

The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:55 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.
Council Member Darrin Hill
Vice Mayor Annette Smith-Lee
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: None

Present from City Council Administration:

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

2. PRAYER:

Mayor Parham stated, "Council Member 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. Minutes:

-July 5, 2022 – Closed Session City Council Meeting
-July 5, 2022 – City Council Work Session
-July 5, 2022 – Special City Council Meeting
-July 19, 2022 – Closed Session Meeting
-July 19, 2022 – Regular City Council Meeting
-July 26, 2022 – Special City Council Meeting
-August 2, 2022 – Special City Council Meeting

b. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance approving the rezoning of property located at 2655 Stedman Drive from Single-Family Residence District (R-1A) to Mixed-Use District-3 (MXD-3).

c. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance approving the rezoning of the properties located at 513 Old Wagner Road, and 525 Old Wagner Road, from A-

*Audio available upon request.

Agricultural District to R-1A – Single Family Residence District.

- d. Consideration of the appropriation of the FY23 Gun Violence Intervention Program Grant for \$190,000 – 1st Reading
- e. Consideration of the appropriation of the Virginia Commission for the Arts Grant in the amount of \$4,500 – 1st Reading
- f. Consideration of an appropriation for the FY23 SRO-SRO Grant in the amount of \$211,428 – 1st Reading
- g. Consideration for the appropriate of the unused FY22 funds provided by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management – Emergency Management Performance Grant to the FY23 budget - \$1,717.27 – 1st Reading
- h. Consideration for the appropriation of the unused FY22 funds provided by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs – Aid to Locality to the FY23 Budget in the amount of \$96,735.31- 1st Reading
- i. Consideration for the appropriation of the unused Virginia Department of Emergency Management – Radiological Emergency Preparedness Grant to the FY23 Budget in the amount of \$3,949.98 – 1st Reading

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

6. SPECIAL REPORTS:

- a. Proclamation designating September 8, 2022, as National Essential Medicine Shortage Awareness Day.

Mayor Parham read the proclamation aloud.

- b. Presentation from Mr. Ted Raspiller from Brightpoint Community College

Mr. Raspiller provided a PowerPoint Presentation. He also introduced Bill Fiege, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and Elizabeth Creamer, Vice President of the Community College Workforce Alliance, and Fred Taylor, Director of Government and Administrative Services, and Holly Walker, Public Relations Director.

Key notes:

- The Community College Workforce Alliance had about 104 students. A lot of the classes took place in Petersburg at the high school.
- Enrollment was down a bit due to the pandemic. But they are now back up by 2%.
- The top classes for Petersburg residents are Truck Driving Training, Certified Logistics Associate, Lean Practitioner Certification, OSHA 10-Hour Training Certification for General Industry, National Safety Council First Aid, Pharmacy Technician Program, and Certified Logistics Technician.
- The Fast Forward Program pays for any resident two-thirds of their tuition to take classes in all the fields named.

*Audio available upon request.

- The G3 Program also pays for their CCWA classes but helps them to get them into a pathway to get them into a program at Brightpoint and to increase their income potential.
- There are non-profit organizations like The Cameron Foundation and Virginia Ready that are providing stipends to help students with transportation and childcare.
- They are looking for more locations to train in and more students to train.
- The new program is looking to have 125 trained pharmaceutical manufacturing technicians in the next two years.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

c. Updates on Ramada Demolition

Chief Jim Reid stated, “Just to give you all an update. Gerrit has a couple of pictures that he is going to present. I am proud to announce that the demolition of the old Ramada Inn on East Washington Street began today. As you can see from the photograph that there is a piece of high reach construction equipment with an articulating head. It goes up there and pinches off a piece at a time and bites away at it. They began this morning. We had out open house press release in the front and then they quickly got to putting the security fencing up all around the complex. And they cleaned it off in preparation for the construction equipment to begin. And they started today. So, I am so pleased that they are moving forward. You can look for the completion to take place in approximately four months. So, we are really excited about it.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Thank you chief, great work.”

7. MONTHLY REPORTS:

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

8. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT:

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

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

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

10. UTILITIES:

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

11. STREETS:

a. Update and presentation on Oak Hill Road.

Paul Johnson, Director of Public Works, gave an update on Oak Hill Road.

Key notes:

- Large cave-in over the corrugated metal pip running perpendicular to the flow of traffic was called in on April 25, 2022.
- Visible section loss in the pipe allowing backfill material to enter the pipe.
- Section loss of the pipe creating a void where material has entered the pipe.

*Audio available upon request.

- Temporary repair to the eastern pipe per recommendation from bridge inspector was completed. An additional inspection was done at this time that found increased deterioration in the other barrels. Recommendation from the bridge inspection firm is to keep the road closed.
- Kimley-Horn has been contracted to prepare bid specifications and plans to initiate a competitive bid solicitation for an in-kind replacement of the CMPs as a maintenance activity.
- Notification is to be sent to the affected property owners regarding survey work.
- Estimated time for deliverables is nine months.
- Environmental permitting will be one mitigating factor on the timeline.

12. FACILITIES:

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

13. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

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

14. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

Presentation on the Transition of Museums.

Joanne Williams, Director of Communications, Tourism, Marketing & Government Relations, presented a PowerPoint presentation.

Key notes:

- The City of Petersburg currently owns three museums: Exchange Building, Centre Hill, and Blandford Church.
- Late 2016, City transferred operations of museums to Petersburg Preservation Task Force (PPTF) – Contract with PPTF ended on June 30, 2022.
- Operations of museums by the city full transferred.
- There is a contractor serving as site manager and volunteer coordinator.
- A full-time tourism manager will be hired. This position is budgeted.
- The advantages are that it will re-establish city tourism presence, operations & experiential programs, consistent brand & marketing, support to hospitality businesses & events, increase spending and tax revenues and additional grant opportunities for site renovation and program.
- The Visitor Center is temporarily moved to the Blandford Church Reception Center.

Mayor Parham stated, "Mr. Altman any other items. First of all, welcome aboard. Your first council meeting with us."

Mr. Altman stated, "Yes, it is. First time, and glad to be here. We have a lot going on and great staff. It is impressive to see the number of things that you have in the hopper come to fruition. Just happy to be part of the team to bring these things across the finish line to make Petersburg a better place."

Mayor Parham stated, "Thank you Mr. Altman. We appreciate you."

15. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

*Audio available upon request.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

17. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Marcus Omar Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, "I am here to talk to you guys today about the gutters in the City of Petersburg. If you go up and down Washington Street and Wythe Street, you will notice there are mounds of dirt in all the gutters. If that is not something to be handled by the streetsweepers then is this something that the property owners should manage. My next concern is in regard to the streets in Walnut Hill. These streets are so old that grass is growing up in the center of them. In front of my house, I have to go in the street to mow the grass. Other neighbors are having similar issues. I have heard from one neighbor about the streets in Walnut Hill have not been paved for over 30 to 40 years. Is this something that the city is looking into, and I am also really concerned about what is going on at Peabody. I am not sure if you have seen the old federal school. But it is wide open. The third floor has collapsed on both sides now. The roof has blown off and this is a piece of African American history that should have been preserved. I think that it was about six years ago that the side of the roof blew off. About six years ago the right side of the roof blew off. The city did not act. And just a couple of weeks ago, the left side of the roof blew off and that classroom caved in as well. So, I am wondering what the city plan for that is. Are you guys putting fencing around it to make sure that no one is going in it. Like I said that it is wide open. So, I hope that the city will act on that. Also, the bathhouse at Wilcox Lake is not secure. Something needs to be done about that. And I did report that the aluminum siding was stolen off of that. I believe that your insurance company was notified about that. So, I am wondering if you guys are going to use the funds from your insurance to help preserve or reserve that bathhouse at Wilcox Lake. Again, thank you for your time and consideration. I hope that you have a great meeting."

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice Street, stated, "I am a little concerned about council communicate document. I looked it up today and none of these things were posted until very late this afternoon. But I asked a series of questions at the last meeting of July 19th. They were supposed to be answered in that, but they were not. The answer today said that I requested a presentation from the fire chief. I never mentioned the fire chief. What I asked was the staffing levels that the city should have and what is the plan to close the gap. I asked about the Ramada that went to court. What was the resolution to that? I did not get any of those answers. She answered it but didn't answer. So, please whoever has the authority to do this ask the person that answers these questions to look at them again and answer the questions that I asked the last time. Thank you."

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, "Since it has been a while since I last saw all of you there are several different things that I wanted to touch on. One of them is redistricting. The comments that I see from folks, there are still a number of questions from some residents of Petersburg about which ward they are in and where they are supposed to vote. I believe that the registrar has been active in providing information to voters. She is doing what she and her staff can do to follow up on that. So, I am asking you as the city that if you are going to do another newsletter, to please provide more information on that to citizens. Because it is one of those things that cannot be explained too many times. The reach of something like the newsletter for people that do not see things in the newspaper or on social media, it is a valuable way to communicate. I also want to congratulate you for "Partnership for Petersburg" as well as the 52.9-million-dollar federal grant that you just mentioned earlier. This is a great accomplishment for the city. It can do great things. What I would ask from the viewpoint of citizens having an interest in it, is if you would please give us monthly reports on progress. You have 42 initiatives and I realize that there are not going to be a report on 42 initiatives all the time but at least if you can highlight the progress on some of them at each meeting, I think that would be valuable. Both for you all to share it among council and city employees but also the general public. Finally, I want to reflect on something that came to me sitting here earlier. I think four of you were part of this meeting. Six years ago, this date, we were at Petersburg High School talking about the city's financial crisis and various

*Audio available upon request.

things and plans that could be done to address the shortfall in revenue and the problems with the budget. It was a good meeting. I think that all of you on stage were interested in what was going on and citizens were open about talking. I wish we could look around tonight and see even a fraction of that many people who showed up six years ago. And I wish that citizens felt as eager and open to participate then. I hope that you all will do everything that you can to encourage that kind of interest among citizens that once existed. Thank you.”

Richard Stewart, 129 Rolfe Street, stated, “First, I want to thank the police department that patrols Pocahontas. We really need it because all types of activity go on there. I want to thank the City of Petersburg for coming out and cutting the grass today. I think that they may be short of help, but they came over and did a very good job. I am still speaking about the one way out of Pocahontas. It is dangerous but I thank somebody who cut the trees and they can see better coming out of Pocahontas. The other thing that I want to speak about is UVA. They came to the museum on Sunday, and they brought students from Liberia, Africa. And they said that they had heard about the Pocahontas Black History Museum up in Charlottesville. So, they wanted the students to actually come to Petersburg where Joseph Jenkin Robinson became the first Black president of Liberia. And the city owns the property down at the former Roper Brothers. So, they wanted to come by. And there were about 15 students from UVA. I told them the next time that they come to call me in advance and that I wanted the Mayor and City Council to meet them. Like I was hearing John Tyler, I graduated from John Tyler 46 years ago when some of you all were still in kindergarten. Then I went on to St. Paul and then came back to Virginia State. Education is very important in the City of Petersburg. Finally, Dr. Farley, she died, and I don’t know where she is going to be buried and so forth. What type of recognition is the City of Petersburg doing to recognize such a great lady as Dr. Farley. Thank you.”

18. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor

*Audio available upon request.