

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL:**

Present:

Council Member Charles Cuthbert, Jr.
Council Member Marlow Jones
Council Member Annette Smith-Lee
Council Member Arnold Westbrook, Jr.
Council Member W. Howard Myers
Vice Mayor Darrin Hill
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: None

Present from City Council Administration:

City Manager John March Altman, Jr
City Attorney Anthony Williams

2. **PRAYER:**

Vice Mayor Hill led the city council meeting in the opening prayer.

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

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

4. **DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:**

A quorum was determined with the presence of the city council members.

5. **PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATION OF CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATIONS:**

a. Presentation from Civica to discuss the latest business updates from the Pharma Company.

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, introduced Benjamin Jarvela, Site Communications & Public Affairs Manager of Civica.

Key Notes:

- Civica is an independent not-for-profit company founded by leading health care systems and philanthropists to address critical generic drug shortages caused by market failures.
- They work by manufacturing and partnering with pharmaceutical companies to produce generic drugs in short supply or that have become too expensive.
- They service over 1,550 hospitals and 50 million patients.
- Many essential medications are produced by only a few large pharmaceutical companies. This creates problems when there are shortages of these drugs. When this happens, patients may not be able to get these medications they need.
- Civica facility is measured at 140,000 square feet. It is 250 employees at full staffing with three packaging bays, laboratory, and a warehouse and shipping facility/area.

- Civica Petersburg will produce dozens of hospital medications as well as the three types of insulin that account for most use in the US: Glargine, Lispro, and Aspart.

There was discussion among the City Council Members and Mr. Jarvela.

- b. Presentation from the City Assessor's Office regarding the upcoming FY2025 Reassessments.

Mary Williams, City Assessor, gave a brief update on the upcoming FY2025 Reassessments.

Key Notes:

- The Constitution of Virginia, Article X, Section 2 & the Code of Virginia, §58.1-3201 require real estate assessments to represent fair market value (FMV).
- The City of Petersburg reassesses their properties every 2 years using sales that reflect FMV in accordance with state law.
- All sales/transfers that are recorded at the courthouse are reviewed by their office to determine if they represent FMV.
- FMV is the amount of money a buyer would be willing to pay a seller for a property offered for sale in an open market, over a reasonable period, where both buyer and seller are well informed.
- In Virginia, when the sale of property is recorded, the sale price is also reported, making it part of the public record.
- Notices will be mailed on January 26, 2024. The office appeal deadline is March 1, 2024. The Board of Equalization deadline is April 1, 2024.
- The values become effective on July 1, 2024.

- c. Presentation on the Health Hub.

Cheryl Garland, Chief of Health Impact at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, gave a brief presentation on the Health Hub.

Key Notes:

- Concerned about the data that has been coming out of County Health Rankings Model for the past ten years. It measures specific health factors and outcomes to determine rankings for localities.
- Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is and in terms of length of life but quality of life as well.
- Petersburg is ranked among the least healthy counties in Virginia.
- The average life expectancy for Petersburg residents is 66.2 years. In Virginia it is 79.1 years, and, in the US, it is 78.5 years.
- Health outcomes address causes of premature deaths, reduce perception of poor/fair health, reduce number of poor physical health days, reduce low birth weight rates, and reduce infant mortality rates.
- Health factors are to reduce adult smoking, reduce adult and childhood obesity, improve physical activity, reduce STI's, reduce teen birth rates, address food insecurity, increase access to mental health providers, reduce preventable hospitalizations, improve access to education, improve access to employment, and address housing issues.
- The proposal is to establish a Petersburg Health Hub Plus Center driven by the shared commitment of VCU.
- The Hub is committed to leveraging its combined resources to offer a comprehensive range of preventive, wellness, and clinical services.

There was discussion among the City Council Members.

Mr. Williams stated, "Back on '5B', one of the last slides on that presentation, and that is the upcoming reassessment presentation, gave a timeline. And I think one of the last items in the timeline had court with no deadline or something of that effect. And I just wanted to say that I think that the assessor was talking about no administrative deadlines. There are statutory deadlines and limitations of actions and timing in which you must file in court. And I do not want people to start showing up with reassessments from the 1980s or long ago saying that we do not have a deadline."

6. RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD:

Mayor Parham stated that responses are found under council communications.

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (to include minutes of previous meeting/s)

- a. Minutes:
 - December 12, 2023 – Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
 - January 2, 2024 – Closed Session Minutes
 - January 2, 2024 – Organizational Meeting Minutes
 - January 2, 2024 – City Council Work Session
 - January 9, 2024 – Closed Session Minutes
- b. Consideration of an appropriation ordinance for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2025, for the Edward Byrne JAG Grant in the amount of \$33,140 – 1st Reading
- c. To conduct a public hearing for consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a Lease Agreement toward the Lease of a City – Owned Property at 301 North Sycamore Street
- d. To conduct a public hearing for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a Purchase Agreement toward the Sale of a City – Owned Property at 101 West Washington Street.

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

8. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- a. A public hearing for an ordinance approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to amend and readopt the future land use map from the proposed land use of Low Density Residential to Medium/High Density Residential at 235 Medical Park Boulevard.

Mayor Parham stated, "Item A has been pulled from tonight's agenda."

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion that the city council initiate a proposal to rezone 235 Medical Park Boulevard to B-2 and forward the proposal to the Planning Director and Commission for their review and recommendation. Council Member Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham

- b. A public hearing for an ordinance from Sayed Shah Owner, representative of S. Shah Properties LLC, to obtain a Special Use Permit at 112 North Crater Road and 114 North Crater Road as provided for under Article 23, Supplementary Use Regulations – Special Uses. Section 4, Special Uses Enumerated. Item (22) of the Zoning Ordinance to establish stand-alone used vehicle sales not associated with a new-vehicle dealership or not located upon the same parcel as such new-vehicle dealership, if located upon parcels of less than one acre, such to be permitted within the B-2 and M-1 zoning districts only.

BACKGROUND: An application for a Special Use Permit was submitted to the Petersburg Department of Planning & Community Development on September 11, 2023, by the applicant Mr. Sayed Shah. The application includes the operation of a used automobile dealership. The subject property had been utilized for auto related businesses and transportation service activity (taxi) for years; however, the property has remained vacant for an extended period. Prior to the current owner's purchase of the property, there had been many inquiries regarding the permitted uses allowed, mainly auto related uses, such as a vehicle tow lot, used car lot, and the continuation of taxi stands.

The request went before the Planning Commission in November, but was deferred pending the submission of a site plan. The case was heard again in December, and the Planning Commission recommended approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of an ordinance for a Special Use Permit at 112 N. Crater Road and 114 N. Crater Road.

Naomi Siodmok, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview of the request.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Jeffrey Fleming, 1819 Chuckatuck Avenue, stated, "People come to Petersburg, and we want business in Petersburg. But we want people to abide by the rules. This Mr. Sayed Shah has already parked cars on the property. It looks like trash, and he has not gotten approved for anything. People cannot come to Petersburg and do what they want. They have to be held accountable. Everyone is saying we are going to Petersburg because it is easy. We can get away with anything. We lose tax base and a lot of other things. We have to put our foot down. And I am against this. When I rode through these past couple of days and see all these cars showing up, like what the heck. He has more than 30 cars out there. So, if he is not going to abide by the rules to get started, then once he is in there, he is going to do what he wants to do. Then we have a headache. And if he was here, I would tell that to his face. I do not have any problem and I am a citizen. This is my city. I hope that you disapprove of this Special Use Permit. Another thing, how many used car lots do we need in the city? We have 15 Dollar Generals. How many car lots, used tire stores, car washes? We need to do some planning of what types of businesses we need here. Not just any business. Thank you."

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, stated, "Happy New Year Everyone. I am happy to be here. I agree with what the gentleman just said. We are trying to beautify this city and we already have a negative name already. We see it all trashy and people are bringing things in to say let's bring the business to Petersburg. I have been here all my life and I have seen this trash brought in. We cannot get this trash picked up and now we are going to get more trash. Let them take it somewhere else. We should just turn this down. I see what the gentleman is talking about, and we do not need anymore trash. Thank you."

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

There was discussion among the city council members.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to deny the request for a Special Use Permit. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion. There was discussion among the city council members after the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham

- c. A public hearing from Barry Jones, owner, Capital City Homes, RVA, to rezone properties from M-1, Light Industrial, District to B-2, General Commercial, District with the intention of building eight (8) single-family dwellings. The properties are contiguous to one another and are vacant lots, addressed as follows: 901, 905, 909, 915, 921, 925, 929, 933 Commerce Street and 208 N Dunlop Street and further identified respectively as 024140003, 024140005, 024140006, 024140007, 024140008, 024140009, 024140010, 024140012, and 024140013.

BACKGROUND: Information attached to the agenda packet.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval to rezone properties from M-1, Light Industrial District to B-2, General Commercial District with the intention of building eight (8) single-family dwellings.

Naomi Siodmok, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview of the request.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to deny the request to rezone. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; Abstain: Myers

- d. A public hearing and the consideration of an ordinance to amend and re-adopt Article 24 Nonconforming Uses and Article 25 Supplementary Height, Area and Bulk Regulations, as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg and as requested by the Planning Commission, to allow the rehabilitation and continuation of residential structures and four-units or less with a certificate of nonconforming use, development of nonconforming lots, and the rehabilitation of existing neighborhood commercial structures with a certificate of nonconforming use.

BACKGROUND: The City of Petersburg has seen an influx of building permits to renovate existing structures that have been vacant for years and do not conform with the existing zoning designation. Per Article 24, Section 3, If any nonconforming use is discontinued for a period of two years ... it shall lose its nonconforming status and any further use shall conform to the provisions of the zoning ordinance. With that, existing duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes have been required to reduce their density, most often to single-family, to be suitable for redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the ordinance to amend and re-adopt Article 24 Nonconforming Uses and Article 25 Supplementary Height and Bulk Regulations.

Naomi Siodmok, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief overview of the request.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Ken Pritchett, 1113 Overbrook Road, stated, "Wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. This has been something that has been a long time coming. We have houses sitting there that could have been rehabilitated by now but because of this article we are not able to do it. There are a lot of other houses that are ready to go to be developed and as the planning director mentioned there are people that need these types of housing. When this ordinance was passed, I believe part of the reason was because it was directed towards houses that were in the lower part of High Street. Where these houses had been sitting there for years and nothing had been done with them. So, to refer them back because if you went into some of these houses you would see that the doors had padlocks and locks that were manually placed on these doors for when they used to be a grand home for families. So, that was one reason not to cover the whole city but to cover specific areas of houses that were much grander than these. These were houses of people who owned businesses in the late 1800s. I would encourage you to approve these articles and make these changes so that the developers can see. One thing that I would like to add is that there is also an issue with some of the materials in the historic district. The roof and siding situation and various things like that can be addressed. The ARB has approved of some things. I am totally in agreement with no vinyl. These houses were not grand houses. They are so much more expensive to replace today. So, I would like you all to consider at some point not to require metal roofs on houses that may have had one. Because I have surveyed a lot of the houses and a lot of them have been changed to composition with or without approval. Thank you very much."

Jeffrey Fleming, 1819 Chuckatuck Avenue, stated, "Sounds like a great idea but I saw something in the beginning of this that I did not quite understand. I was always told that if you do not understand ask. Is this just for residential duplexes? How does this affect the hideous trailer parks on 460? Because those are nonconforming uses. And from my understanding, once they took a trailer out of there, they couldn't bring another one back. I do not know if you can answer this or Ms. Siodmok can answer that for me but that is something that we need to address on the 460 corridors. Because I don't know if you know but those trailer parks are hideous. I would not let my cat live there. So, I hope we won't allow them to keep that trailer park there as a nonconforming use. If she can answer that for me."

Joe Battiston, Chair of ARB, stated, "I wanted to address this issue because we had several people come before us that wanted to redo these homes as duplexes. When they purchased them, they purchased them with the thought that they would renovate them as duplexes. And then they go and get permits and find out that the ordinance was changed, and they cannot make it a duplex. They run into problems where they are figuring that they are going to renovate one side for themselves and rent out the other which is going to help them pay for the renovation and purchase of the home. This is similar to what the person before me has said. People with limited numbers and want to get into these homes, these duplexes make it very possible for them. But the trouble is that they cannot turn around in Petersburg and expect to buy a duplex, renovate, rent it out and turn it into a one family home. Yes, the ARB asked them to keep the double doors because that is what we have to do and those are the guidelines from National Park Department of Interiors and Historic Resources here in Virginia. So, we have guidelines that we have to follow, and we have to follow them. The biggest problem is that people are buying a duplex to live in half and rent the other half. Now they are being told that they have to live in a much larger home that costs more to heat and more to light and more insurance and they are not going to get the income that they were planning on when they purchased it. So, it is doing a lot of harm to the citizens that are looking forward to improving their life and these buildings and bringing them back to life. So, please consider at least the duplex portion of it. And do what you have to do. I am not sure how the trailers fit in, but I have to agree that the trailer parks have not been maintained properly. So, we have to seriously consider that part too. Thank you."

Jasper Lewis, 1009 and 1011 West High Street, stated, "My wife and I own a property at 1009 and 1011 West High Street. You just had it on the screen a few minutes ago. We have owned that property for over 30 years, and we have rented it out the entire time. And up until July of 2020, at that particular we chose to gut the house and update it. Well, COVID hit and then we had this big building booming in Richmond, and we had trouble getting the license for the people needed to come in and do the work that we wanted. By the time we got to the point where we could get the people and get everything lined up for the permits, I found out that I had gone beyond two years, and I was not able to complete my renovation. So, this has been a big inconvenience for us. If you look at the property, we have had it for over 30 years, and it has been well maintained the entire time we have had it. We have rented the property out and it still looks pretty good. We just want to update the property. Everything needs to be updated from time to time. I am in favor of you passing this. Thank you."

Michelle Murrills, 131 South Market Street, stated, "This ordinance needs to be amended. Petersburg is known as a violent city with plenty of vacant and blighted homes and buildings adding to our problems. Many of these buildings are standing abandoned because of the fact that they were never meant to be taken back to single family homes. They were never single-family homes to begin with. They were built as duplexes, businesses, etc. For instance, there are three duplexes on Rome Street that are barely hanging on. They were originally built in 1900 as duplexes. Two of which have been red tagged about every six months for at least five years. There was a fire in one about ten years ago. The couple who owned them died. Not sure if the people who are living there right now are illegally living or someone is illegally renting to them as these buildings are barely hanging on. But something needs to be done. The only way that those buildings are going to draw interest is if they are allowed to stay duplexes. They were built as such and are zoned as such. They should be allowed to be such. If they were torn down, the buildings that would replace them would be allowed to be multi-family. These houses are historically part of the neighborhood. They should be allowed to be multi-family. As Joe Battiston said, if they were in a historic district the Architectural Review Board makes the owner keep them looking multi-family. I mean how dumb is that. Yes, you are in a R-3 Zone and the house was built as a duplex."

But no, you cannot buy this old house and keep it a duplex. The business buildings are even worse. These are buildings that were built for commercial purposes. The city complains as you did earlier that we are a food desert and have a few grocery stores and any other retail space outside of Old Towne. Now is the time to change this. We stand on the brink of something great here in Petersburg as you mentioned before. But if you don't change the thought process on blighted buildings, they will continue to be torn down at the city's expense and we will lose our own history. We will lose out on tax revenue left and right and we will continue to have social issues perpetrated by our own stupid rules that need to be changed. Rather than continue to kick the can down the street to another day, please change this now and allow developers who are waiting to come in and fix these buildings to do so. This is nothing but a positive for Petersburg. Thank you."

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

There was discussion among the city council members and staff.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion that city council reject Item 8D and send to the Planning Commission an alternate version titled "Alternate Article 24-Noncompliance and Nonconforming for study and recommendation and initiate a proposal to rezone the northside of West Washington Street from Davis Street west to the west boundary of 431 West Washington Street to RB-Office/Apartment District and send this proposal to the Planning Commission for study and recommendation. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. There was discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; Abstain: Myers

There was a discussion between the city council and Mr. Lewis.

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.

David Batts, 1127 High Pearl Street, stated, "I own two properties down on Wythe Street where it was flooded. When they were tearing down the hotel, I was the one making sure that they did not drop anything on my building. So, everything they dropped in the creek I was calling the city manager on. They got the debris out but the trees they left in there. I have been trying to get them to get the trees out the creek and no one wants to listen. They told me to wait until the grass stops growing. What is that going to do when they have floods? I put a retainer wall around the lowest building and the front of my building that floods all the time. And a retainer wall around the back of the building. The flood knocked some of the walls down. I do not know whether it knocked it down or a vehicle floated into it. Because they said that vehicles were down there floating. This is crazy. I just don't believe that I can keep calling these people. I have been working for the city for 25 years. Drainage is the work that I was doing before they put me to pick up trash. I had a meeting with the city manager, and they just paid no mind at all. I am asking that the city reimburse everybody down that line. Where it is flooded is in the middle of the creek where the trees were dropped at. I am just so mad that they knew about it and didn't do nothing. I went to everyone. I went to the city because I work for them and went to the city manager. They told me to wait until after the growing season. I actually have two guys that work with us those trucks flooded on Wythe Street. They dropped them dudes from supervisors to regular workers and both of them quit. Down on Bollingbrook Street that are two openings and water is coming all the way from Chesapeake Bay. There is no way that you can leave anything in that creek. All they had to do was get the people to clean it. It is crazy. I talked to the city manager at the Christmas Party. And still have not did anything. I called him and the Director of Public Works and no one responded. I owned the property for 20 years."

Paul Gillespie, 2473 North Stedman Drive, stated, "I have talked to Mr. Altman several times. I cannot get my trash picked up. I cannot get my recycling picked up. It has been two cycles which is four weeks. They are out there on time, and they are full. They have gotten the people around me but have not gotten mine. And another thing, I tried to reregister my vehicle with DMV and sent them a check. I got a thing from them saying that I have not paid decal fees in Petersburg and that there is a hold on it. I have never gotten billed for decal fees. I showed Mr. Altman the bills and he made copies and I have not heard back. But it has been causing me a lot of trouble because I have to pay a late fee to drop the hold. It costs me money and time because people are not doing what they are supposed to do. So, what is my recourse and who is accountable?"

Mayor Parham stated, "Mr. Gillespie, I am going to get your information to Councilman Jones. HE is going to see that through for you."

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, stated, "I have some different issues. What the gentleman was talking about, I have that same problem as far as fees. I have been in this city all my life. I have never seen what has been happening with the water bills and these fees that are happening. I was told I owe a fee for the old truck that I had, and they are charging me the fee. I went to pay that fee of \$62 dollars. Then I paid my water bill, and they added a fee on that. They said it was two years back. I have never been late on a water bill. So, something is not happening. And now I am getting a double bill. What are they doing? Are they adding more to the bill? Please tell me what is happening with that. They pulled up something on the screen. We are getting new people in the city every day. I just noticed that every time I go down there is always someone new. So, someone is not on their job. So, I want that to be taken care of. Also, I am concerned as well like the gentleman here about the trash. They take our monies every month. At one time it used to be every two months but now it is every month. And we have some outstanding bills that is coming from somewhere. With the trash not being picked up it took about three weeks for me. I saw something interesting the other day. When they came to pick up my trash, my neighbor is in and out. So, they came and brought their trash out and the truck came back up. They saw the guy putting it out there. Instead of picking it up they kept moving on. That is not necessary. We are paying for that, and we are trying to keep things in decent order. The excuse of only having one truck or not enough people is not our fault. We are still paying for this. We just had this big rain recently. And where I live, we do not have curbing's. I have been talking about this for the last 15 years on our curbing. My lawn is probably under water. So, when I go out there it is always flooding. They told me I need to put another drainage there. About 15 years ago before the doctor's office was built, they were supposed to clean out the brush area where the doctor's office was built. Trees are back up in there now. Then they told me that they were going to clean out the drain every six months. I have not seen them in five years. No one has been there in five years. I have seen them with the new trucks, but they have not cleaned anything out. This Rives Road exit, I have seen four accidents in that area. There should be some flashing light or something. Thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Mr. Gannaway, I will have Councilman Jones get on that okay."

Ken Pritchett, 1113 Overbrook Road, stated, "I am just going to ask a few questions. I do not have any comments about anything. But I do have one question. We used to get leaves picked up in Ward 3. Usually, a good distance before Christmas so it would not be all over the area. They have not been picked up yet. It was scheduled for January 1st. So, I would like to know when this is going to happen. Because all the leaves were piled everywhere, the rain last Tuesday just spread all over the place. That is one item. Will you look at the bumps on the bridge on Johnson Road that is next to the golf course? That was a problem when it was completed over six years ago. But the bump is getting more noticeable now. Going 35 mph is possible to do damage. So, if you all can look at that and when it can be done that would be great. The next question that I have, I do not know if this has been in the plans before, but Birdsong Road between Flank Road and Johnson Road is in really bad shape. We talked about making Petersburg Sports Complex an attractive venue for other activities. That road is too narrow, and it is also the edges are cracked off and there are a lot of potholes. If it was in the works for something to be done hopefully it is in the near future. A couple of months ago I mentioned Washington Street exit off 95, and the answer that I got was that VDOT had to be questioned about whether they could move a lane over so that people coming off 95 South did not have to move over. It is still pretty dangerous. I think that it is just an accident waiting to happen. But even if the road was changed to two

ways somewhere down the future, then there would have to be traffic light controls at the exit. In the time being if you all can ask VDOT to make it a non-stop when you get off. During the Christmas season cars are backed up in that area. And that is it. Thank you very much for listening to me."

Genevieve Lohr, 19 Guarantee Street, stated, "Tonight I want to talk about two topics but they both are one central unifying case. I worked as a social worker at the Petersburg Bureau of Police. And during that time, I cared deeply for the citizens but also more specifically for our police officers. And I think that I hear from you guys frequently that you also care for our police officers, and you want what is best for them. However, we have situations like last week when we had severe rain and flooding, and we have our police officers out running calls and driving into high waters. They would not be driving in high water if we properly marked the roads and closed them beforehand. We knew that there was a storm coming and a lot of rain coming, and we could have barricaded off key roads that we knew were going to flood but we did not do that, and we should have. And so, we have them doing that in which they have other things to do too. But that is what they did for the entire evening. And I do not think that it is fair and also not safe. And I think that we should do better. And there are ways that we can do better, and we need to try harder. I can do what I can do but that is not much. But you guys can try harder, and we need to do a better job next time it storms. We need to make sure that it is not our police officers who have a ton of things they need to do anyway. So, the next piece of this, there was an article recently about inclement weather in Hopewell. This shelter costs approximately \$100,000 a year to operate. That shelter houses up to 30 people who have no other shelter. Petersburg has no inclement weather shelter. We certainly have \$100,000 because we just gave \$277,000 to the Petersburg Library Foundation. So, we did have that money available. So, my question for all of you, the person who is going to find a person who is homeless who freezes to death when its 14 degrees outside is not one of you. It is one of the police officers who work here and that is not fair. We should have a place where they can take people when it is cold outside, or the weather is bad. It is not about money, so what is it about? It is not about buildings because we have them. So, what is it? Does it matter? It matters to me, and I think it matters to all of our officers because of the citizens who live here. So, I think we need to do a lot better. Thank you."

10. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR OR OTHER MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL:

Council Member Cuthbert stated that he does not have a report.

Council Member Jones stated that he would like to thank everyone for attending and Happy New Year. He stated to Mr. Otis Hill that he had found battery operated smoke detectors. He stated that he wanted to ask the city manager to purchase 25 smoke detectors from Amazon. It is just what these guys need for the hearing impaired. I will send that link out to you, so we get 25 smoke detectors and get the fire department to install them for them. That is one thing I want to do. Hopefully, we can take care of that in the next two weeks. I don't to see Mr. Otis here again and he does not have a smoke detector in his house. Citizens of Petersburg, I want to tell you that you are valuable, every last one of you. But I need you to start exercising your value. This last election only about 30% of us voted. And it is not a republic thing, and it is not a democratic thing. The candidates in my opinion were outstanding candidates in my opinion. But the people who are pushing them in my opinion failed them. There are 70% of voters out here who did not vote and there is a reason why we are not reaching them. And the reason that we are not reaching them is that they are not on your radar. That is 70% poverty, 70% uneducated, and 70% everything. There are a lot of things that are adding up to this 70% of voters that we are not reaching. And we get mad at what is up here, but we need 70% more of you to vote. WE have got to have that. If you want to change then you got to be the change. I am up here because I am one of the ones who want to be the change. Just to address some of the things that I have heard today. Accountability, big time. Mr. Batts about the trees and debris down near the hotel. We owe it to not just the people and the city but when we tore the hotel down it is our responsibility to make sure that someone inspected it. This is why we have a lot of flooding in places that we never had flooding before. Trash, accountability, we have got to get that taken care of. If the trash people are doing what they are supposed to do then it goes down to the workers that is riding pass using up gas money. We pay money for these trucks and for gas and everything. If you are just riding around and riding past people who are putting their trash out that is disrespectful to the citizens. Decals and water bills, from what I understand, is the city collection responsibility. We have to tighten up on that. We need lights on Rives Road. If nothing else comes off Old Wagner Road, you need to put those traffic mirrors up so people can see what is coming. Because that is a

high hazard area. So, I want to definitely address that with you. The bump on the bridge on Johnson Road, I remember when they first put that bridge right there. And I noticed it when I was driving the fire trucks. That bridge needs to be inspected. It is degrading and it is ready to collapse. Something bad is about to happen at that bridge. We need to get some inspectors on it immediately. The shelter is very close and dear to my heart. I have had many homeless shelters and have offered many jobs to the homeless in the city. I want to touch base on the \$200,000 that was given to the Library Foundation. That money was money that was given to us first if I am not mistaken. And I think that we had to pay it back. We have to be responsible to our people. Harding Street is a perfect building with the lights on and nice and warm inside. We have to tighten up. We owe it to you guys to give you what you need to be fair across the board and to follow our own policy and procedures. But you guys play a big part of that too. Keep calling and documenting it and send it to us. Last but not least I want to say thank you again. I appreciate everything. My ward meeting is coming up at the end of February. But I hope that I addressed everything that you guys need to hear. We just got to get ourselves together. There is too much brain power up here to not give you guys what you need. Thank you."

Council Member Westbrook stated, "Good evening, everybody. Happy New Year. I would like to start out by saying that I am glad during the early part of the meeting we were talking about the health of the city with VCU coming in. I would like to ask Ms. Joanne Williams and your department that in one of the upcoming newsletters is there a way we can prioritize how we are trying to make Petersburg a healthier place. Because I do understand that we keep getting this wrap of who are these people that keep saying that Petersburg is the unhealthiest place in Virginia. I think that it is all about the narrative. Even if we are not 133, they keep saying that we are 133. I do believe that there are a lot of great things going on in the city that we need to let residents know that we need to control the narrative as well. We need to have input on how we feel about our city and publicize it more. And we cannot just depend on the Progress-Index. I know that they have a job to do as a part of good journalism as well. I know that the Legislative Agenda for this this term is up. But maybe in the 2024-2025 Legislative Agenda we can put health initiatives at the top. And that is just a plug. I would like to pause as we talk about bridges. I talked to the city manager about the VSU access bridge. It was publicized that it would be December. We were hoping that it would be December 2023 but here we are in 2024 and it is still not open. He gave me an answer, but I would like it to be on record. Mr. Altman what is the update on that bridge?"

Mr. Altman stated, "You are correct. What we were told was that it would be December of 2023. Now the completed anticipation date is February 2024. So, next month some time we hope that the bridge will be reopened to make that easy connection between the campus and the city."

Council Member Westbrook stated, "I would like to let people know that this is outside of our purview. This is VDOT if I am not mistaken. But I will be courteous to say that I give them a grace period of one month. So, hopefully people by March 2024 the access to Virginia State will be open as we do prepare for a big event as the circus comes to town October 1st. I would like to thank Mr. Kenneth Lewis. He is doing a great job with cleaning up the trail. People do not still know that the trail is back at the Copper Field area that we can walk around. Again, when it comes back to health in this new year a couple of things and hopefully, we can continue the momentum of community cleanups. I agree with Council Member Jones and Mr. Batts. It is about the community, and I am glad that you can up here about your community with passion to let people know where the problem areas are. Continue to support local small businesses because that helps with the economic development and the health of the city. Volunteers for Social Services, I know that we depend on Social Services to come in and help out. But sometimes it is for us to volunteer our services to see how we can help out. Whether it be checking on foster children, adoption, and other things that go on with Social Services. Maybe it is more of us that need to volunteer and see what is going on and how we can lend out services. And then ultimately as the year has started, when is your next annual checkup. Are you ready to get yourself checked out? Whether that is older people or just a physical check-up altogether. So, again we can change this narrative that we are an unhealthy place because I disagree with that. Finally, I would like to say again Happy New Years to everybody. Express gratitude for the things that have been done. I am very happy that in my ward there is a federal road, but the S-curve has new signage driven around Wilcox Lake. It is a slick road in the winter. There is signage going all around Defense Road. Hopefully, we can get Neighborhood Watch to curb this violence. I think that COVID kind of hindered a lot of neighborhood services. I am happy that my partners, Bravo Burrito, if you have not eaten there, great new restaurant to get some tex-mex food. Public safety, I am not sure when but when is the next pothole blitz. I have gotten some citizens in my ward asking

when the next pothole blitz is coming up, especially after these winter months. This is the time in which we're planning for the summer, and we are trying to make sure that our youth stay active. But as well we should be encouraging them to do well on their SOLs text that will be coming within the next two months. And if you have not heard tomorrow will be a two-hour delay because of the cold weather. And finally with Black History Month, I would like to say what is the possibility, whether it be Ms. Treska, former Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith, with her Black history trolley tour or working with Parks and Recreation. I know that they have a gospel extravaganza and some other events. But how can we make sure that we are promoting Black history in Petersburg, Virginia? With that let's continue to galvanize and uplift the city together. I think that if we all work together, I think that we will be okay. Again, we are one Petersburg. So, please let's stick together even if we disagree let's get together and talk about these issues."

Council Member Myers stated that he has no report.

Council Member Smith-Lee stated, "Pat Hines opened a shelter and Ann Taylor, me, and several other citizens in the City of Petersburg, provided items for them. And it is sad to say, when you have something, and nobody shows up. They show up for a little while to get something to eat. But we had beds there. We provided costs and everything. It is not that we are not trying but we are trying to do something. It may not be to the level of what people expect but she did open a shelter last year for sure on the corner of Chappel and Hinton Street. Also, I would like to say Happy Birthday to Dr. Martin Luther King. The members of the Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. did a makeover at Cool Springs Elementary School for the teachers lounge. They painted and provided snacks. I just want to say thank you for your day of service. And that concludes my report."

Vice Mayor Hill stated, "Happy New Year to everyone. I pray that everyone is doing well. I want to talk about the leaves and the trash. I know that the weather has been kind of crazy lately but the leaves and the trash, we have to find a way through our public works to get those things up. There is a lot of trash. At first, we were doing well but it seemed like when the trash was not being picked up the recycling and all that was just all over the city. So, we have to come up with a Comprehensive Plan on how to clean up the leaves and the trash. Because in some areas the trash has been picked up and the leaves have been picked up. So, can we please get on top of that? Also, something that I want to kind of introduce during the springtime if we can have a citywide ward meeting right here. It would consist of all the directors having a table so that the citizens can come in and see exactly what they can do and then the council members along with the administration will have a table. And everyone can come in. There would be no set form. Maybe I can get with the city manager and Ms. Williams and maybe we can try to get that together and we can all be under one roof and have some roundtable information. This would be so that the citizens have the resources when things come up. I want to thank the Recreation Department for their Martin Luther King, Jr. service on Sunday. There were great presenters and speakers. The room was packed, and it was a great turn out. I do want to remind the members of council that when we put up these five minutes, just like we keep the residents to their three minutes, we need to be respectful of their time whenever they put up the five minutes for us. Sometimes we can get carried away because we have so much that we want to put out. If we are going to stop them for three minutes, then we need to do the same for five minutes. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Parham stated, "Again, I just want to echo what Vice Mayor Hill said. We had a wonderful weekend of Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration and day of service events here at the library. We also got some great exposure here in Petersburg for the Tabernacle Baptist Church Martin Luther King Day of Service. They had the Petersburg YMCA leading its club there and serving along with Rickey Holly, he gave an inspirational message. Congresswoman McClellan was there and spoke on the need and what we need to do next. And a part of that is the engaging piece with engaging our citizens to make a difference and be that change that Martin Luther King spoke on. Also, I just want to echo the job fair that is going on the 31st at Virginia State University. It is actually a Partnership for Petersburg job fair there. We are looking at having multiple vendors. So, anyone looking for a job or change in career come to Virginia State on the 31st. Also, I would like to thank Joanne Williams. We have a wonderful commercial that airs about coming to Petersburg. I get more calls on how nice of a commercial that is advertising our city showing off the great things that are going on here. So, I just want to thank Joanne and Elle for all you all do communication wise. Because that is something that everyone on council has said that we really need to get the word out on the good things going on in

Petersburg. Also, I would like to thank our police officers that are here today, and Chief Christian and his officers are doing an amazing job. Just speaking on the exceptional job that the chief and his staff do here in service. So, we appreciate you all in dedication. And also, I know we had a new group of fire recruits come in too. So, we would like to thank all the men and women in fire. Our retired fire chief, T.C., in the back, we thank him for all his service too. Thank you for joining us. A round of applause for T.C. He still looks like he is ready to go back out there. So, if anyone find his uniform bring the man his uniform. Because he is always ready to serve the residents here in the City of Petersburg. We thank you for all that you have done. I know that you are proud of one of your best recruits here, Councilman Jones. We want to start grooming our young girls and boys who are in school now to make them dream of a life in fire. That is something that is long overdue. Hopefully, we can get them back to full staff as well from recruiting from within. That is all that I have for this evening."

11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

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

12. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT:

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

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. A public hearing on an appeal by John Brockwell, applicant of 21 W. Washington Street, Tax Parcel 022-03-0001, owned by Labrodor Properties LLC/John Brockwell, on the decision of the Architectural Review Board (ARB). The property is located within the Courthouse Local Historic District.

BACKGROUND: Mr. Brockwell submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) on August 24 with a request to remove the standing seam metal roof on the easternmost gable roofed section of this building and replace it with TPO. The rest of the roof is flat and not visible from the public right-of-way, but the section in question is and is therefore subject to review by the ARB. The application was heard at the September 13, 2023, ARB meeting and denied as submitted based on the Design Guidelines Chapter 4 Section F. An appeal of this decision was received by the Clerk of Council on May 12, 2022, requesting that City Council overturn the ARB's denial.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommend that the City Council uphold the decision of the ARB.

Mayor Parham stated, "I heard that Mr. Brockwell put a roof on it. And I heard that everything is all settled. But I would like to thank Mr. Brockwell. He is another staple here of the City of Petersburg. The Brockwell's have always been great progress here in the City of Petersburg and we look forward to keeping that relationship going. And from what I heard everything is good for tonight. No action on the city part."

Mr. Brockwell gave comments with regard to the roof and standards of ARB.

- b. Consideration of amendments to the City of Petersburg Rules of Council.

BACKGROUND: Summary of recommended changes:

1. Page 2 - Rule I, Sec 9 – Currently, closed session must start at 4:00 p.m. – this revision allows for an earlier closed session start time if requested by the Presiding Officer.
2. Page 3 - Rule 1, Sec. 12 – allows the Presiding Officer to cancel a meeting – the rules only allow it by the majority of Council, but the practice has been that the Presiding Officer calls to cancel under extenuating circumstances.
3. Page 3 - Rule 11, Sec. 4 – Note – this requires recording/minutes for ALL meetings unless excluded (see recommended revisions in #7 below).

4. Page 4 - Rule III – Does not make sense “if objection thereto be made by 4 Council Members” – recommend strike this language.
5. Page 5 - Rule III, Sec 4 – Clarifies that back and forth with a speaker can only be permitted as authorized by the Chairperson during public hearing/public comment/public information.
6. Page 5 - Rule V – Moves CM report after Consent Agenda – appears identical to what the Clerk was attempting to address when she provided the editable version of the Rules.
7. Page 7 – Rule V (G) – resolve #3 expressly stating no minutes in Closed Session unless requested by the majority – also removes ambiguity about having the Clerk “present for Closed Sessions” being construed as “in” Closed Session, since this is not current practice.
8. Page 8 – Rule V – Section 4 – Clarifies no discourse (#5 above) also applies to the public information Period.
9. Page 14 – Rule VII – already addresses the concerns you mentioned. Requests for services or information must go through the City Manager.
10. Page 21 Rule X – incorporates a Remote Participation Policy for Council Members
11. Page 10 - Rule V - Section 2 - adds subsection "H" regarding confidentiality of closed session discussion and materials.

RECOMMENDATION: To approve the attached resolution amending and readopting the Rules of Council.

Anthony Williams, City Attorney, gave a brief overview of the requested changes.

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the resolution amending the Rules of Council. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham

24-R-4 A RESOLUTION TO AMEND AND RE-ADOPT THE RULES OF COUNCIL.

14. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Consideration of an ordinance for an SRO Grant Initiative Program in the amount of \$278,561 – 2nd Reading

BACKGROUND: The Petersburg Bureau of Police applied for this grant and was awarded the SRO Incentive Grant Program funding.

RECOMMENDATION: For the City Council to approve the appropriation ordinance.

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the appropriation ordinance. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

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

24-ORD-1 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2024, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025, FOR THE SRO INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$278,561.

- b. Consideration of appointment/s to the Appomattox River Water Authority (ARWA) Board.

BACKGROUND: The Appomattox River Water Authority consists of the Cities of Colonial Heights and Petersburg and the Counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, and Prince George. The Authority is responsible for the operation of the Appomattox River Water Treatment plant.

The Authority Board includes one (1) Member and one (1) Alternate Member from each of the political subdivisions. The City Council has, as have other as its representatives on the Board and the Director of Public Works as the alternate.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend the City Council reappoint Jerry Byerly, Director of Public Works, as the alternate member to the Appomattox River Water Authority Board and reappoint John "March" Altman, Jr. as the primary for a term ending December 31, 2028.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the resolution reappointing Jerry Byerly, Director of Public Works, as the alternate member to the Appomattox River Water Authority Board and reappointing John "March" Altman, Jr. as the primary for a term ending December 31, 2028. Council Member Smith-Lee seconded the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Smith-Lee, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham

24-R-5 A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING JOHN M. "MARCH" ALTMAN, JR., CITY MANAGER, TO THE APPOMATTOX RIVER WATER AUTHORITY BOARD AS THE PRIMARY AND REAPPOINTING JERRY BYERLY AS THE ALTERNATE FOR A TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2028.

15. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

Mr. Altman stated that he has no items.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM CITY ATTORNEY:

Mr. Williams stated that he has no report.

18. ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council adjourned at 7:32 p.m.