



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Meeting went into Recess

Meeting reconvened

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming, Council Member Laura Dent, Council Member Nasser Alsaadun and Council Member Monica Robinson

Also Present: 5 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer, Deputy Police Chief Rod Pollard and Chief Matthew Tobia

2. Invocation

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Proclamation Celebrating Anniversary

Mayor Reed presented a proclamation recognizing Shannon Porter's 10th anniversary with Mercy House.

Mr. Porter thanked City Council, he stated he is deeply honored to serve the community, and appreciates that all Council Members are doing to make this a better community.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROBINSON HAD TO LEAVE THE MEETING AT 7:09 PM

4.b. Proclamation recognizing March 2024 as Youth Art Month

Mayor Reed presented a proclamation recognizing March 2025 as Youth Art Month. Ms. Eva Camunas, art teacher at Spotswood Elementary School, thanked Council for this recognition on behalf of the entire art staff at Harrisonburg City Public Schools. She stated the students' art will be displayed on March 1, 2025, at the Valley Mall.

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 Dent to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Robinson

5.a. Minutes from the January 28, 2025 City Council meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider amending and re-enacting Section 4-2-124, Section 4-2-23 and Section 4-2-25 of the City Code of Harrisonburg, in regard to personal property and real estate tax relief

These ordinance amendments were approved on second reading

6. Public Hearings

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

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented ordinance amendment requests related to nonconforming use regulations associated with residential units within the B-2 and M-1 Districts. He reviewed the history of the ordinance amendment requests, the definition of nonconforming use, the amendments requested, and the potential impacts to other identified nonconforming properties in the same zoning districts.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval.

Council Member Alsaadun asked what the process would be if the applicant wanted to expand their housing unit. Mr. Fletcher stated nonconforming properties would not be approved.

Discussion took place on how the ordinance amendment would allow property to remain as residential in an industrial zoned area without having to apply for Special Use Permit, which would save applicants money and time;

At 7:26pm Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, and Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 7:27 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the ordinance amendments as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote as follows:

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Robinson

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider a request from B & A Group LLC to rezone a 290, 294, and 298 Lucy Drive

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented items 7a and 7b together. The request is to rezone and grant a special use permit for property located at 290, 294, and 298 Lucy Drive from R-3 to R-8C. He reviewed the history of the request, the proffers offered, the conceptual design, and staff's recommended condition for the special use permit pertaining to landscape buffer if Council desires.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval of rezoning and special use permit without any special conditions.

Discussion took place regarding whether a buffer was needed on the rear part of the property.

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

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Robinson

7.b. Consider a request from B & A Group LLC for a special use permit to allow attached townhomes of not more than eight (8) units at 290, 294, and 298 Lucy Drive

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve special use permit request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote as follows:

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Robinson

7.c. Update on Massanutten Regional Library

Zachary Elder, director of the Massanutten Regional Library, presented an update on the library. He reviewed the following:

- FY 2024 Statistical Increases;
- Completion of the 5-year strategic plan;
- Bringing People together (study pods, meeting room reservations);
- Programming and outreach;
- Expanded collections;
- Equitable Access for All;
- Newsletter and social media;
- Challenges;
- Upcoming Events: Big Read 2025

Vice Mayor Fleming stated he will be attending the Big Read and asked the reason why the increase in the overall registrations. Mr. Elder stated he believes it is due to the outreach that has been done.

Council Member Alsaadun shared his personal story of how the library helped him when he came to Harrisonburg as a refugee. He recommended the library have a few media rooms set up as he found this very those useful at other libraries.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.d. Presentation on Youth Substance Use Prevention from Faces 4 Change Drug Free Communities Coalition and the Youth Popular Culture Institute, Inc.

Dr. P. Thandi Hicks Harper, Faces 4 Change (F4C) Project Director and Youth Popular Culture Institute (YPCI) President, reviewed the following:

- Who the Youth Popular Culture Institute and Faces 4 Change Coalition are;
- The missions of YPCI and F4C;
- How Faces for Change is funded;

Luke Morgan, F4C Project Coordinator and Executive Assistant

- Scope of Youth Substance Use;
- Collaborations;
- Activities;
- Meth Prevention and Intervention Bundle Kit;
- Spotighting Harrisonburg
- Next steps;

Mayor Reed stated F4C is the only organization that focuses on drug prevention in the city. She asked for explanation of the involvement F4C has with Harrisonburg City

Public Schools. Dr. Harper stated they met with the student advisory board to obtain information as to what is going on in the schools and the impact of social media on students. She stated they participate whenever possible during events and place posters throughout the schools. She reviewed what the tool kits include and how they can be used.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if F4C noticed an increase or decrease in drug usage over the year they have been working on the youth in the city. Dr. Harper stated it fluctuates depending on the drug, but there was a decrease in marijuana in the past year. Council Member Alsaadun asked if faith-based centers are part of F4C outreach. Mr. Morgan stated parents, schools, youth groups and faith-based centers are included in their outreach. Dr. Harper stated they could always use help from Council with reaching the faith-based sector.

This Presentation was received and filed.

- 7.e.** Consider a request from Kappa Pi, the international Art Honors Society at James Madison University, to install a mural inside of the Navigation Center

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, and Penny Madden, representing Kappa Pi, presented a request for approval for the installation of a mural inside the Navigation Center.

Ms. Madden stated the design was curated by artists in the Art Honor Society at James Madison University. She stated she is also the communications assistant at Open Doors, and she thought that having a mural in the women's quarters would brighten things up. She stated it was inspired by the Shenandoah mountains.

Vice Mayor Fleming stated he appreciates the effort, and he thinks having art in that space would be positive.

Ms. Snider stated staff recommends approval of this request.

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

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Council Member Robinson

- 7.f.** Presentation on FY 2025 General Fund revenue and update on the local economy

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented an update on the FY 2025 General Fund. He reviewed the following:

- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund 2025
- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund - Property Taxes 2025
- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund - other local taxes 2025
- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund 2024 actual versus 2025 projected
- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund - property taxes 2024 actual vs 2025 projected
- Comparison of Revenues - General Fund - other local taxes 2024 actual vs 2025 projected
- Recap

Discussion took place regarding the revenue from taxes, interest etc.

Brian Shull, director of Economic Development, presented an update on the local economy. He reviewed the following:

- Harrisonburg Population (5th fastest growing in the state);
- Harrisonburg Metropolitan Statistical Area Population (3rd fastest metro in the state);
- Employment Trends;
- New Business licenses requests from 2022 to 2024;
- Building permit requests from 2022 to 2024;
 - Value of Permits issued
- Larger projects that made big impacts for the area;
- Harrisonburg Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (HEDI)

Discussion took place on the need for increased wages; the work that the Economic Department does to help the small business/entrepreneurs in the city; the attractiveness of the city for businesses; attraction/marketing efforts for remote workers;

Council Member Robinson returned to the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.g. Consider approving an encroachment license agreement for 77 E Market St.

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a request for an encroachment license for WithSimplicity located at 77 E Market Street, for their sign that overhangs from the building.

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

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

No: 0

8. Supplementals

8.a. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the Harrisonburg City Public School Board

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$375,000 for Harrisonburg City Public Funds from local, state and federal grants awarded since the fiscal year began.

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

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

No: 0

8.b. Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$188,408.85

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation from four different revenue sources in the amount of \$50,000 for Parks and Recreation from the Swim for Sadie Donation, \$20,000 for the Navigation Center from a Sentara grant, \$29,408.85 reimbursement for furniture at the Navigation Center, and \$89,000 as a cost share from HEC for the generator at the Public Works building.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the supplemental appropriation as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote as follows:

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

No: 0

8.c. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General and Water Capital Projects Funds

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation from interest earned on current bonds in the amount of \$642,296.54

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

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

No: 0

9. Reallocations**9.a.** Consider a reallocation of Series 2021 bond proceeds

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a reallocation of bond proceeds from the road project at the new high school to the continued construction of the waterline to Shenandoah River in the amount of \$881,291.84.

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

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

No: 0

10. Other Matters

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

None

10.b. City Council and Staff

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the VML Government Day; meeting on Town and Gown relationships with Clemson, JMU and city staff; recent Stormwater Advisory Committee meeting; increased concerns about federal funding, the Emergency Committee on the Impact of Federal Workforce and Funding Reductions, and requested that the city manager reach out to the superintendent of HCPS and possibly a joint meeting with Delegate Wilt as well;

Council Member Robinson spoke on the concerns around federal funding; the Town and Gown meeting; the Community Connectors visioning engagement and the amazing job city department heads had done; the International Women's March on March 8, 2025, beginning at 10am; the upcoming International Women's Gala; Black History Month events throughout February; upcoming JMU/City Liaison Committee meeting;

Council Member Dent spoke on the upcoming CSPDC Housing webinar and the recent meeting; the recent Planning Commission meeting; the recent HRMPO meeting; the March 6, 2025, review of Port Republic Road, Peach and Neff Avenue traffic study presentation 4pm at Stone Spring Elementary;

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the VML Government Day; his meeting with staff on information about affordable housing work that is being done; meeting with the Harrisonburg Rockingham Chamber of Commerce executive; meeting with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority; the CSPDC meeting;

Mayor Reed spoke on the Black History month events; On the Road Collaborative 10 year anniversary and expansion; her upcoming trip to NY City for the NLC partnership

with the Mayors Academy; an upcoming event at JMU on March 5, 2025, advocating for education and federal funding; her concerns on federal funding;

Cancellation of March 11, 2025 City Council regular meeting

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to cancel the March 11, 2025, City Council meeting due to the majority of Council Members being at the NLC Conference in Washington DC. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote

11. Boards and Commissions

11.a. Board of Equalization (BOE)

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to reappoint David Powell and appoint James T. Byrd to an unexpired term to expire on December 31, 2026, and Gerald Bland, as alternate, to a first term to expire December 31, 2026, to the Board of Equalizations. The vote carried with a unanimous voice vote.

11.b. Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to appoint Amy Snider to the Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) and as the city's representative. The vote carried with a unanimous voice vote.

12. Closed Session

12.a. Closed Session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under:

Subsection 3 for the discussion of the disposition of publicly held real property and;

Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel on specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 9:47 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Dent, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel on specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Subsection 3 will not be discussed during this closed session. 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

13. Adjournment

At 10:22 p.m. the closed session ended, and the regular session reconvened. City Attorney Brown read the following statement, which was agreed to with a unanimous recorded vote of Council: I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge (1) only

public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Chapter 37 of Title 2.2 of the Code, of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by the City Council.

At 10:22 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR