



# City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

*Mayor Deanna R. Reed*  
*Vice-Mayor Richard A. Baugh*  
*Council Member Ted Byrd*  
*Council Member George Hirschmann*  
*Council Member Christopher B. Jones*

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Tuesday, March 14, 2017

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

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### Planning Commission/City Council Joint Meeting

#### 1. Roll Call

- Present:** 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Richard Baugh, Council Member Ted Byrd, Council Member Christopher B. Jones and Council Member George Hirschmann
- Also Present:** 5 - City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Deputy City Manager Ande Banks, Deputy City Clerk Pam Ulmer, City Attorney Chris Brown and Police Chief Stephen Monticelli

Also present: Debra Fitzgerald, Vice Chair; Gil Coleman; Brent Finnegan; Mark Finks; and Kathy Whitten.

#### 2. Regular Items

##### 2.a. Discussion on the City's Comprehensive Plan update.

Vice Chair of the Planning Commission, Debra Fitzgerald, provided a brief introduction of the Comprehensive Plan and advised Council the Planning Commission is looking for input on items that they feel need particular attention.

Thanh Dang, City Planner, provided a handout of a general overview of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Dang noted the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to paint a vision of what the community aspires to be over the next 20-30 years into the future. Ms. Dang noted the Virginia State Code states the purpose of the plan is to guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will be in accordance with the present and probable future needs as well as best promote the public health, safety, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of its inhabitants. Ms. Dang noted the Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document, but is intended to serve as a guide to help facilitate decision making and to understand what the community desires. Ms. Dang stated the requirements for the Comprehensive Plan are detailed in the Virginia Code Section 15.2-2223 through Section 15.2-2232, and noted the past updates to the Comprehensive Plan were in 2004, led by consultants, and in 2011 led by staff internally. Ms. Dang reviewed the details of the Virginia Code and noted the Comprehensive Plan deals mainly with the physical characteristics of the city. Ms. Dang noted the Virginia Code requires a transportation plan component, long range recommendations for the general

development of the community, addressing affordable housing, and that a survey and study of particular topics in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan should be done.

Ms. Dang provided an overview of the expected schedule reflecting four different phases that staff and Planning Commission developed together as follows:

Phase 1 - preplanning, design, public engagement, and appoint committee members from July 2016 through March 2017;

Phase 2 - Plan development review, host public input meetings, write plan, etc. from April 2017 through April 2018;

Phase 3 - Plan review and adoption, host public meetings, present finalized plan to Planning Commission and City Council from May 2018 through January 2019;

Phase 4 - Plan implementation, after the plan is adopted.

Ms. Dang stated some of the activities to date that staff and Planning Commission have worked on included establishing the process and schedule, web page creation [www.harrisonburgva.gov/yourplan](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/yourplan), creation of a promotional video, and hosted three public information sessions during various days and times of the week to accommodate as many people as possible. Ms. Dang noted there were 85 attendees at the public information sessions and 125 applicants applied for the advisory committees out of which 48 appointments were made, 12 members on each of the 4 advisory committees (total does not include the Planning Commissioners who will also participate). Ms. Dang stated the four committees include land use and transportation, education and culture, community facilities, and economic development.

Ms. Dang stated future activities anticipated include updated background information in time for the first advisory committee meetings whose work is to develop goals, objectives and strategies to be shared at the four public workshops; draft plan to be available at an open house in the summer of 2018; plan finalization so that recommendation from planning commission to city council can be done by January 2019.

Ms. Dang noted the other opportunities for public involvement: e-newsletter, observe an advisory committee, which will be open to the public, participate in public meetings in the fall, and availability to share ideas with staff or Planning Commission members.

Ms. Dang referenced the Comprehensive Plan general overview handout provided to council, reviewed the strategies, objectives, goals, and vision statement, and noted the handout also includes information on the action plan and implementation phase.

Ms. Dang asked if there were any questions, with no response, Ms. Dang asked council what types of topics are they hearing from the community that should be focused on for the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Chair Fitzgerald noted that with most items brought to council, there has been a large agreement with following

planning commission's recommendations, but asked council if there are areas that might be appropriate for the planning commission to re-examine with respect to the work going forward with the Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Byrd stated the city should be looked at as a whole; make sure the assumptions that were made in the past, recommendations moving forward are within regulations of the land use guide. Council Member Byrd stated there are certain areas that need to be concentrated on, but cannot forego one part of the city for others, and that the majority of time should be spent on the land use guide as that drives everything else on.

Council Member Jones asked if the vision statement was a starting point or final draft of what the vision statement will be. Ms. Dang stated this was the vision statement she was comfortable with but didn't want to speak for the Planning Commission. Planning Commission Member Finnegan stated the vision statement might need to be reevaluated once the recommendations from the advisory committees have been received. Vice Chair Fitzgerald stated it was subject to change.

Council Member Jones asked if the 48 appointments to the advisory committees came from the 85 attendees at the public information sessions. Ms Dang stated the 48 appointments came from the 125 applications received via paper forms or a Google form available online for electronic submission and some were received during the information sessions. Planning Commission Member Colman noted there was an active outreach as well. Vice Mayor Baugh noted there was a subcommittee of planning commissioners that reviewed the applications received and made its recommendation to the Planning Commission. Council Member Byrd asked if any further communications were made to the applicants that did not make any of the Advisory Committees, as he feels those engaged wanting to be involved are limited to certain public hearings for further input. Vice Chair Fitzgerald noted there will be a second round of public input that anyone is able to attend those meetings. Planning Commission Member Whitten stated that Ms. Dang emailed all of the applicants including suggestions for further public engagement in hopes they will continue to be engaged in the process. Council Member Jones asked if the outreach efforts reached the diverse citizens in the city with advertising and meetings in those communities, and if so does Planning Commission plan on continuing those efforts, or if not done yet can it be worked into the plan. Vice Chair Fitzgerald stated all members of planning were surveyed and came up with as many organizations as possible for outreach to those organizations regarding the Comprehensive Plan, input process, application process for advisory committees, and received questions from those organizations for ESL participation, translation etc, and considered by the Planning Commission early on in the process. Further discussion took place regarding outreach to all community members.

### **3. Adjournment**

At 6:12 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting

was adjourned.

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DEPUTY CITY CLERK

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MAYOR