

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2019, at the Union Train Station. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL:**

Present:

Council Member Charles H. Cuthbert, Jr.  
Council Member Annette Smith-Lee  
Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith  
Council Member W. Howard Myers  
Council Member Darrin Hill  
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: Vice Mayor John A. Hart, Sr.

Present from City Administration:

City Manager Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides  
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams  
Executive Assistant to Clerk of Council Tanesha Flowers

**2. PRAYER:**

Mayor Parham stated, "At this time Council Member Darrin Hill will lead us in our opening prayer."

Council Member Hill led the council meeting in prayer.

**3. CLOSED SESSION:**

\*No items for a closed session.

**4. MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

Mayor Parham led council and the citizens in a moment of silence.

**5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

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

**6. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:**

A quorum was determined with the presence of all City Council Members except Vice Mayor Hart.

Mayor Parham stated, "For tonight's positive Petersburg Story, this morning I had the pleasure of attending the announcement of the Save America's Treasures Grant to the Historic Petersburg Foundation through the Petersburg Preservation Task Force. This is an award of a \$700,000 Save America's Treasures matching grant by the National Park Service. The grant is for a major rehabilitation and renovation of the Exchange Building at 15 West Bank Street in Petersburg. The Exchange Building is a National Historic Landmark, and this project kicks off an intensive study of the history and construction of this 1841 Greek Revival style building, as well as a thorough condition analysis and rehabilitation. Among the many distinguished guests today were The Honorable Senator Mark Warner, and National Park Service Deputy Director, Dan Smith. I would like to thank the Historic Petersburg Foundation and the Petersburg Preservation

\*Audio available upon request.

Task Force for all that they do for the City and congratulate them on this amazing opportunity. Senator Warner said this morning if you want to know how private partnership works come to Petersburg.”

**7. PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATION OF CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATIONS:**

a. Red Cross

Presenter from Red Cross stated, “Five years ago, the American Red Cross started a program Sound Alarm where we partner with jurisdictions to put in alarms. In the City of Petersburg, we installed hundreds of alarms. We have provided close to 1,000 alarms. The alarms were installed on November 11<sup>th</sup>.”

She presented three alarm awards.

b. Proclamation on Breast Cancer Month

Mayor Parham read the proclamation for Breast Cancer Month.

Mrs. Benavides stated, “This will be our third year in a row that we have partnered with them. We encourage them to partake in not only in breast cancer awareness screenings but also education about women’s health issues. We want to thank them. This is a program that began because of Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith was concerned about women’s health issues. So, she and Council Member Annette Smith-Lee and Ms. Tyus came together as a team to put together this program for the women in the City of Petersburg. We realize that this is a very important month for all of us and we will have a number of activities this month that we have had in the past two years where we will take our staff during the work day to have an opportunity to talk about healthcare issues. So, I would like for you all to join me in giving our councilwoman and Ms. Tyus a hand in their continued effort in focusing on the staff.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Thank you and thank Southside Regional for coming out this evening.”

c. Presentation on Midnight Basketball

\*Presenters were not present at the meeting.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS/SPECIAL REPORTS:**

**\*All reports and PowerPoint presentations:**

<http://petersburgva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4869/1015Materials>

a. Treasurer Report – Kenneth Pritchett, City Treasurer

\*No report from the treasurer.

b. City Assessor Report – Brian Gordineer, AAS, City Assessor

Mr. Gordineer stated, “In the report in this evening I wanted to talk about notice of change to assessments. These are something new that we will be doing that state law requires that the assessor sends a notice of change in assessment anytime an assessment changes. This is just the state law that requires that. The times that the assessment changes throughout the year is when there is construction, additions, demolitions, properties are split, properties are combined, acreage changes when survey is being recorded, rezoning, and special use permits. And of course when we do our reassessment every two years is another time the assessment may change. What we will be mailing out at the beginning of this week is a postcard. And

\*Audio available upon request.

the postcard will have the prior assessment and the new assessment. There will be a line for citizens to appeal it and submit back to our offices. Also, the ability to appeal to the Board of Equalization. They will begin being mailed this Friday. If there are any questions property owners just ask from our office and we will explain what they are for?"

Mayor Parham stated, "Thank you for your report."

c. City Manager Report – Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides, City Manager

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Mayor and council. You have enclosed a longer version of my report included in your packet. Just to highlight a couple of things. Update short-term grass plan. I will turn it over to Ms. Tyus for the first portion of my report on the short-term grass plan update."

Ms. Tyus gave an update on the short term grass plan update.

Key points:

- Sent eight teams of two to recite the prior violations and also sight any adjacent properties.
- Issued 32 violations
- 95 of the residents took care of their violations
- City trucks went and handled the 32 bulk violations.
- Four contractors were assigned to 84 properties. The smaller team had 74.

Mrs. Benavides stated, "As a couple of other notes on my report we do have the cleanup schedule from October 26<sup>th</sup> from 8am-12pm, as well another big event for us is the Christmas Tree Lighting on December 6, 2019."

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Our next update, council asked for this and we normally would have it as part of the finance but I wanted to have it now. We will send out copies of this to each of you. Council asked us to give you the second meeting of each month an update on billing and collections. And as you know our billing and collections, Mr. Jay Baxter is no longer with us. We are restricting to have billing and collections as a division under the finance office. And Paul Mullin is now serving as our interim manager of billing and collections. One of the things that council asked us to present to you is information from a billing standpoint. The question that came is that we constantly talk about our collection rate and what does it look like. When you look at the list you will see that we billed for the first month \$4.7 million and our collection was \$4.3 million, which puts us to a 92% rate. For industrial, we were asked the same question and we billed \$749,752 and we collected \$735,986, which gets us to a 98.16% collection rate. Now the final portion in which you asked for is residential. We billed \$12,073,948 and collected \$10,820,943 which is an 89.62% collection rate. Now what we will point out is that our over all collection rate in rate is that we do not distinguish past due accounts and really focus on closing out on our delinquencies. However, from an overall standpoint when I first got here I think that we were at a 60-70% and sometimes 80%. You can now see the increase. We will send this out to each council member electronically first thing in the morning. I apologize for not having this document for you. The next line talks about the first quarter. And if you look at the first quarter of 2020 and this was last year for FY19. So, this is the fiscal year that just ended and we had an overall of the collection rate of 90% almost to the goal that Mr. Cuthbert wanted us to get to. Now for your first quarter of 2020, our water bill was \$1.1 million and we collected a little over \$1 million which got us to a 92% for commercial. And for industrial we billed \$149,000 and collected \$131,000 which is an 88.11%. And then last but not least are residential, we billed \$2.6 million and collected \$2.1 million which gets us to about 79.37% collection rate for that first quarter. We will present this to you on a regular basis. And because of the fact that in this when we show you all the collection rate which says about 83% here it also includes all of them. So, by dividing them up to understand the residential over the

\*Audio available upon request.

industrial and commercial.”

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mrs. Benavides gave a briefing on Planning Community

d. City Manager Policy – India Adams

India Adams gave a presentation on policy and procedures in the City of Petersburg.

Mrs. Peters introduced Mrs. Tammy Alexander, Chairman of Planning Commission.

Tammy Alexander gave information on the Planning Commission and Planning Department on their block party on November 8<sup>th</sup> and invited all to come out and attend.

Mrs. Benavides stated, “Mayor and council you should have a copy of an ordinance that you passed earlier by council. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, it was in your agenda packet. What occurred is that we realized that in the final ordinance there were two copies and the copy that was in your packet was not the one that was listed on the website and published in the service area. So, what we are asking council to do is approve the changes which we have included on your sheet.”

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to approve the corrections proposed by the City Manager regarding the City’s water rate and utility billing. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart; Voting No: Wilson-Smith

There was discussion among City Council and staff on FOIA request and responses.

e. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Operating Budget Report

**BACKGROUND:** Fiscal Year 2019-20 officially started on July 1, 2019. The City Council requests monthly reports from staff in an effort to keep them apprised of all revenues and expenditures related to the Operating Budget. The Budget & Procurement Office provides these reports on a monthly basis, but since Fiscal Year 2018-2019 was not officially soft closed in our financial system, the Budget & Procurement Office was unable to provide these reports for the months of July and August. Finance soft closed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 on September 30<sup>th</sup>, which allowed the Budget & Procurement Office to compile the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Operating Budget report.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend that City Council receive the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Operating Budget Report.

Robert Floyd gave presentation on the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Operating Budget.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

f. Presentation on the Comprehensive Approach to Eradicate and Prevent Blight in the City of Petersburg: Part II – Code, Zoning and Fire.

**BACKGROUND:** Staff has been working diligently to present processes and create the best method for addressing these challenges. This civil penalty will hopefully encourage people to make the necessary repairs to their property or face enormous penalties that can be levied against the real estate and personal assets.

\*Audio available upon request.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council will adopt the proposed policy allowing the City to assess civil penalties for certain code and zoning violations. The policy will allow the City to determine whether it will enforce against a violator the civil penalty or the criminal summons. Utilization of the civil penalty will allow the City to collect revenue as long as the violation persists, and will hopefully entice the homeowner to make the necessary repairs versus paying the required civil penalties allowed by the proposed ordinance.

Bradley Shupp gave a presentation on Code Enforcement.

Sandra Robinson, Zoning Administrator, gave an overview and briefing of the zoning department.

Chief Jim Reid gave presentation on the fire department.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mayor Parham stated, "I would entertain a motion to suspend the Rules of Council to add to the consent agenda of tonight's meeting 'Item 9C' which would be to schedule the public hearing for the amendment of City Code to adopt the schedule and policy related to civil penalties."

Council Member Myers made a motion to suspend the Rules of Council to add to the consent agenda of tonight's meeting 'Item 9C' which would be to schedule the public hearing for the amendment of City Code to adopt the schedule and policy related to civil penalties. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

g. CAFR Plan

Mrs. Benavides gave a presentation on the CAFR.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mayor Parham stated that he would like to entertain a motion from council to instruct code and compliance and the fire marshal office to start full enforcement of code violations on the old Ramada Inn at 380 East Washington Street.

Council Member Hill made a motion to instruct code and compliance and the fire marshal office to start full enforcement of code violations on the old Ramada Inn at 380 East Washington Street. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cuthbert. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

**9. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (to include minutes of previous meeting/s)**

- a. Request to schedule a public hearing on the rezoning request of Roslyn Farms Corporation to rezone the property from A (Agricultural) District to B-2 (General Commercial) District to allow commercial and business development, to include potential medical offices. The property address is 151 rear Wagner Road, T.P. 064-02-0800 parcel and 301-301A Wagner Road, T.P. 082-01-0001, a portion of parcel A.
- b. Request to schedule a public hearing on the rezoning request of Equity Plus, LLC to rezone the property from A (Agricultural) District to a PUD (Planned Unit Development) District to allow a residential subdivision of 168 single family dwellings. The property address is 2557 North Stedman Drive, T.P. 036-09-0001.

\*Audio available upon request.

Council Member Myers made a motion to accept the consent agenda with the scheduling of public hearings to November 19, 2019, with the addition of part 2 to eradicate blight. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. There was discussion on the motion.

Council Member Myers made a motion to suspend the Rules of Council to cancel the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and retain November 19, 2019, off the consent agenda. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

**10. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- a. A public hearing to consider an ordinance authorizing the lease of a 1-acre portion of the City-owned property at 37 River Street for a Dog Park.

**BACKGROUND:** The City has received a proposal to lease a 1-acre portion of the outdoor space that is included in the following City-owned parcel to establish a Dog Park:

Parcel ID	Premise	Street	Proposed Use
011-010002	37	River Street	Dog Park

In accordance with applicable legal requirements, A public hearing is required prior to approving and authorizing the lease of City-owned property.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the City Council holds a public hearing on October 15, 2019, and subsequently considers adoption of an ordinance approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute a Lease Agreement and proceed with the leasing of City-owned property in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Reggie Tabor, Economic Development Manager, gave a briefing on the dog park.

Sean Jean, 39 River Street, gave an update on the park.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Patricia Daley, 1710 Berkeley Avenue, stated, “I am going to make this very quick. I am a citizen of Petersburg and I have 20 years of dog ownership under my belt. I have an ideal situation right now because I have a house with a fenced in backyard and a doggy door. But I have lived in apartments and you cannot have dogs in apartments. It is just life is miserable and the dogs are miserable and the owners are miserable. It has the potential of misery. On the other hand, with a doggy park it is just not for the benefit of the owner and the animal but the community. You build community because people who do not normally talk to each other will pass each other in the hallway and walk in their door and that is end of story. They meet at the dog park and start talking about their days. Just like moms used to meet at the playground when we picked up our kids. This is how you make friends and build a community in a City composed of apartments. I think this is excellent for the City.”

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, “I love dogs and I think having a dog park is a great thing. So, I was pleased to see that. One reservation however is the location. I understood from what Mr. Tabor said that it is just part of that property. And I guess it is going to be back by the railroad tracks. It is adjacent to the Southside Depot and it is park of that property. And I thought that the Southside Depot was still being developed for a visitor’s center by the National Park Service. And I think that citizens have been told that they are working on it over time. I believe that this is still to be a visitors center. And the context of that is the historic

\*Audio available upon request.

property. I am not going to say that a dog park isn't compatible and if that is a consideration. Where is the bigger vision of how this dog park at that particular site is compatible with the visitor's center. Not only the visitor's center itself but the work that is going to be on the visitor's center. So, I'm assuming there is money coming and some other development is happening. But that would use some of the property around it. You would hate to have it go on and not work out well. And certainly having the visitor's center there and having all these people come to Petersburg because we here that it would bring a lot of people downtown. We would want to make sure that the dog park is well maintained and that the disposal station was used religiously. Because you are not going to be one to have a visitor's center adjacent to anything that is considered any kind of nuisance. Thank you."

Willie Noise, 1508 Circle Drive, stated, "My question is how are you going to dispose of the dog poop? Because when you bring of animals together they are going to create waste. How are we going to disclose of that. Thank you."

Marcus Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, "Dog parks can be very beneficial to a community. If you go out to Byrd Park on a nice warm day there can be over 50 to 100 people in a dog park. I will say that the smell can be smelled from the parking lot at times. So, it does contribute an odor to the surrounding area. So, how does it effect the National Park Service moving to the Southside Depot. I know that there are some brewage from the old storage right there. Will that be fenced off? Will there be a liability issue of people wandering over there and they trip and fall. Just some questions to think about. Thank you."

Ron Flock, 1708 Pender Avenue, stated, "On one slide it showed the roadway going through there. Someone is using that road because it would not be covered with grass. So, someone is trying to get back in and out of there. So, I am thinking that it will conflict with a dog park there. I am not saying that a dog park is a bad thing. It is a good thing and I take my dog on Fort Lee all the time. I don't know if that is a good place for it. Thank you."

Paula Chester, 1013 Oakmont Drive, stated, "I too am concerned about the location and dog poop. We have a lot of restaurants in that area. And to come out and enjoy the restaurants and have all the activities going on we will not be happy about the smell. Let's be real. Dogs do bring body odors as well as humans. So, we have to keep all that in consideration. Thank you."

Richard Stewart, 129 Rolfe Street, stated, "My family has been on Pocahontas for more than 300 generations. And we have encountered tornadoes and drugs and the Roper Brothers tried to throw us out. Finally we heard somebody say that we are going to be developed into a historic Mecca. When you look dog parks are not for the City. They are in Prince George in the acreage of their land. Can't you carry it out there? We have entertainment in the area of Old Town. So, when the horn starts blowing is the dogs going to start howling. Dogs have a tendency of having sensitive ears. We in Pocahontas do not need a dog park a quarter of a mile down from us. Thank you."

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed the public comments.

There was discussion among City Council Members.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to table the dog park proposal until council receives an analysis from staff as to whether it would be feasible to locate the dog park in Patton Park.

Motion dies due to lack of second.

Council Member Myer made motion to give the City Manager the authority to negotiate a lease at the property located at 37 River Street and adoption of the ordinance regarding the lease. The motion was

\*Audio available upon request.

seconded by Council Member Hill.

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a substitute motion authorizing the City Manager to look at the other available properties before making a decision of 37 River Street for a dog park. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cuthbert. There was discussion among City Council. The motion was not approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee and Wilson-Smith; Voting No: Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

Original motion made by Council Member Myers goes back on the floor.

Council Member Myer made motion to give the City Manager the authority to negotiate a lease at the property located at 37 River Street and adoption of the ordinance regarding the lease. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Smith-Lee, Myers, Hill, Parham; Voting No: Cuthbert and Wilson-Smith; Absent: Hart

**19-ORD-50A AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A LEASE OF A 1-ACRE PORTION OF THE CITY-OWNED PROPERTY AT 37 RIVER STREET FOR A DOG PARK.**

- b. Appropriation for preliminary engineering work for Six South Crater Road traffic signal improvements - \$151,769.00

**BACKGROUND:** This project was approved in 2013 and Kimley-Horn began working on the project. As a result of funding issues, work on the project ceased and the project was dormant. The project has been revived and Kimley-Horn is ready to proceed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend City Council approve the attached appropriation ordinance in the amount of \$151,769.

Lionel Lyons, Deputy City Manager, gave a briefing and stated that Mr. Brian Peters of Kimley-Horn would give a brief update.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Ron Flock, 1708 Pender Avenue, stated, "It just may be my own ignorance but is this not a study that can be done by VDOT and not at our expense. I don't I am just asking."

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed the public comments.

Mrs. Benavides stated, "I just want to clarify that it is actually not our funding. It is state and federal funding so VDOT is paying and the federal government."

There was discussion among City Council Members on the motion that is on the floor.

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve the appropriation ordinance in the amount of \$151,769. The motion was seconded by Council Member Myers. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

**19-ORD-51 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2019, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 FOR THE GENERAL FUND.**

\*Audio available upon request.

- c. A public hearing to consider an ordinance authorizing the sale of city-owned property at 209 River Street, 209 River Street Rear, 236 River Street, 275 River Street, 433 River Street, 429 Fifth Street and 501 Second Street.

**BACKGROUND:** The City has received a proposal from Waukeshaw Development, Inc. to purchase parcels of property owned by the City of Petersburg, and bounded by River Street to the South, Joseph Jenkins Roberts St to the West, the Harbor to the North, and Interstate 95 to the East, including the following City-owned properties:

<i>Parcel ID</i>	<i>Property Address</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Acquisition</i>	<i>Purchase Price</i>	<i>Assessed Value</i>
011-020006	275 River Street	2.64 ac	M-2	12/16/1988	\$10.00	\$247,700
011-020002	209 River Street Rear	1.01 ac	M-2	02/25/1987	\$10.00	\$94,800
011-020004	209 River Street	.06 ac	M-2	12/16/1988	\$10.00	\$5,300
011-030001	429 Fifth Street	.73 ac	R-4	06/14/1991	\$10.00	\$68,900
012-010001	433 River Street	.67 ac	M-2			\$13,400
011-020801	501 Second Street	.30 ac	M-2	5/31/1995	\$1.00	\$28,200
011-040002	236 River Street	.17 ac	M-2	12/16/1988	\$10.00	\$4,300
011-040003	240 River St	.55 ac	M-2	04/15/2014	\$1.00	\$30,600

The proposed use for the property is an outdoor event space.

In accordance with applicable legal requirements, A public hearing is required prior to approving and authorizing the sale of City-owned property.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the City Council holds a public hearing on October 15, 2019 and subsequently considers adoption of an Ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a Purchase Agreement and proceed with the sale of City-owned property in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Reggie Tabor, Economic Development Manager, and Dave McCormack, petitioner, gave a briefing on the public hearing on the sale of properties on River and Second Street.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, “And thank you Mayor Parham for asking Mr. McCormack to come up and explain the map because I was really curious about it and also the City put it on the website as also meeting materials because I would like to study it more closely because it looks real interesting. I think the whole idea sounds great. I have got really not a question about this but looking on this presentation of both what was on the agenda packet as well as what Mr. Tabor brought back. It was a lot of emphasis on the appraisal of five of the eight properties equal \$20,000. But that just seems so conspicuously different on the City assessed value of the properties. I am not sure it is relevant. But it just raises the question of the properties that are owned by the City and why are they assessed so high. I guess this is a question that

\*Audio available upon request.

transcends this particular issue. If you think about it then think about those buildings and Union Street and a couple of those buildings where you were going to build that parking lot. Some of those buildings over there have a high assessed value but they are ready to collapse. I just think that this a broader question that you an address later. On the topic of this particular development I hope it happens. It sounds great.”

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice Street, stated, “My question is on assessed value. Why do we sell property that is assessed at almost a half of a million dollars for a senseless value. That just makes no sense to me.”

Ron Moore, 307 N. Boulevard, stated, “As an entrepreneur, if you pay \$52 for then sell it for \$100. Let me tell you what I mean by that. I would be better for Mr. McCormack to put the money into the actual Petersburg then render \$100,000 for what. So, as an entrepreneur I have been involved in products not on this level. I am sure that he has the capita to do it. But he can enjoy his capita and put it in a public place or allocate to do something productive in Petersburg like more traffic cops.”

Marcus Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, “My question is more so about the Comprehensive Plan. I know that the Roper site is controlled by the Economic Development Authority. Are they in on this development as well? Another question would be in the regards of the amount of parking and the fact that it is by a major waterway. How would the runoff be mitigated? Thank you for your concerns.”

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed the public comments.

Council Member Myers made a motion to give the city manager the authority to dispose of the property and the revised ordinance. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. There was discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Hart

**19-ORD-52 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY 275 RIVER STREET, 209 REAR RIVER STREET, 209 RIVER STREET, 429 RIVER STREET, 433 RIVER STREET, 501 SECOND STREET, 236 RIVER STREET AND 240 RIVER STREET.**

11. **PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD:** The Public Information Period is established by the Rules of Council to hear input from City residents or owners of businesses in the City. It will last for a maximum of 30 minutes. Speakers will be called in the order that they have signed up to speak. If there are ten or fewer speakers, each shall speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. If there are more than ten (10) people desiring to speak, the time allotted to each person may be adjusted or the number of speakers limited to meet the time limitation. A speaker may speak on items **except those that are listed on tonight’s Council agenda**. Any matter brought before the attention of the City Council during the public information period will not be acted upon by the City Council at this meeting.

Estelle Gant, 329 N. Park Drive, stated, “I am a citizen the City. I am here about the V-Shape at South Sycamore Street and South Boulevard. It is overgrown with dead shrubbery, overgrown shrubbery and liter. There is an elementary school right across from this area. There is a laundromat and a Shell’s gas station. And there is a church on the left-hand side. Sycamore Street is one of the main streets to Crater Road. I am asking the City for them to clean up this area and keep it clean. If you love this City make it happen.”

Yvette Powell, 1678 Brandon Avenue, stated, “I want to thank Councilman Cuthbert for inviting me. I am here to petition the City for help with funding, maintaining and restoring Poplar Lawn Park, 351 South Sycamore Street. I am partnering with Ms. Estelle. We have been working on this project and have been cleaning. We need help and we are not asking the City to do it. We want the City to help us. Our list is as follows: maintaining the dead foliage, the dead tree limbs and trimming the ground around the fountain,

\*Audio available upon request.

providing the plants and flowers, removing tree stumps, removing the HOA from the canal and cleaning the steps leading to the canal. Down near the canal it is just beautiful. Adding more gravel for the walkways and edging the brick path leading up to the fountain, painting or cleaning the fountain, layer of mulch around fountain area and near entrance of park remove the trees covering of signage. We want to make it look nice and very inviting to the community. My intention when starting this was community. Because community is everything and I think that the community has been forgotten. So, we want to beautify this space so that the community cannot only appreciate the space by help have some responsibility in it. We are not looking for a hand out but looking for to get help to make the community beautiful. Thank you.”

Ron Moore, 307 N. Boulevard, stated, “I want to talk about the traffic issues. I know you all know about the speeding in Petersburg. I would like to work with you Mayor and Council Member Myers to try to come up with some type of solution to ticketing what is going to happen to Johnson Road and North. You can make a million dollars. Put a camera out there and go along the streets. It is that bad. So, I just wanted to mention it to you gentlemen to come up with a summary of policing and getting the tickets and getting some revenue from that because it is over the top. Also, trash, I would like to work with you all in terms of trash on the curb. Thank you so much.”

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, “Normally, around this time of the year if not sooner the City Council talks about its legislative agenda. Now, I just heard that you are only having one meeting in November. I thought in previous years there was discussion in allowing citizens to have more of a role in this like a public hearing. It looks like now that if you all are going to have a legislative agenda then you all are running out of time since the General Assembly starts in January. The other thing that I would like to comment on is the presentation on the CAFR and the process and some of the problems that have been encountered. That was good and I hope that it will be on also presented online on the City’s website. One thing that struck me from the presentation as well as the questions that some of you asked is if there is a lot of diss going on between the City administration and the Treasurer. I realized that this is not new. And those of you who know me, you know I am not an apologist for the Treasurer. I think there has been a lot of balls dropped there. Also, I don’t think that all of it can be laid on Mr. Pritchett and his office. As it has been discussed on the Deputy Treasurer a while ago, the City did not really understand it and there was no reconciliation being done. So, one of the comments in the presentation was that on November 20, 2017 to June 2018, that there was no reconciliation done during this time period. I guess that this like seven months. But, I have been looking back and reading some old articles in the Progress-Index about the CAFR. And I think that it was in July 2018, that there was something where the City administration reported to council and talked about that the initial reports did not look good. And that it was because of reconciliation that helped them be completed. And at that point it was said that there were three months that were not done which I think was April, May and June. In October 2018, there was another newspaper article about two months for the CAFR to be reconciled. I am not sure that this is a concern as a citizen. When we heard from the finance director that it is hard to attract people to come here because they hear so many things about Petersburg. But this is the kind of thing that it doesn’t help with creditability because how do we know where we stand. I am not really sure how many months we did not reconcile. For the first time tonight, we heard that we did not reconcile anything in 2019. So, I am going to get off because I know my time is up. But I do hope that it will be explored further because I do not think that all of the questions can be answered by just saying that the Treasurer done it.”

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice Street, stated, “I want to thank people who have done the cleanup on entrance and exit of Exit 50. People are just like living like you wouldn’t believe on them. It is so embarrassing, and it look so much better now. It is a think less job that needs to be a continued job. I do not know why people do stuff like this. Whoever is responsible I want to thank them for that. On financial transparency, I went and looked at everything online this afternoon. It would help if we had a legend on some of these things. Like DMV Selective Enforcing, what does that mean? I saw it listed twice. That is one example of many things. If we can find out what these things mean it would help us to understand this budget process a lot better. I applaud the fire department on the installation of the smoke detectors, but I had a discussion with them a couple of years

\*Audio available upon request.

back when they first got a grant. People who are deaf and hard of hearing need specialized smoke detectors. What works for one does not work for us. I have two loud ones, but they also set off another alarm in my house. Many people do not have that. So, when they do smoke detectors, they need to do some for ones that are deaf and hard of hearing. Thank you.”

Ron Flock, 1708 Pender Avenue, stated, “I just wanted to briefly go over the whole CAFR thing as well. The General Assembly told you all to figure it out. You have a position in the Treasurer’s Office that has not been filled. So, we are paying \$100 an hour for consultants to come in and do it. The just hired that spot. So, take the Treasurer out of it. We have had him for two years now. You cannot hire around him. It is ridiculous and before you know it, we are going to have three years of CAFR to do. And that is just unacceptable. If you have to hire somebody for the City to do the Treasurer’s job on the side of him, but you have to stop being convocational at the same time. I know that you are dealing with a wall. I understand that. But if I am doing my job and I go into another department and someone is having me flanked by the police then what kind of message are you sending to them? You are not going to get any cooperation out of them and you sure are not going to get any out of me. So, sometimes you have to deal with people that you do not like. Find a way around it. There has to be a way. Sit down with Ken and see how we can get around this. Anything will help. Please get the CAFR done. I would like to know where we are sitting. Thank you.”

Willie Noise,, 1508 Circle Drive, stated, “Tonight I have 14 things that I want to mention right fast on management, parks, trucks parked in neighborhood, total number of tax exempt properties, rank of veterans, buses being not available at new locations in the City, department heads, white collar crimes and present City Council to stay in place for the next two years. What were some of the neighborhood comments from the Halifax Street project that is going on now and the City Cleanup. The City Cleanup is looking good. You all are focusing on the corners and other places. For projects going on in the neighborhoods you have to get a survey of the people in the area. I have not heard nothing of it and do not know what the project is about. The present City Council to stay in place. We have had so many turnovers from the administration that none of the City Council people know each other that well and they need to know in order to direct the City in which way they are going. And being able to spot people that are no help. You did the same thing down at the river by removing the dam. There is no association on the water level for the fishermen in the City. The bus not knowing the location on Wagner Road and the Social Security place. And I hear people all the time that ride the bus that there is no way to get there. Our ranking of the veterans and I have spoken on that, I don’t know how many times. And you all have not made a statement yet and I am still waiting on that. Giles B. Cooke School, who is in charge of maintenance around here? I have seen that school start with a little peeling on the roof and now a whole wing section is gone. That is the way demolish stuff around here. You talk about antique stuff. I mean what is the deal with that? The management, now we have to focus on that. That is the biggest problem that I see. People become friends of the boss and don’t do their job and the boss don’t send you to OJT. Thank you for allowing me to go a little further. Maybe if you keep the clock running a little you can see how much overtime each person is. Thank you.”

Marcus Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, “Do you know Petersburg has the largest amount of original colonial structures in the Commonwealth of Virginia. One of Petersburg assets are actually historical assets. If you go to the New York Met there is a actually a Petersburg, VA room in New York Met from where the Rockefellers and members of the New York Mets came down and pillaged Petersburg colonial structures. So, it would be in the City’s best interest in going around trying to preserve some of these colonial residential structures so that we can keep that status. What is the City doing about the old Titmus Optical Building? What is the City doing with Peabody? Currently in Virginia, there is a new initiative called the Green New Deal. It would be our best interest to hop on that initiative. I know the Delegate was recently talking about that at her debate. We have the old hydroelectric power plant here on the river. Why not implement that again to have technology to have fish swim upstream? They even have microgenerators that can be put on the side of the river. These are some ideas, and everybody have a great night. Thank you.”

\*Audio available upon request.

**12. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FOR/FROM THE MAYOR OR COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you Mr. Mayor. I want to thank the City Manager for her presentation and explanation tonight dealing with CAFR. I thought that was very helpful. It helped me to understand where some of the problems are. I am delighted to see that our collection rates seem to be up. And I just want to plant the seed with everyone that I hope this means when we consider a water rate increase next year that we will be talking about an increase of 8% or less and not the 12% that we were talking about just this past summer. I just want to remind everybody of that. The less the better. But we will see. I think continuing to include our collection rate is going to make the increase in our water rate smaller. So, that pays really benefits to us all. This is not an abstract benefit, but it is a benefit that effects all our citizens when it comes time to pay the water bill. Let me switch to a totally different topic. And that is the minutes. I noticed that there were no minutes in tonight's agenda packet, I believe. Is that right Ms. Flowers? Mr. Mayor, do you know why the October 1<sup>st</sup> minutes are not in packet for tonight?"

Mayor Parham stated, "At this time, with Ms. Jackson being out I do not know if the minutes are completed."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Are we going to have to wait until Ms. Jackson to come back before we have minutes again?"

Mayor Parham stated, "No."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Okay. Is there a problem with preparing the minutes in a two-week period, Mr. Mayor?"

Mayor Parham stated, "We will work on getting those in there. I saw tonight also that they were not there. We are kind of in a transitional period right now while Ms. Jackson is out on maternity leave. But Ms. Flowers is working on it."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Well I am a fan of everybody at this table, but I think we need to have our minutes on a timely fashion. Which means preferably, if we meet on October 1<sup>st</sup> then the minutes would be in the October 15<sup>th</sup> packet. Ms. Flowers, do you think that is an attainable goal?"

Ms. Flowers stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Great. Thank you for that. And everybody appreciates Ms. Flowers what you do and the great service to the City that you are applying. And I do not need to suggest anything else. I am very grateful to you. I know that we all are. Let me go to comments by Estelle Gant and Yvette Powell. Each of them made a comment about landscaping of areas in Petersburg. Estelle Gant made a comment about the V-shape landscape area at the intersection of South Boulevard and South Sycamore, diagonally across from Walnut Hill School. And Ms. Powell talked about maintaining Poplar Lawn Park. It does look a little down. Mrs. City Manager, I am working if you would ask the appropriate staff person to reach out to both Ms. Powell and Ms. Gant to work with them to get their help and ideas as to what can be done to beautify these two areas that is not already being done. I do not think that it is fair to put the whole burden on those ladies who took the time and made the effort to come speak to us tonight, but I do think that they made some good points. Ms. City Manager if you would do that it would be great. And I do not know if we have phone numbers for them, but I know we have addresses. When they signed up to speak did, they leave phone numbers also?"

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Council member, Mrs. Innis has already spoke with them and we are following up with them."

\*Audio available upon request.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Alright that is great. If Mrs. Innis or the appropriate person would report back to council when we meet next to let us know the upshot of that meeting with Ms. Gant and Ms. Powell but the specific game plan for moving forward. Thank you very much Mr. Mayor."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Thank you for coming to your City Council meeting. In reference to what Mr. Cuthbert was saying about the two ladies that talked about the trash at the intersection and fixing up the park. I would like to ask that we reestablish our volunteer bank. Because there are a lot of people within the City that have a lot of skills and talent who would love to tackle something such as that. If we have a listing of such persons. So, if we can talk to Ms. Tyus about possibly reaching out further and doing some more with our volunteer bank we can get more citizens to help with things that they are truly interest in doing. The second thing that I would like to say is that at the last council meeting I attended I brought up the fact that perhaps we could establish a Citizen Committee to review our charter and make recommendations to Mrs. Aird for the legislative update. She will need these recommendations I know no later than December. And right now our council has not established anything. So, if we could get one citizen per ward to sit down and go through the charter and see what they would like to recommend. Such recommendations could include when we talk about our treasurer position, if the charter were changed to include what responsibilities or what the treasurer would have to have in order to be elected, we would get people who are actually qualified to do the jobs. As opposed to anyone running for any particular office. So, the Citizen Committee would look at that. So, I would like to put that to a motion please that we establish by the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting a Citizenry Committee with one person per ward to look at our legislative agenda."

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion to establish by the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting a Citizenry Committee with one person per ward to look at the legislative agenda.

Motion dies due to lack of second.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "It has also been brought to my attention that one of our most beautiful assets, Lee Park and the Watershed Conservatory, is having difficulty getting water. Can I ask a citizen to explain this? I think that we all need to hear about this."

Marcus Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, "I am a recent appointed board member to the Wilcox Watershed Authority Board and currently we have a donation for \$25,000 to restore the Azealia Hill. The City cut of the water and said that they wanted the Wilcox Watershed to pay for the bill to maintain the park. I am not sure if the Poplar Lawn Garden Club has to pay for the fountain or if this occurs in other parks. I am just wondering why this was occurring. Also, two of buildings are open. The bat house and the cottage are open to the public. Thanks."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Can someone just follow-up, please?"

Mr. Lyons stated, "Ma'am, we have the information and staff is following up on that as we speak and we will report back to you."

Council Member Myers stated, "No items."

Council Member Hill stated, "Good evening. Thank you for coming to our City Council meeting. First of all Ward 2 will be having a Town Hall meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at Good Shepherd Baptist Church. And I witnessed a beautiful wedding at Poplar Lawn Park this past Saturday. If you drove by it was really nice and the park looked nice. It was good to see people in the park and using the facility for a wedding. It was really nice and it had several brides and grooms. Also, I want to personally thank this council. We have come a long way in a short period of time. So, I just want to thank the council as a whole. And I know we all tend to think

\*Audio available upon request.

differently at times and that is what makes our diverse thinking great. I thank the staff as well. I want the administration to take a look at the stop sign on Sycamore and Bolling Street. Because people continue to run that stop sign. You maybe can monitor with a police officer or something to that nature. That's it. Thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Good evening again everyone. I would like to just thank the citizens and City staff that came out to the Exchange Building for the National Treasurer Grant that we received. Council Member Cuthbert was there along with Mr. Wayne Crocker, Sergei Troubetzkoy and Ms. Tyus. It was a great time today with Senator Warner. And he is committed to helping the City of Petersburg. Next, while I am thinking about it I wanted to let everyone know that Vice Mayor John Hart could not be here today but he has a ward meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is a joint ward meeting with Adrian Dance at Pleasants Lane Elementary. It will be 6:30pm on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I would like to thank also Officer Hernandez. On last night we had a great neighborhood watch meeting with the Sycamore Street, Fairfax and Monticello Street people at the elementary school. Thank you for briefing everyone along with Captain Walker who was there to answer a lot of questions on what is going on in our community. Next, I want to thank Mrs. Tangela Innis of Public Works. A lot of times people don't understand throughout the course of the weekend they think the City is on break. But Mrs. Innis and her crew was out there. We had several watermain breaks over this weekend. But they were out there Saturday and Sunday and got those things fixed in a timely manner. I thank you and your crew for what you do and keep us afloat. Next, this weekend is homecoming weekend at Virginia State. It will be a pretty active time in Petersburg. We have the parade and everything coming up on Saturday. And if we could have all citizens to show up and participate and show support and help take care of our community while we have our guest here visiting for homecoming. Again, I attended the P.T. Taylor Walk Against Hunger. This was a great event on October 5<sup>th</sup> at Poplar Lawn Park. P.T. is in his 90s and still a man that is still champion out there in Petersburg and still doing great work in his community. Thanks again."

**13. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

**14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

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

**15. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

No items for this portion of the agenda.

**16. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Supplemental Appropriation for Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People, Inc (CAPUP) - \$25,000.

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Petersburg has partnered with CAPUP for many years providing employment to low-income youth in Petersburg. This program has been instrument in youth development within the City of Petersburg.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend that Council accept and appropriate the additional \$25,000 for the CAPUP partnership.

Council Member Myers made a motion to accept and appropriate the additional \$25,000 for the CAPUP partnership. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill.

\*Audio available upon request.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Myers, Hill, Hart and Parham; Absent: Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith, Hart

**19-ORD-53 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2019, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 FOR THE GRANTS FUND.**

b. Appropriation of the Edward Byrne JAG Grant - \$30,630.

**BACKGROUND:** The Edward Byrne JAG Grant is an annual grant awarded to Local Police agencies for various enforcement projects. Petersburg has applied for funding and the Department of Justice has accepted the application and awarded funding in the amount of \$30,630. There is no local match to these funds.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend that Council accept and appropriate the grant funds to be spent in the FY2019-20.

Council Member Myers made a motion to accept and appropriate the grant funds to be spent in the FY2019-20. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed the public comments.

The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Myers, Hill and Parham; Absent: Smith-Lee, Wilson-Smith and Hart

**19-ORD-54 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2019, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020, FOR THE GRANTS FUND.**

**17. REPORTS/REPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD:**

India Adams, Assistant to the City Manager, read comments and responses from previous public information at the October 15, 2019, regular council meeting.

1. What is the status of the former library on Sycamore St.? *{Update} The Office of Planning and Community Development will be partnering with Public Works & Utilities to gather quotes for the engineering study that is needed before repairs can be done.*
2. What can be done to better the condition of Cameron Field?  
*To date, about half of the bleachers on the north side of the field have been repaired and painted. Petersburg Facilities Maintenance supplied labor and materials to repair the broken and warped wooden bleachers. An inmate crew was also utilized for the painting of the bleachers. Staff also completed a field inspection of Cameron Field; findings were that minor cleanup is required.*

**18. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA**

\*Audio available upon request.

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Just wanted to follow-up on one point. If anyone is interested in reporting on the treasurer, if you look at the testimony before the state, which was presented with the charter change and the testimony given stated reconciliation had not been dated from November to June. And that was during the state charter change. So, this was stated all alone. So, if you would like copies of it , it is also online."

**19. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM CLERK:**

\*There were no items for this portion of the agenda.

**20. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:**

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

**21. ADJOURNMENT:**

City Council adjourned at 10:25p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor