
The joint meeting of the Petersburg City Council and the Petersburg Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 25, 2024, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/316161>.

1. ROLL CALL

Present City Council:

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

Absent:

Present from City Council Administration:

City Manager John March Altman, Jr
City Attorney Anthony Williams
City Clerk Tangi Hill
Planning & Community Development Director Naomi Sidmok

Present Planning Commission:

Ms. Tammy Alexander, Chair
Mr. Michael Edwards, Vice-Chair
Ms. Marie Vargo
Mr. Al Cannon
Dr. James Norman
Mr. Fenton Bland

Absent:

Ms. Candice Taylor
Mr. Thomas Hairston
Dr. William Irvin

Others Present:

Ms. Michelle Murrills, Planning Commission Secretary
Ms. Tori Haynes, Berkley Group
Ms. Caroline Vanterve, Berkley Group
Mr. Arthur Cashwell, Berkley Group

2. PRAYER

Vice Mayor Hill led the opening prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Parham led the pledge of allegiance.

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM

A quorum was determined with the presence of the City Council and Planning Commission members.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Update – Joint Kickoff Meeting

Ms. Tori Haynes of the Berkley Group gave the presentation. She reviewed the schedule and the scope of the project's purpose and content. She explained how they all relate to the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that a quick high level summary review of the diagnostic report was conducted by the Berkley Group that included looking at some of the ordinances in the City of Petersburg. A sneak peek at their purpose, structure, format, some keys for success for this project, and confirmation of next steps was provided. She introduced the members of her team, Ms. Caroline Vanterve, and Mr. Arthur Cashwell.

Project Overview & Schedule

The project will be divided into three phases, much like the Comprehensive Plan, Investigation, Content Development, and then Adoption. The Berkley Group has spent the last several months on the Investigation portion. The meeting tonight is the finality of that. After this, they will be working on actual ordinances with bi-monthly meetings with the Planning Commission. They will check back in with Council in April. After that, they will be wrapping up the ordinance drafting and have the full ordinance open for public review similar to the open house that was held for the Comprehensive Plan. This will be followed by another Joint Work Session to review the full draft ordinances for final questions and comments. A joint public hearing will be held prior to consideration for adoption.

The first phase, kicked off back in the Spring goes through this September. Phase two will be the next year. The final phase, in late 2025-2026, will include final reviews, public hearings and adoption.

Ordinance Purpose & Content

Both the zoning and subdivision ordinances will be updated and combined into one concise chapter of the City Code. The zoning ordinances regulate the use of land while the subdivision ordinances regulate the division of land. Under zoning, the regulation of the use of land and whether it is commercial, business, industrial, or residential is considered. Also, where should the uses be appropriately located in Petersburg. Zoning looks at setbacks, adequate lighting, safety and help to facilitate public safety and amenities as well as with adverse impacts. When looking at subdivision ordinances, they help with how one divides land and lots. So how you divide a lot. They help with insuring adequate streets and right-a -ways. They also work in tandem with the zoning ordinances to facilitate public services, amenities, to make sure that the City does not create unbuildable non-usable lots, and ensuring that all lots have access to water and sewer. Making sure that lots are not land locked and things of that nature. These are both guided by the Comprehensive Plan, which is the policy document that sets visions, goals, and guides local regulation.

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The Comprehensive Plan will guide this process. For instance, there is a Comprehensive Plan goal to amend the zoning ordinance to allow adaptive and creative use for renewed housing opportunities in non-traditional areas like an old shopping center or some other abandoned structure. So, a possible zoning element that could start looking into is introducing adaptive reuse as a use with a clear definition. The requirements could be relaxed for parking,

landscaping, and other cite developments to make best use of what's already there. There could be flexibility with people to get them using the infrastructure that is out there in a positive way. Another example of a goal from the Comprehensive Plan is amending the zoning ordinance to support in fill housing. Reduce parking minimum to allow for bike racks in places that you might need them, and also work on allowing plenty of usable sidewalks, bike lanes, and green spaces are all goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Diagnostic Report Review

Ms. Haynes reported that this spring they reviewed the City's currant ordinances and related documents and assessed those against state code requirements. They found several strengths and weaknesses and believe that they can fill in some of the gaps to help Petersburg to be compliant with state code, as well as make it a more user-friendly document. They looked at both the zoning and the subdivision ordinances. It was determined that they both are in need of these assessments to be brought up to the same standards as the state codes. The priority items identified for the ordinance update were 1.) Ensuring that all mandatory items are of the state code are included and also including the optional items that are most important and relevant to the City. There are some things that would be a benefit here. 2.) Clarify and streamline the procedures for all the various developmental applications, as well as update uses. 3.) Provide some performance standards with clear definitions. 4.) All zoning districts have clear and consistently applied standards along with concise design standards. 5.) Combine the zoning and subdivision ordinances into one concise regulatory chapter in the City Code, and not two separate appendices.

Public Engagement Summary

The Berkley Group was in Petersburg over the summer obtaining feedback from the community, in the form of focus groups, pop-up events, and a public survey. They received feedback from over 200 people. With the focus groups, they began with four focus groups. These focused groups were made up of people who are actively working in land use management and are aware of Petersburg's land use ordinances, as well as City staff and members of various boards and staff. These groups discussed the various pros and cons of the ordinances, where improvements can be made and how to make it more user friendly over all. The pop-up events included Juneteenth and National Night out with City employees setting up booths and allowing the public to give their feedback on what the community is prioritizing for this ordinance update. The third form of engagement was an online visual preference survey open to the public.

Proposed Ordinance Structure & Format

There's currently 30+ articles in Petersburg's zoning ordinance and more in the subdivision ordinance. The Berkley Group plans to have only 11 main articles that then divide into divisions and sections. Within each article there will be a main article and then divide into divisions. It will then be further broken down into sections for individual types of content. This will keep this structure as it is very easy to amend down the road as things change. This is an easy system to not only update, but to also find the information that is needed. For this update, consistent formatting will be used throughout each section to make it easier to update. This will then be in a user-friendly format. By doing this, a lot of ambiguity will be taken away.

Keys to Success

Ms. Haynes informed the Council and Planning Commission that they will be getting materials ahead of time, before meetings. She encouraged them to please read through everything and come with their list of questions and comments. She noted that they want to strive for levels of consensus on key policy items and want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable with additional comments and edits. She encouraged them to share the information with their neighbors and networks.

Next Steps

Ms. Haynes wrapped up by saying that tonight was the first kick off session. She reported that they have also started working on their drafts. The first meeting with the Planning Commission for review will be held in November and that will continue on through next year September. Council will be given an update in April and meet further ahead in 2025 for those final review meetings.

She encouraged the Council and Planning Commission to feel free to reach out to the Berkley Group with any other questions or comments.

Planning & Community Development Director Siodmok then concluded the meeting with seeing if there were any other questions or comments.

Mayor Parham asked if there were any other comments, or questions from either the City Council or the Planning Commission. He thanked the Berkley Group for all that they have done to get the City to this point and for the work that they will then do to get the City to the next level

6. ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council and Planning Commission adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

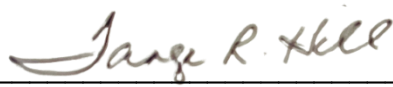
Adopted: 11/6/2024

APPROVED:



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk