



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Laura Dent, Council Member Dany Fleming and Council Member Monica Robinson

Absent: 1 - Council Member Christopher B. Jones

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

2. Invocation

Vice Mayor Dent offered the invocation.

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

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Jones

5.a. Minutes from the March 14, 2023 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider a request from 251 Garbers Church Farm LLC to rezone 251 Garbers Church Road

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

6. Public Hearings

6.a. 2023 CDBG Annual Action Plan

Ande Banks, city manager, presented the 2023 Annual Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). He reviewed what CDBG is, the 2023 allocation, the rollover funding from 2022, the breakdown of recommended allocations per category, and the schedule reflecting the Public Hearing ends on May 1, 2023.

Mayor Reed asked how the decision as to what organizations received funding was made. Mr. Banks stated there is metrics scoring along with a 15 question application.

At 7:12 p.m., Vice Mayor closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Beth Bland, Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS), stated one of the programs they do is the Meals on Wheels program. She stated CDBG Funding is important to their program, they deliver 3000 meals this year to 237 people which is a ten percent increase of people served over last year. She requested Council support the CDBG funding for VPAS.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, stated the CDBG program grew out of political pressure from a time of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., to remedy the horrors of urban renewal. He stated we are entering into a new era of paternalistic white backlash echoing redlining and residential segregation. He spoke on HUD's implementation of the Fair Housing Act, media reports on the city being one of Virginia's highest levels of school segregation and having the largest increase in deaths of any Virginia metro area. He spoke on suppressed voter turnout, the 40 acres of forest that will be wiped out for a housing development, meat processing plants, and all the influential people involved in these projects.

At 7:20 p.m., Vice Mayor Dent closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

No action required

This Public Hearing - No Action was received and filed.

7. Regular Items**7.a. Consider adopting a resolution designating a platted street within the Crossings, Section Two "Ridge Haven Drive."**

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated the subdivision plat for the Crossings Section Two, identified the same public street by two different names, Ridge Haven Drive and Ridge Haven Road. He stated this request is to clarify that the official name should be Ridge Haven Drive by a resolution.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Fleming, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Jones

8. Reallocations

- 8.a.** Consider a reallocation of budgeted funds for the General Capital Projects Fund in the amount of \$1 million

Ande Banks, city manager, presented a request for a reallocation of funding following staff's ARPA update to City Council in regard to the upgrade of a soccer field at Thomas Harrison middle school instead of part of the project at the Smithland Development East, east of the railroad tracks.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the Reallocation as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Jones

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)**

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, questioned Council Member Fleming's comment on the WSVA radio regarding meaningful input into the Bluestone Town Center (BTC) project through the bond process and Council Member Fleming's published bio and credentials.

- 9.b. City Council and Staff**

Vice Mayor Dent stated all Council Members attended the National League of Cities' (NLC) City Congressional Conference (NLC) and a lot was learned from fellow Council Members, Mayors and other officials from all over the country. She stated a few overarching themes covered were on ARPA spending and how other localities used these funds. She stated she had an in-depth session with the Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Committee and went through many different aspects of the environmental legislation and agency actions pending with a lot of emphasis on renewing the farm bill that includes both the natural resources

and the food/nutrition programs. She stated there is one fairly alarming development in the House of Representatives who have issued their first Bill HR 1 which is largely designed to claw back some of the climate provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. She stated she also had a meeting with our regional Department of Energy representative, she shared all of the things the city is doing related to energy, and the representative shared avenues of funding available. She stated there was a preemption focus group that spoke about federal preemption of local actions and state by state preemption, she shared to the group that Virginia as a Dillon Rule state has real challenges for what we can do locally and reference the Solar Resolution and the steps taken to pass it by Harrisonburg.

Council Member Robinson stated the NLC Conference provided a wonderful opportunity for networking with people all over the United States, doing the same thing we are doing, and the whole concept of "it's raining money" is what she felt at every session she went to. She stated the presenters talked a lot about layering funding to get projects done. She stated she felt that we as a city did a great job of collaborating with neighboring cities, which is a crucial tool in layering funding. She stated that in the meeting with state congressional representatives she pushed for funding as we are a refugee resettlement city. She stated she felt very good about everything our city has done, we are a star and it is good to know that our Council has been and continues to be working for the best needs of the people in the city.

Council Member Fleming echoed the value of the NLC Conference and the networking, he was at a session with a staff person from Senator Gary Peters, who oversees Intergovernmental Affairs and the Appropriations Committee in the Senate, and one of the things that came up was that there are 155 portals for access to Federal Grants and Oversight, so if you are looking for money, which our city staff does a wonderful job finding, funding is out there. He stated it makes him appreciate the work that staff puts into applying and receiving grants. He stated he attended the Harrisonburg Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board meeting last week, reports on the Annual Transportation Planning were provided, which will make its way to City Council in a few months, and the Transportation Improvement Plan. He stated one of the things they used in this process is a program called Filestage which is a public input tool to get better feedback from the public. He thanked Chief Warner for giving him a tour last week of Harrisonburg Police Department. He stated he attended the Valley Interfaith Action meeting and was impressed with the number of attendees.

Mayor Reed stated she enjoyed the conference as well, she echoed what the other Council Members stated about the conference, it's nice to find out that we are not the only ones going through certain issues. She stated after talking to the Mayor of Huntington West Virginia about what they have been doing the past few years surrounding substance abuse, and that is something she will be focusing on

moving forward. She stated before the NLC Conference she had the honor and privilege to speak at the 13th Annual Lemon Project Spring Symposium in Williamsburg at William and Mary. She stated this project is an answer to what more could they do in racial healing. She spoke on Celebrating Simms, Oral Histories, and Community Storytelling: Toward a Collaborative Practice for Polyvocal Black Historical Recovery. She shared photographs on that symposium and of her sorority doing a Purse Project that provides purses filled with feminine products to Congolese women in Harrisonburg. She stated it was a great event. She stated she will be attending the African American Mayors Association Conference in April; she has been invited to Vice President Kamala Harris' house during this conference. She stated on May 20, 2023, she will be partnering with Sentara for a health screening clinic at the Lucy F. Simms School from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and everyone is welcome. She stated she also attended the Valley Interfaith Action meeting on support for transportation and childcare, she too was impressed with the number of elected officials that attended.

Vice Mayor Dent stated there will be a public meeting on March 30, 2023, at the Lucy F. Simms Center for the Public Works Open House on Road Reconfiguration at 4:30 pm.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated the City School administration is going after a grant for school construction funding and as part of the application a letter of support from Council is needed. Shawn Printz, chief operating officer, Harrisonburg City Public Schools, stated the letter of support will strengthen their application. All Council Members present approved of the Mayor signing the letter of support.

10. Adjournment

At 7:52 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR