
The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:56 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member Charles H. Cuthbert, Jr.
Council Member Marlow Jones
Council Member Annette Smith-Lee
Council Member W. Howard Myers
Council Member Arnold Westbrook, Jr.
Vice Mayor Darrin Hill
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: None

Present from City Council Administration:

Clerk of City Council Nykesha D. Lucas
City Manager John March Altman, Jr.
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams

2. PRAYER:

Mayor Parham stated, "Vice Mayor Hill will lead us in our opening prayer."

Vice Mayor Hill led the council meeting in prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Parham led the council and the citizens in the pledge of allegiance.

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum is present.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Richard Stewart, 129 Rolfe Street, stated, "I am still concerned about speeding on the Martin Luther King Bridge. The police department is doing a good job. Also, the police department is doing a good job with patrolling Pocahontas. We feel safe. What I really want to say is that something is happening in Pocahontas today and I still cannot understand it, but I do understand it. The young lady that came over there is going to build a house and there was a get together. There were some very distinguished guests that were there. Even some people from the City Council like Westbrook, Myers and Smith-Lee and Jones. They were over there. Is the future of Pocahontas? Are we getting ready to develop Pocahontas? Because this lady Ms. Greene is talking about paving streets and updating. She talked about the former Roper Brothers and what is going to happen to that. I just wonder. It even made national news. One of the channels someone called and told them. But I was wondering is this going to unify the city or is it going to divide it. Because I did not see the mayor come and the Vice Mayor or Mr. Cuthbert, the council member of the ward. So, what is happening? When you opened the St. Andrews Street Bridge, I saw everybody there. Why didn't I see everybody there today? I am concerned about is this the future of Pocahontas or is this the downfall of Pocahontas? Is the city council dividing? Why everybody was not at the meeting on Pocahontas? Thank you."

Vice Mayor Hill stated, "Mr. Stewart, I had an appointment. As you know I voted for the young lady to have that property open, and I think the mayor did as well. So, it is no division with us. We cannot be everywhere at all times. So, to just clear the air since you mentioned my position. I was not there because I

had an appointment. I cannot speak for anyone else, but I can speak for me. But I do support her, and I am glad my other counterparts were there. There will be many times that you will see some of us at some places but that does not mean that there is any division. But thank you for your concern. I appreciate it.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Mr. Mayor, if I may follow-up since I my name was mentioned also. I had a prior commitment, and I am sorry that is the case. But we all lead some pretty busy lives, and I am afraid that interfered with my ability to attend today. So, thank you Mr. Mayor.”

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (TO INCLUDE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S):

- a. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance amending the City of Petersburg Code of Ordinances, Appendix B. Zoning, to add definitions of Group Home and Assisted Living Facility.
- b. A request to hold a public hearing on March 21, 2023, for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a purchase agreement between the City of Petersburg and Elvin Snead towards the sale of City-owned property at 137 Market Street, parcel ID 022-180011.
- c. Consideration of approval of a Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Grant Contract and authorization for the City Manager to execute the Agreement.

Mayor Parham stated, “Do we need this on the consent agenda or move this to old business?”

Mr. Williams stated, “It can be either. We do not need a public hearing.”

Mayor Parham stated, “So, I am going to ask that we move item ‘C’ to old business so that the City Manager can sign it and we do not have to advertise an extra public hearing.”

- d. A request to hold a public hearing on March 21, 2023, for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a purchase agreement between the City of Petersburg and Anthony Cotton towards the sale of City-owned property at 33 Crater Road South, parcel ID 012-260022.
- e. A request to hold a public hearing on March 21, 2023, for consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a purchase agreement between the City of Petersburg and 123 Halifax, LLC towards the sale of City-owned property at 123 Halifax Street, parcel ID 022-180025.
- f. A request to hold a public hearing on March 21, 2023, for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager and City Attorney to take all necessary action to facilitate the conveyance of an easement to Dominion Energy at 125 N. Union Street, parcel ID 011-250041.
- g. A request to hold a public hearing on March 21, 2023, for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager and City Attorney to take all necessary action to facilitate the conveyance of an easement to Dominion Energy at 920 E. Wythe Street, parcel ID 012-340006
- h. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance amending the City Code Appendix B. Zoning Text – To amend Article 4-A. “A” Agricultural District Regulations, Section 9. Special requirements, to permit a subdivision that creates one parcel that meets the dimension requirements of lots/parcels in the R-1A District.
- i. A request to schedule a public hearing amending the FY23 Budget to appropriate additional

local match funding to Petersburg Public Schools in the amount of \$1,665,419 as well as additional State aid received for the Petersburg Library in the amount of \$43,178 for March 21, 2023.

- j. A request to schedule a public hearing and appropriate the allocation of the 2nd Tranche of the ARPA funding provided to the city.
- k. A request for the consideration of an appropriation for a High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) Grant awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and allocated by the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation in the amount of \$92,137.50 to be used for design costs associated with the ultimate improvements to bring the Wilcox Lake Dam into compliance with the VA DAM Safety Regulations – 1st Reading.
- l. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance approving the expansion of the Local Historic District regulations to individual properties listed on the attached list that are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, therefore requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before any exterior changes are made.

Mayor Parham stated, “We are moving ‘Item C’ to the March 21st agenda under unfinished business. So, that is the consent agenda with the amendment of ‘Item C’.”

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented with the amendment. Council Member Smith-Lee seconded the motion.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “On ‘6a’, I take it that the hearing is to be scheduled for March 21, 2023? It does not state that. Is that the case?”

Mayor Parham stated, “Yes, March 21, 2023.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Good. It would be helpful if in the future our agenda stated that and did not just say schedule a public hearing. I am going to abstain because of a conflict of interest that I have on two items. And I just want to put it on the record why I am doing this. The item ‘6f’ deals with my brother hotel rehab and I do not technically in the eyes of the State Code, I do not have a conflict. Because immediate family is defined in Virginia Code 2.2-3101 as a spouse or any other person who resides in the same household as the officer or employee. And who is a dependent of the officer or employee. And I understand that under our new Conflict of Rules that we made a part of our Rules of Council we have to explain why we are abstaining, and we cannot just abstain. So, I am not trying to drag this out or anything else, but I am obligated to do that. The other one that I have a conflict of interest on is ‘6l’, the local historic district issue. One of the properties I have an ownership interest in. So, in any event, I abstain.”

The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; Abstain: Cuthbert

7. SPECIAL REPORTS:

- a. Discussion and consideration of an ordinance approving a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – to amend Article 15. – “B-2” General Commercial District Regulations, Section 2. Use Regulations, by changing permitted uses from those in the “B-1” Shopping Center District to those permitted in the “R-3” Two-Family Residence District and requiring a Special Use Permit for Multi Dwelling in B-2 and B-3 districts.

Reginald Tabor, Program Manager for Planning Department, gave an overview of the consideration of a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – to amend Article 15. – “B-2” General Commercial District Regulations, Section 2. Use Regulations, by changing permitted uses from those in the “B-1” Shopping Center District to those permitted in the “R-3” Two-Family Residence District and requiring a Special Use Permit for Multi

Dwelling in B-2 and B-3 districts. He also showed some pictures relating to the zoning.

Key notes:

- The proposed amendment would continue to permit single-family and two-family use by-right in B-2 and B-3 districts, including new construction.

Council Member Jones stated, "How are you doing Mr. Tabor? Can you let the people know what is a 'B-2' and a 'B-3'?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Within the City of Petersburg, we have zoning districts. And each property within the city is located within a zoning district. Our code specifies that each of these zoning districts permits specific uses. So, B-2 is General Commercial, and B-3 is also a commercial district. 'B' stands for business, and it promotes the development of business uses within those districts."

Council Member Jones stated, "Can you also let them know what is a 'R-1' and 'R-2'?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Certainly. 'R-1' and 'R-2' are single family districts and they permit single family homes within those districts."

Council Member Jones stated, "So, I think what I am asking now is, is this proposed ordinance saying that a 'R-1' and 'R-2' cannot reside in a 'B-1' and 'B-2' district. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "It can."

Council Member Jones stated, "So, are we trying to change it to where it cannot?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "I apologize for the confusion. This would permit it. Currently, the ordinance allows 'R-5' which is multi-family as a by right use from 'R-4' and 'R-5'. This would remove that from the ordinance and require a Special Use Permit and approval of the Planning Commission and City Council for multi-family development within the 'B-2' and 'B-3' district."

Council Member Jones stated, "Isn't downtown Sycamore Street a 'B-1' and 'B-2' district?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "It is actually a 'B-3'."

Council Member Jones stated, "And with the apartments upstairs that is 'R-1' and 'R-2' or is that multi family use? What is that?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "The use is multi-family residential but the district is 'B-3'. All of the downtown area is 'B-3' district."

Council Member Jones stated, "We are trying to make sure that people can do that elsewhere. Is that what you are saying?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "So, again this would require if anyone wanted to do multi-family, they would have to get a Special Use Permit and get permission from the council to be able to do that."

Mr. Jones stated, "Thank you Mr. Tabor."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Tabor, help me to understand. If council were to adopt this proposed ordinance, would it prohibit apartments in 'B-2' and 'B-3'?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Absolutely not. It would only require them to get a Special Use Permit in order to be constructed."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "So, if council did adopt this proposal, council can still allow the development of apartments in 'B-2' and 'B-3' in council's view that was in the best interest of the city. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "And when is this going to come to council for a vote?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "It is on the consent agenda tonight so it will be on the 21st."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Let us just take an example of a shabby motel in the Blandford area in the 4th Ward. Right now, as things stand, if the owner wanted to convert that shabby hotel into a shabby housing apartment complex, is there anything to keep them from doing that?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Currently, multi-family is a by right use of 'B-2' and 'B-3'. So, they can do it without the approval of city council."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Without any further review it would be by right. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Correct."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Let us move forward a step and let's go to March 21. And let us assume that the council adopts this proposed amendment. In the same property the owner of the same shabby motel comes to council and wants to convert to shabby apartments. At that point, he would have to seek a Special Use Permit. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "And then he would have to come before city council and say that 'I want to convert my shabby motel in a series of shabby apartments, and would you allow that?' And I would hope that the city council would say no. In any event, which would be the council's decision at that point? Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Okay. I understand how it works. Thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Also, Council Member Cuthbert, just for the record, we had the public hearing at the last meeting so we can move this to unfinished business as well and not have a public hearing and just vote on it at the next meeting."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Vote on it on March 21st without a public hearing. Okay. Got it and thank you Mr. Mayor and Mr. Tabor."

Council Member Myers stated, "My question was from the last meeting that we had. If you can, take your slide back to where it says Washington and Wythe Street. How far does that travel down Washington Street? At what length is that on Washington and Wythe Street?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "So, those properties in red are zoned 'B'."

Council Member Myers stated, "I said at what length on Washington Street does that exist?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Previously, you can see to the left which would be the west boundary of the city. And it also goes to the eastern boundary as well. I think that I may have cut off a few properties to the east."

Council Member Myers stated, "If it starts at Adams Street, where does it end going west? What side street to what side street does it exist?"

Mr. Altman stated, "I think what you have is the entirety of Washington Street has some amount of 'B Zoned' property along it. It just is not consistent like it is in the downtown area between here at the library, Market Street, to the other of Crater Road, I-95. But as you go further out, there are still pockets of business zoned properties along Washington. It is just not a solid district all the way out. Because you do have single family housing interspersed with that. And most of those, if I am correct Mr. Tabor, has a residential designation attached to them."

Mr. Tabor stated, "Correct. Many of them do."

Council Member Myers stated, "So, it is for the reason I asked the last time is that if someone moves to Petersburg and they buy a big house and they would like to supplement their mortgage. So, by right if it is within the 'B-2' and 'B-3' area they are able to do so without paying an additional \$1,500 to the City of Petersburg."

Mr. Altman stated, "If the property is zoned business. If the property is zoned residential then this does not apply. It is only for property that is zoned business that would convert from a business use to a residential use."

Council Member Myers stated, "Right. So, Mr. Tabor, even 'R-1' to 'R-3', are you still able to have a duplex or a tri-plex without having a Special Use Permit?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "The 'R-3' zone would be two-family. And as long as you are referencing new construction, as long as the property is sixty feet wide and one hundred feet deep and 6,000 square feet total, that two-family use is permitted. And as long as it is fifty feet wide and one hundred feet deep the single-family use is permitted by right."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Mayor, let me try and put a point on this. Is it true Mr. Tabor that this proposed ordinance would require a Special Use Permit only if the property is located in a 'B-2' or 'B-3' area?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you."

- b. A public hearing and consideration of an ordinance amending the City Code Appendix B. Zoning Text – To amend Article 4-A. "A" Agricultural District Regulations, Section 9. Special requirements, to permit a subdivision that creates one parcel that meets the dimension requirements of lots/parcel in the R-1A District.

Reginald Tabor, Program Manager for the Planning Department, gave an overview of the consideration of amending the City Code Appendix B. Zoning Text – To amend Article 4-A. "A" Agricultural District Regulations, Section 9. Special requirements, to permit a subdivision that creates one parcel that meets the dimension requirements of lots/parcel in the R-1A District.

Key Notes:

- Per the ordinance, to create the new parcel, it would have to be rezoned to R-Residential Spot Zoning with surrounding parcels zoned A.
- If the ordinance is adopted, it would allow the new parcel to be created without having to change the zoning. Residential use is permitted in the A District.

Mayor Parham stated, "Let us start off Mr. Tabor by just giving an example of how this will work. Because I see you dealing with agriculture. I see in Councilman Westbrook area where Camelot is, and I know

that they were initially meant to be more homes built over there. And I see that they have been agriculture for more than thirty plus years. That land is for sale so if someone buys it how does this effect the use of that agriculture that is right beside that subdivision?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "If a person purchases that property or the current property wanted to create a lot that meets these specifications then they would be able to create one parcel from that existing parcel. They could not create a subdivision or multiple lots. Just one additional parcel from the existing parcel."

Council Member Jones stated, "Mr. Tabor, what if a lot of agriculture was big enough to divide. What if a family had two siblings and wanted to divide it among the two siblings, you are saying that we cannot divide it into two lots even if it meets this."

Mr. Tabor stated, "They would create one new parcel and then they would have the original parcel. So, they would have the two but if they wanted three, they would not be able to do three."

Council Member Jones stated, "And what is the reason? Because you have families that have a lot of farmland and agriculture and we run into this a lot where when someone passes away and we have to divide it up to the families. And you may have people that want to create at least three homes that meet this requirement. Three homes plus would still have agriculture space. But you are saying that we would not be allowed to do that right?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Right. So, if they did that then they would significantly change the use and it would be more residential. So, we would resort back to the ordinance which would require them to rezone that property that they are creating for residential to be rezoned residential."

Council Member Jones stated, "So, we are not telling them that they just cannot do anything with them."

Mr. Tabor stated, "They would have to rezone the property."

Council Member Jones stated, "Thank you."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Tabor is this property right across the street from International Paper?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "So, it is in an area that we are trying to develop for industrial uses. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map does show industrial use for this area. But the uses of the property are agriculture."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "So, if we were to pass this ordinance on March 21st, we would be doing something inconsistent with our Comprehensive Plan which says that it should be industrial use. Is that correct?"

Mr. Tabor stated, "The State Code states that the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map should be considered when making zoning decisions. But it is not required that it be adhered to."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "But my question was whether we adopted this proposal we would be acting inconsistently with our Comprehensive Plan."

Mr. Tabor stated, "Consistent with current land use and inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan."

Mr. Altman stated, "Mr. Tabor is right. State Code and state law would suggest that the Comp Plan is a

guide and not law. So, we make decisions on future land use and the decision is based on what the guide shows us. In this case though, I do not know that. Correct me if I am wrong but we are dealing with the existing land use and not necessarily the future land use. I would agree that this is a great opportunity for some light industrial use in this area. You have water and sewer already and International Paper close to 85 and the railroad tracks. I think that what we are dealing with is a specific situation. Part of the concern that you would have been typically you do not want to amend the zoning ordinance for a single instance. If this issue came up more than once, then you would look to amend it. This is the first time that this has come across our desk and the fact is that we have a family that is interested in selling a piece of property. There are two homes and there is a home on the property that they want to sale. But in order to subdivide it off to keep it they would have to go through a rezoning of the entire parcel which would then make it residential. Which certainly when we go look at the land use map you would say it is inconsistent with the future land use map. However, this is what I would say, and the city attorney can tell me differ, the current land use is agricultural. And as long as that land use continues without any break in usage for two years it is a nonconforming use, and they can continue to farm the land. Even though it was rezoned residential. We are in a Catch 22. You have a family that is looking for some relief. I am thinking through my mind how can something be accomplished without having to rezone it. I have a little bit of time for me to work and try to figure that out. But we are in an interesting situation where I would say Mr. Cuthbert, if the recommendation and issue at hand was the rezoning of the property then we would certainly look that the future land use map and say that it is inconsistent of what we project in the future. Right now, the existing use is not consistent with the map, however it is the current condition. And it is by right because of the zoning of the property.”

Mr. Williams stated, “So, I was going to comment that when I first saw the proposal, I had mixed feelings about it. It is quite typical for localities to have an ordinance like the City of Petersburg has. The intent of that ordinance is to require whenever you subdivide a piece of agricultural property, which is taxed at the lowest tax break, that it elevated to a more intensive use. Cities, particularly small ones with limited land space, will do that. Because the idea is to get it into more intensive use where possible. However, it is likewise common to have an exception. I believe when I worked in Suffolk, they had a rule of three where you could have three permitted subdivisions and that is what Mr. Tabor is proposing is that an exception be created to our existing ordinance. Likewise, I think that you can go either way with this proposal, but he has an issue that he is trying to address by presenting this to you.”

Mayor Parham stated, “This will be on our March 21st regular scheduled council meeting for the public hearing. Next, we will more on to item 8.”

8. MONTHLY REPORTS:

*There are no items for this portion of the agenda.

9. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT:

a. FY22 ACFR Presentation

Stacey Jordan, Chief Financial Officer, stated, “I want to apologize. We had planned to do the FY22 CAFR presentation, however, we are still waiting for some documentation to come back. So, I would like to present the year-to-date budget to actuals as of February 28, 2023.”

Ms. Jordan showed a PowerPoint presentation of the budget numbers and information.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Ms. Jordan, I am not sure which page it is because it does not have a number, but it is the budget actual as of 2-28-23 continue, the top line is revenues, general property tax of \$37 million dollars. What are the components of that \$37 million dollars?”

Ms. Jordan stated, “That is real estate, personal property, PSC, tangible property, and meals tax. They all are funded under general.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "How much is the real estate component of the general property tax?"

Ms. Jordan stated, "It is over \$25 million. You have \$3 million for public service and personal property is anywhere from \$5 to \$10 million."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Alright. But real estate is in round figures of \$25 million?"

Ms. Jordan stated, "About \$25 million."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you. And thank you Mr. Mayor."

Council Member Jones stated, "I am just looking at the numbers and I can remember when the fire department budget was almost triple what it is now and the police department also. I would like to ask council and you, why is it so low given the status of the fire department and police department."

Mr. Altman stated, "So, I would say that we dialed back to when it was really rough and there were 10% cuts across the board to departments throughout the city. And you have to work overtime to recover that. So, we are in a much better financial position than we were then. I think when we had the 2021 Audit Report, we talked about the negative \$16- or \$19 million-dollar fund balance. Today we are \$25 million to the good and \$46 million with assets. So, we are much better in financial shape. To rebuild that over time it is going to take time. And you do not want to rush out and spend it all. You are going to have the reoccurring revenue to sustain that. Our number one expense is going to be personal. You have to make sure that you have that reoccurring revenue every year to sustain that. We are looking to rebuild and rebuild that back up. Because certainly we need to be in a better spot. But also, we are trying to be conservative to make sure that we do not rush too far and overextend ourselves and have a bad year and find out that we have a bad year and find out that we have to go to the fund balance. Because the one thing that you do not do from my world and Ms. Jordan's world is that you do not balance a budget with one time money using fund balance. Because then you go into your savings account and then you have to go into the next year and the year after that. This will be my first budget with you all and I think the staff that has worked on the budget previously has done a great job. And there is a commitment certainly among council and the staff to work towards restoring those numbers in departments."

Council Member Jones stated, "I appreciate your answer. I just want to make it clear for the record that we got to remember the sacrifices that the firefighters made and any of the other city employees made when we took that 10% and was never given back. And we do not want to take too long to when those guys retire, and we did not give them anything back. We have to make sure that our public service gets what they need to get the job done. We cannot forget when we took that money from them."

Ms. Jordan stated, "So, I just want to let you know that last year we actually did give fire an 8% increase as well as public safety and the police department as far as salary goes. As well as public works got 8%. The rest of the city got 5%. So, we are well on our way in making them whole again."

Council Member Jones stated, "Thank you."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you Mr. Mayor. Help me with this Ms. Jordan. I thought that we had restored and lifted the salaries back to where they were before I got on council. Didn't at some point the old council or the current council bring those pay levels back up?"

Ms. Jordan stated, "No sir. Not that I remember since I have been here. I do know last year the council decided to give public works as well as fire department 8% and the police department got over 10%. But the rest of the staff only got 5%. Leaving another 5% to bring them back whole."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Now hold on just a minute. Mr. Mayor can you weigh in on this."

Mayor Parham stated, "I think what Council Cuthbert is saying about when we took the 10%, it was

restored that following budget year. But what Councilman Jones is saying is that with the fire department can we go back and compensate those that stayed. Right? Because some left.”

Council Member Jones stated, “I just want to make sure that we do not forget what we took from them. And you explained it and I appreciate it Ms. Jordan.”

Ms. Jordan stated, “You are welcome.”

Mr. Altman stated, “And I will say that one of the things that we will have in the upcoming budget proposal is a class and compensation study. Because we do have compression issues within the city. And we do need to look at where we are with the market. We do need to look at the overall salaries. And one of the things that is always the topic of conversation on having a specific public safety pay plan versus general pay plan. But we do that study, and it will help us look at where we need to go and where we are based on market.”

Council Member Jones stated, “Is Social Services included in that too because they are not getting their money either?”

Ms. Jordan stated, “Social Services gets a 5% increase every year from the state.”

Council Member Jones stated, “Some of them did not get it.”

Ms. Jordan stated, “They should all get it across the board. Unless they have a personnel issue.”

Council Member Jones stated, “I will send you information.”

Ms. Jordan stated, “Thank you. Because it should be across the board.”

Vice Mayor Hill stated, “I was on council when the 10% was taken. Councilman Jones, you were working for the city at that time. When we reinstated it a lot of people left, and we understand that. I think that our major challenge coming up now and the City Manager knows about this, is our insurance. So, that is the thing that we need to work on and focus on. I know that we are looking better than we were back in 2016 to now. Insurance is what drives everything up. Because insurance rates are high everywhere. Mr. March, City Manager, I think that will be our major challenge. If we can show some relief, there for our employees.”

Mr. Altman stated, “Not only is it something to look at for our current employees but it is also something to look at as we recruit employees. The cost of insurance for what our employees pay compared to surrounding areas is high. It is something that we are looking at with our upcoming renewal but also moving forward on what we need to do.”

10. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

*There are no items for this portion of the agenda.

11. UTILITIES:

Mr. Altman stated, “At two meetings ago, we had an update from JMT with regard to the overall Poor Creek Project and where we were with the process. And we were committed to shortening that timeframe and getting that project done quicker. This week the team has interviewed the contractors on the water side and will be interviewing the contractors on the design side for wastewater. We will be looking to make decisions on the contract next week. And then at our April meeting JMT will be here to provide an overall update. Because at that point in time we will have timelines for the design time that we can incorporate in our overall timeline with more specific items to give you more details. So, the April meeting JMT will be here. They will come back to each work session to provide updates to the council on our progress. That project is moving along, and we are committed to getting that down earlier rather than later.”

Mayor Parham stated, "Perfect. I just want to thank Mr. Richard Harris and Ronnell Johnson for being here. I know that we had a break this week. And I saw you out there fixing that break. And thank you all for what you all do to keep our utility system going. People do not understand that we have an old system. But it is good because the people that we have in public works and utilities make things happen for us. Thank you all for coming out tonight."

12. STREETS:

- a. Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

Reggie Lantz, General Manager of Street Operations in Public Works, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

Key Notes:

- On February 6, 2023, an inquiry was submitted to the City of Richmond's Transportation regarding speed bumps and humps and where they are located as well as advantages of them.
- Speed tables are a proven and documented traffic calming measure and are very effective when properly designed and installed. They are self-enforcing and help reinforce safe driving behavior. They can be very cost effective due to their high efficiency.
- The disadvantages are that they must meet site-specific design criteria. Speed tables may impact emergency response times. They can have unintended consequences such as causing drivers to speed up between devices, and can increase noise or physical vibration, especially when traversed by heavy vehicles such as trucks and buses.
- The City of Richmond utilizes a comprehensive speed management approach to address citizen traffic calming concerns.
- The comprehensive approach is defined in Richmond's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.
- The City of Richmond receives more than 1,000 requests every year. Since 2004, the city has addressed 350 traffic calming locations with the deployment of horizontal and vertical treatments including traffic circles, curb extensions, medians, and speed tables.
- Asphalt Speed Tables cost \$14,000 - \$24,000 each. Rubberized Speed Tables cost \$12,500 - \$15,500 each.

Council Member Jones stated, "Those figures that you had on there, did you happen to look on Amazon? Because I am looking at it right now and I see a three-pack of two channel 11,000 pounds per axle capacity for speed bumps. They are just like the ones that you have here for \$57. The average weight of a vehicle is \$4,000 pounds. We need to start looking and shopping. My mother said that I should shop around. We do not have time to wait. We can get these things right now. We own them in the city already on Amherst. They have been there for years since I was in high school. Once they were put down, they did not have to be maintained and they are still there. We can do this everybody. We just need to act on it. Fifty-seven dollars, we have that, we can take it out of council pay if we have too. We got it. Thank you."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Lantz, my head is spinning. I could have sworn that you told us the last time that you appeared before us that these things should not be installed on active roadways. And yet, I just saw a picture of one on the corner of Amherst and Oakhill. My colleague says that it has been there for years. You should tell us what is commercially available. I had photographs at the last meeting of speed bumps in Richmond at a couple of different locations. The Richmond Neighborhood Traffic Management Program acknowledges the use of these things. I am really confused. But in any event, Mr. Altman would you ask staff to produce a Petersburg Neighborhood Traffic Management Program."

Mr. Altman stated, "Certainly, if that were what council would like to do. We can have staff develop a program and bring back a draft. I think we can have it done by the summer. Is that what we talked about Mr. Lantz?"

Mr. Lantz stated, "I believe it is going to take about three months for the rough draft and then take another three months to go through the full vetted review. Because the council should review it too. My goal is to produce a Neighborhood Traffic Management Group that is going to work for the city. Currently, we have an undefined process for determining how we are going to approach traffic calming in the city. My recommendation back on February 14th was to develop a Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. And I communicated this. And I would very much like to produce a document that works internally for the Department of Public Works, City Manager's Office, City Council and most importantly for the neighborhoods that it would serve."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Mayor, I do not want to leave this thing hanging. The City Manager said if it is the will of council. Do we need a motion directing the City Manager to produce a Petersburg Neighborhood Transit Management Program or do we need not to be that formal and kind of belligerent about it? I am happy to just say please, and it gets done."

Mayor Parham stated, "Let us say please and get it done. And we will get the City Manager to bring it back to us at the meeting on the 21st."

Mr. Altman stated, "In May. We talked about it in May. We think we can get it to the June work session."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That is great. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you Mr. City Manager. In that Petersburg Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, would you address what can be done to reduce the speed between the old hospital site at the top of South Sycamore Street and Church's Fried Chicken. It is an absolute speedway. I walk along there, and I see cars and I know that they are going 45mph. I suspect that plenty go faster than that. But can that be addressed? It is a difficult problem and I do not know or have the answers. But we need some answers."

Mr. Lantz stated, "The short answer to your question would be that the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program is going to be a multi-layer approach. There is not going to be one single answer to fix all of these problems with speeding. We need to look at that corridor changing the paving markings. There are some other things that we can consider implementing as far as placing some type of structure that will actually provide a visual means encouraging traffic to slow down. Because we all tend to drive the same methods. We look at where we are headed, and we adjust our speed accordingly. So, if you have a very open corridor a lot of drivers are going to naturally go faster than they should. And without having law enforcement there to control those people that misbehave then we are limited in what we can do. Unfortunately, that corridor would be one major route that is considered for emergency vehicles. So, it would not be open for speed bumps or speed tables or those type of devices."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you Mr. Lantz. I certainly think that we have come a long way towards solving some of these problems that have troubled the constituents of all of us. I do not care where our constituents come from, speeding is a problem in this city. And I think that we have come a long way from where we started. So, I look forward to that draft of the Petersburg Neighborhood Traffic Management Program at our June work session. Thank you, Mr. Lantz, Mr. Altman, and Mr. Mayor."

Vice Mayor Hill stated, "We need to put that in a motion. Because what particularly happens is that you may have one or two that ask for a request of such magnitude. And for record keeping purposes, I would like to have that particular one in the form of a motion. Council Member Cuthbert if you will."

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to direct staff to present to council at our June work session a Petersburg Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to address problems throughout the city including Sycamore Street between Cameron Field and Church's Fried Chicken. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. There was discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham

13. FACILITIES:

- a. Assessment of Vacant & Partially Vacant City Buildings for City Staff.

Randall Williams gave a briefing with a PowerPoint presentation.

Key Notes:

- At 135 North Union Street- Roof Replacement (\$65,000), Interior Plaster Walls (\$40,000-\$50,000), Task order initiated to update the restrooms included in FY23 Capital Budget - \$300,000. (Building is occupied)
- At 103 W. Tabb Street – It is partially vacant and currently occupied by police staff and fire marshal staff. Task order initiated to update the restrooms included in the FY23 capital budget - \$300,000.
- AT 142 North Union Street – Exterior stucco/painting & interior plaster/painting (\$26,000), Waterproofing basement (\$26,000), and Awnings surrounding the building to prevent water damage to exterior (\$8,000). (Building is vacant)
- 106 West Tabb Street – Waterproofing basement (\$26,000), Ice blasting in basement and on main floor to remove mold spores from wood, stripping down to studs (\$175,000), and rebuild interior, painting, flooring, etc. (\$100,000). Demolition Costs (\$100,000-\$125,000) (Building is vacant)
- 400 East Washington Street – Flooring and painting (\$15,000), HVAC system replacement (\$25,000), Carpentry/wood replacement of porch ceiling, columns, and shutters (\$5,000), Roof repair (\$3,000) (Building is vacant)
- 1898 Midway Avenue – General cleaning, painting, and flooring (Building is vacant.)
- 400 Farmer Street – Phase 1 – Exterior envelope (\$1.2 million), Phase 2 – HVAC replacement and mold remediation (TBD), and Phase 3 – Interior design and construction (TBD) (Building is vacant)

Council Member Jones stated, “Since we have Social Services up there, do we plan on Social Services moving back into that building once it is fixed. Or is this something that the Police Department is going to occupy?”

Mr. Williams stated, “I have been told that it will be the new police department.”

Council Member Jones stated, “Didn’t we mention earlier about building a new Police Station?”

Mayor Parham stated, “I think what you are talking about is the resolution.”

Mr. Altman stated, “The resolution, they are confusing with the Police Department and the Courthouse. They need to flip the two. We are looking at renovation of the old Social Services building for the Police Department (PD). We are moving PD into one of our areas where we have a higher level of activity. So, that is what we are looking at.”

Council Member Jones stated, “I just do not understand why we are not renovating the Social Services Building for Social Services. We rent for Social Services now from someone clean out the way. This is right here where people are used to coming too. I do not need an answer for that right now. I just want to get through my questions so we can move on. Do you have enough people to do preventive maintenance on city buildings?”

Mr. Williams stated, “No.”

Council Member Jones stated, “I did not think so and you need that. We need to make sure that you get that. My other question is on fire inspections. Have any of these properties been inspected by the fire marshal?”

Mr. Williams stated, "Some have."

Council Member Jones stated, "We need to make sure that they inspect them too. Last question and I am going to ask you something. Does any of these properties that are on that list up for sale? And does it have any ties with anyone up here trying to buy it?"

Mr. Williams stated, "No they are not for sale. In the capital budget for FY23, there were some funds that were set aside for some of these buildings. It is not for all of them. Every fiscal year we put \$500,000 aside in the capital reserve. So, that is something that we currently utilize. That is what we are utilizing now for the bathrooms in city hall, city hall annex, and for the roof on city hall."

Council Member Jones stated, "I would like to ask council to make sure that we get this department what they need to do preventive maintenance on all of our city buildings. Because if not we are going to go through this over and over again. This list will be doubled next year and then tripled the next year after that if we do not give him the people that he needs to do preventive maintenance."

Mr. Williams stated, "Since we have invested in city assets our balance sheets look better and our financial position also looks better. It also helps us there too."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mr. Altman, to bring this discussion into the realm of or close to an action plan, what do we ask for and when can you give it to use? Mr. Williams has given us a lot of good information. But I do not want to walk away and say thank you for the presentation. What use are we going to make of this information? I am wondering for example at our meeting on March 21, could you come back to us with a recommendation as to the future use or disposition of each of these buildings? A budget where you propose to retain the building for city use and a timetable for carrying out that budget. Is that something that you can do?"

Mr. Altman stated, "We can certainly bring back recommendations. I do not know if the 21st will give us time to get all of the cost estimates that we would need on the buildings. But we can target the April Work Session to have additional information with regard to some of the additional costs that were quantified today with recommendations on future use. And we will put that in the context of where we are going and what we see in staff growth and what that may be. We can do that and bring that back in April."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That would be great. I am not trying to cram it into a timetable that we cannot achieve. I think the April work session would be great but to include a proposed use by the city or a disposition by the city, and if we are going to retain it then a budget and timetable for making the necessary improvements. That would be a big help to us all. Thank you."

Council Member Smith-Lee stated, "I just want to make a statement in reference to the Social Service Department. If I am not mistaken, we renovated the Social Services building a few years ago. Because the employees stated that there was mold and we renovated it. We put everyone back in there. Some of the employees were getting sick and they still were not satisfied with that building. They did not want to stay in that building. Am I right?"

Mrs. Innis stated, "You are correct."

Council Member Smith-Lee stated, "And that is the reason we had to get a place where they were comfortable and was not about to sue us. Because of the employees had some health issues."

Mrs. Innis stated, "You are correct."

Council Member Smith-Lee stated, "So, I just wanted to make sure that I explained the reason the employees and Social Services is off of Rives Road. The State came in and evaluated it and they wanted them to be placed somewhere else. Am I right?"

Mrs. Innis stated, "You are correct. They also stated that they were not going to contribute anymore funding for the building."

Council Member Smith-Lee stated, "And the State is paying a majority of the rent."

Mrs. Innis stated, "You are correct."

Council Member Jones stated, "I know the police department wears bulletproof vests, but I know that they are not mold proof. So, if it is not good for Social Services then it is not good for them. The Fire Department has mold all in their stations and I do not see anyone saying let's get them a new station. So, we cannot go on with that logic of what the employees do not want. We have to do preventive maintenance in this city. We have to give you what you need. We have been ignoring it for too long. I do not care what the State says. It is our responsibility to take care of the employees. Thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Thank you Mrs. Innis and Mr. Williams."

14. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

a. A presentation from Cava Companies.

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, gave an overview and introduction of the Downtown Master Plan.

West Hopeland, Vice President of Acquisitions of Cava Company, and J.B. Samuel, Acquisitions Manager of Cava Company, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the plan.

Key Notes:

- Cava Companies was established in 2007 by Frank Cava. The company is based out of Richmond, VA.
- Built and renovated thousands of homes. Own and manage 500 homes in Richmond.
- Eighty percent of rental portfolio is affordable housing.
- >1,250 hours of community service annually.
- Largest real estate investment firm in Central Virginia.
- New construction benefits are brand-new affordable energy efficient housing. All building materials meet or exceed current energy efficient standards.
- Benefit to the community is that the product encourages the growth of healthier, safer neighborhoods for residents to live in. It is increased statistical likelihood of higher individual earnings, thus greater possibility of elevated tax revenues through personal spending and reinvestment in property.

Mayor Parham stated, "I hate to interrupt you, but this has been going on for quite some time. We have seen dozens of these types of presentations. And I understand the entire thing about affordable housing. But you said something about deconcentrating poverty. And here in Petersburg we have the highest poverty rate in the Commonwealth. Our people need the ability to buy homes in the areas of the Commonwealth where they are not wanted. Where you need more affordable housing in Henrico, Chesterfield, and Prince George where they have nice, accredited schools, shiny new restaurants, hotels, and water parks. We have 20,000 people here on public assistance because we have tons of affordable housing. And what we are trying to do here now is build a community so that we can get some of the amenities of what the Short Pumps have. So, we need that higher income level to balance off the 20,000 that we have out of 33,000. So, at this point in time thank you for the presentation. Council Member Cuthbert do you have anything to add?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "No. I thank you Mr. Mayor. You said it well. I do not have any questions."

Council Member Jones stated, "I want to thank you for your presentation. I share the same thoughts as the mayor. And this is for you all and our economic developer. The top three major roles of economic development are income, jobs, and quality of life. A majority Black, which is what we are. But let us not get it twisted. Black people in the city are not the only ones suffering and struggling. White people are struggling, and Chinese people are struggling, and Arabs are struggling. I am tired of hearing the same thing that are targeting out black suffering. It is not just us suffering. You in Petersburg you are struggling in some state, form, or fashion. And I hope we give this economic developer a budget to travel farther than Richmond to get those top three of quality of life, income, and jobs. This right here, no offense, Mr. Economic Developer, we need you to travel. We need something from outside of Richmond. We do not want to be like Richmond. No offense to Richmond. Richmond needs to start trying to be like us. You need to advertise us, not as a poverty city, but as a city on a rise with a melting pot of people. That is what we are. We are Petersburg. That is what we are."

There was discussion among the City Council and Cava Companies.

15. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

Mr. Altman stated, "Just wanted to inform council of one thing. We were informed that we were fortunate enough to receive \$3.5 million dollars in the congressional appropriation to replace Locke's Water Maine. So, we want to thank Congressman McEachin for his work on securing those funds for us. It has been a little time coming with this passing and getting the information. But we did receive confirmation that we are going to receive \$3.5 million dollars to replace the Locke Box. So, we are making progress on all of our utility issues."

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

18. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor