

The Special City Council Meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, on live stream. Mayor Parham called the Special City Council Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL:**

Present:

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

Absent: Council Member Darrin Hill (arrived after roll call)

Present from City Administration:

Clerk of Council Nykeshia D. Jackson  
City Manager Stuart Turille  
City Attorney Anthony Williams

**2. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- a. A public hearing on the consideration of revised city council ward maps following population changes identified in The 2020 Census.

**BACKGROUND:** Article VII, Section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia specifically requires any locality that conducts elections by district to change its district boundaries every 10 years in the year ending in one. Districts must be drawn using U.S. census data.

The United States decennial census is the primary data source on population, age, and race used in redistricting. The 2020 census, conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce through the Census Bureau, is the twenty-fourth census in U.S. history, and it will also be used to redraw congressional, state legislative, and local election districts.

There are two basic pieces of information needed to redraw election district lines: population data (Section 4.2) and maps (Section 4.3). The Census Bureau provides both.

The Constitution of Virginia Article VII. Local Government, Section 5. County, city, and town governing bodies, requires that the governing body of each county, city, or town shall be elected by the qualified voters of such county, city, or town in the manner provided by law; If the members are elected by district, the district shall be composed of contiguous and compact territory and shall be so constituted as to give, as nearly as is practicable, representation in proportion to the population of the district; that when members are so elected by district, the governing body of any county, city, or town may, in a manner provided by law, increase or diminish the number, and change the boundaries, of districts, and shall in 1971 and every ten years thereafter, and also whenever the boundaries of such districts are changed, reapportion the representation in the governing body among the districts in a manner provided by law; that whenever the governing body of any such unit shall fail to perform the duties so prescribed in the manner herein directed, a suit shall lie on behalf of any citizen thereof to compel performance by the governing body.

The 2020 Census population is 34,013, and the average Ward population for each of the seven (7) wards is 4,859, with a 10% range being 5% above (5,034) - 5% below (4,905). Wards 1 and 2 are above the range, and Wards 6 and 7 are below the range. To establish Wards that are within the range, all Ward boundaries and populations will need to be adjusted. The Wards must be contiguous and compact. Additionally, observable boundaries should be

\*Audio available upon request.

used (roadways, waterways, greenways, etc.), and a goal of maintaining intact neighborhoods has been identified.

The most recent decennial population figures for each locality, as adjusted by the Division of Legislative Services, are to be used. Beginning with the 2021 redistricting, any person incarcerated in a federal, state, or local correctional facility within the Commonwealth is to be counted as a resident of the locality where his address at the time of incarceration is located.

A new requirement for the 2021 redistricting is that a Geographic Information System (GIS) map that shows the district boundaries must be sent to the local elected board, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Department of Elections, and the Division of Legislative Services.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the City Council holds a public hearing and approves an amendment to the city's ward maps.

Reginald Tabor, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview of the public hearing.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, "First, off I would like to thank Council Member Wilson-Smith for doing everything that she has done to try to promote awareness of the redistricting process going back months. I mean she got me interested in it and hopefully some others. And hopefully they will be here tonight. Just a few comments on the process. And I think that I did talk about it in an earlier council meeting. I think that it would have been good to have some citizen participation earlier on. I realize that is all water under the bridge, but I believe that before all the narrowing down took place there were several scenarios. These citizens could have maybe had some good ideas. We do not have the same vested interest in trying to preserve some electro advantage. I think that driving some of you and how you have looked at this. So, just a thought. Giving though what we have to comment on, my preference is scenario 6. Just a side note, at the last meeting when scenario 10 kind of emerged, and there was a lot of discussion on whether or not that was fair of one councilor to come up with a scenario that hadn't been presented earlier and other people were not aware that they can add them. I think that it gives some credence to some arguments. Here we are and I am not sure that it is the only idea that anyone had. And it hadn't been presented earlier. So, I have a hard time putting scenario 10 into the mix. I am really only looking at five and six because they are similar. I think what is good about six is that it does take in the whole Blandford neighborhood which is that it would be preferable to have all of that neighborhood together. And this particular scenario includes the mall in Ward 4. And so, it satisfies that. It also makes sense that some of the areas downtown that were like dog legged before between four and five, now it has been taken into five. That looks like it makes more sense too. I believe that there are commonalities in those areas of the neighborhood. This is the map that I think probably comes closest to the criteria of trying to keep like areas together and not use any unnatural boundaries. And it does not look like a bunch of Jerry Manderin then the earlier map did. So, I hope that you will consider this as probably of the options that you are looking at. Thank you."

Gregory Hospodor, 530 Grove Avenue, stated, "Greetings. And I know that redistricting is an owner's pass and I want to thank all the council members for what you are doing on our behalf. I want to say good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am president of the Grove Avenue, Cross and Low Street Association. And I believe that there are members of the association here tonight. But I am primarily here to speak for those who are unable to attend. And I want to let you know that I am speaking for the association as a whole. That it is the unanimous opinion of the association members that the so called panhandling including Grove Avenue, Low and Cross Street remain in Ward 4. I want to reiterate that we are not asking for a change. We are not asking for any special consideration. We only wish to remain in Ward 4 where we have been for a very long time. All of which is to say that we hope that city council will adopt Map 10 under consideration here this evening. And it is fair to ask why. Why does your association want to stay in

\*Audio available upon request.

Ward 4? And I will give you just a couple of reasons and then I will let others speak. First, we believe that our neighborhood interest aligns with Old Towne. What happens in Old Towne affects our neighborhood and vice versa. We thrive or decline together. We believe that it is in the best interest of all residents and businesses in the Old Towne Historic District that to the extent possible political representation align with the boundaries in the historic district. For example, historic preservation which is part of the city's future as well as part of the past might best be coherently advanced by having our oldest areas nested together politically so that they can speak with one voice. And our neighborhood which contains Petersburg's oldest street remains committed to historic preservations. For example, my next-door neighbor is a past president of the Historic Petersburg Foundation (HPF). I am a HPF Member. Many of the members of the association are also in the HPF. We are dedicated to the development of our city and saving its architectural past and we believe that we can best contribute to this by remaining in Ward 4. I will differ a little with the previous speaker in saying that this looks unnatural. I have to say another major reason for my second and final point is this. History and precedence support our request to stay in Ward 4. Our neighborhood has been part of Ward 4 since at least 1877. Other ward maps have changed. Cross Street and Grove Avenue have been in Ward 4 at least since 1877. That is 144 years. We are the longest geographic residents of Ward 4. Which is not to say necessary that you will keep us there, but I think that it bears consideration. I will close by saying this. Our neighborhood association and the residents of the Grove, Low and Cross Street area are not asking for special consideration. We do not want you to do any changes on our believe. All we want is to remain where we been well over a century. And I will say this. We believe that the adoption of Map 10 is in the best interest of neighborhood and the best interest of Ward 4 and of the Old Towne Historic District as we move forward together. I want to thank you all for what you are doing. I want to thank you for your time and consideration in keeping or adopting Map 10 and keeping the Grove Avenue area in Ward 4. Thank you."

Kirsten Katzenbach, 301 Jefferson Street, stated, "Good evening and thank you for holding this informative meeting. It is a pleasure to be a part of it and I appreciate all of the hard work that is going into these different scenarios. I really would like to support map number 10. I disagree with the first speaker. Just because it was introduced late does not mean that it is not possibly the best scenario. I like the idea of keeping Grove as a part of Old Towne. I agree with the previous speaker that 144 years is a long time to be a part of a ward and then to have it dismissed and placed in another ward. It just does not make sense. Especially with a street like Grove that shares a very rich history with Old Towne. As well as interest and what happens in Old Towne. It directly affects Grove and vice versa. I hope that you will choose map number 10 as our future zoning. Thank you."

Mayor Parham read several letters from people who could not attend tonight's council meeting.

Mr. VanVoorhees stated, "Mr. Talley did text that he supports the map for Scenario 6."

Mayor Parham read letters in support of Map 10.

Jacqueline Bailey Kidd, 509 St. Luke Street, stated, "I am going to be very short. I am going to go back to Barb Rudolph's comments. She started off by saying that she was concerned about the lack of citizen participation. That is my main concern. And with the lack of citizen participation for Petersburg, that means that the majority minority did not participate in the doing of these maps. I want it to go on record saying that African Americans in Petersburg did not have reasonable participation in drawing maps that you all are offering on the table today, January 25, 2022. Thank you."

Mayor Parham read another letter in support of Map 10.

Clothilda Hill stated, "I live in the Blandford area. I was off of Wills Road but now I am on Old Church Street. And we are under Treska Smith. So, I just wanted to speak on behalf of my family. First my mother, she is elderly and so, the rezoning she did not get the opportunity to see it. I think that it could have been handled a

\*Audio available upon request.

little better for a lot of the elderly people in Blandford. I just want to say that I have been in Blandford for 50 something years under Ward 1. And I would like to stay under Ward 1. I do not want to go to Ward 4. I think that Blandford is a historical neighborhood and I want to keep it where it has always been under Ward 1. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.”

Mayor Parham read a letter in support for Map 10.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, stated, “I would like to first say that this whole redistricting thing has been troubling to me. Because first we had maps that did not show streets or anything. This could have been done better if you all had consulted with the three original people that helped to put the ward system together. That being former Mayor Annie Mickens.”

Mr. Christian was having technical difficulty.

Mayor Parham read a letter of support for Map 10.

Pamela Lundy, 12 N. Burch Street and 718 Bollingbrook Street, stated, “I have not been on this redistricting conversation through the whole time, however, I will speak up for Blandford. And I ask that Blandford remain together in Ward 1. Map 10 has just came up and if that area is historical of 144 years, that information would have came up earlier. If need be, that this item be tabled so that more investigation or discussion can be done on it. I ask of you, because I do ask that Blandford remain together and not separated. Thank you.”

Hadley Katzenbach, 301 S. Jefferson Street, stated, “I would like to see Map 10 so that we can keep Grove Avenue in Ward 4. Grove Avenue, being a part of Old Towne, shares a common vision of the fully restored homes of Old Towne thereby increasing the people in Petersburg and the tourist that come with it. Tourism is essential to the city and Grove Avenue being part of the historic district will increase that tourism. I know that they share a common vision. So, I would like to see Map 10 go forward.”

Bernadette Hite, Blandford resident, stated, “Treska is our wardship. And Treska has done so much for this ward. And I believe that Blandford still needs to stay together. We do not need to be divided. We have been together as one ward for all of these years. And it will be a serious disservice to sit there and break Blandford up. And my kudos is to Treska for all that she has done and I pray that she reconsiders November and continue to be apart of this Blandford ward. So, I just wanted to say that I need us to stay together. Thank you.”

Mr. Christian stated, “As I was saying that council was Dr. Florence Farley, Mr. Juliane Greene, former Mayor Annie Mickens. Because they had a hand in bringing into existence the ward system. I think that everyone is fighting to keep their neighborhoods intact. I am the same way although by right I do not live in the Delectable Heights, I live in the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward.”

Mayor Parham stated, “I think that we lost Linwood again. We have another hand up.”

Mr. VanVoorhees stated, “Go ahead iPhone. Please state your name and address.”

Mayor Parham stated, “I guess that no one is there. I see that Linwood is back up.”

Mr. Christian stated, “I am sorry about that. I would definitely like the Delectable Heights to stay just as others are staying.”

Mr. VanVoorhees stated, “I think that we lost him again.”

\*Audio available upon request.

Mayor Parham stated, "Are there any other hands in the chat Gerrit?"

Mr. VanVoorhees stated, "Mr. Mayor, I see none."

Mayor Parham stated, "Alright, so at this time I will go to the members of council. If you want to raise your hand, please raise them and I will acknowledge them."

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion to table everything and send it back to the Planning Commission to do it the right way. The motion was seconded by Council Member Myers.

Council Member Cuthbert made a substitute motion to adopt Map 10.

Motion dies due to lack of second.

Original motion goes on the floor.

There was discussion among City Council Members.

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

**3. ADJOURNMENT:**

City Council adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

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Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

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Mayor