



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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: 4 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer and Deputy Police Chief Rod Pollard

2. Invocation

Council Member Jones offered the invocation

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Proclamation acknowledging Employee Appreciation Week October 7 - 11, 2024

Mayor Reed presented the proclamation recognizing Employee Appreciation Week to the City Ambassador Team. Heather Turner, chair, introduced the team.

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 Robinson, seconded by Council Member Jones, that the consent agenda be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

5.a. Minutes from the September 24, 2024 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$600,000 for the School Transportation Fund

This supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading.

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Consider a request from Ritchie Vaughan to rezone 439 and 445 Myrtle Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a rezoning request from R-2 to R-8C for property located at 439 and 445 Myrtle Street. He reviewed the long term plan for the area, the property, the submitted proffers, and the proposed plat.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (7-0) recommend approval of this request.

At 7:13 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, September 25, 2024, and Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Gil Coleman, Coleman Engineering, representative for applicant, spoke in favor of this request and stated this is a great opportunity to add housing in a well-established neighborhood.

Kathy Whitten, 560 S. Mason Street, spoke on her unpleasant experience while calling into the Planning Commission public hearing. She spoke against this project due to size of lot, rental increase in the area, reduction in green space, and noted that the owner does not live in the area.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke against approving this request due to density and loss of green space.

Ritchie Vaughn, applicant, spoke on the concerns brought up by others and stated she is trying to do the best for the neighborhood by making it affordable and providing additional housing that is needed in the city.

Council Member Robinson asked Ms. Vaughn about the rental rate and management company. Ms. Vaughn stated the rent will be based on what the management company recommends for the area. Council Member Robinson shared her concerns about how having a management company handling the property could make it impossible for a lot of people to compete to get into the property.

At 7:31 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing, and the regular session reconvened.

Discussion took place with Council Members regarding if this is the type of developer and landlord needed in the city, the management company, the threat of gentrification, the Community Connectors grant work done in the neighborhood, voting in alignment

with the zoning rewrite and the history of the neighborhood.

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

6.b. Consider a request from New Venture Partners LLC to rezone 715 North Dogwood Drive

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a request to rezone from R-1 to R-5C for property located at 715 North Dogwood Drive. He reviewed the long term plan for the area, the property, the history of the property, the proposed development of the property, and submitted proffers.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-1) to recommend approval of this request.

Council Member Fleming stated this project will allow for pedestrian connection from Chicago St. and Waterman St. and asked if a road is planned for the future to connect the two. Mr. Fletcher stated there is a plan for 2nd street to connect, but there are topographical challenges to work through.

At 8:14 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, September 25, 2024, and Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Gil Coleman, Coleman Engineering, representative for applicant, and Gary Myers, New Venture Partners, LLC, applicant, spoke on the need for rental housing, that the more difficult terrain a site has the more expensive it is to build, and the anticipated timeline to begin construction.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros spoke on being cautious about the green space and trees around this property but is still in favor of this request. He stated there isn't a housing shortage in the city, but rather a wage discrepancy, and that falls under economic development.

At 8:25 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing, and the regular session reconvened.

Council discussed making sure the residents in the city are built up, educated and prepared for homeownership, the terrain of the site, the creativity to build on this site, and the need to get the residents to take advantage of all the education offered.

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

- 6.c.** Consider a request from Eastern Mennonite University for a master plan amendment (rezoning) for multiple properties on College Avenue, Hillcrest Drive, Mt. Clinton Pike, Park Road, Parkway Drive, Parkwood Drive, Smith Avenue, West Dogwood Drive, and Woodland Park Circle

Mayor Reed stated the Virginia State and Local Conflict Of Interest Act requires that he make the following disclosure to be recorded in the city records on any matter from which he is prohibited by law from participating:

1. The transaction involved is agenda item 6(c) - Consider a request from Eastern Mennonite University for a master plan amendment for multiple properties;
2. Her personal interest in the transaction is that I am an employee of Eastern Mennonite University;
3. She affirms she will not vote or participate in any manner on this matter

Vice Mayor Dent took over as chair for this item.

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a request to amend the 2014 Master Plan for Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). He reviewed the property, the history of the property's previous zoning, the parcels being added to the Master Plan, and the increase in maximum height of buildings to support solar.

Vice Mayor Dent asked if the open spaces were regulated by the Master Plan. Mr. Fletcher stated the open space throughout the development could be developed at some point in the future.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (7-0) recommend approval of the request.

At 8:54 p.m., Vice Mayor Dent closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, and Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Gil Colman, Coleman Engineering, representative, and Phillip Martin, facilities planner and constructions manager at Eastern Mennonite University, stated EMU plans on keeping as much green space as possible,

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros spoke on his role as secretary of the Martin Luther King, Jr coalition and reasons why people aren't showing up for these types of Public Hearing.

At 9:02 p.m., Vice Mayor Dent closed the public hearing, and the regular session reconvened.

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

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider adopting a resolution related to Election Precinct scanners

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a resolution stating only one scanner for each voting precinct is necessary. He reviewed the registered voter figures.

Mark Finks, registrar, stated that the over 4,000 voters per precinct mark only happens during a presidential election and therefore, an additional scanner is not needed.

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

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

No: 0

7.b. Consider approving by resolution an updated and amended Procurement Policy Manual

Nicole Robertson, procurement specialist Sr., Department of Finance, presented the updates to the Procurement Policy Manual. She reviewed:

- Why are procurement policies important;
- Why the updates to the manual;
- The primary updates made.

Vice Mayor Dent asked if the Federal and State Procurement rules require a technical proposal and a separately sealed financial proposal to ensure the bid doesn't necessarily go to the lowest bidder, but the lowest bidder with the correct qualifications. Ms. Robinson stated the revised Procurement Policy Manual includes that.

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

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

No: 0

7.c. Consider adopting a resolution of Support for the Harrison House Project and Virginia 250 Preservation Fund Grant

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, presented a resolution of support to compete for grant funds from VA2502

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Vice-Mayor Dent, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

7.d. Update on the City's comprehensive Employee Benefits Study and the most recent implementation of the Parental Leave Policy

Angela Clem, director of Human Resources, presented an update on the Classification & Compensation Comprehensive Benefit Study related to employee benefits. She reviewed the following:

- HR's strategic plan to match City Council Vision;
- The study's goals;
- Listening session participation;
- Prioritization of benefits;
- The new Parental Leave policy created;
- The Benefits Study committee members;

Council discussed the evaluation of the benefits matrix, and thanked Ms. Clem and the Benefits Study Committee for their hard work.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.e. Consider adopting a Resolution approving issuance by Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority of Revenue Bonds for the acquisition, construction, renovation and equipping of multifamily rental housing units located in the City of Charlottesville, Virginia.

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a resolution requesting approval of a Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) bond issuance for financing, acquisition, construction, renovations and equipping of an 82-unit multifamily residential development in Charlottesville, VA. He stated there is no financial obligation to the city but a benefit to HRHA in fees collected at the rate of ½% and \$7,500 bond issuance fee

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

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

No: 0

- 7.f. Consider cancelling the November 12, 2024 City Council meeting as all Council Members will be attending the National League of Cities Conference in Tampa, FL

Mayor Reed stated all Council Members will be attending the National League of Cities Conference in Tampa, FL. November 11 - 15, 2024, therefore the November 12, 2024, City Council meeting needs to be cancelled.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, Seconded by Council Member Robinson, to cancel the November 12, 2024, City Council meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

NLC Business Meeting Voting Delegates

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson to appoint Vice Mayor Dent as Voting Delegate and Council Member Jones as alternate to the NLC Business Meeting at the NLC Conference in Tampa, Florida for 2024. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

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, spoke on a letter in the Daily News Record about property values in a particular neighborhood, presented a box plot showing the comparison of the asking price and the selling price in that neighborhood versus a neighborhood that has restrictive covenants. He spoke on the political signs in Wyndham Woods subdivision.

Public Comment submissions

9.b. City Council and Staff

Vice Mayor Dent spoke about attending the Poultry Growers dinner; the International Festival; the Virginia Housing meeting; an electric truck demonstration; Valley Tech Con;

Council Member Robinson spoke on her participation at the VAIL / Cardinals Game; the International Festival; Our Community Place Gala; Public Safety Employee Appreciation lunch; Community Criminal Justice Committee;

Council Member Fleming spoke on his visit to the ECC; his attendance at the NLC Financial Administration Intergovernmental Relations committee meeting; the Valley Tech Con;

Mayor Reed spoke on her attendance at JMU People, Place and Planet ceremony; the Protect our Care bus tour; the groundbreaking for the Splashpad; the SWAT competition; EMU's homecoming beginning October 11, 2024;

10. Boards and Commissions**11. Closed Session****12. Adjournment**

At 10:05 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR