



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Worksession at 6pm Regular Session at 7:00 pm

Worksession

1. Roll Call

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Laura Dent, Council Member Christopher B. Jones, Council Member Dany Fleming and Council Member Monica Robinson

Also Present: 6 - City Manager Ande Banks, Acting Deputy City Manager Amy Snider, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer, Police Chief Kelley Warner and Chief Matthew Tobia

2. Regular Items

2.a. Consider adoption of the City Council 2024-2027 Priorities Action Plans

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, presented the 2024-2027 Priorities Action Plans based on the Harrisonburg City Council 2043 Vision. She stated 27 members of city staff convened for a two-day strategic retreat to preliminarily develop the action plans and priority champions were determined. She reviewed the City Council 2043 Vision and the focus areas. She stated the priorities were developed by consensus of City Council and staff created action plans for those priorities to outline the action steps and timelines necessary to advance implementation over the next three years. She reviewed the vision areas and the list of priorities for each. The vision areas are as follows:

1. A City For All
2. Community Resiliency and the Natural Environment
3. Economic Development: Goals, Gains, and Growth
4. A Thriving Educational Epicenter
5. Fiscal Responsibility and Planning
6. Available Housing for All
7. Distinctive, Reliable Delivery of High Quality City Services

Discussion took place amongst City Council Members as to what staff is looking for from Council on this report, if there are specific questions or clarity needed it would be beneficial to staff, but changing the wording or going into specifics of each priority or implementation plan should be left up to staff.

Mayor Reed asked if there are time limits to priorities. Ms. Snider stated there are timelines attached to each priority reflecting target dates for each of the tasks.

Council Member Fleming stated some of the tasks under the priorities have been completed, he would like to see origin dates and revision dates as well on the timelines. Vice Mayor Dent stated that may be a little too complicated since this is a rolling 20-year document. Council Member Jones stated he would leave the administrative stuff to the administrative team, and they should keep it in the best way they understand. Further discussion took place regarding this topic.

Vision 1 A City For All:

Vice Mayor Dent stated she liked the changes made to Priority #2 and #3. She stated she would propose to add Community Paramedics under Rationale and Consideration Fire Department column.

Vision 2 Community Resiliency and the Natural Environment:

Vice Mayor Dent stated under the Implementation Plan #4, it is crucial to get the whole community on board with education and outreach. Council Member Fleming stated he liked the addition of the Stormwater Improvement Plan; it is a good proactive way to get information out for residents to become involved. Mayor Reed stated she liked the equity considerations. Council Member Robinson stated this particular section has a greater emphasis on education and outreach to a broader population, which is extremely important for future generations and preserving the earth.

Vision 3 Economic Development: Goals, Gains, Growth:

Vice Mayor as to transportation partners, is it more specific because of the private operators in the area. Council Member Jones stated if it doesn't exist, we want to be able to go to the free market. Ande Banks, city manager, stated it is talking about private transportation networks because we know that many of the larger industries in the region already provide private transportation for some of their employees, and so if there is an opportunity for us to coordinate with them on drop off/ pick up stops along our already existing bus stops it would make it much more efficient. Council Member Jones asked Mr. Gatobu, director of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation, to make sure he reaches out beyond the Chamber of Commerce as not everyone is a member. Council Member Jones stated the Mayor and Council Member Fleming are making sure Implementation Plan #3 is being done.

Vision 4 A Thriving Educational Epicenter:

Council Member Fleming stated Implementation Plan #8 should be included with #3. Council Member Jones asked if Implementation Plan # will actually take until May 2025 to complete, we need to be finished by February 2025 so it can be on the

budget of FY 25/26 if funds are needed. Mr. Banks stated staff tried to identify timelines that would align depending on budget considerations and reminded Council this is a three-year time horizon, to help Council think beyond the next election and budget cycle. Mayor Reed stated childcare, early learning needs, and afterschool care are all top priorities, it seems as though these issues are being dealt with later than expected. Ms. Snider stated the discussion of the staff team was there needs to first be a step to gather data, assess, and really hone in on what the need areas are, where are the gaps, and then take the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and use them to make recommended actions going forward. Mayor Reed stated she understands that, but the school times are changing in the fall and there will be a huge need, especially for elementary school students. Mr. Banks asked if there is a consensus amongst Council that this needs to be more fast-tracked. Council agreed that Implementation Plan #7 target date needs to be changed to March, 2025 and #8 to April 2025.

Vision 5 Fiscal Responsibility and Planning: no comments

Vision 6 Available Housing For All: No comments

Vision 7 Distinctive, Reliable Delivery of High Quality City Services:

Mayor Reed stated she is glad that Priority #7 was added and Station 4 was included. Vice Mayor Dent stated she liked that Priority # 8 was added.

Council discussed Priority # 6

Council Member Fleming stated for Priority #3 shows a population of 57,000, JMU is actually not ½ of our population, more like one-third, which makes a big difference. Mayor Reed stated she likes the population number because it shows us slightly larger than Charlottesville. Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development stated the Weldon Cooper Center will be releasing their numbers by the end of January 2025 for the 2023 estimate, in 2022 we were at 55,700.

Council Member Fletcher stated he would like to get a presentation of the High Performance Organization model as shown in Priority 3 Implementation Plan # 7, it is a very distinctive thing that the city manager and the Human Resources Department is pursuing, and it would be good for the community to see what that is and what it means.

Council Member Robinson thanked city staff for all their hard work, she enjoyed looking through this and seeing how our vision seems through them.

Vice Mayor Dent stated this is a great example of our Council/Manager form of government, City Council sets the policy decisions and then city manager and staff work through the details of how to implement them.

City Council held its most recent biennial off-site retreat on August 26 and 27, 2023. This retreat focused on review and revision of the City Council Vision, with the new future state

year of 2043. City Council created a new set of priorities for City staff to implement between 2024-2027 to advance the City 2043 Vision. On October 24 and October 25, 2023 the City's Executive Leadership Team and other senior staff came together for a two-day work session to draft implementation Action Plans for the City Council 2024-2027 Priorities. These Action Plans describe the priorities, the action steps/tasks, and timelines over the next three years. Once adopted, City staff will begin implementation. City staff will update City Council on progress toward implementation.

Recess

At 6:49 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 7:01 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

Regular Session

3. Invocation

Mayor Reed offered the invocation

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

5. Special Recognition

5.a. Police Promotional Ceremony

Chaz Haywood, Clerk of the Rockingham County Circuit Court sworn in officer Amy Rayman to the rank of Sergeant.

Kelley Warner, chief of Harrisonburg Police Department, provided information on Sgt. Rayman's career history, Sgt. Rayman introduced her family.

Promotion of Officer Amie Raymann to Police Sergeant. Rockingham County Clerk Chaz Haywood will swear in the officers to their new roles.

Presentation from Harrisonburg High School for the musical Cats

Phil Saunders, assistant director, Harrisonburg High School musical, stated they are super excited to be the very first school in the area to put on Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cats. He stated it runs from February 7 - 11, 2024 at Harrisonburg High School and tickets can be purchased on the school's website. Some of the cast performed a small portion of the musical.

6. Consent Agenda (any item placed on the consent agenda shall be removed and taken up as a separate matter, if so requested by any member of Council, otherwise all items will be voted on with one (1) motion)

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

6.a. Minutes from the January 9, 2024 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda.

6.b. Consider a request from Richard Germroth and Alexandra Vilela to rezone 1182 Nelson Drive

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

6.c. Consider a request from Daniel R. and Naomi R. Shenk, Harrisonburg Cohousing LLC, and Brenda G. Castello & Ted A. Morris to rezone 1816, 1820 Country Club Road, 640, 650, 660, 670, 680, 690, 700, 710, 730 Keezletown Road

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

6.d. Consider a request from 865 East LLC to amend Section 10-3-91 (9) of the Zoning Ordinance's B-2, General Business District regulations

This ordinance amendment was approved on second reading.

6.e. Consider a request from 865 East LLC to rezone 865 Port Republic Road

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

6.f. Consider a request from Devon Lane LLC to rezone 716, 720, and 722 Foley Road

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

7. Public Hearings

7.a. Consider a request from Cobblers Valley Development LLC to rezone 585 Pear Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, stated items 7a and 7b will be presented together. He presented a request to rezone R-1 to R-8C and a special use permit to allow townhomes in R-8 district, for property located at 585 Pear Street. He reviewed the surrounding zoning designations, the subject site, submitted proffers and draft planned development map.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (7-0) recommended approval of both requests and allow up to 48 months to initiate the special use permit.

Council Member Fleming asked if this development was on city water and sewer. Mr. Fletcher stated he believes it will be provided by the county since it's all one development.

Vice Mayor Dent stated although it feels like an integrated development, there is still a hard line for the school district because part of this development is in the city and part in the county.

At 7:23 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first and second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Daily News-Record on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Todd Rhea, Clark and Bradshaw, representative of applicant, stated he has been working with the developers for over six years on this project, the sidewalks and road networks have been carefully thought out, stormwater management systems have already been installed, and meets transit goals. He stated Valley Engineering is present should Council have any questions.

Council Member Fleming asked how many of these units will be for sale. Mr. Rhea stated all units will be for sale in this part of the development. The other parts of the development do have rentals.

Theresa Kusak, 91 1/2 Franklin, asked if this project addresses the need for low income housing.

At 7:29 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council Member Robinson stated the staff notes from Planning Commission reflect price points for the home purchases, but it didn't mention anything about any new rentals in this project. Mr. Rhea stated the discussion at Planning Commission regarding the price point were for the single family homes in the county portion of Cobblers Valley community, that have been selling for between \$325,000 and \$450,000. He stated there will be townhomes in this new request that will be for sale for around \$300,000.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the rezoning request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

7.b. Consider a request from Cobblers Valley Development LLC for a special use permit to allow attached townhomes at 585 Pear Street

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the special use permit and to allow up to 48 months to initiate the special use permit as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

7.c. Consider a request from J&D Group LLC to rezone two parcels at 465 Pear Street and Pear Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development presented 7c & 7d together. He stated the request is for rezoning from R-1 to R-8 C and a special use permit to allow townhomes located on 465 Pear Street. He reviewed the surrounding properties, proffers offered and draft site plan.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (7-0) recommended approval of both requests and to allow 48 months to initiate the SUP.

Vice Mayor Dent stated there was some discussion in Planning Commission regarding the 48 month extension, but as the representative for the applicant explained they might need the time to get the various components involved but moving forward now, and this would avoid having to renew the special use permit if more time is needed.

Council Member Fleming stated the developers' goal is to get this developed as soon as possible.

Council Member Jones stated that we shouldn't make this a precedent, we don't want to keep our list of ongoing developments to become something that is still on there when housing is needed.

Vice Mayor Dent stated in her three years so far Council has approved dozens of developments and only two have actually gone to development, so she agrees we don't want to keep adding to the backlog, we want to see these things built.

At 7:33 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the third and fourth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Daily News-Record on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

Todd Rhea, Clark and Bradshaw, representative of applicant, explained the reason why the extension to 48 months is requested, the developer has developed the infrastructure, they are going gangbusters, active today, and he is confident it will happen sooner than requested. He stated developments like this that don't have proffered affordability component help meet the city's goal of affordable housing through the moving chain, and explained how that works. He stated the developer is present for any questions. He stated this and the previous development are working together with access, transportation needs, etc.

Council Member Fleming stated one of the ways people can move into first time homeownership is with housing and financial counseling that is available. He stated would or could there be a commitment to providing such counseling by the

developer/owner. Mr. Rhea stated they haven't seen a direct need for that but with the Cobblers Valley Project in the County with a national home builder they have a lot of first time homeowner programs in place, it is part of their business model to offer subsidized interest rates for first time homeowners as well.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on consumer surplus and producer surplus, the housing study, neighborhoods, the backlog of housing construction, insufficient wage problem vs housing problem, sprawl, and the decision processes in the city.

At 7:51 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the rezoning request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

- 7.d.** Consider a request from J&D Group LLC for a special use permit to allow attached townhomes at 465 Pear Street and Pear Street

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the special use permit and to allow up to 48 months to initiate the special use permit as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

8. Regular Items

- 8.a.** Update on Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Update Project

Thanh Dang, deputy director of Community Development, presented an update of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance project. She reviewed the purpose of these ordinances and noted the last time these ordinances were reviewed and comprehensively rewritten was in 1996/1997 and are overdue for an update. She stated in July 2020 the process was started by contracting with a consultant, stakeholder meetings were held, and ordinance advisory committee was formed, released a draft of the first part of the zoning ordinance rewrite, module one, for public comment, but this project got stalled out and put on hold late 2021. She stated over the past month the core project team regrouped, updated the project schedule and started their work on module two. She stated they anticipate releasing module two later in the spring of 2024 and will continue working on the other parts of the ordinance, post additional public meetings, public comment periods, to present the final draft the ordinances at public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council meetings in early 2025.

Council Member Jones stated since this started in 2020, people weren't leaving their house due to the pandemic, and it was hard to get any information from the public, do we feel confident that we heard from a good amount of people and representation in order to move forward. He stated if we want to move forward, we need to make sure we work as hard as we can to get it at its peak and 2020 wasn't it. Ms. Thanh stated module one will be re-released to the public again, but asked if Council Member Jones is requesting stakeholder meetings be held again. Council Member Jones stated he just wants to make sure that staff is comfortable that we have received residents' input and did a good job following up on then we want to keep things moving forward.

Mayor Reed asked what releasing the module would do. Ms. Thanh stated it would give the public the opportunity to provide feedback again, staff will incorporate any previous comments received as well.

Vice Mayor Dent stated she is thrilled to have this restarting and she appreciates Council Member Jones' questions. She stated the ordinance rewrite committee can dig into all the comments. Vice Mayor Dent stated this is going in sequence with the zoning ordinance rewrite first and then the Comprehensive Plan update, because that is a much more in depth and long project. Further discussion took place regarding the timeline of both projects.

Council Member Fleming stated he is thrilled and excited to move forward with this project and he appreciates Council Member Jones' thoughts, it makes a lot of sense. He stated on the member list there aren't any university people on there representing EMU and JMU, he stated that should be thought about and make sure we get input from those groups specifically.

A discussion took place regarding Council's representation on the Ordinance Advisory Committee.

No action required

This Report was received and filed.

8.b. Consider adoption of the City Council 2024-2027 Priorities Action Plans

Council Member Jones stated it was great to see all the executive leadership team involved in different roles and working together, the presentation was perfect, our goal and our job as City Council and staff is to provide high quality services to the members of the city. He stated these priority actions make that very clear.

Mayor Reed stated that you can see where it started 3 years ago, it has evolved and now we can see Mr. Bank's stamp on it, and she loves the Champions piece too. Mr. Bank stated he appreciates the comments but defers to the Executive Leadership Team, they are the ones doing the hard work, they are our champions, the deputy city

manager has been leading the coordinated effort in getting all that work together, and his job is to empower them and give them the tools they need to do this kind of innovative work.

Council Member Fleming stated the idea that we have a document that outlines targets, and we can measure progress to see what we are doing as a city and citizens can see that as well.

Council Member Jones stated all of us are serving on state and national committees doing the work that is in our vision statement for 20 years from now. He stated we are doing this work in Virginia and nationally.

Council member Fleming stated the value of that is when we meet with people around the country about things they are experiencing, we can say we are already doing that, we have the same issues, but we have a plan to address them.

Council Member Robinson stated having been a lifelong member of this community it really speaks volumes to her to know where we have come from and where we are today, having lived through a time when our government clearly focused on the higher, more elite end of the population, to see now where we are focusing on housing for all people to make this a community for all. She stated being very inclusive and thoughtful across all spectrums, all areas of government, and to see that written out in the plan says a lot about where we are and the new community this city has embraced and become. She stated this is reflective of the city manager and staff, to be led by someone who embodies those ideas that are important to her means a lot and she is very thankful that staff is being led by someone who believes in a city for all.

Mr. Banks thanked Council, this is a strategic planning process is one that starts with our policy makers, Council is the elected body of our residents and have been put into these positions of leadership and it starts with Council's vision of the community they want to create. He stated the edits requested will be made and he will send out the updated action plan.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to adopt the 2024 – 2027 Priority Action Plans as presented in the work session including recommended amendments. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

8.c. Consideration staff's recommendations regarding collective bargaining

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated he wanted to bring to Council's attention that the city has received a letter from an attorney representing the Harrisonburg Police Office Members of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association to engage in

collective bargaining with the city, which is now permitted by Virginia law. He stated it would require an ordinance if Council wanted to move forward. He stated this is to notify Council and members of the public of this request. He provided the background of collective bargaining which was disallowed by the Supreme Court in 1977 among local government employees as a violation of the Dillon Rule, in 1993 the General Assembly codified that ruling. He stated in 2020 the General Assembly amended the Code of Virginia to allow collective bargaining by local government employees and local governments which he believes was a compromise so that local government could permit collective bargaining by ordinance. He stated if the governmental body receives signed certifications from at least 50% of the members of an appropriate collective bargaining unit then the local governmental body must vote yes or no on whether or not to enact an ordinance to permit collective bargaining. He stated there is no obligation to permit collective bargaining and has until April 20, 2024, to vote on this matter. He reviewed the next steps and noted he is finalizing some analysis of the financial obligations that would flow from engaging in collective bargaining that will be shared with Council over the next couple of weeks.

Council Member Fleming stated he appreciates the description, there is a lot of information to gather, we need to understand what binding ability this has with future Council financially. Mr. Brown stated under the amended State Code it states specifically that no ordinance adopted shall include provisions that restrict the governing body's authority to establish the budget or appropriate funds, so it will always be in Council's purview to appropriate funds.

Vice Mayor Dent stated the guideline not to obligate future Councils, and asked how that works. Mr. Brown stated with the language that is included in the State Code future Council Members will not be obligated as they could rescind the ordinance at any time.

No action required at this time.

This Ordinance was received and filed.

Recess

At 8:25 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 8:32 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

9. Supplementals

- 9.a.** Consider approving a supplemental appropriation for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant

Ande Banks, city manager, presented a supplemental appropriation request for grant funds in the amount of \$16,964 to outfit our newly purchased police patrol vehicles with Automatic External Defibrillators (AED).

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the supplemental appropriation as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

10. Other Matters

10.a. Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not on the regular agenda. (Name and address are required)

Muawia DaMas, 240 Fairway Drive, stated he is one of the people compiling a City Council resolution in support of three main objectives:

1. Calling for a cease fire in Israel and Gaza,
2. Release of hostages,
3. Humanitarian aid;

He stated this is in thanks to the Mayor the initiative to create the best wording and what best reflects the value as a city. He stated is a descendant of Palestinians and shared what it is like to be Palestinian today. He asked that Council support the request of the resolution.

Michael Snell-Feikema, 1174 Westmoreland Drive, spoke on what is motivating people to go to Washington DC for the demonstrations, teach-ins, and arrests. He stated we just need to look at South Africa in the part of world justice, and what the Center for Constitutional Rights are doing in the American court system, they were trying to stop a genocide. He spoke about a genocide in Guatemala in 1970's and 80's; the organization of the local groups seeking the request for cease fire;

Reslie Cortez Rivera 1233 Frost Place, stated it has been 108 days of: carpet bombing of residential areas; of bombing hospitals, refugee camps, sacred historical sites, and places of worship; of dropping leaflets telling Gaza's to go north or south and then bombing those exact escape routes; of cutting off water, food and life saving medical supplies; of our tax dollars funding a genocide we have no means of stopping on our own; of her checking on Gazan journalists; of protests, vigils, teach-ins, boycotts, webinars, caravans, calling our representatives, and letter writing across the world; of silence from this Council, our city, and our local institutions; hearing our nations officials deny that a genocide is happening or justifying the massacring of 30,000 plus civilians and tens of thousands more injured; of realizing our leaders don't care; of losing every shred of hope in our democracy and confidence in our leadership. She stated you may not think this issue is relevant to this Council, but silence is complicit at best. She urges Council to speak in favor of a cease fire and support the Arab and Muslim community members.

Ron Ornstein, 358 Monticello Avenue, stated he would like to thank Mayor Reed for convening a group representing both the Jewish, Muslim, and peace communities within the city, that met last week and has plans to meet again this coming Friday, to work on what we share as goals of cease fire and release of hostages. He stated it has also been 108 days of several hundred children and elderly Israeli civilians who were taken captive; Hamas brutally attacked and killed well over 1,000 Israeli civilians; there is plenty of blame to go around on both sides; we all mourn the losses and we all wish for peace; it is a very complicated historical conflict; there are members of this community that have close connections to both Israel and Palestine; the goal of the task group the Mayor convened is to find common ground to live up to the principals, values and beliefs of this community. He stated he supports all that are in support of peace, but if they are in support of the destruction of the nation of Israel then that is not a solution to the problem, just a continuation of the problem. He stated he assumes that Hamas does not represent the majority of the will of Palestinians who want peace. He stated by in large what we do in our city isn't going to change international relations. He stated the Synagogue and the Mosques have a great relationship in the city and he hopes that this political issue of international relations doesn't disrupt that peace, community building, and welcoming here in the city.

Hasan Hamdan, stated he supports the efforts of Council, and hopes they support the resolution. He spoke on the conditions of the Palestinians and people he knows in Gaza and what they have been through there.

Hin Mousa, 1311 Starcrest Drive, stated she is a freshman at Harrisonburg High School; she spoke on the horrible travesties taking place in Gaza to innocent Palestinian children. She stated we pride ourselves on being a fair, democratic, and progressive city, but what has Harrisonburg done for the victims of the genocide dying by the 100's every day in Palestine. She stated it is imperative in the name of basic humanity that we come together as a community to show our support for the people of Palestine, it is critical we give a voice to the voiceless, and she requests Council shows their support for Palestine and for a cease fire.

Earl Martin, 1013 College Avenue, stated he would like to raise one concern and that is the consideration of moral injury. He stated people who study social responses, in particular, those growing out of the study of PTSD, have identified moral injury that happens to people when we observe abuse or violence being committed against another human being and we have the feeling we can do nothing or we chose to do nothing; it is out of that circumstance or choice that we experience moral injury akin to PTSD, and it seems that perhaps our society at this point is experiencing a great deal of moral injury over what is happening, we see what is happening but feel helpless. He stated he thinks often of Gaza and what he can do, therefore he feels the encouragement of the city in resolution form for a cease fire is one step in addressing the moral injury that we all feel. He shared the situation of someone he knows over there and asked Council to take the steps of support.

Holly Hurst Stravers, 1522 Hillside Avenue, stated she stands not as a Christian, Muslim, or Jew, but as a human being, a mother, a community member, and a family member, to voice her support for the city passing a resolution asking for a cease fire in Gaza and a release of hostages on all sides. She stated she would stand the same no matter who the victims were. She thanked Council for their service to the city and all they do to provide services and make Harrisonburg a wonderful place to live, but she thinks there are times in our present and our history that we all need to speak up and take a moral stand.

Dalia Dalla, 525 Davis Mills Drive, stated she is a student at JMU, she was happy to see Officer Amy sworn in earlier because she thought it was interesting how our police officers are asked to uphold the Constitution in basic human rights and then ensure that the rest of us do so to, yet the leaders of this country, seem to be the only ones having trouble doing so. She stated Palestinians are still being denied their basic human rights to food, water, electricity, speech, education, shelter, and just about every other right you can think of. She stated our government response to this hasn't been sending food to the starving Palestinian orphans, it hasn't been helping mothers dig their children out from the rubble, it hasn't been turning the power back on to the incubators holding hundreds of premature babies, it hasn't been creating an effort to remind the American people that our belief in the Constitution in human rights for all people should be a core aspect of what makes us American. She stated instead all they have been showing us for the past 75 years is that our Constitution is actually just a fancy piece of paper whose sole purpose is to be admired behind some glass in a museum.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, secretary of the Harrisonburg Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition, stated Peoples Day was once again a success, as always, the powers conspired against it and the people stood up. He stated people came out in the spirit of Dr. King and the spirit of our renaming, which said we want to build our community on an inclusive hour, no gaslighting, but genuinely build our community. He spoke further on the event, Dr. Kings speech called Beyond Vietnam, the renaming of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, the symbol of sunflowers and not mowing the grass.

10.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Fleming stated he thinks there needs to be something from Council, he appreciates everyone that showed up to speak, he understands the urgency, we allow for all those voices to come here to speak. He stated as a Council we don't have a policy on responding to foreign policy and human rights violations, our responsibility is to our community and how is it that we can step into this discussion in a way that is helpful and healing in our community. He stated there is ongoing discussion and dialogue that is happening, he appreciates the difficulty that it represents, and he is somewhat anticipating there will be something more coming forth from the community that represents further discussion. He stated all his adult life has been stepping into issues of peace, places where there is conflict, and shared his past history.

Council Member Robinson stated she echo's what Council Member Fleming just said, she comes from a history of trauma, she knows what racism looks like, she knows what is like to have difference access, pathways, lanes, building and facilities for different people, even though it isn't posted anymore she knows what it is like. She stated she is overwhelmed tonight with the sharing and transparency tonight and hear firsthand from those who have loved ones that are suffering; she thinks about MLK, Day and his words, and shared a Dr. King quote;

Vice Mayor Dent stated she is deeply moved by the very transparent and raw sharing of pain, the phrase that resonates the most with her is human rights, when people anywhere are having their basic human rights violated it behooves us as humans to acknowledge, hear and heal that as best we can. She stated there is a contrast between the Russian/Ukraine invasion, she visited those countries and studies foreign policy, but it was easy for her to support Ukraine. She stated it is much harder in this situation because people are fighting to live in the same home with a millennium old conflict. She stated she appreciates the learning and the compassion that this is instilling in us because you are speaking with suffering, she understands the frustration of the slowness of our government and reluctance to do anything divisive in our community that Council has to keep in mind.

Council Member Jones stated one of the speakers reminded him of himself when he was that age with her passion. He stated he knows what it is like to see your people being tortured, separated from families, and left in slavery for decades after slavery ended. He stated he doesn't know what it is like to be in Palestine or Israel, but he knows what it is like to not have human rights, he wishes he could help everyone, but the problem is people hate each other, the lack of love and compassionate cannot be fixed by the government, hate comes from greed, money, power. He stated he doesn't know all the history of Palestine and Israel, or what it is like there. He stated if there are ways that he can help he would love to, but he knows a resolution isn't going to be what they need, what needs to happen is on a state and federal level. He spoke further on historical human rights violations and where to get the most impact for this issue with our governor and U.S. senators.

Mayor Reed stated she has been meeting with several groups as a task force, she wanted everyone to feel like they were being heard. She stated the first meeting was very productive, another meeting is scheduled, and we will keep meeting because a lot is coming out of those conversations. She stated she wants to see movement, action, she is not trying to divide our community, she normally isn't supportive of resolutions because they are only symbolical, but if anyone needs her to contact our senators, or go with them to the state level she is willing, that will make more of an impact. She stated she wants everyone to be able to live in a community that is safe; she is glad everyone came to this meeting as Council's job is to sit here and listen and hear our residents, and to support as best as possible. She stated she cares about everyone, she cares about their pain and suffering, and we will all come together and keep moving forward.

11. Boards and Commissions**11.a. Tree Advisory Board**

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to appoint Scott Jost and Tyler Evans to the Tree Advisory Board to full 1st full terms to expire on January 27, 2027. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

11.b. Economic Development Authority

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to reappoint Michael Goertzen to a 4th term and Jennifer Maclin to a 2nd term to the Economic Development Authority. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

11.c. Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA)

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to re-appoint Kenneth Kettler to the HRHA to a full 1st full term to expire on February 11, 2028. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

11.d. Consider appointing Deputy City Manager, Amy Snider, as alternate to City Manager Ande Banks on certain boards and commissions.

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to appoint Amy Snider, deputy city manager as alternate for Ande Banks, city manager, on the Emergency Services Board, the Harrisonburg – Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center Commission. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Other Matters (continued)

Council Member Fleming stated that any jurisdiction that has photo speed monitoring needs to report annually back to the state, he would like to see that report when it is available. Mr. Banks stated he already reached out to Chief Warner, chief of Police, and she is getting the data. He stated he will forward it to Council as soon as it is received.

Council Member Fleming stated Council Member Jones, Mr. Banks, and himself had a liaison meeting with James Madison University, it was a good successful meeting, taking us to the next step of rethinking, reframing the relationship. He stated they hope to meet next month.

Cancellation of the March 12, 2024 City Council Meeting

Vice Mayor Dent stated with the NLC Conference taking place over the March 12, 2024, City Council meeting she asked if that Council meeting be postponed or cancelled. Further conversation took place regarding the conference.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to cancel the march 12, 2024 City Council regular meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

12. Closed Session

13. Adjournment

At 9:47 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR