

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 6:32 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Tue, 07/14/2026 - 18:31

Submitted values are:

Name

Amy Risko

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-07-14

Agenda Item Number

Number 8- Other Items

Comment

I am submitting comment to Harrisonburg City Council to ask Council to NOT renew the upcoming contracts for the Flock cameras and to immediately take down existing Flock cameras in the city. As a resident of the city of Harrisonburg, I have concerns regarding the use of Flock cameras including misuse by law enforcement, racial profiling, and privacy violations. The abuse of Flock cameras is well documented.

It is concerning that these cameras were installed with little notice or education to the public. Furthermore, Council has not been responsive to the concerns of residents. Council members are meant to be representatives and to act on behalf of the residents of the city. We do not want Flock cameras in our community.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

If you would like to be contacted, please provide preferred contact information

amy.risko@gmail.com

570-262-8294

Pamela S. Ulmer

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Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 5:33 PM
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Submitted on Tue, 07/14/2026 - 17:32

Submitted values are:

Name

Gregory Sinn

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-07-14

Agenda Item Number

8. Other Matters - Mass Surveillance

Comment

I am resident of Harrisonburg and an active member of my community. I vote and I organize. I am writing to you today because I do not support the use of Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) being used for mass surveillance in my community, in collaboration with our local law enforcement in, especially from negligent companies such as Flock. Public officials that support the use of these technologies on our streets are complicit with harm to the community. The use of ALRP technology constitutes dragnet surveillance. I do not believe that the City has any right to introduce mass surveillance of this kind. The personal data of citizens is being handled and stored by a company with a substandard track record. In November 2025, a security researcher found Flock logins for sale on Russian hacking forums, since Flock negligently doesn't require multifactor authentication, an alleged violation of federal law and industry standard security practices. Furthermore, there are many documented cases where police have knowingly used ALPRs to commit crimes and put people in danger. There's no independent research proving that ALPRs can reduce crime. Headlines and supporting studies claiming otherwise are often produced by the companies selling ALPRs and the police agencies buying them, as is the case in Harrisonburg. ALPRs introduce harm into our community by mass-surveilling residents, exposing our personal data, and relying on error-prone profiling technology. These are seriously grave concerns. If any public official is aware of these concerns and continues to support the use of this mass surveillance against their constituency, they would not be qualified for public office. If any public official is not aware of these concerns, and fails to learn about the true nature of the technologies being employed against our citizenry, that would also be grossly disqualified for public office. We live in the "information age" and the truth about ALPR and Flock is very easily available online from reputable sources.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 16-6-58

ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 16-6-58 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Be it ordained by the Council of the City of Harrisonburg, Virginia:

That Section 16-6-58 Weeds, etc., on lots be repealed.

Example Resolution Declaring No Mow May and Calling for Repeal of Lawn Ordinances

WHEREAS, Virginia didn't start to pass enabling legislation for lawn ordinances until the 2000s for cities and 1990s for counties; and

WHEREAS, lawn ordinances with anonymous complaints, have been used to publicly humiliate and harass people based on religion, race, or national origin to the point of displacing them from their homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS the use of police power for aesthetic enforcement, including during Urban Renewal, has destroyed communities and promoted residential segregation with lasting racially disparate impacts on wealth, health, and environment; and

WHEREAS, ecosystem services contribute to harmony between people through personal and community psychological and physical wellbeing; and

WHEREAS lots allowed to grow out or undergo succession provide better ecosystem services than mowed turf; and

WHEREAS, lawn ordinances have a chilling effect on the adoption of beneficial practices such as storm water best management practices, pollinator habitats, and wildlife corridors; and

WHEREAS, surveys from show over 90% support for initiatives like No Mow May in communities that have deliberated the topic; and

WHEREAS, Harrisonburg is situated in the most agriculturally significant region of Virginia and in a biodiversity hot-spot on the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, insects, especially bees, serve a significant and critical role as pollinators of plants including agricultural plants; and

WHEREAS, the ideal pollinator-friendly habitat is one comprised of mostly native wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees blooming in succession throughout the growing season; and

WHEREAS, the formative period for establishment of pollinator and other insect species and the many songbirds and other urban wildlife species that depend upon them occurs in spring and early summer as they emerge from dormancy and require flowering plants as crucial foraging habitat; and,

WHEREAS, “No Mow May” is an international community science initiative started in the UK and taken up in states in the US where the insect establishment period starts in May that encourages property owners to limit lawn mowing practices during the formative period for establishment of many insect species to provide early season foraging resources for pollinators that emerge in the spring, especially in urban landscapes when few floral resources are available; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg would like to encourage interested residents to increase pollinator friendly habitat by encouraging pollinator-friendly lawn-care practices on their own properties during this formative period and throughout the year;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Harrisonburg recognizes No Mow May to actively promote and educate the community about the critical period of pollinator emergence, generation of crucial pollinator-supporting habitat and early spring foraging opportunities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Harrisonburg City Council directs staff to not accept complaints or issue violation notices for tall grass and weeds before the month of May, permitting all residents to voluntarily delay lawn care until June, allowing pollinator species to emerge and early flowering grasses and forbes to establish, which may result in ground-cover exceeding established ordinance height restrictions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Harrisonburg City Council directs the City Attorney to draft for City Council's final April meeting in 2025 an ordinance completely repealing ordinance Sec. 16-6-58. - Weeds, etc., on lots, and related aesthetic landscape restrictions such as that on compost in Sec. 10-3-193. - Storage and screening and exempting tree trimmings, tree limbs, vegetative matter, etc. as described in 6-2-34 as a cause for violation of Sec. 6-2-6.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Harrisonburg City Council directs the City Manager to reallocate staff freed up by the repeal of 16-6-58 and related ordinances and procedures to providing or administering volunteer and paid programs for assistance in community landscape maintenance or conflict resolution toward repairing and preventing the repetition of historical harm to residents whose families lost homes, businesses, or community to Urban Renewal and related harms enable by allowing the use of police power for aesthetic enforcement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Harrisonburg City Council commits to adopt and maintain the strongest version of tree canopy and landscape protection allowable by state statute.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Harrisonburg City Council commits to changing Harrisonburg's zoning to allow food forests and community gardens on all parcels, in all residential districts, by right.

Adapted from <https://wspmn.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/05052021-963?packet=true>