



CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 25, 2026 at 6:00 PM

CitySpace: 100 5th St NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

The Charlottesville City Council held a special meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, to receive a presentation from the Low Barrier Shelter Workgroup outlining a proposed vision for a shelter at Holiday Drive. Vice Mayor Natalie Oschrin called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called the roll, noting the following councilors present: Vice Mayor Natalie Oschrin and Councilors Jen Fleisher, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook. Mayor Wade joined the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Vice Mayor Oschrin turned the meeting over to City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., who summarized the reason for the presentation and introduced the next speaker.

Sunshine Mathon, Piedmont Housing Alliance Executive Director, made a statement commending the collaboration witnessed between members of the Low Barrier Shelter Workgroup.

Shayla Washington, BRACH (Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless) Executive Director, introduced other members of the Low Barrier Shelter Workgroup: Cameron Moore, PACEM Executive Director; Owen Brennan, The Haven Executive Director; Major Donny Wilson, Core Officer for The Salvation Army Emergency Year-round Shelter; and Erin Hannegan, Principal with Mitchell-Matthews Architects & Planners. She then summarized components of the Workgroup's scope and discussions:

- **Transformational Impact:** Investment in 2000 Holiday Drive will improve outcomes by strengthening safety, support services, and pathways back to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Design Process:** Facility design prioritizes service coordination, housing-focused case management, and flexible program space, informed by partner and community input.
- **Capital Cost:** Project costs reduced from \$9.7M to \$8.6M (~11% reduction) through redesign and value engineering while maintaining core program goals.
- **Programs:** The facility will support day shelter services, coordinated entry, case management, housing navigation, and connections to health and workforce supports.
- **Near-Term Uses:** Serve as a central hub for shelter engagement and housing placement, increasing system capacity to move people from homelessness to housing.
- **Transportation:** Accessible location with proximity to transit and community services, supporting client mobility and partner collaboration.
- **Needs & Assumptions:** Continued demand for safe shelter, coordinated services, and expanded housing pathways to reduce length of homelessness.
- **Operating Model:** Sustainable operations focused on housing-focused staffing and coordinated service delivery.
- **Housing Programming Expansion Goals – The Haven:** Prevention, Housing Navigation, Rapid Re-Housing, Laura Delapp Haven Housing Fund. All programs will ensure steady exits from shelter to permanent housing while strengthening the community's homelessness response system.

Erin Hannegan spoke about the working group process, which began with visioning then moved into programming and facility design.

Owen Brennan, Executive Director of The Haven, presented the decision matrix for The Haven,

answering the question, “Is relocating some or all of our programs to Holiday Drive in the best interest of our guests and mission?” The Haven board discussed this recommendation at their March 17 meeting and convened again on March 24, voting to accept the recommendations based on data in each of the following areas:

- Financial Viability
- Service Accessibility
- Proximity
- Improved Facility and Space Design
- Mission-driven Trauma-informed Decision Process
- Safety
- Partnership Alignment
- Community Impact
- Mission-driven Organizational Identity

Ms. Washington reviewed the primary proposed partnerships and services provided, referencing the current continuum of care catchment area of: Charlottesville, and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson. The Workgroup acknowledged that the City of Charlottesville is not expected to solely fund the project, but that success will require support from regional partners.

Mr. Moore provided the estimated operating budget for PACEM and stated that operating from the Holiday Drive location would be a good investment to meet the need for the number of guests being served. BRACH and The Haven followed up with their estimated operating budgets.

The Workgroup also brainstormed interim and temporary uses for the Holiday Drive space. The Holiday Drive project will occur alongside the Salvation Army’s expansion of The Center of Hope.

Councilors followed up with questions and observations. The presentation has only been given to the Charlottesville City Council. Mayor Wade suggested that the Workgroup look at what Roanoke has in place. Assistant City Manager Samuel Roman stated that he could make introductions to contacts in Roanoke. Councilors expressed a desire to maximize the number of available beds. Councilor Snook encouraged continuing to work toward synergy and combining the various organizations under one umbrella to build efficiencies in operations and fundraising/philanthropy.

Councilor Payne acknowledged regional partners in the room, particularly a member of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors.

Mayor Wade left the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Councilor Fleisher suggested including Sentara in the conversation about operating a clinic.

City Manager Sanders stated that he engaged the businesses surrounding the Holiday Drive facility. Following further Council discussion, Mr. Sanders made closing remarks and Vice Mayor Oschrein thanked the Workgroup.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Fleisher, Council by a vote of 4-0 adjourned the meeting at 5:58 p.m. (Absent: Wade)

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council