

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/320738>.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Samuel Parham, Mayor – Ward 3
Darrin Hill, Vice Mayor – Ward 2
Marlow Jones, Councilor – Ward 1
Charles Cuthbert, Jr., Councilor – Ward 4
W. Howard Myers, Councilor – Ward 5
Arnold Westbrook, Jr., Councilor – Ward 7

Absent:

Annette Smith-Lee, Councilor - Ward 6

Present from City Council Administration:

City Manager John March Altman, Jr.
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams
City Clerk Tangi R. Hill

2. PRAYER:

Vice Mayor Hill led the Council meeting in 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 present.

5. PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATION OF CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATION

a. Richard Bland College to Transition to an Independent Governance Structure.

Mayor Parham read a proclamation recognizing Richard Bland College's transition to an independent governance structure. Mr. Terrell Robinson accepted the recognition.

b. 2nd Accreditation Award to the Petersburg Bureau of Police from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) and the Virginia Law Enforcement Accreditation Coalition (VALEAC)

Todd Clingenpeel, program manager for the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission, recognized the Petersburg Bureau of Police for its accreditation award.

c. Recognition of Petersburg Fire Department (Francis Road Fire)

City Council recognized the Petersburg Fire Department, specifically for their response to a recent structure fire on Francis Road.

d. Recognition of the City Manager and Finance Team

City Council recognized the City Manager and Finance Team for the Standard & Poor's upgrading of Petersburg from an A+ to a AA general obligation bond rating.

6. **RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION POSTED**

Mayor Parham stated that there were no items under previous public information posted.

7. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (TO INCLUDE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS):**

- a. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
November 6, 2024 Closed Session
- b. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing on an Ordinance to Amend the City Charter to Add Section 2-1.2 to Provide for Non-Partisan Elections of Members of Council
- c. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Amend Chapter 3-16 of the City Charter Concerning the Powers and Duties of the Collector of Taxes
- d. First Reading and to Schedule a Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Amend and Readopt Article 3, Definitions, Article 14, B-1 Shopping Center District Regulations, and Article 23, Supplementary Use Regulations – Special Uses, as Set Forth in the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to Gathering and Event Uses, Including Nightclubs
- e. First Reading and to Schedule a Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Amend and Readopt the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to the Regulation of Alternative Financial Institution/Short-Term Loan Establishment and Small Box Discount Store Uses Within the City
- f. First Reading and to Schedule a Public Hearing to Amend and Readopt the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to the Regulation of Tire Sale and Service Uses Within the City
- g. First Reading and to Schedule a Public Hearing for the Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend and Reenact Section 86-31, Limitation on the Number of Pawn Shops, Article II - Pawnbrokers, and of Chapter 86, Secondhand Goods of the Petersburg City Code
- h. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Appropriation/Grant from the VA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)/Main Street Program

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

8. **OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Appropriation Ordinance for State Aid to Public Libraries Additional Funding

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing and asked if there were members from the public to speak on the ordinance for state aid to public libraries additional funding. Seeing none, the Mayor

closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

- b. A Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance & Appropriation of Funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services for the 2024 Operation Ceasefire Grant

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing and asked if there were members from the public to speak on acceptance and appropriation of funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services or the 2024 Operation Ceasefire Grant. Seeing none, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to accept and authorize appropriation of funding for the 2024 Operation Ceasefire Grant. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

- c. A Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance & Appropriation of the FY25 Cameron Foundation Grant for the Recreation & Leisure Department

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing and asked if there were members from the public to speak on acceptance and appropriation of funding for the FY25 Cameron Foundation Grant for the Recreation & Leisure Department. Seeing none, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to accept and authorize appropriation of funding for the FY25 Cameron Foundation Grant for the Recreation & Leisure Department. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

- d. Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Rezone Property at 1425 and 1525 Youngs Road and 1819 and 1827 Boydton Plank Road, Parcel IDs 051070002, 051070001, 051070802, and 051070023, from the R-1 Single-Family Residence and B-2 General Commercial Districts to the RTH Residential Townhouse District

Director of Planning Naomi Siodmak presented the staff report for rezoning at Young's Road and Boydton Plank Road. She explained that the properties are looking to rezone to the Residential Townhome District, covering about 11 acres and proposing 99 townhomes with 198 parking spaces.

She noted the current zoning is R1 Single Family and B2 General Commercial.

Ms. Siodmak stated that there were no proffers included in this request, and she illustrated that the surrounding area is predominantly single-family residential. She pointed out that the proposed

development does not comply with city code setbacks, architectural treatments, sidewalk requirements, and street lighting. She said there are significant concerns about the loss of trees and green space.

Ms. Siodmak highlighted that Public Works had concerns about street layout, fire access, and maintenance. She mentioned the project does not conform to the comprehensive plan, which focuses on walkable, compact development with amenities and services.

She stated that the concept plan shared with Council is not tied to this project, nor is the number of units. She said that the applicant's rezoning would be Residential Townhome District, and they would be allowed to do whatever is within that zoning designation—which was townhomes up to 12 units per acre. She shared that the staff recommended a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for more flexibility. Ms. Siodmak provided a timeline of feedback given to the applicant, noting the applicant requested to proceed despite these concerns.

She stated that staff recommended denial, but the Planning Commission approved without proffered conditions. Ms. Siodmak emphasized that no proffers tie the development to the presented concept plan or floor plans. She concluded by providing sample motions for approval, denial, or amendment, and invited any questions..

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice Street, stated that this proposal did not conform to the comprehensive plan, which they spent a lot of time and money on, and he did not think they should make an exception.

There being no further public comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Council Member Jones expressed appreciation for Ms. Siodmak's explanation of proffers and what they provide, and he appreciated what Mr. Talley said in reference to the comprehensive plan but did not think this area was actually included in the plan.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the development of these tracts would cost the City anything.

Ms. Siodmak responded that there was probably already water and sewer provided here, but Public Works wanted to know the potential costs of maintenance and whether this would be a public or private street. She also said that sidewalk, curb, and gutter would be required for the internal streets within the development, which is required by City code.

Mr. Altman said that if it was a public street, the City of Petersburg would have to maintain it—and that was not addressed in the application.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if there could be a proviso that the applicant be responsible for that maintenance.

Ms. Siodmak said that it may be beneficial to defer this and address that with the applicant, so that conditions could be included that would address that.

Council Member Cuthbert stated that he liked that idea, and he said that Council had received a letter from a Mr. Mason stating that his family owned an adjacent or neighboring property and was opposed to this development, which was one of the reasons staff was against this. Council Member

Cuthbert said that he drove out to this site and tried to envision what townhouses would look like on the adjacent piece of land, and he came up to the same conclusion as staff that the scale did not conform to the surrounding community character. He confirmed with staff that an option would be to defer this to their December meeting to ensure that the applicant's proposal is in line with the comprehensive plan.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to defer this item to their December meeting so the applicant could work with staff on a proposal that was in better conformance with the comprehensive plan. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion. Mayor Parham asked if the developer could address the Council, and he wasn't sure why this was before them if staff hadn't discussed this and vetted it with the applicant.

Mr. Williams suggested that they follow Ms. Sidomak's recommendation, as Virginia statutes require that proffers be voluntary, and they didn't want to get in a situation where Council was asking for specific things from the applicant.

Ms. Siodmak said that they had this discussion with the applicant, and he chose to move forward without addressing those concerns.

Council Member Jones emphasized that Council started the year by delaying decisions and expressed his determination not to end the year in the same manner. He acknowledged the presence of trusted developers and reiterated that Council should not continue to delay progress. He said that proper maintenance of the streets was necessary and highlighted past discussions on the matter and emphasized the importance of development. He pointed out the current state of Lincoln Street, where everything was in disrepair, and emphasized that development was vital. He stated that Council had the power to facilitate development, and there were people willing to invest in the City so they should not drive away potential developers.

Council Member Jones made a substitute motion to approve the ordinance to rezone 1425 and 1525 Youngs Road and 1819 and 1827 Boydton Plank Road, Parcel IDs 051070002, 051070001, 051070802, and 051070023, from the R-1 Single-Family Residence and B-2 General Commercial Districts to the RTH Residential Townhouse District.

There was no further discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: Cuthbert; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

Council Member Cuthbert stated that they needed to be calm and deliberate in their discussions and not yell into the microphone to make a point.

Vice Mayor Hill commented that the developer should continue to work with staff on this proposal.

- e. A Public Hearing of an Ordinance for a Special Use Permit for a Vehicle Removal Operator and Associated Vehicle Storage and Tow Lot on Property at 1700 Midway Avenue, Parcel ID 028310001, in a M-1, Light Industrial District

Ms. Siodmak explained that the applicant seeks to operate a tow and vehicle storage lot at 1700 Midway Avenue, which is allowed with a special use permit in an M1 industrial zone. She noted that the Planning Commission approved the request in January, but the City Council had denied it. Ms. Siodmak mentioned the project now includes additional conditions. She presented current site photos and discussed the comprehensive plan's vision for the area to include hospitality, commercial, personal services, and small-scale manufacturing. Ms. Siodmak emphasized the area

should be more walkable and vibrant, with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Ms. Siodmak detailed the conditions, including storing vehicles within a fenced area with opaque covering, limiting storage to 25 vehicles, and maintaining a clean site. She said that evergreen trees at least six feet tall, must be planted along the southern property visible from West Washington Street. She specified that lighting must be inward-facing and not spill over onto other properties. She stated that parking spaces for recovered vehicles need to be striped, painted, and paved. Ms. Siodmak clarified that no vehicle repair, engine parts, or scrap metal would be allowed onsite.

She stated that the owner must notify the Zoning Administrator if a new owner takes over, ensuring compliance with the special use permit. Ms. Siodmak added that the City Council could revoke the permit for non-compliance. Ms. Siodmak reiterated that the use aligns with current zoning, though not the future land use map. She pointed out that manufacturing, distribution, and freight uses are allowed in the M1 district. She concluded by recommending approval with conditions, noting that the Planning Commission also recommended approval.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Mr. Darius Wyatt, the applicant, said that this was a small four-truck operation that would not be operated as a junkyard. He stated that this was his second special use permit, and the process was taking a toll on him.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the ordinance for a special use permit for a Vehicle Removal Operator and Associated Vehicle Storage and Tow Lot on Property at 1700 Midway Avenue, Parcel ID 028310001, in a M-1, Light Industrial District, with the conditions as presented. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

Council Member Cuthbert asked the Mr. Williams if the property right would be into perpetuity if they approved this special use permit.

Mr. Williams responded that it would continue and become the equivalent of a by-right use, and they could impose additional conditions.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if they could put a cap or an expiration date on the permit.

Mr. Williams responded that it was not uncommon to include a “check status date” to determine whether the applicant remained in compliance with the conditions.

Council Member emphasized that they were in a new phase in Petersburg, and if a more upscale use were to be proposed for that property, it would be zoned into perpetuity as a vehicle storage lot—limiting their ability to use the property for something else.

Mr. Williams said by limiting this, it would allow some room for other future uses.

Council Member Cuthbert made a substitute motion to modify the current motion to include a proviso that the permit come back before them in five years to evaluate whether this use is the right use for this piece of property. There was no second to the motion.

Vice Mayor Hill stated that his original motion was in effect, and it had a second. He commented that it was “crazy” for this to have to come back before Council every five years, and this applicant has gone above and beyond what has been asked of him. He said that if this applicant ceases to operate his business, it would come back before Council for any future usage. He stated that the

comprehensive plan is fluid, and while it provides an overall aesthetic for how the City should look, it is ultimately up to the Council to decide what the uses are.

Mr. Williams clarified that the use would not expire, as it runs with the land. He stated that any future applicants could use the property for that same use without coming before Council.

Ms. Siodmak clarified that Condition #7 stipulates that the applicant would need to talk to the City to confirm that the use was the same.

The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: Cuthbert; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

- f. A Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Amend and Readopt Article 3, Definitions, Article 17, M-1 Light Industrial District Regulations, Article 18, M-2 Heavy Industrial District Regulations, Article 23, Supplementary Use Regulations – Special Uses, and Article 31, Permits, Plats, and Filing Fees, as Set Forth in the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to Data Center Uses

Ms. Siodmak reported that staff would talk about regulating data centers, as there has been increased interest in these facilities in Petersburg, which are seen a lot in Northern Virginia and are now becoming more common in rural areas and small towns. She explained that they currently don't have the use listed in the zoning ordinance. She provided an example of such a facility, highlighting components like cooling equipment, secure fencing, and diesel generators for backup fuel storage. She emphasized the need to define "data center" per the code, specifying what is permitted by right and what requires a special use permit.

Ms. Siodmak shared the zoning map, indicating that industrial zones exist even in downtown areas. She mentioned that the biggest focus is protecting residents and green spaces, with considerations for noise, visual aesthetics, and more. She suggested a setback of 100 feet from residential properties or parks, a six-foot berm for noise mitigation, and specific planting requirements. She proposed a pre- and post-construction noise study to evaluate and mitigate noise issues. She said the recommendation is for no barbed wire or anti-intrusion fencing within 35 feet of the public right of way in light industrial areas. She said that staff encouraged a closed-loop water reuse system to reduce water demand.

Ms. Siodmak said that Section 15.22-232 of the zoning ordinance says if any public facility, utility structure, or utility infrastructure is not identified in the comprehensive plan, that they have to come before the Planning Commission to make sure the location, character, etc. are compliant. She said that frequently, companies want to have a substation so they can pull more energy to their site. Ms. Siodmak noted the need to add a \$500 fee to the code for reviewing utility structures not identified in the comprehensive plan, covering advertising and notifications. She cited the comprehensive plan's support for attracting industry while emphasizing adequate infrastructure and environmental impact mitigation. She said that staff and the Planning Commission have recommended approval.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Leonard Curry, 2014 Woodland Road, stated that the Council did not do a lot of research before it made decisions. He said that data centers promised to be clean and beautiful—but public information indicated that places having these data centers find that they run 24/7/365 and people 10 miles away can hear the noise from them. Mr. Curry said that companies like Nvidia, one of the richest in the world, would run the City into the ground. He asked the Council to determine how

much sound would be generated and how far the sound would go.

There being no further public comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Council Member Myers made a motion for City Council to table this ordinance for further discussion. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

Vice Mayor Hill stated that he and Council Member Westbrook had attended a conference with a class on data centers and the effects they have on the community. He said that people still think of the old original data centers, but they have come a long way and do not emit the noise they once did. He said they are “just big servers,” and for every dollar they make, they give about \$14 to the locality. He commented that data centers would be beneficial to the City, in the right location, but he was not opposed to tabling it for future discussion.

Council agreed to have the item come back on the January agenda rather than December to allow time for reading all of the information on regulations.

The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

- g. A Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Amend and Readopt Article 25, Supplementary Height, Area, Bulk, and Design Regulations, and Article 28, Changes and Amendments, as Set Forth in the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to Administrative Clarifications on Development of Contiguous Nonconforming Lots Under Common Ownership and Requirements for Public Notice

Ms. Siodmak said that she would discuss a few items in the zoning ordinance that are outdated or unclear, and her report would focus on amending those items. Ms. Siodmak noted that one of these items is ensuring conformance with the state code regarding noticing and advertising requirements. She mentioned that they need to clarify language related to the development of nonconforming lots, which may not have the proper width or area. Ms. Siodmak highlighted that current processes for zoning ordinance changes, including rezoning, require public hearing and advertisement. She clarified that these processes involve reaching out to property owners and posting signs.

Ms. Siodmak proposed referencing state code for advertising and noticing adjoining property owners. She suggested sending notices via certified or first-class mail, depending on the number of parcels involved, as this could lead to significant cost savings. She emphasized the importance of ensuring notices to adjoining localities and military installations are done as required by state code. She said that staff recommended posting signs 10 days prior to the first hearing for rezoning or special use permits to ensure timely and accurate sign postings. Ms. Siodmak recounted an issue when they ran out of signs, which led to readvertising and restarting the process.

Ms. Siodmak explained the difficulties in comprehending a sentence related to contiguous nonconforming lots owned by the same person. She said that the original proposal was to delete this sentence, allowing single-family home development on lots that do not meet width or area requirements. She shared examples of homes developed under this interpretation, including properties at 11 Shaw Street, 520 Shaw Street, and 824 and 820 Rome Street.

Ms. Siodmak presented key changes, including noticing requirements referencing state code and

clarifying language about non-conforming lots. She mentioned concerns raised by Council members and cited a map presented by a gentleman during a Planning Commission meeting. She indicated that parcels could be made up of smaller lots, which was mostly seen in R-1 zoning districts. She noted that contiguous non-conforming lots under common ownership must be consolidated to become less non-conforming. Ms. Siodmak suggested keeping the sentence for R-1 zoning districts but removing it for R-2 and R-3 districts.

She said that staff recommends approval of the latest text amendment and invited questions from Council members.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Michael Packer, 1245 Woodland Road, stated that he was in favor of the alternate proposed amendment to Article 25, Section 3.6 of the ordinance, which would remove the restriction on development of undersized same-owner contiguous lots in the R-2 and R-3 districts but maintain the restriction in the R-1 districts.

Leonard Curry, 2014 Woodland Road, stated that he supports the alternative. He noted that he is a member of the CDBG Advisory Committee, which is working on the five-year plan that HUD required the City to have to continue receiving CDBG funds.

Rick Maddox, 1570 Westover Avenue, stated that subdividing these lots does not make them better, as one of the gems of the City is Walnut Hill. He emphasized that they don't need to subdivide into 25-foot lots in their prime neighborhoods, and he would like to keep them the way they are.

Winston Sanders, 1221 Woodland Road, stated that he moved here 10 years ago from Chesterfield and loves the City and can't imagine them doing anything other than to continue to move it forward. He said that he agreed with Mr. Packer and asked Council to exercise some patience, as good things would come.

There being no further public comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Council Member Jones expressed his support for the idea of diverting and having districts with 25-foot lots, emphasizing the importance of not dividing major neighborhoods. He acknowledged the patience needed and recognized the many men and women in the City who dreamt of becoming homeowners. He mentioned people stuck in the projects without programs to help them develop into homeowners and taxpayers. He commended proposals that had the potential to revitalize areas like Lincoln Street and channel people from places like Pecan Acres and Penn Oaks into building homes if their credit is good. He noted the shift in perception, with people now considering moving to Petersburg. Council Member Jones concluded by expressing his happiness and his love for the City, acknowledging the collective effort in moving it forward.

Mayor Parham made a motion to approve the ordinance to amend Article 25–Supplementary Height, Area, Bulk and Design regulations, and Article 28 changes and amendments as set forth in the zoning ordinance of the City of Petersburg pertaining to administrative clarifications on development of contiguous non-conforming lots under common ownership and requirements for public notice. He clarified that they were approving Exhibit A, Page 5 of 8 [Page 357], unless such loss is within an R-2 or R-3 district. This section would not apply to contiguous non-conforming lots under common ownership, lots under common ownership shall be consolidated to the extent possible to become at a minimum, less non-conforming.

Council Member Cuthbert seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

9. PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD

Leslie Hayden stated that the FCC had approved a tower for radio broadcast at 101.5 FM, which would be located at 1013 Upper Appomattox Street and would have a 20-mile radius coverage. Ms. Hayden stated that the station would be a valuable resource for reliable and valuable information, stating that they were still seeking location and funding.

Michael Packer, 1245 Woodland Road, congratulated Council members from wards 2, 4, and 6 on their reelection. He also thanked the Mayor, Council members, and City Manager and his staff for their persistence in securing the casino for Petersburg, which received 81% on the referendum.

Marlo Green, 301 Rolfe Street, thanked Council for their support of Bypass Road on Pocahontas Island, and she requested an update on DCR's concerns regarding the floodplain. Ms. Green also mentioned the trees on City-owned property at 343 Magazine Road, which could potentially conceal criminal activity, including illegal dumping already taking place.

Mr. Bobby Beverly, 2305 Dundee Drive, stated that there were two incidents brought to his attention on election day, including one at Good Shepherd Elementary School, where there were improper procedures attempting to persuade voters, and another at Good Shepherd Baptist Church, where constituents said he wasn't a resident of Petersburg.

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

The Mayor wished Council Member Cuthbert a happy birthday.

Council Member Cuthbert thanked him and also thanked the citizens of Ward 4 for reelecting him, stating that the City would be on a new path with the opening of the casino. He also said that he would like a new elementary school to be the next large capital project undertaken by the City, asking Mr. Altman how to get the ball rolling with that.

Mr. Altman stated that they would need to coordinate with the school system and have conversations with the School Board and Superintendent. He said they had a few issues there currently, but they could look at their capacity to manage the project and what assistance from the City would be needed. He stated that they have planned for the construction of a new school with their initial bond issuance in 2023 for \$30 million, which they applied for the state literary loan fund. He noted that they were approved to access those funds but needed to have plans, and the school system received a \$15 million grant to allow them to move forward with plans. He said they were working with Davenport on a long-range plan, and staff could bring that back to Council for discussion and prioritization.

Council Member Cuthbert also recognized Delta Sigma Theta alumni volunteers for their involvement in the Adopt-a-Street program, which included picking up trash.

Council Member Jones wished Council Member Cuthbert a happy birthday and said even though they sometimes had disagreements, they went right back to work. He echoed Council Member Cuthbert's support for a new school, stating that their responsibility is to their children and adding that the adults in the community needed to be a good example for youth in the community.

Council Member Westbrook congratulated Omega Psi Phi fraternity on their 113-year anniversary. He

also announced that Coach Terry Smith was holding her second speech and debate tournament at Petersburg High School on December 14, with 30–40 schools coming to the area. He said that she needed community judges to volunteer for 3–4 hours and listen to the youth proceed with their debate forensics, noting that as Council Member Jones had said, it's important to be able to share differences. He also mentioned upcoming sports events and the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Council Member Myers wished everyone a joyous and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

Vice Mayor Hill thanked everyone who voted and voted for him—with a 30% margin that was one of the highest in the City's history.

Mayor Parham congratulated fellow Council Members for their reelections, including Council woman Annette Smith-Lee, who was not present at the meeting, and thanked them for all the work they were doing to move the City of Petersburg forward. He recognized Parks & Recreation staff for the wonderful Veterans Day program they had held in this room, with soldiers from Fort Lee present. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and mentioned the December 7 Christmas parade.

11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

12. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Consideration of Appointment to the Petersburg Arts Council

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the slate of appointees to the Petersburg Arts Council. Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

b. Consideration of Appointment to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Advisory Board

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the slate of appointees to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Advisory Board. Council Member Cuthbert seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

c. Consideration of Appointment to the Planning Commission

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the slate of appointees to the Planning Commission. Council Member Cuthbert seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

d. Consideration of Appointment to the Petersburg Redevelopment Housing Authority

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the slate of appointees to the Petersburg Redevelopment Housing Authority. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

14. NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation of the 2025 Legislative Agenda.

Ms. Joanne Williams stated that the agenda was shorter than usual, but at the top of the list was Poor Creek, with material and labor costs having increased to make that request \$10 million additional. She stated that the request for the Life Sciences Workforce Training Facility was a new project request for \$25 million. She also said that a charter change would be reviewed at the next meeting as a public hearing item, and the other items were the Oak Hill Bridge and JLARC study on 599 funds.

Council Member Jones asked why they had to wait on the \$4 million for the Oak Hill bridge, as the citizens had already been waiting too long.

Mr. Altman responded that he has a plan to get it to Council earlier, and they requested state funding as a first source but would enact a backup plan if that did not get awarded. He clarified that he did not have an exact timeframe for the temporary bridge order, but staff would have something for Council's approval in the first quarter of 2025.

Mr. Williams noted that there were two charter amendments for Council to consider, not just the one that was listed.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve Richard Bland College for independent governance. Council Member Myers seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the legislative agenda to approve the 2025 legislative agenda to include adding the non-partisan election. Council Member Myers seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Smith-Lee.

15. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT AND SPECIAL REPORTS

City Manager March Altman congratulated Council for their S&P bond rating, which moved to an AA rating. He recognized Mr. Glasner and Finance staff for an outstanding job.

Council Member Cuthbert asked Mr. Altman to provide an update at their December 17 meeting on the environmental issues raised with the road across the Roper Brothers property.

Council Member Jones asked for an update with the comp and classification study.

Mr. Altman responded that they were looking at that currently and going through that department by department, and staff would be bringing it back before Council soon. He said that some of those positions were in Social Services, which were handled differently.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

Tangi Hill, City Clerk, stated that she had been in her position for six months and hoped for many more. She wished Council Member Cuthbert a happy birthday.

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY

Mr. Williams had no report.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Parham made a motion to adjourn. All members of the Council present voted in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned.

The City Council adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Adopted: 04/01/2025

APPROVED:



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk