

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, January 5, 2016, at the Union Train Station. Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m.

1. REGULARLY-SCHEDULED MEETING – 6:30 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member David R. Coleman
Council Member John Hart, Sr.
Council Member Darrin Hill
Council Member Brian A. Moore
Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith
Vice Mayor Samuel Parham
Mayor W. Howard Myers

Absent: None

Present from City Administration:

City Manager William E. Johnson, III
City Attorney Brian K. Telfair
Clerk of Council Nykesha D. Jackson, CMC

3. MOMENT OF SILENCE:

a. Clerk of Council, Nykesha D. Jackson, led council and the audience in a moment of silence.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

a. Clerk of Council, Nykesha D. Jackson, led council and the audience in a moment of silence.

5. PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: (Each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes.)

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. Minutes December 8, 2015.

b. Schedule a public hearing on the proposed disposition of publicly-owned property addressed as 503 West Washington Street on Tuesday, January 19, 2016.

Council Member Hart made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda to schedule public hearing “6b” on January 19, 2016. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Parham. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

7. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS: (In accordance with the Rules of Council, public comment will be heard before discussion by Council. Once discussion has started, no further input from the public will be accepted. Each speaker will be limited to three (3) minutes.)

a. Hold a public hearing for the expansion of the City’s tax abatement program to include vacant lots in areas designated as rehabilitation areas.

BACKGROUND: The Code of the State of Virginia allows a locality to expand the tax abatement program to include vacant lots in designated rehabilitation areas of the City of Petersburg. The proposed expansion gives the City of Petersburg an opportunity to attract developers to the City who can build infill housing and commercial uses to support the neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that Council approve the expansion of the City's Tax abatement program.

Michelle Peters, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview of the expansion of the City's tax abatement program to include vacant lots in areas designated as rehabilitation areas.

Ms. Jackson opened the floor for public comment.

Willie Noise, 1508 Circle Drive, stated Happy New Year's to everyone. He stated that these lots that houses have been torn down on and they start growing up and that he wanted to adopt one of the lots. He stated that the location is probably where undesirables hangout. He stated that this is an ideal place to put a picnic table and a trash receptacle so that these same people can come back and enjoy that lot until something is done with it. He stated that he ask that with this plan they throw in picnic table and trash receptacle until something has been done with it.

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, stated that he remembers this being the same ward the Dollar General. He stated that he hears the program and that it seems like it is taking out the kids. He stated that they have to remember that this is a big place. He stated that the City has a lot of empty buildings. He stated that the administrative stated that they people are not asking for homes that they are asking for duplexes. He stated that they do not want this to come up that they are building duplexes. He stated that after while the City will end up having projects like he stated on time before. He stated that not to take away from projects but they have their place. He stated that they have not grocery store but they have the Family Dollar. He stated that the Family Dollar will need security. He stated that when he looked in that area he asked himself what homes are in that area. He stated that they are still tearing down homes in that area. He stated that the City is utilizing this program hoping that people will purchase or build single homes. He stated that on the particular lot that was for that gentleman to help the stores a piece of land was voted down by City Council. He stated that is lot was to help the children go forward. He stated that they have to have the entire City to go forward not just one area.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, stated that in listening to the explanation that Mrs. Peters stated it definitely sounds like a good idea. He stated that they are trying to get the vacant properties to start turning in some money therefore, generating the tax basis. He stated that he is all for this. He stated that one of the problems that he is seeing is in the 5th Ward they have one of the highest concentration of deadbeat landlords in that area. He stated that what is concerning him is that those deadbeat landlords will come in to build a single-family home or something of that nature and it ends of becoming like some of the homes on Halifax Street, Mistletoe Street, and Harding Street that end of becoming rooming houses. He stated that this concerns him because if you go on the registry now that is sent out by the police department that area alone has a high concentration of sex predators. He asked how things are going to be monitored to make sure they do not have someone come put a door on it to keep them off it. He stated that they see stuff not going on and they come to their City Council representative and never hear anything. He stated that he does not hear anything from the Mayor.

Mrs. Peters stated that this is a residential development. She stated that you are talking a one-family, two-family, three-family and a quad. She stated that commercial is not a part of this expansion. She stated that this is residential development homeownership. She stated that this is not rental property. She stated that there are provisions in this ordinance that will guide how a developer who comes in Ward 1, 4 or 5 would acquire the property and construct a single-family development up to a quad. She stated that this has to be a permitted use. She stated that the zoning ordinance governs the design that will be required. She stated that this ordinance does not override the zoning ordinance. She stated that because someone has the ability to

take advantage of this program they cannot use it for a rooming house. She stated that when they do a building permit they will know that it is for a single-family up to a quad. She stated that when you are looking at a building permit you can determine the size and tell whether it is a rooming house or not. She stated that they look at it based on locks. She stated that if you have a key lock or a padlock on the door it constitutes a rooming house before a building permit is permitted. She stated that the City of Petersburg for a number of years had a project where they did demolition on properties. She stated that she always said that a plan is needed to rebuild buildings. She stated that if they are going to continue to demolish they have to have a plan to put back or restore those communities. She stated that this will be a tool that they can use to begin that restoration process.

Richie McKeithen, City Assessor, stated that they built in this particular ordinance to address certain issues and one of them being absentee landlords. He stated that if in fact you do not have an individual for a quad or a triplex in that particular property that has an executed lease agreement to purchase the property in a certain amount of time then you get put out the program. He stated that you have a certain amount of time of three years to get this. He stated that if in fact you get into the program and you do not meet the requirements in the audit process then you will be excused or put out the program. He stated that he audits the program as well. He stated that this is something that they are trying to do to put vacant lots in use and be taxable property. He stated that he thinks that they built somethings in the program that will address some of the concerns in regard to absentee landlords. He stated that the actually property has to be owner occupied. He stated that if they don't occupy one of the units then they have to have a tenant who has an agreement in their lease to purchase the property after a certain amount of time. He stated that if they do not do this then they are put out of the program.

Mr. Gannaway stated that his only other concern is how the program would be monitored.

Mr. McKeithen stated that he has an audit process in which he would have the individual property owner fill out documentation and an affidavit. He stated that there is a lot of information that they have to fill out proofing certain things. He stated that this is how they monitor everything.

Seeing no further hands, Ms. Jackson closed the public hearing.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Council Member Coleman made a motion to approve the City's Tax Abatement Program and Ward 1, 4 and 5 would be used as a pilot. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hart. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Wilson-Smith, Moore, Parham and Myers

16-ORD-1 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 106, TAXATION, TO ADD SECTIONS 106-139, PURPOSE, 106-140, EVALUATION OF EXEMPTION PROGRAM; 106-141, RULES AND REGULATIONS; 106-142, ELIGIBILITY; 106-143, APPLICATION; 106-144, AMOUNT OF EXEMPTION; 106-145, PENALTY, 106-146 LAND BOOK; AND 106-147, DEMOLITION; TO DIVISION IV OF ARTICLE III OF CHAPTER 106; OF THE 2000 CODE OF THE CITY OF PETERSBURG, AS AMENDED.

- b. Hold a public hearing to purchase 512 University Boulevard and an easement to the rear of 525 University Boulevard.

BACKGROUND: The City is proposing gateway improvements along this corridor and needs to have control of the property currently owned by CSX. The proposed gateway improvements will change the aesthetics of this important thoroughfare as it welcomes visitors to our great City. A passive park is a feature of the improvements and will be very inviting and interactive for all who visit.

RECOMMENDATION: Permit the purchase of 525 University Boulevard.

Michelle Peters, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview on the purchase of 512 University Boulevard and an easement to the rear of 525 University Boulevard.

Ms. Jackson opened the floor for public comment.

Larry Smith, 1151 Normandale Avenue, stated that this was flashed around a little too fast. He stated that he needs to know where these properties are. He stated that it was not clear. He stated that he sees 512 and 525 University Boulevard. He asked would these properties be on the same side of the street.

Mrs. Peters stated that it is near the railroad and then near the trestle.

Mr. Smith asked whether this was across the street with one on one side of street and the other portion on the other side. He asked what the easement would be.

Mrs. Peters stated that the easement would be behind the trestle and that the easement is already there.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, asked for clarity on purchase.

Mrs. Peters showed Mr. Christian with the laser on the map on the projector.

Mr. Christian asked that the City does not own this now.

Mrs. Peters stated no. She stated that CSX owns it currently.

Mr. Christian asked isn't this area where people are parking now to go fishing. He stated that he applauds Mrs. Peters and her staff for this work. He stated that he has to ask this question. He stated that when they are talking about University's, he stated most University Boulevards have something that relates to the university. He stated that he is wondering why the City is buying this and what is going to be done with it. He stated that they have seen a sharp decline in the students patronizing Petersburg. He stated that he is not sure what visitor is coming thru the gateway in that area other than people that are going in the old town area. He stated that there is nothing that says Virginia State University on University Boulevard. He stated that most of the students are being shuttled to Southpark Mall. He stated that in that area they can say University Boulevard more than the City of Petersburg can. He stated that there are very few businesses that cater to Virginia State University students. He stated that whatever they build there to have it have something that connects to the school. He asked what was the reason of naming the street University Boulevard.

Michael Edwards, 409 Grove Avenue, stated that last year the City went into an agreement with the Petersburg Foundation to take over the park in Squaw Alley. He asked whether this was where the turnaround would be. He stated that when they access the parking lot from University Boulevard and it goes down to the bridge.

Mrs. Peters stated that if she is not mistaken, Squaw Alley is outside this area. She stated that she can check on this information to make sure that it is accurate.

Mr. Edwards stated that the way the picture is shown it is going all the way back to the substation. He stated that there is a boat launch in that area. He stated that in the area where they are hanging out fishing it does not seem like there is enough room right there.

Mrs. Peters stated that the picture that everyone sees is illustration only. She stated that they can scale it and get actual property lines. She stated that this is not the case here though. She stated that all of the property that is developed is currently on City owned property other than what they are trying to acquire from CSX. She stated that nothing is changing and that it will still have the parking and have where people can go and fish. She stated that it is just going to be improved. She stated that it will have a curb appeal that it currently does. She stated that nothing is being taken away from what is currently there.

Mr. Edward asked Mr. Johnson was it 2014 when the City took the property from the Petersburg Foundation.

Mr. Johnson stated that the pavilion will always be as a passive piece of property due to the environmental condition. He stated that it will never be heavy activity use.

Mr. Edwards asked that the properties that the City is getting are where the arcs are sitting.

Mrs. Peters stated yes.

Mr. Edwards asked about the old fish market that is sitting in the corner.

Mrs. Peters stated that it is outside the scope of the property.

Seeing no further hands, Ms. Jackson closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Parham made a motion to approve the purchase of 525 University Boulevard. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

16-ORD-2 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF 525 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD.

8. **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 six (6) 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.

Larry Smith, 1151 Normandale Avenue, stated that something so simple as what they just saw can be complicated when the information is not clear. He stated that he would like to ask can City Council clarify to them what the news article was talking about when it highlighted the thousands of dollars that is being spent to go to the municipal league conferences. He stated that last year he asked about what they got. He asked for the bank for their buck when they sent the City Manager and a Council Member to London. He asked what they got in return. He stated that he was subsequently sent a pack of information from the City Attorney's office and charged a fee for this. He stated that after further discussion and clarity the fee was dropped and they reached an agreement. He stated that from the news article they sent five times as many people to this latest conference as did Colonial Heights by spending a lot more tax dollars. He stated that this would make it imperative that they tell the City what happens at these things and what they get out of it. He asked do they attend and go to a class and what did they learn from the class. He asked how the \$12,000 or \$13,000 from them sending them somewhere benefits the City. He stated that this is all that he was asking last year. He stated that he did not get an answer and that what he got was a charge. He stated that he wants an answer. He asked that when they go to a municipal league conference what is it that they do. He asked did anyone go and not attend one single class. He asked did they just have a \$50 hamburger or did they do something to help benefit the City. He stated that he would like to have a report. He stated that he does not think anyone knows. He stated to have the citizens talk positive about what they are doing. He stated that they cannot do this if they do not know what the City is doing. He stated that he asks what classes they attended and what they got from this. He asked what they brought back.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, stated that he would like some clarity as well. He stated that he did not know that someone would ask the same questions. He stated that he read the article about the amount of money that was spent at the conference. He stated that it bothered him. He stated that what they went

through with the sheriff it was in the paper about the sheriff attending conferences and spending money and not bringing back a report. He stated that City Council is guilty of the same thing. He asked how this is benefiting the citizens when they are spending money. He asked what the citizens are getting out of this. He asked who put together the "I AM PETERSBURG." He stated that this bothers him. He stated that all that is shown is everyone that does not live in his hood. He stated that there are those of the poor people that are of Petersburg. He stated that they fight for Petersburg and argue as well. He stated that they do not necessarily criticize the City but criticize leadership. He stated that they need to do better than what they are doing. He stated that they do not have ward meetings when they say that they are. He stated that when they try and call City Council Members they do not return phone calls. He asked that with the skating rink gone what kind of negotiating is being entered into with the fire department and others. He stated that he has done his own little investigation and some of the reports and findings that the investigator stated that he found is wrong. He stated that if they want the citizens to be together then City Council needs to do the same thing. He stated that it does not look good when Council Member Wilson-Smith has talked the water bill and sending a letter that it looks like it went on left field. He stated that when Mr. Johnson puts it out there in the paper then everyone wants to stand up like the City Manager is doing something. He stated that Council Member Wilson-Smith took it upon herself to organize the health fair at the bus station. He stated that they go out to the sports complex like it's something new. He stated that this is the same thing with the Juneteenth celebration. He stated when she has spoken or Council Member Hart or others have spoken they are turned off. He stated that this is a bad thing. He stated that this looks like the house representative. He stated that republicans on one side and democrats on the other. He stated that they want the City to be united as one then they need to see if from the leadership.

Delores Smith, 410 Mistletoe Street, asked that when they as citizens bring a concern to City Council why no one gets back with them. She stated that it needs to be some kind of way or in the papers that are on the back table. She stated that they can let them know that they are working with the people and the citizens. She stated that maybe she is wrong and maybe they do get back with the citizens and she does not know it. She stated that this is very important and that this is why the citizens are here. She stated that she hears all the time when people come out to the City Council meetings that City Council is not going to do anything. She stated that she would like to know if City Council has been investigating this thing with the skating rink. She stated that this was a question. She stated that the skating rink is a good activity for the young people in the City of Petersburg. She stated that she thinks that the owner was wrongly accused and that things happen. She stated that she does not think that she should be accused. She stated that it should have been more investigation on what happened with the skating rink owner. She stated that she believes that if this was a white person then it would have been much more said and done about it. She stated that she wishes that City Council would get on this and find out what it going on with the skating rink. She stated that the owner has spent most of fall her money opening up this business and that it is a good business. She stated that it is bad that the City has some bad eggs. She stated that they need to fix the problem. She stated that they do not need to go to the person to own the business. She stated that there are some things that they found out that needs to be investigated. She stated that she is wondering whether City Council will find out what is going on with this. She stated that she wishes everyone a prosperous New Year coming in.

Michael Edwards, 409 Grove Avenue, stated that he stands before them in a new year. He stated a New Year in positive Petersburg. He stated that they may say why positive with all the negative statements that they hear. He stated that they begin this journey in 2016. He stated that they should not forget the good things in 2015. He stated that they opened a new on site medical center at the Freedom Support Center. He stated that the City progressed on the "I AM PETERSBURG" campaign. He stated that whether people know it or not google does wonders. He stated that the "I AM PETERSBURG" has reached all the way to the west. He stated that they announced plans for Petersburg first brewery. He stated that they completed the clubhouse at Dogwood Trace Golf Course. He stated that also just right before Christmas they were blessed with the multimillion dollar announcement of a hotel at Exit 52. He stated that this was a long awaited development. He stated that it was stated in the press conference that well over a hundred thousand cars travel I-95 a day to come through the City. He stated that this number increases as the holiday approach. He stated that not everything is negative in the City of Petersburg. He stated that he grew up in the City and has lived on the same street for 29 years. He stated that he is now 30 and that he moved away for one year. He stated that his grandfather was a deputy sheriff for many years and that his grandmother was the school crossing guard for

Peabody Middle School. He stated that they may say why come and speak positive on Petersburg when he has done his fair share of negativity. He stated that he will be the first to admit that they have had a lot of negative things go on. He stated that everyone can agree that the positive things that have happened will outweigh the negative. He stated that out of the press conference he posted on his facebook page the development for Exit 52. He stated that he was in shock of all the negative comments that he received from this post. He stated that people said that this will be like the rest of the negative hotels on Wythe Street. He stated that this is highly unlikely. He stated that they have to continue to put their priorities forward and that Exit 52 is a main priority. He asked himself do he agree on the upcoming announcements of a New City Hall. He stated that if the City can pay for it then let's do it. He stated that most of them have heard him circulate that he is running for City Council. He stated that tonight he is making that formal announcement. He stated that as of yesterday he has filed his paper and that he has been certified to be a candidate for Ward 4 City Council. He stated that if anyone has any questions his number is 804-720-0314. He stated that he will be happy to tell them anything about his plans, platform or anything about his past. He stated that he hides nothing and that he looks forward to working with everyone in 2016.

Brandon Martin, 1546 Berkeley Avenue, stated that he would like to speak on potholes. He stated that he would like to congratulate Public Works on taking care of problems. He stated that sometimes this is in 24 hours or less. He stated that this is amazing and that he would like to thank them. He stated that he is going to speak in reference to what he calls the little green box. He stated that this little green box was in the vault in the Clerk of Council office from 1860 until around 2005 or 2006. He stated that it is his understanding that it resides in the vault in the Finance Department. He stated that amongst the papers in this box there is advertising for lots for sale in the Blandford Cemetery from 1830s. He stated that there is a receipt for repairs to the clock in Hustings Courthouse. He stated that there is a special investigative report of 1855 dealing with the financial information of the railroad. He stated that this is just the beginning of what is in that box. He stated he has not seen it in about ten years. He stated that it probably belongs back in the vault in the Clerk of Council office. He stated that he would suggest that it belongs to the Virginia State Law Library. He stated that he would suggest that this body hold a separate town hall meeting and take input from citizens on anything without regard to a 3 minutes limit and do it on a Saturday and one week night. He stated that they need to also see video of this meeting and the Architectural Review Board meeting and the Board of Zoning Appeals meetings as well. He stated Happy New Year to everyone.

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, stated that he would like to say dido on what Mr. Martin stated. He stated that it is time for the City to televise the City Council Meetings so people can see this action. He stated that in a democratic society you have a choice of voting for who you want. He stated that it may not be pleasing to the decisions that you make. He stated to not let it get to the point that your character is out of place. He stated that this offended him when a situation happened to his daughter. He stated that the person won and he congratulated them. He stated that he is pleased in know that they all go to a conference. He stated that he would like to know one question. He asked Council Member Coleman what he ate that no one else at. He stated that whatever he ate it was not expensive. He stated that he loves Petersburg but that he does not like the things that are happening. He stated that the Christmas event at the high school was a beautiful event. He stated to Council Member Hill that the situation regarding the drainage at his home is not finish. He stated that he had a drainage problem and that they found out that it was another problem. He stated that they sent a letter and it was not addressed and that they sent a letter stating it was his fault. He stated that this is not his property and that it belongs to the City. He stated that the next problem is the light on Rives Road and Crater Road. He stated that everyone is still doing a U-turn. He stated that the only difference is that now they put the green light on but for only two seconds. He stated that then there is a backup at the light. He stated that one day he saw a lady stand there for about 45 minutes watching the light. He stated that he does not see where she did anything. He stated that they need to fix this. He stated that he thought the police officer was going to give him a ticket for a making a U-turn but he saw that the officer had to make a U-turn as well. He stated that he still would like them to check into this.

Willie Noise, 1508 Circle Drive, 1508 Circle Drive, stated that it seems like the only thing that works real good in the City of Petersburg is the clock and timer that Ms. Jackson operates. He read a letter out loud to the audience and City Council Members. He stated that he is returning home from the military to another drop off spot. He stated that he does what he always does to survive. He stated that he finds out where he is and

that he is not happy. He stated that he does not care about other places too much but that home is Petersburg and that he lives here. He stated that to City Council that they are followers. He stated that Petersburg is a leader. He stated for them to look at some of the fallen brothers and sisters. He stated that for the time that he has been coming down here he has been accomplishing a couple of things. He stated that arithmetic and the common denominator, you factor things out. He stated that until City Council starts doing this they will always be behind. He stated that they should never disrespect seniority. He stated that last year Mr. Petersburg went to the VA for over extortion. He stated that Mr. Petersburg is back. He stated that you know that he never went to recess because everyone knows that he does not play. He stated that he wants the Mayor of the Year. He stated that this is coming from the Mayor. He stated that he has two bad habits and that the other one is you.

9. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FOR/FROM THE MAYOR OR OTHER MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL:

Council Member Wilson-Smith thanked everyone for being in attendance tonight. She stated that she would like to start out by wishing everyone a Happy New Year and that she is glad to start the year out by serving them.

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion that they as council review all of the City's appointee's contracts prior to the next City Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Coleman.

Council Member Moore asked Council Member Wilson-Smith why in regards to her motion.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated that according to the current contracts they were to look at them prior to the December 15 date. She stated that it has been a year and that it is customary to review the contracts of the people that you supervise.

Mr. Telfair stated that with the understanding he is one of the appointees, the discussions related to the appointee's contracts are best in closed session and not subject to open discussion among the public. He stated that the reason is that the appointees have a certain right to privacy that must be protected. He stated that as to Council Member Wilson-Smith concern in reviewing the contracts it is his understanding that they have been reviewing them. He stated that this is neither here or there for him to say.

Council Member Moore stated that they had a meeting last month and that he thought that this would have been one of the questions that would have come up and that he thought that there were somethings that were discussed in that closed session.

Council Member Wilson-Smith that it appears to them that what they did last month was an evaluation of the employees which is quite different. She stated that she did not ask that they discuss any contracts in open session. She stated that she just asked that they review the City appointee's contracts prior to the next Council meeting. She stated that she does not want to discuss them or bring them out tonight. She stated that she is asking that they as a council can look and discuss them.

The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion to reinstate according to the charter Section 4.9 the Commission on Community Relations and Affairs.

Mr. Telfair stated that this type of motion requires a public hearing and that it has to be an agenda item. He stated that at the next meeting would be setting the public hearing and the meeting after it would be the actual public hearing.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated that the next item is in reference to the school board liaison committee. She stated that if they are not going to have the quarterly or twice a year meeting with the school board and the school board liaison committee is still in effect, can they have a report from the school board

liaison committee at the next City Council meeting.

Mayor Myers stated that there is a liaison meeting already schedule for this month.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated that it is that time of the year when they honor five women who reside in the City of Petersburg. She stated that it is called Ordinary Women doing Extraordinary Things. She stated that they would like the citizens to nominate a desiring woman who lives in the City who volunteers to make this City better.

Council Member Hart stated to everyone Happy New Years. He stated that he only has a couple of items. He stated that he will be having a Ward 7 Meeting and that it will be the last Thursday of January. He stated that he does not have the date with him but that it will be at Stuart Elementary School. He stated that he will get the information out. He stated that he would like to wish everyone who works for the City of Petersburg a great 2016.

Council Member Coleman wished everyone a Happy and Safe New Year. He stated that when he attends these conferences he gains a lot of knowledge. He stated that with this knowledge it allows him to better serve his ward. He stated that they attend various seminars and that there are various subjects that they get involved in. He stated that hopefully his colleagues gain the same knowledge so that they can better serve their wards as well.

Council Member Hill stated that on March 21st he will be having a "Getting Acquainted" Meeting. He stated that this meeting will be at Traditions at 6:30pm-9:00pm. He stated that they will have food, fun and activities. He stated that he may have a raffle as well or play some games. He stated that it is primarily for Ward 2 but all are welcome to come. He stated that he would like to thank the City employees for their hard work over the past year. He stated that they are turning the corner. He stated that he is asking all the citizens to continue to bear with the City. He stated that he is one of the new kids on the block and that he is still learning. He stated that he is a citizen of Petersburg and that he takes all of this serious. He stated that he takes all of the comments that he said very seriously. He stated that he would like to thank the Economic Developer and the City Manager on the excitement with the hotel. He stated that this is a major step. He stated that everyone wants to come to Petersburg. He stated that no one wants to be the first. He stated that this company is the first. He stated that the City Council needs for everyone to talk positive about of Petersburg. He stated that he knows that the City does have its challenges like other areas do. He stated that they the City have a group of people that are united. He stated that they all have seven different opinions and that they all have seven different backgrounds. He stated that it is not the Republicans and the Democrats its Petersburg. He stated that they talk and they get along and that any conferences that they have attended help them to better serve the citizens. He stated that he has gone to one conference and one Retreat and that he has gained knowledge. He stated that there is no such thing as a \$50 hamburger that they ever ate. He stated that these things like this are out in the air. He stated that he has a business here and that his family is here. He stated that when you throw things out there and that they hear a lot of things coming from their family. He stated that a lot of things are being said from certain people in attendance. He stated that it gets back to them and that they do have feelings. He stated that he is not politician that is going to sit back and let people talk about him. He stated that he is not there yet and that he is not going to just sit there is take it. He stated that he is not that dude. He stated that anyone who wants to get in contact with him and that they know his number. He stated that this is who he is and that he goes to church here as well. He stated that his family is here and that he was raised here. He stated that he is Petersburg before the slogan came out.

Council Member Moore stated that he wanted to congratulate City staff and Mr. Johnson and everyone that worked hard on the hotel project. He stated that it has been stated that whoever builds the first hotel wins. He stated that as they look forward these are the blocks. He stated that you have to win block by block. He stated that at the next City Council meeting they need to have a discussion in regards to parking downtown. He stated that he knows that there are some comments that were in the newspaper about this. He stated that it was discussed about City parking that was used to do projects. He stated that this was done in the downtown area and that they have helped out Mr. Isaac Ward in the past. He stated that they look forward to working with Ms. Peters in doing some great worked. He thanked Ms. Peters for all she does. He stated to Mr.

Johnson to look in the Graham Road and the gravel on the road. He stated that curb is broken and that the sidewalk and stone is now in the road.

Vice Mayor Parham stated Happy New Year's. He stated that everyone closed out 2015 on a great note and is now starting 2016 and will make it a fabulous year. He stated that on December 8, 2015, City Council approved a motion to direct the City Manager as a condition of employment to the City of Petersburg to require newly hired employees with an annual salary of \$80,000 and or above to live and or acquire residency within the City of Petersburg within six months of employment. He stated that this motion applied to essential and nonessential new hires. He stated that in order to get this motion in compliance with Virginia law he would like to make another motion. He stated that he wish to rescind this motion with the following motion.

Vice Mayor Parham made a motion that the City adopts a policy which requires all new essential and nonessential employees with an annual salary exceeding \$80,000 and who are deputies, executive assistants to the City Manager, agency heads or department heads or the equivalence be required to live or acquire permanent residency within six months from the start of their employment. The motion was seconded by Mayor Myers. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers; Voting No: Moore

Mayor Myers stated that he would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and a prosperous new year. He stated that he mimics what his colleagues have stated. He stated that this is a very positive City. He stated that he is humble and very proud to be the Mayor of the City of Petersburg. He stated that even though some people do not seem to think so that the City is moving very forward. He stated that the City has a wonderful administration and staff that carries out the mission of the council. He stated that he is very proud to say that he is Petersburg.

10. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

Mr. Johnson stated that this report is the answers to the questions at the last City Council meeting. He stated that the responses are put in the Council Communicates the Friday after each City Council meeting. He stated that they are responding to the questions that come from citizens at each council meeting.

a. City Manager's report

1. Please address the issues about the closing of the Skate Factory and it being referred to as a "hang out."

Answer: The City of Petersburg met with the owner July 2015 to discuss the Skate Factory. The City is working with the owner and giving her time to address the issues. The owner has been asked to address the following items:

- a. Zoning;
- b. Fire violations;
- c. Police and public safety issues;
- d. and obtaining special use permit from City Council if there are any events at the location other than skating.

The City of Petersburg is eager to assist businesses to ensure that they are in compliance with local ordinances and will continue to offer safe establishments for residents and visitors.

2. Please give an update on the paving of the driveway by McDonald's and AutoZone.

Answer: A violation letter will be issued to the owner of this property. We will also send letters to the other businesses in this area asking them to address any aesthetic issues that may be present prior to the City sending official violation notices, such as parking lot, signage, dumpsters, etc.

3. Please provide an update on the cars that were taken from the Sheriff.

Answer: Some of the vehicles were retained by the Sheriff for staff use, nine were assigned to the

Police Department and the remaining are in fleet possession that are used by City staff.

Mr. Johnson stated that he thinks that it is very important to start this year off on the right foot. He stated that local government is where the rubber meets the road. He stated that local government is where the citizens have an opportunity to reach out and touch not only the Mayor and City Council but City staff. He stated that a lot has been said about the development at Exit 52. He stated that he is present tonight to say that this is only a small piece to this puzzle. He stated that yes Mr. Harrison and his team was the one that is first. He stated that the City needs a second and a third and fourth and a fifth. He stated that the beauty of this process is that the citizens have an opportunity to come in voice their opinions during public comment period and during public hearings. He stated that this City has 33,010 citizens. He stated that everyone is not always going to agree on every solution or the policies put in place from this Mayor and City Council. He stated that it is the job of the administration to carry these policies out. He stated that they do not mind the criticism but sometimes it would be great to get a recommendation followed by that criticism. He stated that they do not get it right and that this why staff, the Mayor and City Council attend conferences. He stated that they do not have all the answers; however the other communities that are small or large or even towns face some of the same issues that are faced in the City of Petersburg. He stated that they do not have to reinvent the wheel. He stated that it is called learning from your peers. He stated that it is very important that they begin to stay solid. He stated that when a developer was coming to town and asking why should I put restaurant or retail shop to the City of Petersburg and then they are being told by citizens that they would not come to the City. He stated that when the stores are in the City the citizens need to support those stores. He stated that the bowling alley was here, the City does not dictate a private entity staying in the City. He stated that it is a business decision. He stated that the City does talk to them; however businesses run on dollars and cents. He stated if the City does not like the services that they are providing then they need to tell the business establishments what's wrong. He stated that University Boulevard is named University Boulevard for the relationship with Virginia State University. He stated that there is a lot of development coming on University Boulevard. He stated that he would encourage everyone to sign up for "Notify Me." He stated that all you have to do is go to the City's webpage and click on it and then click what they would like to be notified about. He stated that anytime that a notice or a press release is issued or council meetings, parks and recreation or anything then all they have to do is click on it. He stated that whatever addresses the put in it whether cellphone or email addresses it will come to it. He stated that there is a lot of work to do in the City. He stated that as long as he is the City Manager they are going to get it done. He stated that they have over 600 dedicated employees that are eager to do what's right. He stated that they are going to do it based on the policies, ordinances and resolution written by seven members sitting to his immediate left. He stated that they are going to have an outstanding 2016. He stated that he thanks them for their participation but that they are about business as well as the Mayor and City Council Members is about business. He stated thank you and Happy New Year.

11. CLERK OF CITY COUNCIL'S AGENDA:

Ms. Jackson stated that she would like to wish City Council, staff and citizens a Happy New Year.

12. CITY ATTORNEY'S AGENDA:

Mr. Telfair stated that he would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. He stated that he would like to address an issue that keeps coming up. He stated any citizen that would like to sit down and talk with him and his staff about Skate Factory his door is open. He stated that he will even make the offer that a citizen would not have to make an appointment if he is not in a meeting.

13. CLOSED SESSION (IF NECESSARY):

No closed is necessary.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor