses from the application. That information is still publicly available if somebody wants to call our office to get in contact with the developer. We can pass that information on to people who call our office. We just did not want to put that out there on the internet anymore where people can scrape that information. If you hear community members asking you questions about why they cannot read that information when they go to Legistar, let them know the reason and they can contact Community Development for the information.

8.a. Review Summary of next month's applications

Ms. Dang said in March we have three rezonings. One on Franklin Street. They have a proffer amendment they want to bring forth. There is a rezoning at 851 Madison Street that includes also a special use permit for that same property. Then The Link apartments will be back here in March for public hearing.

Chair Baugh said I assume that given how that went with the vast difference in public interest in the Planning Commission and the City Council, staff and everybody will be preparing for a sizable crowd.

Commissioner Kettler asked do we want to have the second meeting instead?

Ms. Dang said I would feel comfortable with just having one meeting to consider all four of these items.

Councilmember Dent said several of us went to the Virginia Municipal League Legislative Day and there was one bill that we are fairly horrified by that would essentially gut local authority for zoning. In the sense that they were saying that multifamily buildings would be allowed by right in at least 75% of all commercially zoned properties. What is the point of zoning anymore? What are we going to do in Planning Commission, if they do not have to come to us for approval? Our misgiving about this is, if any size multifamily could be built anywhere in commercial districts, what are developers going to do? Build student housing. So much for the push for affordability. We were, for once, really in sync with our representatives on this. This is going to have unintended

consequences for us in Harrisonburg if it goes through. The whole legislative process is so back and forth. It goes from the Senate to the House and eventually to the Governor. So far it seems to be sailing through as is. I think that this would be a time to lean on the Governor's office because they have the option to amend it before signing it. I think, given the push for affordability and build as much housing as possible, it may well go through, as is. The catch is that it would go into effect as written January 1, 2027.

Mr. Russ said the commercial designation at least in the Senate version would capture any zoning district where a commercial use is permitted by right. R-3 where we allow professional offices by right. All of that falls into this category as well. It would not just be B-2 and B-1.

Councilmember Dent said maybe I was overstating it, saying it guts our zoning, but in some important ways it does, potentially.

Commissioner Kettler said sort of tangential to that... and I have heard about this. Part of my thinking is, I do not like not having that kind of local control that I think is helpful. The other part that I am thinking is that we have had some extremely restrictive zoning for at least three decades that has led to the position that we are in, and that is why that kind of thing can be incredibly popular. My question is do we have an update on the Zoning reform process for Harrisonburg?

Councilmember Dent said this could throw that into question too. Like what do we do about this if it goes through?

Commissioner Kettler said I believe there is also a proposed bill for ADUs [Accessory Dwelling Units] by right. I mean the state may well overtake us on a number of things.

Councilmember Dent said and manufactured housing. I can see the legitimate push behind it to get more housing out there. Where is the balance between local control and having a really strong push for housing? We are often fighting an uphill battle when there is opposition to housing that we need. My comment on this was that it seems like a sledgehammer when we need a screwdriver.

Where is the balance? In the case of The Link, I think there has been a lot of benefit to the robust community engagement to improve the project overall. If we no longer have the option to do that, there would be no proffers, no special use permits, no kinds of controls that we could put on.

Then we are losing the opportunity to improve the projects by community engagement. Where is the lid on that to make a community engagement beneficial overall, instead of obstructionist, which I think is what this bill is sort of over-reacting to.

Mr. Russ said it will be interesting to see how it all plays out during the legislative process. It moves very quickly and then slowly and then quickly again.

Councilmember Dent said I listened in and wrote in comments yesterday to a bunch of bills that are in committee about energy, like funding for data centers and making sure they pay for their own electricity. There were some wins and losses and disappointments and tabled. It is interesting being more in tune with the legislative process because there is a lot going on right now.

Commissioner Kettler said do we have an update on the zoning reform?

Mr. Fletcher said are you talking about the Zoning Ordinance Update Project?

Commissioner Kettler said yes.

Ms. Dang said we will share an update with you later if we could get through this next set of things that we are working on.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.

NOTE TO THE PUBLIC

Staff will be available at 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the next Planning Commission meeting for those interested in going on a field trip to view the sites on the next agenda.

INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Language interpretation service in Spanish, Arabic and Kurdish is available for Planning Commission meetings. To ensure that interpreters are available at the meeting, interested persons must request the accommodation at least four (4) calendar days in advance of the meeting by contacting the City Clerk at (540) 432-7701 or by submitting a request online at: www.harrisonburgva.gov/interpreter-request-form

El servicio de intérpretes inglés-español está disponible para las reuniones públicas de la Comisión de Planificación. Para asegurar la disponibilidad de intérpretes, cualquier interesado deberá solicitar la presencia de un intérprete al menos cuatro (4) días calendarios antes de la reunión comunicándose con la Secretaría Municipal al (540) 432-7701 o por medio de la página por internet al:

<https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/interpreter-request-form>

NOTE TO THE PUBLIC

Residents/Media will be able to attend the meeting.

The Public can also view the meeting live on:

- The City's website, <https://harrisonburg-va.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
- Public Education Government Channel 1072

A phone line will also be live where residents will be allowed to call in and speak with Planning Commission during the Public Hearings and the Public Comments portion of the night's meeting. We ask those that wish to speak during the public comment period to not call in until after all the public hearings and public comment on those have been heard. This will avoid anyone calling on any other item from holding up the queue and then being asked to call back at a later time.

The telephone number to call in is: (540) 437-2687

Residents also may provide comment prior to the meeting by visiting this page:
www.harrisonburgva.gov/agenda-comments