

The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, in a virtual meeting. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith
Council Member Arnold Westbrook, Jr
Council Member Darrin Hill
Vice Mayor Annette Smith-Lee
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: Council Member Charles H. Cuthbert, Jr. (arrived after roll call vote)
Council Member W. Howard Myers (arrived after roll call)

Present from City Council Administration:

Clerk of City Council Nykesha D. Jackson
City Manager Stuart Turille, Jr
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams

2. PRAYER:

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

Council Member Hill led the council meeting in prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum is present.

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

- a. A request to schedule a public hearing to amend Sec. 106-14. – Permanent Board of Equalization.
- b. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of appropriating \$3,672,454.51 in Federal, State, and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) for COVID-19 Municipal Utility Assistance Program.
- c. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance approving amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to Comply with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- d. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance approving an amendment to the City Code, Chapter 50. Environment, Article II. Noise
- e. A request to schedule a public hearing on March 8, 2022, for the consideration of an ordinance to authorize the acceptance of the conveyance of real property by AMPAC Fine Chemicals Virginia LLC.

Ms. Jackson stated, "Mayor Parham before you do that there is one additional item that Reggie sent over to be scheduled on the agenda for a public hearing. Gerrit if you have that item can you pull it up so that they are aware of it."

*Audio available upon request.

Mayor Parham stated, "Okay. This will be item 'f,' which is a public hearing in consideration of an ordinance amending the zoning of the property addressed as 801 South Adams Street, Tax Parcel ID 031-300002, from R-B, Office-Apartment District to MXD-3, Mixed Use District. And I believe that concludes all the items for the consent agenda."

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the additional attachments. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Wilson-Smith, Westbrook, Hill, Smith-Lee, and Parham; Absent: Cuthbert and Myers

6. SPECIAL REPORTS:

Mayor Parham stated, "Having ten reports, let's try to keep them under ten minutes. Gerrit, if you can put the clock on."

Council Member Hill stated, "I think five minutes, Mr. Mayor. If it is something that they are just going to be reading from we can read it ourselves. Maybe they can give us the highlights."

There was discussion among council members on time.

a. Report and discussion on "A Plan to Address Homeless."

Council Member Wilson-Smith gave PowerPoint presentation on homeless.

Key points:

- City has potential access to a place on state property where the city can possibly house homelessness.
- Petersburg should not be the one to finance all the homeless people from the all the regions.
- Have an idea of regional concept to house homeless population on the grounds of the former Southside Virginia Training Center. They have cottages that have three to four bedrooms to each with bathrooms.
- Issue is with evictions, and this is what the study referred to.
- There is a plan in place called the "Humanities Bill."
- The Anti-Poverty Commission went to the site along with Social Workers to view the site.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Before I close, I want to as please Mayor Parham, at the work session in April, if you can get with Genevieve Lohr. There are some housing people within city who are working on the housing issue. They would like to come before us to do a presentation. So, I am asking if they can please come on April 5th, at the first meeting in April. Thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Absolutely, you can do that. But I have seen the proposal and I have been in meetings with you. I 100% am in support of this idea because it only makes sense. And I would like to see how soon we can get something adopted at the next council meeting to get this moving."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "To adopt the bill or plan?"

Mayor Parham stated, "The bill."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I was told that I need to get a legislative workup on the bill. So, I guess it has to be put in terms of legislative jargon. Mr. Williams can help with that. I am not sure."

*Audio available upon request.

Mayor Parham asked Mr. Williams to chime in.

Mr. Williams stated, "Yes. I can take care of that for you. If you give me the word form, I will put it in the format that it needs to be in."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I can do that. You will have it tomorrow. Thank you."

There was discussion among city council members.

Mayor Parham stated, "Thank you Council Member Wilson-Smith for the presentation."

b. Presentation by PHOPs on Tactical Urbanism (Street Murals)

Fancie Terrell, Department of Population Health Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation on tactical urbanism.

Key points:

- Present to address some of the issue that pedestrians and pedalcyclist experience in Petersburg.
- Learned that traffic fatalities have increased by 7% since 2019. Drivers that remain engaged in the road are more likely to engage in speeding and the failure to wear seatbelts and use of drugs and alcohol.
- Tactical urbanism is a short-term action with a low cost and scalable intervention to catalyze long-term change.
- Street murals help support slow traffic and protect pedestrians within the city.
- First area of focus is West Washington Street and Market Street.
- Second area of focus is Halifax and Harding Street.
- Singling out these areas are an excellent to start this project.
- Objectives:
 1. Community and Level 1 Decision Maker Engagement– April 2022
 2. Project Design Completed by May 2022
 3. Engage Decision Makers for Final Design Consideration – June 2022
 4. Project Installation between June – September 2022
- Asking for authorization by City Council to install a street mural at the intersection of W. Washington and Market Street (corner of Petersburg Public Library) by September 2022.

There was discussion among City Council and presenters.

c. iWorq Software Presentation – Neighborhood Services.

Nikeshia Williams, Director of Neighborhood Services, presented a live presentation on using iWorq.

d. Presentation of the ARB's Activities in 2021.

Kate Sangregorio, Preservation Planner, presented a brief update on Architectural Review Board activities.

Key points:

- The current board members are Larry Murphy (Chairman), Dino Lunsford (Vice Chairman), Celeste Wynn, Bill Hartsock, Joe Battiston, Terry Ammons, and Louis Malon.

*Audio available upon request.

- The functions are to promote the general welfare of the city by preserving and protecting the old, historic, or architectural significant buildings.
- Also, to review exterior alteration visible from public right-of-way to ensure that any changes keep the historical character of the building and area.
- A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required prior to the erection, construction, alteration, or restoration of the exterior of any building or structure, including signs, or part thereof, within a historic area.
- Some minor alterations can be approved administratively by staff, such as in-kind repairs, paint, and signs.
- Bigger projects, like full renovations, large scale replacements of materials, additions, and new constructions are reviewed by the ARB.
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- Meetings are once a month on the second Wednesday of the month. Applications are due in their entirety 2 weeks prior and there is no fee.
- In 2021, 112 applications were reviewed in total. There were 33 approved by Preservation Planner, 56 approved by ARB and four applications for discussion. There were 13 that were denied and eight were deferred.
- In January 2022, seven applications were reviewed and four were approved. There were two applications that were denied and two were deferred.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Is the residential community of Pocahontas in a local historic district?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "No. It is in a state and national historic district."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "But that yields no protection over demolition except of the demolition is funded by federal dollars. Is that correct?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "That is correct."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Is the triangle by Halifax Street and Harrison Street and South Avenue and the buildings that remain facing that triangle, is that area in a local historic district?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "It is not. It is also in a state and national historic district."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Is that one of the factors that led to us losing the Realta?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "I believe that was established as a state and national historic district maybe two or three years ago. In most cases, demolition if the building becomes a public safety habit. That overrides our board requirements. Public safety has to come first. It might not have or may have. It is hard to say."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "But in any event, no Certificate of Appropriateness was required before the bulldozers moved in demolished the Realta. And that is because this area that we are talking about is not in a local historic district. Or was not at the time and even is not now. Correct?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "It is hard to say. In some cases, demolition is needed. But the Architectural Review Board might have put a slow down to it."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Are there any local historic districts in the historic Blandford Community about in which we heard a lot fairly recently?"

*Audio available upon request.

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "No."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Are these three areas important to African American History and more broadly to the history of Petersburg."

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "Yes. Absolutely."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Why do you say absolutely?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "Pocohontas Island is one of the first and oldest and largest African American communities that started even before the Civil War. Halifax Triangle was a huge center for business for the African American community. Blandford, I know, Martin Luther King, went canvassing to get residents to register to vote at one point. So, there are significant areas in the city."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Why are these three areas that are important to African American History, more broadly, Petersburg history, why are they not in a local historical district?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "That is established by City Council. So, if there is a push from citizens, city council and staff to make it so, then it is possible to include them. I will note that I am not entirely sure about the Blandford neighborhood. Because it is certainly significant however it does not contain as much integrity as some of the other neighborhoods. That is to say that when Washington Street and Wythe Street cut through the area it changed it drastically from when it was just a neighborhood. So, now it has gas stations and a big stretch of roadway cutting through it. It disrupts the continuity of the houses."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I understand but we have got some reminiscence of 19th century architecture surviving in the historic Blandford area. Isn't that true?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "Yes."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I think that the greatest concentration is along Taylor Street. Is that the case?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "I am not entirely sure to be honest."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Okay that is fine. Let me turn to the possibility of creating local historical districts in these three important areas. I sense that, and this is just my sense, but my sense is that one reason for some reluctance is that the cost of making improvements to existing structures in those areas would be higher if they were in a local historic district. Have you heard anything along those lines Ms. Sangregorio?"

Ms. Sangregorio stated, "Yeah. One concern that I would have in making areas like that a local historic district is that it is cost prohibited to renovate those houses. We are running into that problem along Liberty Street and Harrison Street where some of the owners are more low income and have trouble affording to replace their windows. It is very expensive. There is the possibility of something called a conservation overlay district, which I tried to do some research on. And unfortunately, I have not had a lot of time. But that would regulate bigger projects in the area, like demolition and new constructions versus getting into the nitty gritty details of windows, sidings, and such. So, that might be helpful in the cases of Pocohontas Island and Halifax Triangle when investments do come into that area."

Mayor Parham stated, "I would like to ask a question. Council Member Cuthbert, what is the sentiment?"

*Audio available upon request.

Because I know that you represent that Ward 4 area. Is there any type of desire to be a part of a district? Or what are you hearing? Being that you said Pocohontas Island and you also share Blandford with Councilwoman Wilson-Smith. Is that something that your constituents are looking at doing?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I think that it is an unknown to many people. And consequently, there is a fear of the unknown. And I think that it may well be an education process in terms of helping people understand what the benefits of a local historic district are as well as what are the cost. I am wondering Mr. Turille as in furtherance of your hope that we will not lose another historic building in Petersburg, I am wondering if you would report to council at our work session in April. Whether there might be a way to create an income-based subsidy program to address the concerns that low-income citizens might have to be included in a local historic district. That is perhaps the subsidy program could be funded partially through CDBG. But I do not know. But that would be part of the report. There may be income limits on those who benefit from the subsidy program. It may be some other type of provision to go under the program that would help to make it work. Maybe it would be a percentage of the cost of the improvement required by the Architectural Review Board minus the cost of the improvement if the building was not in a local historic district. There are all kinds of issues to be thought about and I don't have the answers and I just know that we lost a terrible building in Pocohontas two years ago. And we have an opportunity to help increase the likelihood that heritage will be preserved. That opportunity is on the table in front of us. And if we don't take that opportunity fairly soon, I anticipate that one day we are going to wake up and Pocohontas is going to be a piece of scrapped earth. And I would hate to see that happen. I will use that as an example. The same is true for the remaining buildings around the Halifax Triangle and the same is true for the admittedly few 19th century historic structures that remain in Blandford along Taylor Street. But, Mr. Turille, is that something that you would think about please. And come back to council at work session in April with a proposal, on whether there is a way to make this happen and what is feasible, and how would it have funded. And in general terms, what would be the criteria for eligibility. Obviously, we do not want to be subsidizing a high roller for whom money is not an object. So, I do think that it ought to be income-based. But back to you Mr. Turille is that something that you would be willing to think about and report back to council at our April work session."

Mr. Turille stated, "Absolutely. This is the reason for to save historic Petersburg. When I hear about the Realta and I see pictures of these treasurers being demolished, the mission of this organization is that it will never happen again. And the other goal to achieve that is that anyone who lives in an historic house regardless of income should have the means financially in place somewhere to rehabilitate their home. That is a goal of this passport. Right now, CDBG monies can be used for this purpose. Mr. Tabor will be able to speak more to that at the meeting. Please keep in mind that we requested \$3 million dollars from the state. And that is a budgetary request for rehabilitation money for this type of activity. Okay. Do you want a report on the feasibility on creating a local historic district or would you like a report to focus on how any regardless of income can rehabilitate a historic home?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I do not know the answer to that good question. I think the two kinds of goes together. My sense is that eligibility should be limited to properties located in local historic districts that would create an incentive for additional historic districts to be created within low-income areas where there is African American History and I say more broadly, Petersburg history that is worthy of being presented. So, I think that the two likely go hand in hand. But I would like for you to think about that if I may ask you to consider that and include that in your report to council at our work session in April."

Mr. Turille stated, "Alright, yes sir."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That would be great. Mr. Mayor, thank you very much for letting me ask those questions and we are all grateful to the ARB and Ms. Sangregorio for the contributions in preserving our local history."

*Audio available upon request.

Council Member Hill stated, “Just two things. I just want us to be careful about painting a whole neighborhood with a ball brush of historic. Because some of the residents there may not be able to afford. I understand that some may meet the criteria when others may not. And then they have to put a different color paint, or they may put a shed in the backyard, or they are putting a fence around. It may prohibit them from doing so. We have to be careful with that. I am leaning more on the side that there is an individual house that needs attention to, and we feel like it is historic in some nature, and we can help them, then I think that is the easier route. Then for us to say that this whole neighborhood is historic. Because then everybody will be coming in saying I need this, that and the other done to my home. And maybe we do have the money. I just want to say that out there for food for thought. So, if Mr. Turille could come back with a scenario of making it historic altogether and then if we kind of somewhat cherry pick and a house is falling down or whatever and it meets those criteria’s then we can help and subsidize income with that. That is more of my thought. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. No need for any comments. I just wanted to get that out for the record.”

e. An update from Transit on questions from Council Member Wilson-Smith and Cuthbert.

Mr. Turille stated, “I believe that I can answer a number of these in my manager’s report if you want me to pull that up.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Okay these will be addressed in the manager’s report.”

Mr. Turille stated, “I can do that now if you want.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Okay that is fine. Please proceed.”

Mr. Turille gave an update on transit questions from Council Member Cuthbert and Council Member Wilson-Smith.

Key points:

- The total annual operating cost for the South Park route is \$237,500 with annual ridership of 31,329. This is verified through the Kimley-Horne Strategic Plan of November 2021).
- The Southpark Mall route ranks highest of all PAT fixed routes for access to jobs. Although this route operates outside of the city limits of Petersburg, the route provides beneficial access to jobs for the residents of Petersburg.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Why are these numbers so different from the numbers before?”

Mr. Turille stated, “I had to question that myself. And I think that there are a lot of different funding sources according to the department and somewhat confusing. The financial folks at transit tend to blend up the money. And tend to break them down by routes. I prefer to use the consultant’s information. As an outside consultant they have more of an understanding of that. So, I think that their numbers are more accurate and that is why I used those.”

Charles Koonce, Director of Petersburg Area Transit, stated, “I just wanted to add that this particular plan we worked on for about three years. As a result of COVID, it had slowed down somewhat. And actually, we had that information right in front of us once we reviewed some of the notes, Kimley Horne had already broken it down for individual riders. So, I apologize for not seeing that. But once I went back and started looking at my notes, I see it in black and white.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “My head is spinning because the numbers are so different.”

Mr. Koonce stated, “I would go with the numbers that Kimley Horne presented. Because they are the

*Audio available upon request.

accurate numbers. They went through some of the things that you talked about as far as us doing surveys. That information is very accurate, and they also took the time to survey the folks that rode the Southpark Mall route.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “When we talked about it last time on February 22nd, I have a note here that the cost per month per the city manager for the Southpark Mall route \$51,927. Now how does that compare to the numbers that we are being given today.”

Mr. Turille stated, “I think that if you took the 273,000 annually and divided it by 12 it is lower than and somewhere about 20,000 monthly. So, when you asked that question, I wanted to confirm that. So, I dug more deeply into, and Mr. Koonce and I met and found the consultant report. So, it was off the monthly number that I gave you at the last meeting. It was too high. I think that it aggregated some of the routes. And so, I needed enough time to clarify that.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “For this month, what is the cost for running this route in city dollars per month.”

Mr. Turille stated, “Yes, sir. It is \$273,000 divided by twelve. That would be less than \$27,000. So, it would be somewhere around \$20,000 a month.”

Mrs. Innis stated, “It is \$22,750.”

Mr. Turille stated, “So, I overstated the cost by \$30,000 at the last meeting. My guess is because the numbers that I received were aggregated and it must have included another route.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “So, this month the cost for running the route in 2021 is \$22,750.”

Mr. Turille stated, “According to the Kimley Horne report, yes sir.

There was discussion among council and staff.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “If I may get in touch with you Mr. Turille and we can go over this and see if we can make sense out of it. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.”

There was additional discussion among council and staff.

f. Update on efforts of the trash czar.

Mr. Turille stated, “The trash park is Mr. Hairston.”

Thomas Hairston stated, “I did not want to do a presentation as much as I wanted to report to council where we were. We had three meetings, and, in those meetings, we established a quarterly clean-up schedule, which is April 16th, July 16th, and April 15th, that the city is doing. We are going to support the city’s efforts and the city is going to support us. Those were ones that were stretched out. But in between those we had to fill in the dates. So, on this Saturday, we have 15 soldiers that are coming that I coordinated with Marquis at Parks and Rec to get the sports complex done. So, I will have 15 soldiers doing the sports complex. I meet with the President of the Rotary Club on Wednesday morning at the YMCA. And then I have the pastors meeting on Thursday at 2pm. So, the meetings are being set and I wanted to establish that we were cleaning up. So, I wanted to get something done so we immediately jumped on the Parks and Rec. I am supposed to meet with Mr. Randall tomorrow in public works to tighten up our efforts that are going to talk place on the 16th of April.”

*Audio available upon request.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mayor Parham stated, "Thanks everybody. We are over on time so please get with Mr. Harris and Mr. Kofi Adih. We got to keep moving. I know that this is a hot topic, but it is very complicated. But we do have a team to confront it. Alright, thank you."

- g. Update on litter efforts, street sweeping schedule, streetlight assessment, on speed plan report and underpass in Ward 7.

Randall Williams, Assistant Director to Public Works and Utilities, gave an overview and update on litter efforts, street sweeping schedule, streetlight assessment, on speed plan report and underpass in Ward 7.

Key points:

- ARPA Municipal Utility Relief Awarded \$3,672,455 to the City of Petersburg after applying.
- Public hearing and appropriation of \$3,3672,455 scheduled for the March 15, 2022, council meeting.
- Relief was for water and sewer only for residential customers that were in arrearages of 60 days or more between the March 2020 and August 2021 dates.
- Applied for and was awarded annual litter grant award to pay for trash bags, paper pickers, gloves, etc.
- Currently securing more contractors to partially offset 16 vacancies in Street Operations to pick up litter in the Right-of-Way.
- Proposing a well-publicized and organized job fair for the City of Petersburg to fill positions.
- The Street Operations Division continues to consult with internal and external engineering entities to evaluate and implement effective speed control strategies based upon Traffic Engineering Best Practices and Standard.
- Street Operations Division continues to work with the Petersburg Police Department in the deployment of the Electronic Speed Indicator Signs in selected areas.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mayor Parham stated, "Thank you Mr. Williams. Just for the record, I want to let everyone know that I know the area on Defense Road has been flooding since Council Member Westbrook and I have been going to school. So, it has been going on for ages and it has not been corrected. We have spent a lot of time talking about trash, but we have not talked about the real problems. Which is you have to get some police out here ticketing these people for throwing trash. Because I stand behind them every time. You can talk about trash czar and all this stuff. But until you start fining people heavy and I mean that we need to start writing tickets. There is no need to sugar coat this thing. I have seen people clean out their whole car there. Our staff cannot compete cleaning up behind them. It is time to get somebody in court and make an example of them. If we are not doing that then we are not doing anything. But it is only one thing that is going to do it and that is \$250-\$500 fines for littering in Petersburg."

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

- h. A report on blighted properties.

Nikesha Williams, Director of Neighborhood Services, gave a brief presentation on blighted properties.

Key points:

- An article published in the Progress-Index on February 8, 2022, stated that there were 3,202 vacant houses out of 16,367 housing units.

*Audio available upon request.

- The updated number today on vacant building registry list is 690 properties as of February 2022.
- The review collected today is \$13,700.

There was discussion among City Council Members.

Mrs. Innis stated, "There are a couple of departments that are going around the city ward by ward to verify the vacant properties throughout the city. And if you want more information on that I can make sure Ms. Williams as well as Mr. Tabor to come back with those exact numbers for you."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Alright. If you would at the April meeting come back and let council know please Mrs. Innis which blocks have not been inventoried yet. There is just too big a gap between 3,202 per the Progress-Index and 690 per the city's file. Thank you."

Mrs. Innis stated, "We can do that."

- i. An update on St. Andrews Street reopening.

Joanne Williams, Director of Communications, Marketing and Government Solutions, gave a briefing on the opening of St. Andrews Street Bridge.

Key points:

- The bridge has been closed since 2007 because it was structurally deficient. A full bridge replacement was required.
- The cost to date in putting in a new bridge is \$1.8 million dollars.
- There will be a ribbon cutting and reopening of the bridge on March 17th at 11:00am and everyone is invited.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I think that Ms. Williams has said it all and said it well. And this did not happen by itself. It took a push by all members of city council. And I am indebted to all members of city council for making it happen. It took a big push by city staff to find the money to make it happen. So, it has truly been a team effort. And I am not just putting a happy face on something. I think that this is a real accomplishment for the City of Petersburg. And the people that will use this bridge, I suspect that it will be a major boom to our citizens that had been referred to at an earlier meeting today as the residents of a historic Blandford community. I am pleased to have played a roll in making this happen. So, thank you Ms. Williams and thank you Mr. Mayor."

Council Member Hill stated, "Ms. Williams, does that mean that the street will be open on the 17th."

Ms. Williams stated, "Yes."

Council Member Hill stated, "Okay. Thank you."

- j. An update on the African American Brochure status.

Ms. Williams gave a briefing on the African American Brochure status.

Key points:

- This project is much larger than a brochure. It is an element for expanding tourism and community engagement.
- The elements would include a brochure, a tourism website, which would have a large African

*Audio available upon request.

American History Section, as well as interpretation of the historic sites and identification of sites that can be seen today.

- There would be tours and marketing.
- A work group was formed with communications, tourism, library, council member (Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith), and parks & leisure services.
- Timeline: Brochure (Summer 2022), Tourism Website (Fall 2022-pending budget), Videos (Ongoing-pending budget), Historic Site Development McKenney Library (2023/2024), Interpretation of existing sites (Fall 2022), Tours (Walking and Trolley Summer 2022), and Marketing (Summer 2022)

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you. Let me go back to the vacant buildings for a moment. In that report, Mr. Turille and Mrs. Innis, that is to be given at council's work session in April, would you include among whatever you think is appropriate, two things. There are two things that I think would be appropriate. One is the basis for the Progress-Index's estimate of 3,202. That is pick up the phone and call the Progress-Index or send them an email and ask them for the basis of the estimate of 3,202. Where is your data? Or they do not have any and they made that number up. But it is a precise number just to be made up. The other thing is that when you do present information to us as to the number of vacant houses in Petersburg, can you include that in your presentation at our April work session. If you would present that information to us organized on a block-by-block basis. Because to a certain extent, we know our wards and if we drive by a block and we know that it has a vacant building or two or three, and those buildings are not in the city's record and then we can bring that to the city's attention or ask the city why the report is deficient. So, I think that it would be useful to members of council if that data was reported on a block-by-block basis and of course any other way that you care to present it. But that had some benefit, I think. Mr. Mayor, thank you very much."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I wanted to thank Ms. Williams for doing a good job. And I wanted to thank everybody for finally listening to a request that I had been making since February 2018. I am glad this city is finally doing something to promote the history of the African American population. Because it is vast and rich, and we needed to do this. So, thank you."

7. MONTHLY REPORTS:

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

8. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT:

- a. A report on how the \$5 million in RP and \$2 million on PP are projected to be collected in June.

Mr. Turille gave an update and overview with a PowerPoint presentation.

Key points:

- As of February 28, 2022, there is a monthly collection of \$421. This is a 12-month projection of \$5 million in real estate.
- As of February 28, 2022, there is a monthly collection of \$147. This is a 12-month projection of \$1.8 million in personal property.
- There are total of 36 properties that have been sold thus far.

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

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

*Audio available upon request.

10. UTILITIES:

- a. Update on plan for Inflow and Infiltration problem and resolution scheduled for April 2022.

Andrew Barnes, City Engineer and General Manager of Utilities, gave a brief update with a PowerPoint presentation.

Key points:

- At the February 1, 2022, council meeting, Timmons presented a presentation that touched on infiltration and inflow.
- Cross connections and deteriorated pipes are a systemic issue that should be addressed by Capital Projects. It requires assessment, prioritization, scoping, design, and construction.
- These projects have been included in the previous unapproved 5-year CIP.
- Until there is an approved CIP or annual commitment to CIP funding these types of projects cannot proceed.
- Over the past few years, the operations division has installed a significant number of manholes inserts that included waterproof covers in areas that usually flood.
- An Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a cooperative contract is recommended.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you Mr. Barnes. Those were some helpful comments. I think that you have identified the problem well. And we are all grateful to you. What is our timetable for doing the various task that you have outlined or itemized that you address in your presentation?"

Mr. Barnes stated, "As we are getting ready to go into the CIP process, we have a scheduled meeting with the city manager next week. I would say it would be best to come back after that meeting. We will have a better idea on how we are going to move forward on these projects."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That is fair enough. Can we put these also on our April Work Session? A report back as to a timetable to address these various important water and wastewater issues. Mr. Turille, I guess that question is more fairly directed to you rather to Mr. Barnes. Would you do your best to put that on the April work session, a report."

Mr. Turille stated, "Yes, sir. So, the original request you made at the previous meeting was to focus on inflow. The cross-connection problem is particular troublesome after a heavy rain. What we need now is an itemized list of the inflow points with an estimated cost of repair. Did I hear you correctly that you want us to focus on the inflow problem for the April meeting?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That would be great. Inflow, another term for that would be the crossover. Is that right?"

Mr. Turille stated, "Right. Inflow is direct inflow of cross connection of manholes into the sewer system. Because the sewer system is designed for sanitary removal that when you have a sudden inundation through a storm of the cross connection into the sewer system it is not designed to handle that. That is really related to infiltration. Infiltration is more of the breakdown of the deterioration of the pipes that have been there for two hundred years, and the water just seeps in the ground to it. Bud did you want a report on the inflow? Is that correct?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Yes, sir. And a separate report on the infiltration if you would. And let us take them one at a time. On the inflow, I believe there is a city ordinance that requires properties owners to segregate their rainwater from the wastewater system. If you could include in that inflow/crossover

*Audio available upon request.

presentation whether there is such a statue and whether we are enforcing, it. If we are not enforcing, it what steps can we take to enforce it. I have a feeling that it is not all the city's fault. I have a feeling that private property owners are substantial contributors to the problem. But city staff can give us better insight to that. On the infiltration, I heard that it is a particular problem in the southeast quadrant of the city, which is the Poor Creek Area. I am wondering if we address that if it would give us greater compacity at the Poor Creek Station while we are working towards replacing Poor Creek Station. I think that it would be helpful to council to have both. If you cannot have total gameplan with deadlines and funding mechanisms in place, come our April meeting. That is fine. Tell us that and we will kick it to the main work session. What I am asking is get in focus and stay in focus with a plan that will produce results on both the inflow/crossover topic and the infiltration topic."

Mr. Turille stated, "Yes, sir. We can absolutely do that. But I listened to Mr. Barnes, and I think what the issue in the past has been that they have presented this information and then it never gets funded. And so, then it is moved on from year to year. But certainly, the first step to solve the problem is to get the truth on how to fix all these individual inflow points and how many linear feet of pipes is going to require slip lining or you can insert foam into them. There are all kinds of new technologies. How many linear feet are we talking about? You have to have a handle on the cost. Let me just take this opportunity and I am going to talk about this in my manager report. The CIP must now be taken seriously. We have to find ways to dedicate funds into the CIP and get these things done. Even if it is just to design."

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

11. STREETS:

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

12. FACILITIES:

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

13. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

a. Presentation from GovDeals on City-owned real estate property.

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, stated, "We are presenting a report to you. I believe we have Jim Stuart from GovDeals. He will be making the initial presentation and I will follow up with talking points.

Jim Stuart, Chris Lassiter, and Frank DonBullian, representatives from GovDeals, gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Key points:

- The City of Petersburg has complete control.
- The bidder pays all of the fees and there is no cost to the city.
- City Council approves all bids.
- There is transparent recordkeeping.
- Information is updated every 30 minutes.
- Petersburg has been using GovDeals for 10 years.
- Surplus sold \$558,037.94
- Unsold properties are off the tax roll.
- Blighted homes bring lower tax revenues then habitable homes.

*Audio available upon request.

- Access to over four million qualified buyers globally.
- Access to over 150,000 targeted real estate through the newest partner “Bid4assets”.
- They handle the bulk of auction process and posting, and they manage the process remotely.

There was discussion among City Council and the presenters of GovDeals.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Before we put any vacant lots in your hands, I would like city staff to supply council with a list of those vacant lots. Until about three months ago, on that list of vacant lots was Hillside that slopped down to 85. Before we engage in this company to sell our vacant lots, I would like to have a list of those vacant lots and I would like council to consider whether we are to put any restrictions on those vacant lots. That would encourage what we all most want. That is single-family owner-occupied residents. Mr. Mayor, how soon can we make that happen. What is to happen next?”

Mr. Moore stated, “The next step would be again that council would have all control on designing the criteria for the particular sales. We will work with Mr. Cuthbert to provide the information that he has asked for. And you will have total control on that process. And we will bring that back. The list is also updated on our website. And I believe that many of the properties have been removed. But I would concur with Council Member Cuthbert. We are going to have some guidelines for the process, and we would control that 100%. So, we will take that as a pass to bring back to the next meeting.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Thank you Mr. Mayor and thank you Mr. Moore.”

b. A presentation to the City Council on Enterprise Zone Incentives.

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, gave a presentation on the Enterprise Zone Incentives.

Key points:

- The Virginia Enterprise Zone program was established by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.
- The goal of the program is to encourage job creation and private investment.
- The program provides two grant-based incentives: Job Creation Grant and Real Property Investment Grant. These grants are provided to qualified investors and job creators within the Enterprise Zone.
- A locality can also provide local incentives.
- The City Council adopted a resolution to establish a local Enterprise Zone on June 21, 2005.
- Tax exemption is equal to 100% for an entire 6-year period. The additional year is only for commercial properties in the Enterprise Zone.

14. CITY MANAGER’S AGENDA:

Mr. Turille stated, “We discussed already the Southpark Mall route. I would like to move to the Poor Creek Project schedule. We met with the Federal Reserve Governor recently. There is a lot of interest. He indicated tremendous interest in the project, and I know that the mayor is much involved. I think that it is important that people understand that there is a plan in place to make this happen. We have consultants and an excellent capability of Mr. Barnes to help us schedule it. So, let’s let him discuss how this is going to play out. So, everyone knows that it has been in planning, I believe since 2016. So, it is not something that we are just winging it. It is something that has been in the works, and we got a plan. Mr. Barnes.”

Mr. Barnes gave a brief update on Poor Creek Project.

*Audio available upon request.

Key points:

- The middle of March 2022, the grant EDA application is due.
- March/April 2022 – Staff will prepare BID documents for design services.
- May 2022- Design Services Procurement.
- December 2022 – Formal Design Complete
- December 2022 – February 2023 – Construction Procurement Phase
- March 2023 – Construction Contract Award

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mr. Turille gave more information from his city manager's report.

Key points:

- With large tax base increase (13%) from recent assessment, the city is required by statute to reduce the tax rate. In which the city can only collect 1% more in real property revenues than last year unless they hold a special meeting to discuss a lower reduction of the tax rate that allows them to keep more than one percent.
- Staff will present two more options at the budget meeting next week.
- The preliminary budget will be presented on March 8, 2022.
- With the new lower-case load of COVID-19, the projected date to reopen the city is March 14, 2022.

Chief John Michalek gave an update on COVID-19.

Key points:

- Cases have now dropped down to an average of about 4-5 cases a day.
- Suspected to continue to drop over the next couple of weeks.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mr. Turille continued his city manager's report.

Key points:

- With the Stormwater Grant, the city received \$325,000 from Community Flood Preparedness Fund.
- The city received the Youth and Family Master Plan Grant in the amount of \$16,000. This is coming through the police department.
- Deputy City Manager, Tangela Innis, was accepted in the Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute. Congratulations.

15. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

17. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

*Audio available upon request.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, "I hear you tonight that you are very concerned about litter and the quality of life. Which I will not disagree with, but you keep ignoring one of the more invasive problems that is facing our citizens. I am going to go back and read verbatim a commentary that I made at the May 17, 2016, council meeting. That is almost six years ago. At the risk of being to in your face, I challenge any of you to tell us that the problems with citizens bills, particularly those with water usage and personal property taxes, are anywhere near accurate or consistent. Estimated water bills for far greater amounts than one's historical pattern of consumption and personal property taxes that charge for absorbent amounts of delinquent payments seem to be common placed. We have all heard many times that the billing processes are being fixed and citizens will be given accurate information. Assuming that this does eventually happen, it remains a big problem area that is not being talked about. In fact, it is the proverbial elephant in the room with this clear pattern of overcharging. Which I know from personal experience that goes back a year a half. How are the citizens that pay too much able to recover the difference of between the initial bill and the corrected bill? You say go to the appropriate office in city hall and work with staff to correct the bill and receive a credit. Has it ever occurred to you how many people cannot readily access this remedy? That is making a personal visit to negotiate with their city government. Some have simply given up after months of questionable bills and the inability to get answers via phone calls or online for those who have internet access. Some don't know where to start to figure out what they should be charged in order to effectively make their cases. Some quite a few more than you imagined, cannot make it to city hall or now the finance building to spend hours or multiple visits in a hassle with the city. What about citizens in the military that have to deploy? What about citizens that lack transportation that come downtown. What about single parents with multiple children to care for? What about the elderly. What about people trying to make it by working several jobs and no time during the workday to take off. I believe that we all deserve a thorough answer on how the city is going to reach out proactively to citizens that have been overcharged. And to ensure that no citizen is financially damaged because of inaction by the city. It is so wrong for the city to adopt an attitude of 'if someone wants to correct it then they need to bring it to us.' Please show that you have compassion and concern for the many people in Petersburg that do not have the know how or the ability for the reasons that I have mentioned to come to the city for help. I know that is what I said in 2016. Today, I know that the finance employees are working really hard to deal with everyone that comes in. And there have been a lot of problems with personal property taxes during this cycle. I am not faulting our employees. I think that they're working hard and that they are more customer service oriented than they used to be. What I am talking about is the system wide issues and the inequity that no one will talk about. This is a major problem. It is a real quality of life issue. Personally, I think that it is more of a problem then litter. I will leave it up to you. But I hope that something will happen. It hasn't for over six years. Anyway, thank you very much."

Norma Williams, 148 North Sycamore Street, stated, "It has been a while. And I thought I would come in tonight and get updated without having to go back and listen to the council meeting. I sat back intentionally for some months just to observe. And just to see what was going on and the things that were occurring in the city. And I see as I drive down the road and come down Washington Street. I still see the same things that are present. As we all come down Washington Street and we get off of 95S and we come down and see the same trash and the walkways are unmanned. I see patches of the road being done on Washington Street being done going towards Fort Lee. And I see that all we are doing is patching. I can only recall over the past year or so that Graham Road and West Street having been paved. So, I hear the conversation about litter. Well, when you have the overall appearance of the city not being maintained then of course no one has a problem with throwing trash out the window. Cigarette butts out of the window. You come to the red light when you leave downtown going to the city building at the old Virginia Power and you see trash. Now, I am not sure how many of you actually pay attention to these things. I have asked before about the sheriff department having the noncriminal and those with minor offenses, taking part in the city. But we hear that we want to have someone be paid. And no disrespect to you Council Member Cuthbert but I hear you ask and task a lot on the city. And I ask myself are you asking for yourself or your ward. Because I would like for my ward representative to speak on my behalf and to speak for our ward as well. And I do appreciate your efforts to bring these things up. But I did not think that you were being the spokesperson for all the council members. I would like to hear my

*Audio available upon request.

representative to speak as well. And these concerns that you bring forward, I would like that concern to be made by my ward representative as well. One of the things that I want to also comment on is that we have not had a natural disaster in the Petersburg area. But I do not see any preparations. We are coming up trying to find funds to do this and that, but we haven't made any plans for anything that may occur outside that we would really need some funds for. We have to prepare for the unexpected. I want to thank you all for the jobs that you are doing. But I think that we really need to dig in and work more collaboratively with the city constituents because they do want to work. And keep us informed. Thank you very much."

18. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor