



COUNCIL

Communicates

Highlights from City Council Meetings

June 17, 2025

Petersburg Public Library

City Council Members

Ward 1

Marlow Jones

mjones@petersburg-va.org

Ward 2

Darrin Hill

Vice Mayor

dhill@petersburg-va.org

Ward 3

Samuel Parham

Mayor

sparham@petersburg-va.org

Ward 4

Charles Cuthbert

ccuthbert@petersburg-va.org

Ward 5

W. Howard Myers

whowardmyers@petersburg-va.org

Ward 6

Anette Smith-Lee

alee@petersburg-va.org

Ward 7

Arnold Westbrook

awestbrook@petersburg-va.org

Please Note:

These are not the official minutes of the City Council meeting.

The official minutes and agendas can be accessed on the city website:

www.petersburg-va.org

Please note that the official minutes are not posted until approved by City Council.

Closed Session

3:00 pm

1. Roll Call

Councilman Westbrook absent.

2. Closed Session

The purpose of this meeting is to convene in the closed session pursuant to:

a. §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion or Consideration of the Acquisition of Real Property for a Public Purpose and the Disposition of Publicly Held Real Property Where Discussion in an Open Meeting Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body, Specifically Including But Not Limited to the Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property; and

b. §2.2-3711(A)(7) and (8) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Receiving Legal Advice and Status Update from the City Attorney and Legal Consultation Regarding the Subject of Actual or Probable Litigation and Specific Legal Matters Requiring the Provision of Legal Advice by the City Attorney, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion Regarding Actual or Probable Litigation and Legal Matters Requiring the Advice of the City Attorney; and

c. §2.2-3711(A)(29) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Regarding the Subject of Award of a Public Contract Involving the Expenditure of Public Funds, and Discussion of the Terms or Scope of Such Contract, Where Discussion in an Open Session Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body; and

d. §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Pertaining to Performance, Assignment, and Appointment of Specific Public Employees of the City of

Petersburg, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion of the Performance, Assignment, and Appointment of a Specific Public Officer of the City of Petersburg.

3. Adjournment

Regular City Council Meeting

5:00 pm

1. Roll Call
Vice Mayor Hill and Councilman Westbrook were absent.
2. Prayer
Led by Councilwoman Smith-Lee.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
Led by Mayor Parham.
4. Determination of the Presence of a Quorum
Quorum present.
5. Proclamations/Recognitions/Presentation of Ceremonial Proclamations
 - a. National League of Cities Small Cities Month Proclamation
 - b. Honoring 12-Year-Old Ramir Parker as a City of Petersburg Hero for Heroic Actions on June 3, 2025
6. Responses to Previous Public Information Posted
Council Communicates.
7. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):
 - a. Minutes of Previous Meetings
May 20, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes
Approved, with spelling correction on page 17.
8. Official Public Hearings
 - a. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreements Between the City of Petersburg and URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION for the Development of 135 Franklin Street, 116 and 120 N. Jefferson Street, Located in Petersburg, VA
No comments at Public Hearing.
Approved.

b. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Barber Construction for the Development of 201 Graham Street and 617 S. Sycamore Street, Located in Petersburg, VA

Public Hearing

Gary Talley

Mr. Talley expressed concern that the property is being offered at 50% of the assessed value.

The ordinance was not approved.

c. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement between the City of Petersburg and Anthony Jackson for the Development of 723 Harding Street, located in Petersburg, VA

No comments at Public Hearing.

Approved.

d. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund Police grant for \$125,000

No comments at Public Hearing.

Approved.

e. Public Hearing for Michael Knick to Appeal a Decision Made by the Architectural Review Board Regarding 224 E Fillmore Street in the Poplar Lawn Historic District that Determined the Windows Should be Repaired when Possible and Replaced if Necessary with Wood Clad in Aluminum – the Applicant Seeks to Replace All Windows with Wood Clad in Aluminum

Public Hearing

Bill Hartsock (ARB)

Mr. Hartsock stated that, according to the Department of the Interior's guidelines, sashes should be in good condition and that the original windows should be retained.

Approved. Councilman Jones voted no.

f. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to Short-Term Rental Uses in the City of Petersburg

Public Hearing

Rev. Bowles and Mrs. Bowles

They have a property in a residential area that they would like to use for short-term rentals.

Diane Curling

Ms. Curling recently stayed in a short-term rental and suggested that they should only be permitted in residential areas if the owner resides on-site during the rental. She expressed concern that short-term rentals could displace families, noting that one individual in the City owns over 80 short-term rental properties.

Amanda Wyatt

Ms. Wyatt recently moved to Petersburg and would like to see the area around her home brought up to better standards.

Paula Chester

Ms. Chester expressed concern about the constant turnover of people, which leads to issues with trash and noise. She is worried about the absence of property owners and fears it could attract drug activity. She does not want the City to decline.

Marlo Greene

Ms. Greene requested that the ordinance be revised to include R1 districts. She also inquired about potential fines for issues such as trash in residential areas, emphasizing the need for proper controls on short-term rentals.

Ms. Blow

Ms. Blow emphasized the importance of maintaining controlled environments and prohibiting activities such as parties. She noted that short-term rentals have the potential to improve the appearance of properties.

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison stated that the Planning Department and Planning Commission have been working since July 2024 to refine the regulations. He expressed concern that R1 districts may lack sufficient parking but voiced his support for the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Jordan

Ms. Jordan expressed her opposition to Airbnb and short-term rentals, comparing the situation to a California gold rush. She shared concerns about limited parking on her street and emphasized her preference for knowing her neighbors, advocating for stricter limitations.

The ordinance was approved with an amendment that new short-term rentals will only be allowed with a special use permit unless it's the owner's primary residence.

g. Public Hearing to Amend and Readopt the City Ordinance Pertaining to the Planning Commission to add Language Clarifying the Ability to Compensate Planning Commission Members with an Associated Amount

Public Hearing

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph noted that volunteering is a polarizing topic, with some associating it with unpaid work. She raised concerns about the potential for numerous Boards and Commissions to request compensation. She also questioned whether this would be difficult to manage.

A motion to table was approved.

h. Public Hearing to Approve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds for Program Year 2025 - 2026 and Fiscal Year 2026 as Recommended by the CDBG Advisory Board

Public Hearing

Bill Nickleson, PAAL

Mr. Nickleson requested funds to continue making improvements to the Art League.

Leonard Curry

Mr. Curry stated that funds should be used as directed by the CDBG Board.

Marlo Greene

Ms. Greene advocated for allocating funds to help people keep their homes. She also requested funding to support the preservation of historic Pocahontas Island.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph underscored Mr. Curry's remarks.

A motion was approved that reallocated funds to additional organizations. Councilwoman Smith-Lee voted no. Mayor Parham abstained.

9. Public Information Period

A public information period, limited in time to 30 minutes, shall be part of an Order of Business at each regular council meeting. Each speaker shall be a resident or business owner of the City and shall be limited to three minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak on any item scheduled for consideration on the regular docket of the meeting at which the speaker is to speak. The order of speakers, limited by the 30-minute time period, shall be determined as follows:

- a. First, in chronological order of the notice, persons who have notified the Clerk no later than 12:00 noon of the day of the meeting,
- b. Second, in chronological order of their sign-up, persons who have signed a sign-up sheet placed by the Clerk in the rear of the meeting room prior to the meeting will be removed from the consent agenda

Ms. Jordan

Ms. Jordan highlighted several issues at Poplar Lawn, including knee-high grass, damaged flowers, overgrown grass on sidewalks, a deteriorating fence, illegal dumping, and grass too tall to clean up after her dog. She also noted vehicles being driven into the park.

Janine Lester

Ms. Lester introduced herself to the Council as the new City Arborist within the Planning Department. She expressed her hope that the Council would consider adopting the City's Strategic Canopy Plan.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph expressed her appreciation for the City having an arborist but voiced concerns about the state of Poplar Lawn Park, noting that the flowers had been cut, which was inexcusable. She also criticized the removal of two Japanese maple trees at the Exchange Building, stating they should have been pruned instead. She emphasized the importance of hiring knowledgeable tree care professionals and condemned Dominion's tree-cutting practices, which she described as merely trimming to prevent branches from touching power lines. She emphasized the importance of properly caring for the existing trees.

10. Business or reports from the Mayor or other Members of the City Council
Councilman Cuthbert

Councilman Cuthbert echoed concerns regarding the flowers at Poplar Lawn Park, stating that something is wrong in Public Works and placing responsibility on the director and managers in that department. He also announced a Ward 4 meeting on July 9 at 5:30 pm in the Library Event Center to continue discussions about speeding throughout the City.

Councilman Jones, Councilman Myers and Councilwoman Annette Smith-Lee had no reports.

Mayor Parham

The Mayor asked about the replacement of Oak Hill Bridge.

11. Items removed from Consent Agenda

None.

12. Finance and Budget Report

a. Department of Finance Monthly Update

Finance reported earned interest at \$2.1M.

13. Unfinished Business

a. Consideration of Appointments to the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Board

A motion to table was approved.

b. Consideration of Appointment to the Architectural Review Board

A motion to table was approved.

c. Consideration of Recommendations to the Board of Zoning Appeals

A motion to table was approved.

d. A Resolution of Council Support for and Adoption of The Strategic Tree Canopy Plan

Approved.

14. New Business
 - a. FIRST READING/SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING FOR: An Ordinance to Amend and Re-Adopt Section 46-92 of the City Code to Change the Polling Place for the First Ward to Lakemont Elementary (**Public Hearing/Consideration for Adoption to be held on July 1, 2025).
Approved.
 - b. Adoption of a Resolution to Re-Appoint Mr. Kenneth Pritchett to the Brightpoint Community College Board to Serve a Second Four-Year Term from July 1, 2025, until June 30, 2029
Approved.
 - c. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Finance Update - Davenport & Company, LLC
No action taken.
 - d. Adoption of Resolution in Support of Expanding the Federal Child Tax Credit Proposed by the U.S Conference of Mayors
Approved.
15. City Manager's Report and Special Reports
The City Manager recognized Naomi Siodmok for her service as Director of Planning and Community Development. Ms. Siodmok announced that Planning had won the Jamestown award.
16. Business or reports from the Clerk
None.
17. Business or reports from the City Attorney
None.
18. Adjournment