



# City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

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Tuesday, April 8, 2025

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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### 1. Roll Call

Chris Brown referred to the Virtual Attendance Policy and stated Council Member Robinson will be joining the meeting virtually due to illness.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, to allow virtual attendance of Council Member Robinson. The vote carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

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

**No:** 0

### 2. Invocation

Mayor Reed offered a moment of silence.

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

### 4. Special Recognition

### 5. 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 Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:**

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

**No:** 0

#### 5.a. Minutes from the March 25, 2025 City Council Meeting

**These minutes were approved on the consent agenda**

#### 5.b. Consider a request from Daniel W. and Nancy R. Brubaker Trustees to rezone (amend proffers) for a +/- 12-acre site addressed as 210, 290, and 280 West Mosby Road

**This rezoning request was approved on second reading.**

- 5.c.** Consider approving an ordinance enactment of Chapter 6 Article F - Private Towing Advisory Board

**This ordinance amendment was approved on second reading.**

- 5.d.** Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$300,000 for the Central Garage Fund

**This supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading.**

- 5.e.** Consider a request from the City of Harrisonburg to amend the Zoning Ordinance, Article E. - Nonconforming Structures and Uses

**This ordinance amendment was approved on second reading.**

- 5.f.** Consider the special event application request for the EMU Spring Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, May 4, 2025.

**This request was approved on the consent agenda**

- 5.g.** Consider the special event application request for the Judge Paul Marker Dedication Ceremony on May 17, 2025.

**This request was approved on the consent agenda**

- 5.h.** Consider the special event application request for Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance's Best.Weekend.Ever on Saturday, June 14, 2025.

**This request was approved on the consent agenda**

## **6. Public Hearings**

- 6.a.** Public Hearing to Consider 2025 CDBG Action Plan

Kristin McCombe, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Manager, presented the CDBG 2025 Annual Action Plan. She reviewed the following:

1. What the CDBG is and the process;
2. Estimated allocation amount for FY 2025
3. Applications and funding for the following categories:
  - (a) Housing and property improvements;
  - (b) Community & Public Facilities;
  - (c) Planning and Administration;
  - (d) Public Services;
4. Schedule for the 2025 Action Plan.

At 7:07 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first public

hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

Joyce Nussbaum, program director for Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS), thanked Council and Ms. McCombe for supporting Meals on Wheels, which provides 5,000 meals to 43 unique individuals in the city.

At 7:09 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

**This Public Hearing - No Action was received and filed.**

- 6.b.** Consider a request from Cat's Cradle of the Shenandoah Valley, Inc. to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow pet adoptions in B-1

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented an ordinance amendment request to allow pet adoptions in B-1 and B-2 zoning districts. He reviewed the amendments and stated this was a request from Cat's Cradle.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

At 7:18 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Sherri Heishman, executive director of Cat's Cradle, stated they do approximately 600-650 adoptions per year overall, but cannot actually hand off any adoptions at the storefront downtown because of the current ordinances. She stated this ordinance amendment will allow adoptions directly out of the store and reduce the amount of volunteer transport needed.

At 7:19 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that the ordinance amendment be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:**

- 6.c.** Consider a request from Janis Brown Enterprises LLC to rezone two parcels addressed as 1211 and 1231 Smithland Road

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a rezoning request from R-1C to R-8C for property located at 1211 and 1231 Smithland Road. He reviewed the land use guide, the proffers offered at the Planning Commission meeting, conceptual layouts offered at Planning Commission, and stated Staff and Planning Commission (3-2) recommended denial. He stated since that meeting, the developer has met with staff and provided a revised conceptual layout and revised

proffers, which he reviewed. He stated staff maintains their recommendation for denial and noted Planning Commission has not had a chance to review and vote on the most recent changes. He reviewed the concerns staff and Planning Commission had on this request related to the conceptual layouts and the city's design criteria.

Council Member Dent stated we are voting on the rezoning, not the conceptual layouts, and we should trust the process that the conceptual layout won't be accepted until concerns of staff are met.

Discussion took place around the rezoning related to the conceptual layouts, the applicant's quick responses to some of staff's concerns, the proffers offered, and the need for this type of housing.

At 7:47 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the third public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

David Gast, The Riverbank Companies, developer and applicant, provided a background of his company, the partners involved in this project, and spoke on the by-right uses versus the R-8 uses, the terrain of the property, the estimated prices of the homes if rezoning is allowed.

Jack Scanlon, Land Design, civil engineer for the project, spoke on the revised conceptual layout and how it addresses the proffers submitted and some of staff's concerns. He stated there is no doubt that additional detailed engineering needs to be and will be done if Council approves the rezoning request.

Coner O'Donnell with Gentry Lock Attorneys Land Use Planner for the project, spoke on the work they have been doing with staff over the past 9 months,

Dan Rublee, 1251 Smithland Road, spoke against the rezoning request based on the change to the character of the neighborhood this development would create, traffic impacts, safety, environmental concerns, preservation of trees, and referred to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

At 8:08 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council Member Dent spoke on the conceptual layout, the willingness of the developer to work with staff on concerns, that she likes the R-8 zoning, is in favor of the potential shared use path, and is in favor of this request, but understands if staff needs more time.

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the need this development would address in the city, the willingness of the developer to respond to staff concerns, how the engineering approval process could take care of the concerns staff has, and noted he is in favor of approving the request or allowing additional time if staff needs.

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on how this development addresses the needs in the city, the importance of this 10 acre tract in the development of a larger future neighborhood, and that he is in favor of staff having a bit more time to get to a closer agreement in the conceptual layout.

Council Member Robinson agreed with Vice Mayor Fleming, and stated what is done with this tract is important and she is in favor of tabling this until the next meeting.

Mayor Reed stated she takes staff and Planning Commission's recommendations seriously; housing is needed but decisions should not be rushed, and she is in favor of tabling this item until the next meeting.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to table this item until April 22, 2025, City Council meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**6.d.** Consider a request from Divine Unity Community Church to rezone 1680 Country Club Road

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a rezoning request from Divine Unity Community Church, from M-1 to B-2C for property located at 1680 Country Club Road. He reviewed the land use in the area, the history of the property, and the proffers submitted.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

Discussion took place regarding the use for this rezoning request.

At 8:30 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the fourth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Pastor Gabe Kreider, applicant representative, stated that although there are not set plans for the expansion, they hope to hold youth activities in the additional space.

At 8:33 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that the rezoning request be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

**6.e.** Consider a request from James A. Herr to rezone 532 Hawkins Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a rezoning request from R-3 to R-5C for property located at 532 Hawkins Street. He reviewed the surrounding areas, long term plans for the area, the conceptual design, and the purpose of the rezoning request.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

At 8:37 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the fifth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Gil Coleman, Coleman Engineering, applicants' representative, stated the intent is to utilize these types of properties in a fruitful way given their space constraints, and that the planned use is perfect for this property.

James Herr, applicant, thanked Council for their consideration, stated there is a need for affordable housing and that the anticipated use for this property will support the mission of the nonprofit Bridge of Hope.

Heidi Hoover, executive director, Bridge of Hope, stated the planned use is for rental units for single parent families with minor children to get back on their feet through a program they offer.

At 8:44 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Discussion took place about the productive use of this space and how it is an important part of our housing continuum that addresses a critical need.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming seconded by Council Member Dent, that the rezoning request be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

**6.f.** Consider a request from Bluestone of Harrisonburg LLC for a special use permit to allow multiple-family dwellings of more than 12 units per building at tax map parcel 108-B-2 (Boulder Ridge)

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a special use permit request for R-5C zoned property known as Boulder Ridge Apartments. He reviewed the area, the surrounding properties, and the history of the property.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

At 8:50 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the sixth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Seth Roderick, Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio, representative for applicant, stated this is part of a much larger project located in Rockingham County, and this request is to allow for more than 12 units per building of multiple family dwellings.

At 8:53 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, that the special use permit request be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

## **7. Regular Items**

### **7.a. Harrisonburg Presentation on the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Regional Housing Study Topics**

Jeremy Crute, director of Planning, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) stated he is joined virtually by Mel Jones with the Virginia Center of Housing Research and Jonathan Knopf with Housing Forward Virginia. He presented the CSPDC Regional Housing Study. He reviewed the following:

- The process of the study;
- Data analysis;
- Regional Solutions;
- Priority solutions for Harrisonburg;

He stated this is a brief and high level review of the study and asked if Council had any questions.

Discussion took place regarding what can be found in the two reports, how to use these reports for the benefit of the city's housing issues, how some ordinance amendments could be directed to housing shortages in the city, and state legislation.

**This Presentation was received and filed.**

## **Recess**

At 9:23 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 9:27 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

**7.b. Presentation on the proposed FY 2025-26 Budget**

Ande Banks, city manager, presented the proposed 2025-26 Budget. He thanked department directors and city staff for carefully evaluating the services offered by the city, the current budget and the ongoing needs of the city. He specifically thanked deputy city manager Amy Snider, assistant to the city manager Brian Vandenberg, and the finance director, Larry Propst. He reviewed the Council's 2045 Vision, the budget preparation process, the focus of the proposed budget, budget development challenges, budget highlights, City Council priorities highlights, the one new full time position, civic and community organizations grant funding recommendations, tax recommendations (no change), rate and fee recommendations for water, sewer and stormwater, population estimates, all fund budget, general fund revenue and expenditures, comparison of revenues, city schools budget highlights, budget calendar and the website link for the Budget in Brief.

Council reviewed the budget calendar and thanked Mr. Banks and staff for proposing a balanced budget. Council spoke on how the individual budget reviews were extremely helpful, there are things in the budget highlights that are exciting, possible challenges with federal and state funding, and they are happy there are no tax increases.

**This Presentation was received and filed.**

**8. Supplementals****8.a. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General Capital Projects Fund**

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation for grants received for Public Works for almost \$4M for Gay Street refiguration, various pedestrian crossing improvements throughout the city, and Liberty Street improvements design work.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, that the supplemental appropriation be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:**

**9. Other Matters****9.a. Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not on the regular agenda. (Name and address are required)**

none

**9.b. City Council and Staff**

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the recent Immigrant Support Session at JMU in which he was a panelist; a recent session of JMU Civic students on the relationship between JMU and the city he and Mayor Reed were on the panel; and a meeting he



had with Andrea Dono with Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance.

Council Member Dent spoke on her serving on the panel for the Young Democrats meeting, the Strongest Town contest, and Arbor Day on April 12, 2025.

Council Member Robinson spoke on a meeting with the Young Democrats and that she spoke at the Equity Summit with Smart Growth America about the Community Connectors program.

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the 25th anniversary of the Arts Council of the Valley event; he was on the panel of a Day with Leaders Symposium at Bridgewater College; he will be part of a Chesapeake Bay Watershed Tour;

Mayor Reed spoke on her serving on the panel for the Young Democrats meeting; a recent session of JMU Civic students on the relationship between JMU and the city she and Council Member Alsaadun were on the panel for, and the recent Virginia Hunt State Policy Fellows cohort she attended.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated the city has been notified by the DEQ that we are now in a drought watch but no action is required; and Saturday April 12, 2025, at 9:00 am is the annual Blacks Run Cleanup.

## **10. Boards and Commissions**

### **10.a. Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to appoint Aaron Hewitt to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to a term to expire on April 8, 2029. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote:

### **10.b. Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to reappoint Jeffrey Holsinger to the Board of Zoning Appeals to a first term to expire on May 26, 2030. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote:

## **11. Closed Session**

## **12. Adjournment**

At 10:11 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR