



City of Harrisonburg

City Hall
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The Harrisonburg Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday June 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 409 South Main Street.

2. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

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

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

Absent 2 - Richard Baugh, and Heja Alsindi

3. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Porter asked if there were any corrections, comments or a motion regarding the May 13, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Seitz said motion to approve minutes with the amendment indicated by Commissioner Seitz.

Commissioner Kettler seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the May 13, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes with the amendment passed by voice vote (5-0).

3.a. Minutes from the May 13, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Seitz, seconded by Kettler, that the May 13, 2026, Planning Commission Minutes be approved. The motion carried by a voice vote.

4. New Business - Public Hearings

4.a. Consider a request from Sean Ryan and Lisa Lopez-Ryan for a special use permit to

allow short-term rental at 453 West Water Street

Vice Chair Porter read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Soffel said the applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-40(8) to allow a short-term rental (STR) in the R-2, Residential District. The +/- 10,297-square foot property is addressed as 453 West Water Street and is identified as tax map parcel 36-S-12. If approved, the applicant plans to operate a short-term rental on the property.

In 2019, the City adopted regulations associated with short-term transient lodging, commonly referred to as Airbnb's. These regulations were amended in September 2020 to create the by right "homestay" use. To operate a homestay, the property must be the operator's primary residence, may host up to four guests, may operate up to 90 nights per calendar year, and guests must stay within the main dwelling unit (as opposed to staying in a separate building on the property). If the operator wants to operate outside of what is permitted by right as a homestay, they must apply for an SUP to operate an STR.

On the property is a duplex (two connected dwellings) and an accessory structure. The property owner has stated that they will be the STR operator and will reside in one of the dwellings. They will operate the STR in the accessory structure on the property, offer two accommodation spaces, and host no more than four (4) guests at one time. One off-street parking space is required for each dwelling and for each accommodation space, for a total of four (4) off-street parking spaces. The driveway can accommodate the required spaces.

As explained within the submitted application materials, the applicant would operate the STR in the existing accessory structure (formerly a detached garage) that was renovated without required permits, prior to the applicant's ownership of the property. The applicant is in the process of applying for a building permit to bring the accessory structure into compliance and to obtain a certificate of occupancy. The applicant has been informed that a certificate of occupancy is required prior to beginning STR operations.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Neighborhood Residential and states:

These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types, but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood.

The proposed SUP does not add additional dwelling units or increase density.

Transportation and Traffic

A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was not required for the SUP request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested special use permit regarding water and sewer matters.

Housing

The City's Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject property within Market Type D, which notes that "[m]arket type D has lower market activity as well as lower access to amenities. This could be because the areas are stable residential neighborhoods or because the area is less developed and therefore has fewer sales and fewer amenities. Strategies that would be appropriate in the latter case include concurrent development of the housing and economic opportunities through mixed-use developments to build commerce and housing centers across the City.

Public Schools

If the special use permit is approved, no additional dwelling units would be added to the property; therefore, the student generation is zero.

Conclusion

After review of this request, staff believes it shares similar characteristics to other applications for STRs that have received approval. Staff recommends approval of the SUP with the following conditions:

1. All STR accommodations shall be within the accessory structure (detached garage) described in the application.
2. There shall be no more than 2 STR guestrooms or accommodation spaces.
3. The number of STR guests at one time shall be limited to four.
4. Minimum off-street parking spaces do not need to be delineated and can be accommodated utilizing the driveway or other areas on the property.
5. Prior to operation, the operator shall submit to City staff a completed Short-Term Rental Pre-Operation Form. Furthermore, the operator shall maintain compliance with the items identified in the Pre-Operation Form when short-term rental guests are present.
6. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the short-term rental becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.

Ms. Soffel asked if there were any questions for staff.

Councilmember Dent said I think it said that they had two sinks, a kitchen and a bathroom, I did not see anything about the kitchenette and the whole debate about stoves.

Ms. Soffel said there is no stove or oven which is the thing that would make it a kitchen.

Vice Chair Porter asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their request.

Lisa Lopez-Ryan, the applicant, came forward to speak to the request. She said I have been here for almost a year now. The dwelling that we are looking at seems perfect for something like an Airbnb. I am currently working for a bed and breakfast here in Harrisonburg and I talk to a lot of people traveling through and traveling to Harrisonburg. It just seems like a good thing to do for the City. Any questions for me?

Councilmember Dent said I believe that staff said that this short-term rental was set up before you bought the property.

Ms. Lopez-Ryan said the detached garage is roughly 500 square feet. Part of it was finished and turned into what they called a media room. It has AC and heat, floors, walls, lighting. At the time there is no record of what they did to it but since it is already partially finished, we decided to do the whole thing and use all 500 square feet of it for this short-term rental.

Vice Chair Porter asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and invited anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Commissioner Kettler said to the degree there is sometimes a concern with a short-term rental getting rid of existing housing stock, I do not think that applies to this particular unit.

Councilmember Dent said it is not officially a dwelling unit, it is an accessory structure.

Commissioner Kettler said motion to approve the special use permit with the suggested conditions.

Councilmember Dent seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Porter called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Seitz	Aye
Commissioner Jezior	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Kettler	Aye
Vice Chair Porter	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request passed (5-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on July 14, 2026.

A motion was made by Kettler, seconded by City Council Representative Dent, that this

PH-Special Use Permit be recommended for approval to the City Council, due back on 7/14/2026. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

Absent: 2 - Baugh and Alsindi

4.b. Consider a request from Honest Meats LLC for a special use permit to allow a meat processing and storage facility at 256 Charles Street

Vice Chair Porter read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Soffel said the applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) to allow a meat processing and storage facility in the M-1, General Industrial District. The +/- 1.5-acre property is addressed as 256 Charles Street and is identified as tax map parcel 45-A-3. If approved, the applicant plans to continue operating the currently nonconforming meat processing and storage facility.

T&E Meats currently operates on this property, where a portion of their use is a nonconforming meat processing facility (slaughterhouse) for domesticated livestock. As part of the meat processing facility, the livestock is processed onsite to produce fresh meat or value-added cured, cooked, or smoked products and then shipped to other markets or facilities. The remainder of the facility includes storage of processed products.

In 2025, the applicant expressed interest in finding a way to permit the slaughterhouse use in the M-1 General Industrial District to remove the nonconforming status, provide a route for future improvements, and to avoid the restrictions of Article E, Nonconforming Structures and Uses.

On February 10, 2026, City Council approved a Zoning Ordinance (ZO) amendment to add a new definition for “meat processing and storage facility” and to allow such facilities by SUP in the M-1 General Industrial District. If the applicant’s request for an SUP to operate a meat processing and storage facility is granted, the currently nonconforming use would become conforming under the ZO. While the applicant has stated that they do not intend to expand operations at this time, conformance with the ZO means that the applicant could expand in the future, so long as they comply with applicable codes and standards.

Special Use Permit Conditions

The applicant has offered the following self-imposed SUP conditions:

1. Semi-opaque fencing along the rear property lines and portions of the side property lines surrounding the livestock barn structure and livestock unloading area shall be provided and maintained with a 6- foot tall, semi-opaque screen consistent with existing installed screening in the screening area shown in orange on the attached Figure 1. Any torn or damaged screening will be repaired or replaced and maintained on the property. The screened perimeter area would be expanded should the outdoor livestock unloading,

- movement and penning area described below in condition 2 be expanded.
2. No outdoor, open-air livestock pens will be maintained or placed on the property. Livestock penned in the current livestock unloading barn will not be stored on site for more than 48 hours absent a regulatory order delaying operations. All livestock unloading, movement and penning area(s) shall be located behind or to the side of the principal building in the area shown in purple hashing on the attached Figure 1.
 3. Within six (6) months of Special Use Permit approval, the applicant will delineate required parking spaces on the property per City Zoning and DCSM requirements.
 4. A grease trap will be permitted and installed at the property within six (6) months after Special Use Permit approval with design and specifications subject to approval by City Public Utilities Department.

Conditions #1 and #2 require livestock to be kept within screened, designated areas, in a manner that would not be readily visible from outside the property. Condition #3 requires the delineation of required parking spaces. Condition #4 addresses a concern from Harrisonburg Public Utilities regarding discharge to the City's sanitary sewer system by requiring the installation of a grease trap.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Commercial and states:

Commercial uses include retail, office, professional service functions, restaurants, and lodging uses. Commercial areas should offer connecting streets, biking and walking facilities, and public transit services. Interparcel access and connections are essential to maintaining traffic safety and flow along arterials. Parking should be located to the sides or rear of buildings.

The SUP would not change the property's existing industrial use and therefore would not advance the Commercial land use designation; however, approval would make a long-standing nonconforming use conforming under the ZO.

Transportation and Traffic

The Determination of Need for a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) form ("TIA determination form") for the proposed SUP is attached. The TIA determination form indicated that the project would not generate 100 or more new peak hour trips, which is the threshold for staff to require a TIA. Therefore, a TIA was not required for the SUP request.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

With condition #4 requiring a grease trap, staff has no concerns with the requested special use permit regarding water and sewer matters.

Conclusion

Approval of the SUP would allow the existing use to become conforming under the ZO, and the

proposed conditions address concerns regarding screening, livestock areas, parking, and the installation of a grease trap. Staff recommends approval of the SUP with conditions, as submitted by the applicant.

Commissioner Jezior said the facility there right now is being used to house the livestock as they are going into the slaughterhouse. Would it be under the same use?

Ms. Soffel said very temporarily. The livestock is delivered and I believed the applicant said a maximum of 48 hours in the processing of the livestock.

Councilmember Dent said I am remembering, when we passed this as City Council, the definition of livestock. Am I remembering correctly that we also defined poultry at the same time to make sure there is a distinction?

Ms. Soffel said I believe with adding the definition for the meat processing then it raised the question about the poultry processing and we did not want to risk it being interpreted as not allowed.

Commissioner Seitz said I did have one clarifying question on the Figure One Diagram provided where the screening is shown in orange. That is existing screening that will be maintained, correct?

Ms. Soffel said correct.

Commissioner Seitz said there is no screening being added.

Ms. Soffel said not at this time.

Councilmember Dent said when I went over there today, I was looking at the blue hatched area identified as “animal unloading/movement and pinning area” and sure enough there were trucks backing up and a pen that encloses all of the animals. It is already there.

Vice Chair asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant’s representative to speak to their request.

Todd Rhea, the applicant’s representative, came forward to speak to the request. He said Ms. Soffel gave a great summary of the history of this request primarily to move a grandfathered nonconforming use into conforming status that helps with things from financing to insurance and related activities. The meat processing operations have been ongoing at this site for almost 90 years beginning in the 1930s. This is not a new operation and this request merely gives permission for what has gone on there historically. It is in an industrial district. Industrial uses primarily surround it. There have been no histories of complaints with the operations there. Staff has been really good to work with Honest Meats, Mr. Russ, Ms. Soffel and Mr. Blanks, to address concerns and technical considerations as we worked through the process to number one, amend

the City's ordinance to allow us to make this request and then to make the request for what we believe are appropriate conditions. Mr. Heavener is here. He runs the operations. They process a little less than 100 animals a month, so it is not a super intensive operation. They serve almost exclusively local organic farmers here in the Shenandoah Valley. It is a valuable business use in the City of Harrisonburg. We will respectfully request the Commission recommend approval to Council for the permit as requested with conditions.

Vice Chair Porter asked if there were any questions for the applicant's representative. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Commissioner Jezior said I think my main concern with this one is that as our residential district expands into this space how is that going to conflict in the future if this is approved and there is an option to expand in the future? There is just more potential for conflict moving forward. They have been there for a very long time so it is an interesting situation to be in as the City turns to expand in this space and potentially have houses across the street in the future. That is my biggest concern with this.

Commissioner Kettler made a motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request as submitted by the applicant.

Commissioner Seitz seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Porter called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Seitz	Aye
Commissioner Jezior	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Kettler	Aye
Vice Chair Porter	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request passed (5-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on July 14, 2026.

A motion was made by Kettler, seconded by Seitz, that this PH-Special Use Permit be recommended for approval to the City Council, due back on 7/14/2026. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

Absent: 2 - Baugh and Alsindi

4.c. Consider a request from WFS Hanson LLC to rezone 2210 and 2230 East Market

Street

See Minutes Extract.

A motion was made by Seitz, seconded by Jezior, that this PH-Rezoning be recommended for disapproval to the City Council, due back on 7/14/2026. The motion passed with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 3 - Porter, Seitz and Jezior

No: 2 - City Council Representative Dent and Kettler

Absent: 2 - Baugh and Alsindi

- 4.d.** Consider a request from WFS Hanson LLC for a special use permit for townhomes at 2210 and 2230 East Market St

See Minutes Extract.

A motion was made by Seitz, seconded by Jezior, that this PH-Special Use Permit be recommended for disapproval to the City Council, due back on 7/14/2026. The motion passed with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 3 - Porter, Seitz and Jezior

No: 2 - City Council Representative Dent and Kettler

Absent: 2 - Baugh and Alsindi

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Report of Secretary & Committees

8.a. Rockingham County Planning Commission Liaison Report

Commissioner Alsindi was absent therefore unable to give the liaison Report.

8.b. Board of Zoning Appeals Report

Vice Chair Porter reported on the June 1, 2026 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting. The BZA held a business meeting. The following items were on the agenda:

- Approval of the May 6, 2024 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting-Approved
- Appointments of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
- 2024 & 2025 Board of Zoning Appeals Annual Report-Approved sent to City Council
- Adoption of proposed Rules of Procedure updates-Approved
- Presentation on the Freedom of Information Act & Ex Parte Communications by Deputy City Attorney
- Presentation of staff reports by the Zoning Administrator

Matthew Phillippi was elected chair and Mr. Porter was elected vice-chair.

8.c. City Council Report

Councilmember Dent reported that there were no public hearing items to report from the May 26, 2026 City Council meeting.

At the June 9, 2026 City Council Meeting:

- Public hearing for a special use permit at 1315 Carrera Lane-Approved
- Public hearing to rezone 850 Canterbury Court-Approved
- Public hearing to rezone 1340 South Main Street-Postponed by the applicant

9. Other Matters

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

Ms. Dang reviewed the items anticipated for the July agenda:

- Rezoning - 704 N Liberty Street (R-2 to R-8C)
- Rezoning - Various addresses S Main Street & S Liberty Street - The Lindsey, formerly The Link (R-3 to B-1C)
- Subdivision Ordinance Amendment

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.

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