The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The meeting video link is https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/345992

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Samuel Parham, Mayor – Ward 3
Marlow Jones, Councilor – Ward 1
Charles Cuthbert, Jr., Councilor – Ward 4
W. Howard Myers, Councilor– Ward 5
Annette Smith-Lee, Councilor - Ward 6

Absent:

Darrin Hill, Vice Mayor – Ward 2
Arnold Westbrook, Jr., Councilor – Ward 7

Present from City Administration:

City Manager John "March" Altman, Jr.
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams

2. PRAYER:

Council Member Smith-Lee 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. National League of Cities Small Cities Month Proclamation

Mayor Parham presented the proclamation for the National League of Cities Small Cities Month.

b. Honoring 12-Year-Old Ramir Parker as a City of Petersburg Hero for Heroic Actions on June 3, 2025

This item was discussed after Item 8e.

6. RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION POSTED

There was none.

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

a. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

- May 20, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes

Mayor Parham noted that there was an amendment to the Consent Agenda, which was a correction to the spelling of Kelsey Jewell's name in the May 20, 2025, meeting minutes.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Council Member Smith-Lee 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

8. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreements Between the City of Petersburg and URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION for the Development of 135 Franklin Street, 116 and 120 N. Jefferson Street, Located in Petersburg, VA

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, stated that Mr. Murphy would present his development plan for the properties listed, after which Council would hold the public hearing.

Mr. Murphy stated that he would discuss their plans for 135 Franklin Street, 116 and 120 North Jefferson Street. He explained that they had submitted a proposal to purchase these lots in November 2023, and since then, they had been working closely with the Planning Department and the Economic Development Department to finalize the acquisition. In addition, they had made an agreement with Urban Development to survey and prepare the lots for new housing construction.

Mr. Murphy said that as part of this proposal, they planned to build one single-family residence on Franklin Street and a duplex on North Jefferson Street. The offer did not include the cost of surveying and preparing the lots for construction, which was estimated to be an additional $10,000 to $14,000. He stated that he believed this proposal presented a valuable opportunity for the community, and requested that the Council give it favorable consideration. He noted that the lots had been vacant for an extended period, and they believed this project would be a positive addition to the area.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing. Seeing no speakers, he closed the public hearing.

Council Member Cuthbert expressed his appreciation to Mr. Murphy's work in the community and for his service on the Architectural Review Board. He asked if the duplex was planned to be owner-occupied or a rental property.

Mr. Murphy replied that they were focused on owner-occupied properties. He emphasized that they did not engage in flipping properties or rentals, but rather aimed to increase ownership. Therefore, these properties would be put up for sale as soon as they were completed.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the duplex would be listed for sale as a single property or if it would be two separate sales.

Mr. Murphy replied that the plan was for the duplex to be sold to two different families.

Council Member Cuthbert expressed his appreciation for the applicant's focus on homeownership opportunities.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to adopt the Ordinance approving the purchase agreements and authorizing the City Manager and City Attorney to execute all documents to facilitate the sale of City-owned property in accordance with applicable legal requirements. Council Member Smith-Lee 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

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

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, stated that Mr. Barber was on his way, but he would proceed with the presentation on this item. He explained that the applicant's intention was to develop single-family housing for sale, located at 617 South Sycamore Street and 201 Graham. Mr. Barber is a well-respected developer in the community and there were no issues with the application, so staff recommended approval.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice Street, stated that he had noticed that the offering price was approximately 50% of the property's valuation. He asked if they were planning to continue this trend in the future.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to deny the Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Barber Construction for the Development of 201 Graham Street and 617 S. Sycamore Street, Located in Petersburg VA. Council Member Jones 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

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

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, stated that Mr. Jackson would present information on this proposal, after which Council would hold a public hearing.

Anthony Jackson explained that this was a new construction project at 723 Harding, a single-family home intended to be sold for owner occupation. The provided image was the front elevation and the features of the home, which would have three bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms. He noted that he had built the same type of property in the past at 124 Pine Street.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing. Seeing no speakers, he closed the public hearing.

Council Member Myers made a motion to adopt the Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Barber Construction for the Development of 201 Graham Street and 617 S. Sycamore Street, Located in Petersburg VA. Council Member Jones 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

d. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund

Garry Cozier, Budget Manager, stated that this item was presenting a proposed amendment to the FY26 budget, which would take effect in July. He explained that the City had received a new grant of $125,000 to be awarded to the Petersburg Bureau of Police for software and technology upgrades. He said that staff were recommending approval of this item.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing. Seeing no speakers, he closed the public hearing.

Council Member Smith-Lee made a motion to approve the amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund. 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

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

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that staff has an appeal before Council today regarding a decision made by the Architectural Review Board. She explained that this item is for the Council to decide whether to appeal or uphold the determination of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) regarding the nine windows on the front of the East Fillmore Street property.

Ms. Siodmok stated that the Architectural Review Board determined that these windows should be repaired instead of replaced. However, the applicant, Michael Knick, was requesting that all windows on the structure be replaced. She provided an aerial view of the location of the property on the corner of Clinton Street and East Fillmore Street. She provided some additional background information on this item as well. She explained that they received a Certificate of Appropriateness application in April, which included items to replace the windows in question, as well as repair the front gutter and discuss roofing materials.

Ms. Siodmok stated that the request was heard, and part of it was denied. The Architectural Review Board's decision is that the front windows should be repaired, while the remaining windows could be replaced. Two members of the Architectural Review Board inspected the windows in person and noted that the side and rear windows could be replaced without significant visual impact to the street. She reiterated that Mr. Knick wants to replace all windows, which was why he was appealing this decision. The front elevation was provided for their reference, showing the windows that the Architectural Review Board asked to be repaired.

Ms. Siodmok stated that the historic district design guidelines required rehabilitation of building structures, with the goal of retaining original windows and historically significant examples when possible. When that was not possible, they would consider replacement opportunities and look for materials consistent with the existing windows. The Architectural Review Board did recommend repairing all of the windows, but supported the applicant replacing the side and rear windows if the front windows can be repaired. Additionally, they aimed to retain and preserve windows that contribute to the overall historic character of the building.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Michael Knick, 224 E. Fillmore Street, stated that the reason for his request to replace them all was that this would be a rental property. He explained the existing windows had good sashes, but they did not open and close properly. He said that the tracks were either missing or non-functional, and the counterweights were unreliable and inaccurate. He did not want to put a tenant in a situation where, if something went wrong, they were unable to exit the window because the old windows could not be replaced.

Mr. Knick acknowledged that while he still wanted to replace all the windows according to the guidelines, which called for aluminum-clad windows, he wanted to maintain the same appearance, including the same look, amount of paint, and dividers. He said that the only difference would be that the new windows would not be the original windows if approved.

Bill Hartsock, 239 High Street, stated that he was a member of the Architectural Review Board. He stated that he was one of the two ARB members who conducted the site inspection for this property, he was joined by Joe Yates, a licensed architect. They thoroughly examined all the windows around the house, including those in the back, where they noticed some damage. However, their primary concern was the front windows. Their determinations were all guided by the Department of the Interior's guidelines and the City's regulations for renovation and restoration.

Mr. Hartsock explained that their assessment revealed that the sashes were in good condition and could be preserved. Additionally, the casings and trim work surrounding the sashes could be easily duplicated, replaced, or repaired. They did not see issues with replacing the ones in the sides and back, but the front ones were subject to the guidelines that the ARB had to administer. Therefore, he would ask Council to uphold the ARB's determination to have the front windows repaired instead of replaced.

With no further comments, this public hearing was now closed. He said that next, he would proceed to the Fourth Ward Councilman, Councilman Cuthbert, who represented the area where this property was located.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Cuthbert asked Mr. Hartsock if Council were to maintain consistency with their guidelines and regulations, they should uphold the ARB's determination.

Mr. Hartsock replied that was correct. He noted that the ARB often had to make determinations regarding windows, and there were some similar cases to this one where the same determination had been made and supported.

Council Member Jones acknowledged that consistency was important, and from that viewpoint the Council should uphold the ARB determination. However, what was equally important was safety, so they address the issue of non-functional windows. He said that whether it was a rental property or a homeowner's personal residence, he would not support anything that put people's lives at risk in the case of a house fire or other emergency. He noted that the owner had stated he would replace the windows with the same material, wood clad in aluminum. He stated that he could not prioritize aesthetics over safety in this case; he believed they should replace any windows that do not work properly.

Mayor Parham asked for clarification regarding the functionality of the windows and whether they would be able to open and close if repaired or replaced.

Ms. Siodmok clarified that the City would want these windows repaired to a functional state, and it appeared that they had been inspected in the field by the Architectural Review Board and were deemed to be in good condition, capable of being repaired to be functional. She noted that anyone completing work on a house would be required to meet occupancy and safety standards, and the City would not support it otherwise.

Mayor Parham asked if Mr. Battison could speak to the issue of repairing the windows so they could be functional.

Joe Battiston, 1 South Sycamore Street, explained that he had experience with window repairs. He had personally repaired the windows, sashes, and frames, and successfully put them back into operation. He stated that the three buildings on the corner of Sycamore and Washington, which were previously torn out and covered with stucco, had been restored to functionality. The windows were not functioning at the time he took ownership of the buildings, but during the renovations and repairs, he restored them to be functional. He noted that some windows in that building were from the 1800s, so he could attest that they could be made functional, and otherwise would not have a Certificate of Occupancy.

Council Member Jones asked if there was a discernable difference between the historic windows and the new ones. Additionally, he was concerned about the costs of repair versus replacement of the windows.

Ms. Siodmok noted that the replaced materials were not identical. She said that the original ones were currently made entirely of wood, whereas the requested replacement was wood clad in aluminum.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to affirm the decision made by the Architectural Review Board regarding 224 E. Fillmore Street in the Poplar Lawn Historic District that Determined the Windows Shall be Repaired when Possible and Replaced if Necessary with Wood Clad in Aluminum. Council Member Smith-Lee 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, Myers, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: Jones; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

5b. PROCLAMATION HONORING 12-YEAR-OLD RAMIR PARKER AS A CITY OF PETERSBURG HERO FOR HEROIC ACTIONS ON JUNE 3, 2025

Mayor Parham presented the Proclamation Honoring Ramir Parker as a City of Petersburg Hero for Heroic Actions on June 3, 2025.

Wayne Hoover, Fire Chief, thanked Council for recognizing Mr. Parker, who had already been made an honorary member of the Petersburg City Fire Department. He expressed his deep pride in Mr. Parker for his heroism. Additionally, Mr. Parker would be throwing the first pitch at tomorrow’s Chili Peppers game for first responders’ night. He emphasized that Mr. Parker had saved lives with his actions and everyone was very proud of him.

Council Member Jones stated that he had served as a firefighter and understood the grave danger that Mr. Parker had faced when he went into a burning building to save his siblings. He recalled a deadly fire on Harrison Street in which a child had tried to save his siblings but was unable to make it out. He emphasized that Mr. Parker acted with speed and precision that he had because he knew where his siblings were in the house, which the Fire Department would not have had the same knowledge of.

Council Member Jones asked Chief Hoover to consider reinstating the Petersburg Fire Explorers, for young people like Mr. Parker to begin learning how to become a firefighter and home inspections. He emphasized that the youth in Petersburg were courageous and filled with hopes and dreams, and it was important that the rest of the community be mentors to them. He thanked Mr. Parker again for his heroism.

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

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that staff was presenting a recommended text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to define, permit, and regulate short-term rentals. She explained that short-term rentals included establishments such as Airbnb, Homestay, Flipkey, and others of similar nature. The definition of a short-term rental was a rental of a dwelling unit or a room for fewer than 30 consecutive days in exchange for payment. Currently, the City Code and Ordinance did not account for short-term rentals, so they were not currently regulated. Therefore, staff were here today to establish where short-term rentals could be located, how they were regulated, and what standards applied. This conversation had been ongoing for some time, dating back to 2022, when the topic first began to be discussed.

Ms. Siodmok stated that in 2023, they brought it back and held a meeting with internal staff, including the City Manager, Joanne Williams, and Brittany Flowers. Since then, from July 2024 to May 2025, they had been working with the Planning Commission to develop language for this amendment. In March 2025, the Planning Commission decided to create a subcommittee to further explore this issue and develop recommendations. On May 1, 2025, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 in favor of the subcommittee's recommendations.

Ms. Siodmok explained that most short-term rentals would be permitted to be located by-right in higher-density residential districts, including R-3, R-4, R-5, and R-6. These districts allowed duplexes and multifamily housing. They would also be permitted in mixed-use zoning districts, such as MXD-1, MXD-2, and MXD-3. Finally, they would be permitted in commercial zoning districts, B-2 and B-3, which allowed multifamily housing with a special use permit or existing multifamily housing.

Ms. Siodmok stated that staff was also recommending the City create a registry for short-term rentals. They would be required to submit an application to staff and the Zoning Administrator, and annually verify compliance with the standards they were sharing with the Council today. If they failed to comply and submit their application by the deadline, a $500 violation fee would be applied. The use standards staff was recommending to implement included those related to safety, occupancy, and establishing penalties for violations.

Ms. Siodmok stated that the proposed use standards included: a primary structure must be used for the rental, not a shed or garage; the renter must be at least 18 years old; overnight guests could not exceed six unrelated adults; no visible recreational vehicles could be stored on site; no signage was allowed; trash was the responsibility of renters/operators to ensure it is taken out on time; no food prepared by the property owner for the guests, and no prohibited commercial uses allowed. Additionally, short-term rentals would have the same registration process, so none of them would require a special use permit, regardless of whether the owner was occupying it or not. For apartments, they had established a limit of 10 units, or one-third of the units, whichever was less, that could be applied for as a short-term rental.

Ms. Siodmok stated that they were setting a deadline of October 1st for individuals to provide this information to the City, as they were nearing the opening of the casino and they wanted to ensure they had a registry for these items in place. Registration could be revoked for various reasons, including noncompliance with the standards she had previously shared. If individuals were not registering or were not adhering to the standards, revocation required notice, allowing them time to comply, and the opportunity to appeal.

Ms. Siodmok stated that the comprehensive plan considerations emphasized their vision for the next 20 years in Petersburg, focusing on hospitality and expanding their ability to accommodate visitors. Currently, existing short-term rentals were underutilized revenue streams. She explained that they had the opportunity to tax these rentals, and the first step to do that was creating a registry. She said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval this proposal with a vote of 5-0. After the City established this text amendment and created the registry, the Commissioner of Revenue could work to establish a tax on these properties.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Reverend Eugene Blow stated that he was accompanied by his wife, Dr. Tamara Blow. He stated that they owned a property in Petersburg that was currently zoned Residential R-1, located at 1725 Monticello Street. He noted that a majority of Airbnb short-term rentals were currently located in residential houses, so he would like to request that Council allow short-term rentals in the residential zoning districts as part of these proposed amendments.

Diane Curling, 116 Liberty Street, stated that she and her husband had owned their home for 11 years. They were married 50 years ago last year, and their children had recently gifted them a certificate to stay in a short-term rental in West Virginia. They spent the weekend there and it was lovely, but she hoped the City Council would consider an amendment to allow short-term rentals in residential areas only if the property owner was present at the time.

Ms. Curling stated that in September 2023, the City of Richmond amended their short-term rental restrictions guidelines, requiring property owners to be present for 185 days of the year. She explained that this was necessary because Petersburg's housing stock was low, leading to high rental and purchase prices that were unaffordable for many people. She emphasized that as a former teacher, she felt it was essential to have more families and children in the City. Without adequate housing supply, they would lose potential family homes to being used as short-term rentals, especially because of the casino bringing in short-term guests in the City.

Ms. Curling stated that after visiting West Virginia this weekend, she and her husband envisioned Petersburg becoming a very large Harpers Ferry, where they had historic sites, short-term rentals, and fudge shops, but lacked families because they would not have housing stock for people to affordably purchase or lease. However, she said that they lacked sufficient family housing due to unaffordable housing stock. She noted that she had been told repeatedly that on her three-block street in Petersburg, there was a gentleman who owned more than 80 homes in Petersburg.

Ms. Curling said that he bought homes and turned them into rentals, which was not the issue; however, he sat on them for years before doing so. She said that they could not solve that problem at the moment, but the issue of the short-term rentals was before Council right now, so they could nip it in the bud before it became a problem. She requested that Council consider creating amendments that grandfather in the short-term rentals they already had, but limit future short-term rentals in residential areas so that the host must live on the property.

Amanda Wyatt stated that she owned property in Petersburg, located at 224 Witten Street, and she was planning to open a furnished home for traveling nurses. Hers would be in a residential area, but she was planning to work with her neighbors in order to make sure it would help improve the neighborhood.

Paula Chester, 1013 Oakmont Drive, stated that she did not particularly care for short-term rentals. She believed that residents who already lived in these communities had invested their life, money, and time, and were looking for a peaceful retirement. She said that the constant turnover of people coming in and out created uncertainty about their behavior and potential impact on the community. It could lead to issues such as littering and noise disturbances.

Ms. Chester emphasized that it was essential to consider that not all short-term renters would be law-abiding or respectful of their neighbors. She expressed concern that the property owners not being on the property with the short-term renters could lead to drug-related crimes occurring on the properties; the transient nature of short-term rentals was a problem because those renters do not have any connection to the community or their values.

Ms. Chester said that she was concerned that if people thought of Petersburg as an area where they can make money with short-term rentals, long-term residents would leave because they would not want to be surrounded by short-term renters and their lifestyles. She said that this could ultimately result in a decrease in property values and a loss of character for their City, preventing it from growing and thriving.

Marlow Green, 301 Rolfe Street agreed with the other speakers that short-term rentals should be allowed in the Residential R-1 zoning district. The reason for this was that she believed they were still opening themselves up to noncompliance. She said that people would likely continue to disregard the regulations, regardless of the $500 fee. They could not expect neighbors to police each other and report any issues to the City. She also agreed with another speaker that she would like to see some mitigating controls put in place to address concerns.

Ms. Green said that for example, if there were incidents where a short-term rental owner was not adhering to code compliance, such as failing to dispose of trash properly, there could be fines in place. She said that they must ensure that these controls were in place to prevent people from taking advantage of the short-term rental opportunities and being irresponsible. She also felt that there also could be revenues that would be left on the table if they did not include them in the R-1 zoning district.

Tamara Blow stated that she understood the concerns voiced by previous speakers, so what she would recommend would that the short-term rentals be in an Airbnb environment or a similar regulated and controlled setting. This would address several concerns. Firstly, Airbnb does not allow parties, and a controlled environment would ensure that the property is properly maintained and rated. She said that they also required specific insurances, which would be built into the system.

Ms. Blow said that Airbnb already had infrastructure in place to prevent bad behavior, utilizing AI technology to block any attempts to book the property for parties. This would alleviate many of the concerns heard tonight. She noted that she and her husband had had this property over the past 30 years, which had hosted various types of rentals, from short-term to long-term. She noted that the short-term rentals had consistently resulted in better property maintenance and a more visually appealing neighborhood.

Ms. Blow said that 1725 Monticello was a prime example of this. She said that short-term rentals were not only improve the aesthetic appeal of the area but also generate revenue for the City through taxes. When she analyzed the numbers, she found that Airbnb collected taxes and sent aggregate tax money to the City, benefiting both the City and the tenants. She said that this was a win-win situation, as it brought in much-needed revenue for the City and provided financial benefits to the residents.

Joe Battison, 1 South Sycamore Street, stated that he attended all the meetings regarding the short-term rental with the Planning Commission, and he commended the Commission for covering almost all the concerns that had been raised by constituents. They had worked diligently since last July on this issue, with multiple meetings to discuss the matter. He noted that Airbnb had its own issues and had tried to solve them, so he would give them a lot of credit for being strict, especially on the issue of parties.

Mr. Battison explained that he believed the R-1 zoning designation was not included in the ordinance because it would require adequate parking for existing residents in areas like High Street and other parts of the City that were limited in terms of parking spaces. If R-1 were to allow short-term rentals, there would need to be some form of parking requirement to prevent it from becoming a burden on neighbors. The R-1 designation was not included because it would result in multiple cars parked on City streets, potentially on streets with limited parking capacity. He thought the Planning Commission did a great job addressing all aspects of the issue and supported their recommended ordinance.

Cherub Jordan, 427 South Adams Street, stated that she had been listening to the prior comments and must express her opposition to the Airbnbs. She noted that she had just moved to Petersburg in November, so everything was new to her, and she often found herself wondering where she was and what she was doing. She said that she was excited to have been able to afford a tiny home in the City, but now she was concerned about the implications.

Ms. Jordan said that this seemed a bit like the California gold rush, where the focus was on making money rather than building a home and living in it. She emphasized that she had moved here to live in a home, and she indeed lived on a street where parking was difficult. She was looking for a peaceful and quiet environment, not a bustling atmosphere like Las Vegas. She said that she understood that the Council had their own vision, but she would like to share her perspective.

Ms. Jordan said that they could not control everything, and she had heard a lot about local issues from other residents. She agreed that parking should be considered as an impact of short-term rentals. Additionally, she appreciated having a family atmosphere in her neighborhood, knowing her neighbors next door, saying hello and helping each other. She felt that she could not do that if it was an Airbnb.

Ms. Jordan stated that she did not think there should be none at all, but she believed they should be strictly regulated. She noted that she could make some money herself by making her home into an Airbnb, but it felt wrong and like it would disrupt their sense of community. She would not want to live next to someone who was just allowing anyone to come in and out of their house so they could make some money. She said that she was not thinking so much about revenues but more about how this would impact residents and their neighborhoods. She would like to see a balance between allowing residents to monetize their properties and maintaining a sense of community and respect for their neighborhood.

Ms. Jordan noted that there was not much being policed in the City; she could not walk her puppy without dogs jumping out at them, nor could she go to the park without seeing the grass was a foot high. She believed they needed to prioritize basic things like that before considering complex restrictions on new uses in the City.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Smith-Lee noted that they used to have bed-and-breakfasts in the City, which she had stayed at. She had stayed in Airbnbs, which were often better than hotels. She also had a friend who rented out her condo to traveling nurses and doctors. They were popular right now and not everyone wanted to stay in a hotel. She asked Ms. Siodmok if the short-term rentals were not proposed to be permitted in R-1 due to parking restrictions.

Ms. Siodmok said that while some of the community members had requested inclusion of R-1 as a permitted zoning district for short term rentals, the Planning Commission had been discussing this project for the past year, and a significant portion of the R-1 designation in the City was located south of Route 85, primarily in their various zoning districts. These areas were characterized by larger lots and single-family homes. It was the intent to preserve the single-family character of these communities.

Council Member Smith-Lee asked if parking was the main issue with R-1.

Ms. Siodmok clarified that parking was not the primary concern, but Mr. Battison's remarks did highlight that it was a consideration. She stated that the Planning Commission was primarily focusing on the higher density zoning districts, where the density was more consistent. In these areas, they were more likely to see a mix of duplexes, triplexes, and other varied housing types, which would also contribute to a more diverse community character. It was likely assumed that this is where they would integrate best into the City.

Council Member Jones asked what the difference was between these short-term rental units and hotels.

Ms. Siodmok noted that Council Member Smith-Lee mentioned a bed and breakfast, and she wanted to clarify that the City does allow bed and breakfasts with a special use permit. These establishments were regulated as a separate use and were only permitted in their higher density districts, such as R-3, R-4, R-5, and RB. Additionally, they came with specific requirements, including limits on capacity, the number of people per unit, parking spaces, and the need for a manager on the premises.

Ms. Siodmok stated that additionally, there were signage requirements and any other conditions deemed necessary by Council and the Planning Commission. For short-term rentals, the time period was less than 30 days. However, traveling nurses and doctors often stayed for more than 30 days, and a time period longer than 30 days was treated as a standard rental in the City. Hotels differed in terms of size, staffing, and services, so they were different from an Airbnb at someone's house.

Council Member Jones asked what the impact would be on the City's housing stock.

Ms. Siodmok stated that there were various ways to support this initiative, but she wanted to reiterate that the Planning Commission had been examining this issue for an entire year. She said that to be clear, they already had Airbnbs in Petersburg, but they did not have regulations in place for them. It had taken them a significant amount of time to establish these regulations. Their goal was to create a registry that would help them understand the location and number of existing short-term rentals, which would also enable them to tax them and generate revenue. She said that this proposal was not intended to stimulate the creation of new Airbnbs, but rather to regulate the ones that already existed.

Council Member Jones stated that he could appreciate regulating them, but he had spoken with his constituents, particularly in his neighborhood, and they were strongly opposed to having Airbnbs or any similar short-term rentals in the area. He emphasized that many people simply wanted to live in a decent neighborhood, where they knew their neighbors and felt safe. He said that where he was from, they understood the importance of knowing their neighbors and being aware of what was going on in the community. With short-term rentals, they would not know who was moving in or what was going on.

Council Member Jones said that they needed to protect their children and seniors, but if they did not know their neighbors, they did not know what was going on in the community. He was saying this because they did not want to commercialize their neighborhoods. He asked how this would affect the neighborhoods and what was the difference when enforcing the building codes and safety codes versus those for hotels in commercial districts.

Ms. Siodmok said that regarding their neighborhoods, she would reiterate that short-term rentals currently existed in them. Therefore, they were experiencing living in a world with short-term rentals. Their goal was to establish regulations that she had previously presented, ensuring that guests adhered to basic standards, such as taking out the trash and having fire extinguishers and fire safety mechanisms. Those short-term rental owners would be required to provide staff with a floor plan showing the layout of the bedrooms, including fire alarms and other necessary safety features. If they failed to comply with these requirements, staff could submit violations, and they had established this process in their short-term rental guidelines.

Ms. Siodmok said that for each non-compliant factor, they could issue a separate violation. Once they accumulated three violations, the City could revoke their short-term rental approval, preventing them from submitting again for a full year. She stated that it was in everyone's best interest to ensure that safety measures were in place, trash was being addressed, and the area's character was maintained.

Council Member Jones stated that hotel had to provide a guest registry to the police upon request. He asked if short-term rentals would be subject to that same requirement.

Ms. Siodmok said that Airbnb and other short-term rental systems had applications and guest details. Staff would be working with the property owners to make sure the City had their contact information 24/7 in case of emergency.

Anthony Williams, City Attorney, stated that Council Member Jones was referring to a bucket check, which was a law enforcement procedure that allowed them to check a hotel's register to determine who was staying at the hotel at a particular moment. He was not aware of any similar statutory authority regarding short-term rentals. Therefore, the answer to the question of whether law enforcement could know who was actually staying in that property at that moment was no, it was not currently enforceable.

Jared Crews, Planning Manager, clarified that as part of the registration process, the short-term rental property owner would be required to designate a responsible party, which was someone who was committed to being available 24/7 in case the City needed to reach them, whether it was for an emergency or a maintenance issue. Additionally, the guests of the short-term rental would have a designated contact.

Council Member Jones expressed concern regarding fire safety for Airbnbs.

Ms. Siodmok stated that when someone submits an establishment to the City of Petersburg for registration of the short-term rental, they must submit a floor plan that includes information on each room, occupancy levels for sleeping rooms, cooking facilities, emergency egress and rescue openings, and the location and size of fire and carbon monoxide detectors. If an establishment is found to be non-compliant with these standards, they will receive associated violations. All establishments are required to renew annually, which means they will need to verify their compliance every year for all of those safety components.

Council Member Jones asked if there would be a limit on occupancy for the short-term rentals.

Ms. Siodmok confirmed they would need to meet occupancy standards, and there was another limit of six unrelated guests in a short-term rental at one time.

John Altman, City Manager, clarified that renting rooms was usually a different situation than renting an entire dwelling units as a short-term rental.

Council Member Jones asked how they would prevent a situation of individual room rentals from occurring.

Ms. Siodmok reiterated that they had occupancy limits, 30-day limits, no more than six unrelated people in a house at one time, and other regulations to restrict the use to be a short-term rental and not a boarding house. The City had separate regulations for boarding houses and were working with Members of Council to enforce those based on unrelated occupancy, and this matter would be regulated separately.

Council Member Jones asked who would be responsible for enforcing all of these restrictions.

Ms. Siodmok replied that staff had already been working well with the community and Council Member Cuthbert who had been instrumental in alerting staff to issues of overoccupancy and other issues. The annual renewals would also be very helpful because the owners would be required to submit their information every time, including the floor plan of the unit. If there was ever an issue, the community knew to contact staff for help in solving the problem.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion that the Council approve the ordinance as proposed, with a single amendment that short-term rentals be allowed only with a special use permit, except when the property is occupied as the owner's primary residence, in which case no special use permit shall be required.

Mr. Crews noted that staff had been looking to implement a deadline of October 1 for short-term rentals to submit their information and be added to the registry. If Council was considering approving short-term rentals by special use permit, he would request a longer deadline, such as January 1, 2026, in order to give enough time for the applications to be processed.

City Attorney Williams said that those individuals who had been operating and registered prior to the October 1, 2025 date would be exempt from the new ordinance, thereby avoiding the special use requirement, and thus it would not affect them.

Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

14a. <u>FIRST READING/SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND RE-ADOPT SECTION 46-92 OF THE CITY CODE TO CHANGE THE POLLING PLACE FOR THE FIRST WARD TO LAKEMONT ELEMENTARY (PUBLIC HEARING/CONSIDERATION FOR ADOPTION TO BE HELD ON JULY 1, 2025)</u>**

Anthony Williams, City Attorney, presented a brief summary of the item. He explained that this matter was being taken out of cycle due to a request from the Registrar and Electoral Board for expedited review. Tonight, Council would have a first reading of this item, and they would schedule a special meeting in advance of their next meeting, with the hope that this would be adopted. The proposal was to relocate the polling place for Ward 1 from Blanford to Lakemont.

City Attorney Williams explained that the reason for this change was the recent decennial redistricting, which had moved Blanford outside of Ward 1. Although it was only a little less than a mile outside of Ward 1, it was no longer located within the ward. To maintain the integrity of Ward 1, they wanted to relocate the polling place to be within the ward. The Electoral Board had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Lakemont to facilitate this relocation; all the necessary steps had been taken to bring this proposal to this point.

City Attorney Williams continued to state that if Council approved this ordinance, he would need to submit a request for certification of no objection to the Attorney General's office, which could take up to 60 days. Therefore, even after Council adopted this, it may take up to 60 days before the polling place could be relocated, which was why the Electoral Board was seeking to expedite this process to meet the time limitations to use the new polling place in the next election.

Bossie Bonner, of the Petersburg Electoral Board, stated that they had been trying to move this polling place for over a year now. There were ADA requirements that necessitated moving the polling place from the front of the building to the back of the building at Blanford Academy; however, Lakemont had all the facilities needed to accommodate the polling place. He respectfully requested that Council approve the ordinance that will change the polling place for the First Ward to Lakemont Elementary.

Mayor Parham stated that Council will have a special meeting to take action on the ordinance at their July 1, 2025 work session meeting.

14c. MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FINANCE UPDATE – DAVENPORT & COMPANY, LLC

David Rose stated that he would be presenting an update on the Multi-Year Strategic Plan of Finance, which was a result of the events that had transpired over the past several months. In the background, one could see that the successful vote on the casino project had led to the Cordish companies moving forward with their plans. They had worked with Chmura Economics and Analytics, an independent firm, to review their assumptions and understand the revenues that would be generated by the casino project for the City. The third point on the list was crucial, as the City had identified at least $250 million of capital projects that needed to be funded or completed within the next five years.

Mr. Rose noted that Davenport's role tonight was not to recommend specific projects or their sizes, but rather to develop a plan of finance that responsibly managed these projects while adhering to best practices. With that in mind, Chmura had analyzed the casino's revenues over the next decade, assuming that all went well, and found that revenues would exceed $250 million. They had focused on the revenues within the next decade to determine if the City could fund these projects. He explained that City expected two types of revenues: guaranteed payments from Cordish, which were not tied to funding levels or tax revenues and were scheduled to occur over the next eight years, and ongoing revenues from gaming, meals, lodging, sales, and real estate, which ranged from $8 million in Fiscal Year 26 to $26 million by Fiscal Year 2035.

Mr. Rose stated that to ensure they understood these revenues, they had discounted them. He would now show how they had discounted them. First, they had not discounted the guaranteed payments, but they were going to explore strategies to address capital needs after those dollars actually came into the City's coffers; they would only consider those guaranteed dollars after they were received. If they were received on time, they had a specific strategy recommended for addressing capital programs. However, if they were delayed for any reason, they would then discuss how to adjust their investment strategy. The goal was to always maintain a cash-strong position for the City.

Mr. Rose continued to explain that when examining the annual revenues for Fiscal Year 26, they saw that between sales, Business, Professional, and Occupational License (BPOL), and real estate, the total was approximately $8 million. They then considered the scenario where they received 25% less, resulting in $6 million, and the scenario where they lost 40% of those revenues, resulting in $5 million. They had modeled all possible plans, assuming they received all revenues, 75% of the revenues, and 60% of the revenues. They believed this approach would help the City avoid financial difficulties when making investments.

Mr. Rose stated that the recommended approach was that one-third of the $250 million projects be paid through cash, with the remaining two-thirds borrowed, approximately $170 million. This was not coincidental to the $80 million pay-as-you-go guarantees; they were tied to each other. Their focus was then on how to implement this approach in a way that would minimize the City's financial risk. The recommendation was to set aside the initial $15 million in an emergency downturn reserve when those payments were received, and to have that money available over the next four to five years.

Mr. Rose said that the second recommendation was to set up a line of credit for $30 million, and the City would use the guaranteed payments to make credit payments over time. He explained that this approach allowed for flexibility and minimized interest costs, while also enabling the City to spend up to $80 million of pay-as-you-go funds. He noted that Davenport had used this approach in multiple localities across the state and it had proven to be an effective approach over the past seven years. He stated that when analyzing potential pay-as-you go projects, those were determined by the City, and they came with a total cost of approximately $76 million.

Mr. Rose said that they had rounded this number to $80 million, but he acknowledged that these figures and the projects' timings were subject to change. However, the plan he proposed would allow the Council to decide when to undertake these projects, how to execute them, and to allocate resources accordingly. The key aspect was that if they proceeded with this plan, they would ensure that the City maintained a minimum reserve of $15 million, and as these projects progressed, the Council would continue to receive the other funding, which would support the completion of these projects.

City Manager Altman added that the $80 million in projects was an estimate. He clarified that any projects in this plan that had not been approved by Council were not formally agreed upon nor finalized; they were meant to provide some idea of what the costs and associated financing strategies would be.

Mr. Rose thanked City Manager Altman for that point of clarification. He said that before discussing the next strategy, he wanted to point out that they had the cash flows indicated. However, what they were showing here was that the City would only move forward with projects when they knew that those guaranteed payments were indeed coming in. This was crucial. They were always going to be, in effect, a step behind the overall receipt of dollars in terms of spending these dollars.

Mr. Rose stated that another way to think about this was that they were not going out and making any payments until they received their paycheck. The City may want to move forward on certain projects, but only then would he start to authorize spending, so they recommended using a line of credit for this purpose. From a cash flow standpoint, they were always going to be in a very strong position with regard to fund balance, or the funds that were sitting there. He acknowledged that it was a lot to digest, but he believed working with staff and with bond counsel had proven to be effective.

Mr. Rose stated that for example, if the first project was expected to be valued at $17 million, and the project was moving slowly, they would not have to expend funds prematurely. Instead, they would have money sitting in an interim funding line of credit, which would not be spent until dollars came in. By not spending existing dollars from the General Fund, they minimized the chances of having funding gaps in other government functions or being impacted by changes in revenues.

Mr. Rose stated that next, he would discuss how they would rely on those new revenues generated by the casino project. The casino project would not only bring in revenues but also have expenses tied to it. He explained that they had worked with City staff to go line by line, agency by agency, department by department, and analyzed the cost impacts the casino would have on each department and agency of the City. What they would see was that offsetting those revenues would be about $2 million in FY26, growing to some $9 million by FY29. He reiterated that they could not just look at revenues; they had to consider the expenditures.

Mr. Rose noted that Davenport thought those expenditures were on the high side, which was good for planning purposes. They wanted to be conservative, and he believed that working with staff, they had done that. They then discussed the projects that had been identified, which included four major projects that could be seen on the slide. The project timelines were intentionally set to be quick, with the goal of conducting a stress test and assessing the impact of what it would take to work as quickly as possible. This was done to determine what effect it would have on existing and expected revenues and to determine whether they would have sufficient revenues to cover the approximately $160 million in projects that would require borrowing.

Mr. Rose reiterated that these projects were not Davenport's to complete, but rather were assigned to them for analysis. One thing he would note was that the schools. They had been in discussions with the schools, and the provided number was the net amount after the City school received the grant monies that were available to the City, which were approximately $30 million. The City had also been preliminarily approved for a literary loan, which was a guaranteed 2% fixed-rate loan, regardless of market fluctuations, so long as the City, the Schools, and financial managers all followed the eligibility protocols.

Mr. Rose explained that this meant that the City would not need to borrow that money from the public markets. Instead, it would come from the Department of Education. This was an important point, as literary loans had been available for 50 years and were very stable, set aside by the Department of Education and not contingent on the state's or economy's performance. As a result, the City was eligible for approximately $30 million at a 2% interest rate. The remaining amount would need to be borrowed from the public markets, with final maturities potentially moving slightly slower and timing taking a bit longer. However, to test the system's stress, they had acted as if the loan terms were slightly faster.

Mr. Rose stated that as a result, when they calculated the No Revenue Discount, with the expected revenues from Cordish, they found that they could fund approximately $250 million in capital needs, while still maintaining annual surpluses of between $6 and $8 million dollars. This was the good news. However, they also considered the possibility that revenues might not come in as expected, so they decided to apply a discount of 40% to revenues from the start of the next 10 years. This would result in an annual shortfall of approximately $3 million starting in FY29. They then asked what the breakeven point would be to fund the capital projects without any surplus remaining.

Mr. Rose stated that essentially, they could handle a 30% discount on revenues, which meant that if they only received $0.70 for every dollar expected, they could still implement this program without touching the General Fund. This 30% discount was on the revenue side. Additionally, if operating expenditures were not as great as expected, which they believed they would not be, this would provide an even greater cushion. Furthermore, if some projects were delayed until Fiscal Year 26, this would also help. However, he felt it was Davenport's responsibility to provide them with the information of what would happen if they did not receive those revenues as quickly as possible or ever.

Mr. Rose stated that one final point he would like to make was that when it came to those various projects, the schools were on a certain track, and they felt good about that. However, if the revenues for the other three were not robust by Fiscal Year 26 and 27, the City had the ability to slow down certain projects and adjust them. It was not an all-or-nothing situation. Hopefully, he would be before the Council to discuss this information on a quarterly basis, examining how the projects were progressing, what surprises had happened, because that was the key thing here.

Mr. Rose said that if the revenues were delayed or the projects were delayed, with the probable exception of the schools, which were already accounted for in the General Fund, this could be slowed down. The City Manager likely could add some context to this, but they had recommended that the City make sure the revenues were coming in before committing to the other projects.

City Manager Altman stated that this was part of their ongoing commitment to realize revenues and take a conservative approach to expenditures of both one-time and ongoing revenues. The stress test they were considering was reflected in the potential outcomes they were exploring. He said that at this point, they had not had discussions about these projects with the exception of the schools. They were essentially testing their ability to handle the financial implications by providing some example dates and numbers.

City Manager Altman said that at this point, they still had a long way to go before they began selecting projects and determining timing, and the provided estimates were meant to give an idea of what the effects of these potential situations would be. He noted that the school project, which involved the replacement of Walnut Hill, was moving forward, and they had a meeting with them to confirm that they were eligible for the loan and grant they received. The other three projects were just example numbers used as a way for them to stress-test the system.

Mr. Rose indicated the dark blue line on the cash flow projection graph represented Cordish's expected revenues each year under the Cordish plan without any discount, along with existing debt service and operating expenditures. The projected debt service and the delta between the two were also shown. The light shade of green represented the $6 million to $8 million dollars, so this would be the most optimistic scenario in accordance with Cordish's projections. In contrast, if the dark blue line was discounted by 40%, they would notice that the line was under the golden line, which represented the total of the debt service and operating expenditures.

Mr. Rose explained that the shade of red on the chart highlighted the fact that they were short about $3 million a year. While this would not be catastrophic, given the City's current trajectory, they wanted to avoid relying on the General Fund to support these projects. The third scenario, with a 30% discount, showed the dark blue line roughly approximating the various debts and operations. Again, these operations could be reduced, but only over time would that be known for certain. He stated that for next steps, the City had finalized the FY 26 budget, and they knew they would receive the $15 million by the end of the calendar year. Davenport recommended establishing a line of credit while they had these things aligned.

Mr. Rose noted that however, they were not recommending to spend any of that line of credit until the $15 million was in the bank. Then, they could decide which projects to pursue and not exceed the $15 million. They expected the next $15 million to come quickly, so they would always keep $15 million in reserve. They would get their next $15 million and start moving forward without delay on some of the projects they had decided on, using a pay-as-you-go approach. The line of credit would be paid back through the guaranteed Cordish payments, not through long-term borrowing. They wanted to be behind in their spending in terms of those Cordish payments to avoid putting themselves in jeopardy.

Mayor Parham expressed his gratitude to Mr. Rose for providing Council with this valuable information and multiple hypothetical scenarios to consider. He stated that he would like for Council to discuss all of this further at their Council retreat in August so they could have a more in-depth discussion and create a road map for what their actual plan would be.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the $30 million loan was inconsistent with the concept of pay-as-you-go.

Mr. Rose replied no; they wanted to give the City the opportunity to move as quickly as they wanted, pursue different projects with those dollars, but it was not inconsistent at all. It started with the first $15 million being set aside. He said that to illustrate this, they considered the smaller projects that Mr. Altman mentioned. They could keep the $15 million and invest it, essentially investing it and maintaining a cash flow. He would be happy to walk Council through the cash flow concept at the retreat, but it was a bit difficult to explain here.

Mr. Rose said that this approach had been successful for numerous local governments, including the $80 million, which had a specific timeline. He said that they were currently in a mode where they expected the benefits to start in FY 26, FY 27, and beyond, with upwards of $60 million expected in the next few years. To set the City up, they recommended starting modestly and borrowing dollars, using the Cordish payments to pay them off. He said that this way, the City was not the bank, but rather, the line of credit would act as the bank.

Council Member Cuthbert stated that he had a difficult time understanding how borrowing $30 million to pay for projects was the same thing as paying as they went. It sounded more like they were borrowing more than they needed for the work they were planning on.

Mr. Rose stated that some of their projects were substantial, and it was essential to demonstrate that they had the necessary funds for them. He said that they did not have to settle on $30 million, but that was the amount they had considered reasonable after their discussions with staff. He said that they were thinking about how to bring in these payments and essentially "bank" them, which would allow them to make $30 million in commitments. He stated that as a finance professional, if he knew that there were guaranteed dollars coming in from external entities, he would be more comfortable recommending short-term borrowing, knowing that they would be repaying it with the incoming funds rather than long-term borrowing.

Council Member Cuthbert thanked Mr. Rose for the explanation. He said that this conversation brought back memories of the nightmare they faced in 2017 when they were using payday loans. He asked what the difference was between the short-term loan of $30 million and a payday loan of $30 million.

Mr. Rose said that that was a significant difference. When they did that in 2017, it was solely to cover expenses; that was the only purpose. He emphasized that this was not for the same reason. These funds were not coming from the General Fund, meaning the dollars spent on various projects would be repaid from the Cordish payments, rather than the General Fund; that was the first distinction. The second difference was that short-term borrowing in the form of payday loans, which they had previously arranged, was a last resort to help avoid a difficult situation, as they had no other choice at the time. This was the opposite. They were not using this $30 million until they had a solid $15 million in the bank, and they were not taking on debt to fund these projects.

Mr. Rose added that the City's General Fund unassigned balance, which was around a negative $7 million in 2017, had grown to a positive $40 to $50 million. In terms of their financial position, they were 180 degrees from where they were then. If all of this were to fall apart and they relied on the credit line and only received $15 million, he would not even recommend proceeding until they had the $30 million in place to cover the projects. He reiterated that this was a cash flow accommodation, where they were approaching this from a position of strength, whereas the 2017 situation was a cash flow necessity from a position of weakness, and they had no choice at the time.

Council Member Cuthbert said that both loans were based on spending money they did not yet have.

Mr. Rose clarified that it was the opposite. Before they spent any of that $30 million, they would have already spent $15 million, which was sitting in their account.

Mayor Parham stated that Mr. Rose had provided all of the information on this presentation to Council for them to review. They would be looking at it in much more depth during their Council retreat in August. It was a lot to digest, but they would be reviewing it and discussing it many more times.

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

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that Council had previously discussed this matter in a work session so that staff could hear their thoughts on the matter. They were proposing to provide compensation to the Planning Commission for their duties, including reviewing significant documents and seeking Council's approval of the ordinance. She provided some background information on the item. She explained that staff first presented this idea to Council in May and there was a mix of support and opposition at the time. Those who supported it were generally comfortable with the budgeted amount of $75 per meeting, which was currently allocated in the City's budget for this upcoming year.

Ms. Siodmok said that staff had met with the Planning Commission this month, and there was a discussion about the potential funding. The Planning Commission felt it was appropriate for their funding to be $75 per meeting for those who had not yet received training, and $100 per meeting for those who had completed the Planning Commissioner training program, which was offered by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The program was intensive, consisting of four days of in-person training, three books, and a month-long review period.

Ms. Siodmok said that so far, about half of their Planning Commissioners had attended the training, and the other half were planning to do so soon. As a result, they had made significant progress in understanding the intricacies of reviewing resolutions, special use permits, and zoning ordinances.

Ms. Siodmok stated that staff was proposing the following draft language for the text amendment. The state code section stated that the Council may provide compensation, and they were seeking to specify the details. Staff specified that the compensation for Planning Commissioners would be set at $75 per meeting or $100 per meeting for those who had completed the certified Planning Commissioner program or other training approved by staff. No payments shall be made to Commissioners more than 15 minutes late to a meeting or those absent from a meeting, because they wanted to establish a few guidelines to ensure that Planning Commissioners were present and on time for meetings.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street stated that she was not in favor of compensating Planning Commission members. There was some suggestion in previous discussions that people who gave up their time to help the City government should be compensated for their time, which she would not criticize. She felt that it was volunteerism, and that meant that they did not mean to be paid. She personally felt that the Planning Commissioners should be willing to serve and sacrifice their time without compensation. However, the bigger objective issue was the precedent this decision would set for other boards and commissions. She believed this may result in a much greater cost than just what they were deciding tonight for the Planning Commission. She asked that Council consider the feasibility of administering this change.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Jones asked how many meetings the Planning Commission had per year.

Ms. Siodmok replied that the Planning Commission had regularly scheduled meetings once per month, and met at a minimum 11 times a year. However, due to the current Zoning Ordinance update, they were meeting an additional six or seven times a year as well, inclusive of joint meetings with Council.

Council Member Jones noted that with the proposed numbers, it appeared that the Commission may be compensated equal or more than the City Council was, but he did not see how that was justified. He believed if they were going to do this for the Planning Commission, they should do the same for all of their boards and commissions.

Mayor Parham stated that he believed they may need to table the item so they could gather the information on how to compensate all of their boards and commissions.

Council Member Jones made a motion to table the item so they could gather information on compensating all of their boards and commissions. 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

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

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that Council had received a presentation on this item a few weeks ago, and tonight Council would take action on the item. She introduced Kofi Adih, Chair of the CDBG Advisory Board, who would provide a summary of the item.

Kofi Adih, Chair of the CDBG Advisory Board, stated that he would recap the Program Year 2025 recommendations and seek a decision on how to allocate their program year funds from the City Council. He first wanted to review the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) letter for Program Year 25, as it provided guidance on what they could pursue. As they could see, they had a total of $585,812 to allocate for this program year. They were eligible for Section 108 funding, in addition to capital improvement dollars to allocate to these projects.

Mr. Adih noted that HUD strongly recommended that they focus on supporting opportunity zones, providing gap financing for large-scale community projects, and addressing local housing shortages by expanding the housing supply. These recommendations would ultimately inform their Year 1 Annual Action Plan, which was due to HUD on August 16, 2025. To recap, they had 25 applicants seeking funding for a total of $1,385,355, but they were only allocated about $585,000.

Mr. Adih stated that the breakdown showed how they could allocate the funds to different sectors, including public services, with a 15% cap, and administrative cap. The Advisory Board's recommendations, as discussed in the previous meeting, were provided on the slide and in their report. He noted that City Council had requested answers to a list of their questions, and those were sent out yesterday. He wanted to ensure that everyone had the necessary information as they moved forward with the decision-making process.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Bill Nicholson, 225 High Street, stated that he served as the president of the Petersburg Area Art League. He said that the Art Leage respectfully requested funding to continue the improvements of their building. Over the past two and a half years, they had made significant enhancements to the building, including new bathrooms, a new roof, air conditioning, and securing the space. This had enabled them to provide a clean, mold-free environment where they could offer classes, educational programs, and events for the citizens of Petersburg.

Mr. Nicholson said that they had not only provided a platform for local artists and musicians, free of charge, but had also brought in external talent to elevate the Art League and the City of Petersburg. For example, they had recently collaborated with an individual who created a video showcasing Petersburg, which had garnered over 20,000 views on YouTube and 35 million views of his own work. By engaging these talents, they aimed to create programs and events accessible to citizens and children, including those from Virginia State University (VSU), Appomattox Regional Governors School (ARGS), and other organizations.

Mr. Nicholson said that one notable event where these improvements would be beneficial, was a guest speaker who was a key figure in the 1961 sit-in movement in Jackson, Mississippi. She would be visiting Petersburg on September 13, 2025 to deliver a special presentation, a movie, and a speech. They had planned to host this event in the art park, but lacked the necessary equipment and lighting to do so. This grant would enable them to make improvements to the art park, which would benefit their local musicians, talents, and performing artist programs, as well as external events that would provide exposure to students and residents of Petersburg.

Leonard Curry, 2014 Woodland Road, stated that he served as a member of the CDBG Advisory Committee. He spoke today because last year their recommendations were ignored by the Council, which allocated all the funds to parks. He said that the committee had met with citizens throughout the year, and they had heard what the community needed. He said that this was a housing program, primarily funded by HUD, and they had 150 homes in the town that belonged to primarily widows and widowers, people of his age, and he knew them well.

Mr. Curry noted that these same individuals were active in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, participating in sit-ins and other efforts to open up public spaces. Unfortunately, these homes were in dire need of repair. Their roofs leaked, the plumbing was inadequate, and they had spent approximately $10,000 to $15,000 on these homes. He said that last year, some Council members suggested that these homeowners obtain insurance, but the needs for these homes were not covered by insurance. He said that insurance typically covered damage from natural disasters, such as a tree falling in a house.

Mr. Curry explained that in many of these cases, the problems were due to neglect. He said that many of the homes had been red-tagged, indicating that they were uninhabitable. However, these widows could not move out of their homes, and they continued to live in the red-tagged homes. He urged the Council to please continue to allocate critical home repair funds. He said that these funds were essential for rehabilitating, historic preservation, and other initiatives, including Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Curry implored the Council not to shift the funds away from the critical needs of widows and widowers. He said that many of these homeowners had inherited these homes and had lived in them for so long that the sale price was no longer reflected on the assessor's website. He respectfully requested the Council not to change the funding and let them move forward with critical home repair, addressing the 40 homes that they would be able to repair, and not forget the remaining 110 homes that were not covered by these funds.

Marlow Green, 301 Rolfe Street, said that she was representing OCR Community Empowerment Group, which she founded and led. She said that the funds they were requesting were actually the smallest amount being requested here. Their goal was to utilize these funds to directly benefit the Pocahontas Island neighborhood, a historic district. Several residents had received code compliance notices, and they aimed to assist them in maintaining their homes and bringing them up to code. To achieve this, they planned to conduct home assessments in the neighborhood, as some residents who did not receive code compliance notices had underlying issues such as roofing and plumbing problems.

Ms. Green said that they would partner with a Class A contractor to evaluate these properties and provide cost estimates, which could then be shared with philanthropists, private donors, and other nonprofit organizations who could secure funding to support those in need, allowing them to remain in their homes. She noted that in many cases, code compliance notices could be a catalyst for displacement, while in other instances, residents lacked a safe dwelling. She said that their request was designed to address this issue and revitalize the Pocahantas Island community.

Barbara Rudolph said that she wanted to underscore Mr. Curry’s comments. She reiterated that Council should accept the recommendations as provided by the CDBG Advisory Board without modification. The City Council should not base their decision on any particular nonprofit group or individual with concerns. The CDBG recommendations had been carefully vetted, and she had confidence in their thoroughness. As someone who regularly attended CDBG meetings, she was impressed by the dedication and seriousness of the Board about this issue.

Ms. Rudolph noted that several nonprofits had already been heard from, and she believed they were all worthy organizations. She thought this selection represented an excellent cross-section of community needs. While there may not be enough funding to address everything, she believed this was a worthy proposal that should be approved without further modifications.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Myers noted that according to the list, he noticed a difference of $3,375.09. However, with respect to this particular motion, he would not attempt to find an appropriate place for that money.

Council Member Myers made a motion to direct the City Manager to provide a scope of regulatory recommendations at their upcoming retreat, based on the needed improvements within the community, and to approve the following allocations: People's Advantage Federal Credit Union, $101,467; YMCA, $19,412; Pretty Purposed, $9,706; Parks and Leisure Department, $166,751; Black Resilience and Advancement through Volunteering and Empowerment (BRAVE), $5,000, Downtown Churches United, $2,000, Coalition on Homelessness, Crater Area Coalition on Homelessness, and Virginia Community Resource Center, in conjunction, $88,000; Healthy Start Loving Steps, $9,706; The Alamo Recovery House, $20,000; Hebron, $19,438; Administration and Operations, $116,000; and PAL, $15,250.

Mr. Adih clarified that an updated version had reconciled the differential amount referenced by Council Member Myers.

Council Member Jones 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, and Myers; No: Smith-Lee; Abstain: Parham; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

Mayor Parham explained that he abstained from the vote because he did not accept the CDBG Board recommendations.

9. PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD

Cherub Jordan, 427 South Adams Street, stated that that six months after closing on her South Adams Petersburg home, she was on the phone with a realtor and a loan officer. She explained that park grounds were overgrown with grasses that reached her shins and sometimes her knees, making it nearly impossible to pick up after her puppy. She said that a recently roped-off buckled bridge that had not been repaired restricted park use. She said that a beautiful 40-year-old flower bed, which had once been a lovely feature near the fountain, had been destroyed, leaving a hurtful and unsightly mess. Sidewalk weeds were growing hip-high in the sidewalk cracks.

Ms. Jordan said that the dilapidated fences were leaning heavily into the sidewalk area next to her home. There was also widespread illegal dumping, likely exacerbated by the City's dump policy, which refused to take items from citizens. A tree was actively growing into service lines, and service companies were passing the buck. She said that worst of all, vehicle drivers were frequently moving through and standing in residential neighborhoods, blasting music so loud that the bass rumbled interior walls in residents' homes and moved objects across tables.

Janine Lester stated that she would be serving as the new City Arborist for the City of Petersburg. She had been working and planning, and this was her third week. She said that she was very pleased to be there. She said that she was unsure if they would finish the agenda tonight, but she hoped Council would consider implementing a strategic tree canopy plan for the City so that she had something to do.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street, said that she wanted to welcome Ms. Lester and was so thrilled they had a City arborist. She said that she was glad Ms. Lester was present to hear her next comment, which she had been planning to make for months. As referenced by Ms. Jordan, she wanted to discuss the recent removal of the hydrangea shrubs and other plants at the fountain at Poplar Lawn Park. She personally witnessed the beauty of these plants last fall, and it was senseless to cut those down. According to a City staff member, this was a major error made by Public Works. It was inexcusable that they would cut down such beautiful plants without a clear reason.

Ms. Rudolph was told that the decision was made to remove vines from a building in a different part of the park, but it seemed they had mistakenly targeted the fountain area and butchered all of those plants, which was a travesty. Furthermore, she recalled a similar incident involving two beautiful Japanese maples flanking the steps to the Exchange Building. She was surprised to see these two trees destroyed, considering they were not causing any issue with the building or in bad health. She knew a lot about Japanese maples and knew they were easy to prune, non-invasive, and not a danger to infrastructure. She hoped they were not removed just because they were not native plants.

Ms. Rudolph requested that Council employee people who understood the care and maintenance of plants. She would be happy to donate her time to prune Japanese maples anywhere in the City. Additionally, she was hoping that Council could intercede with Dominion regarding the tree-cutting issue with their contractor, Xylem. The current approach seemed to be solely focused on preventing branches from hanging over power lines, resulting in trees being cut off on one side, which was unattractive and detrimental to the tree. She was grateful for the upcoming tree canopy plan, which would include planting new trees, but they must also prioritize the care and preservation of the existing trees, many of which had been mutilated.

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

Council Member Cuthbert said that he would like to echo the comments made by Ms. Jordan and Ms. Rudolph. He agreed that what Public Works had done to the hydrangeas was inexcusable. He said that cutting down flowers was not a standard practice, and it was unacceptable that they would do so. It was clear that there was inadequate oversight in Public Works, and it was not the fault of the employees who were undirected, but rather the lack of direction from those who were supposed to be directing. He requested City Manager Altman look into how to do better in the future.

Council Member Cuthbert said that secondly, he would like to inform the public about an upcoming Ward 4 meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, at 5:30 p.m. in this room. The purpose of the meeting was to continue their discussion on speeding and ways to mitigate it. He understood that the administration had been working on traffic calming techniques and would present their conclusions and progress at the meeting. This was a continuation of the May meeting, which had been helpful in setting the table for moving forward and identifying problem areas. He noted that he had submitted traffic calming requests on behalf of each constituent that had raised a particular issue to him. He invited all members of the public to come to the meeting to discuss any speeding issues they had noticed.

Mayor Parham wished everyone a happy Juneteenth holiday, which was coming up this Thursday and would give employees a well-deserved day off. He expressed his gratitude for the wonderful Juneteenth event they had held at Petersburg High School, which featured a great concert and had a tremendous turnout despite the inclement weather. He addressed the City Manager and asked what progress they had made on the Oak Hill Bridge.

City Manager Altman replied that they were moving forward with the Oak Hill project, and designs were currently being prepared so that they could put it out to bid.

Mayor Parham asked if that was included in the Davenport presentation.

City Manager Altman replied no; Council had already appropriated those funds and the project was in progress.

11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

12. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

a. Department of Finance Monthly Update

Garry Cozier, Budget Manager, stated that he would provide the monthly update on the budget. Beginning with budget to actuals, 11 out of 12 months of the fiscal year had elapsed, so 91% of the year was complete. Their bottom line was on track, with 87% of their budgeted spend having been incurred. Overall, they were doing well in terms of meeting their budgeted and actualized expenses. He noted that Dogwood was showing an overspend, but it was supported by revenues and their Enterprise Funds were self-supporting, so they were not concerned about the overspend.

Mr. Cozier said that next, he would discuss the earned interest update. The amended budget projection for earned interest was increased to $2.2 million, up from the original $1.4 million. To date, they had earned $2.177 million, which was in line with their target of $2.2 million for the remainder of the fiscal year. They were expected to meet this target and would continue to invest the earned interest.

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

This item was tabled until the July meeting of City Council.

b. Consideration of Appointment to the Architectural Review Board

This item was tabled until the July meeting of City Council.

c. Consideration of Recommendations to the Board of Zoning Appeals

This item was tabled until the July meeting of City Council.

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

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that she was thrilled to have Janine Lester, their new City Arborist, with them today, who was excited to implement this effort. She said that their consultants from Green Infrastructure Center would provide a brief summary of the item. She noted that they had received a lot of community engagement on this effort and were hoping to move forward with this matter after the Council approved a Resolution of their support.

Jessica Huang, Community Forestry Planner, provided an overview of the Strategic Tree Canopy Plan for Petersburg. The program would be funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Virginia Department of Forestry. The official name of Petersburg's program would be the Community Forest Revitalization Program. There would be a Phase 1 of City Wide Planning and a Phase 2 of Community Focused Implementation. The analysis of the tree canopy cover and benefits began with mapping the Petersburg tree canopy, which found the City had 45% tree canopy coverage. However, the tree canopy was not evenly distributed and there was a 76% difference between neighborhoods.

Ms. Huang explained that focusing on the tree canopy was important because of the deep and varied ecosystem services provided by the urban forest to their community's health and finances. The main areas that Petersburg residents focused on in their engagement was reducing urban heat, air quality, and flood reduction. In addition to being identified as community values, these goals aligned well with the Petersburg Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the goal was to maintain tree canopy cover at 43% over the next 20 years. This goal accounted for Petersburg's projected future development projects, so a coordinated effort of the City and private property owners was essential.

Kendall Topping, Community Forester, provided an overview of the strategies the Green Infrastructure Center developed with staff and the community to achieve the goal of maintaining 43% of the tree canopy. They were to hire a City Arborist, to increase the City's capacity to care for newly planted trees and public projects, to train City staff in methods of green infrastructure and vegetation management, to ensure long-term success by following a "right tree right place" policy, to expand community knowledge and support for tree maintenance, to expand community involvement in tree stewardship, to increase the preservation of the existing large trees before and during development projects, to plant trees along transportation corridors, pedestrian routes, and business districts to beautify the City's entryways and welcome visitors, and finally to expand the equitable distribution of tree canopy benefits across Petersburg by increasing tree canopy in low-canopy communities.

Ms. Huang stated that the next steps for the program were the Council's vote on the Public Tree Ordinance update on July 15, Greening Petersburg Planning Workshops on July 14 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tree Care 101 free educational classes on Monday July 21 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30

p.m., and the City Council's vote on the Zoning Code Update on September 16. She said that it was recommended that City Council adopt the Strategic Tree Canopy Plan.

Council Member Jones asked what the plan was for the East Washington Street tree project. He noted that the corridor had already begun to look better with their improvements so far.

Ms. Siodmok stated that they had successfully secured the contract, thanks to the Crater Planning District's funding of $335,000 for studying and implementing improvements on East Washington Street. They were collaborating with Public Works to involve Timmons Group in their efforts, who would assist in identifying utilities and determining areas where planting was feasible. She noted that their primary focus was on a pilot project.

Ms. Siodmok said that they had discussed the importance of emphasizing the gateway, but their goal was to engage the community in identifying and suggesting locations for planting once they had located utilities and assessed feasibility. They had already received requests from the Public Works Department, and if they had had the opportunity to visit the area, they may have noticed that even the outdoor spaces could benefit from improvements, such as additional shade and attractive trees. Therefore, they were planning to work with the community to determine the best locations for planting.

Council Member Jones noted that it was too hot to put anything in the ground right now. He asked if they could plant trees by the end of the year.

Ms. Siodmok explained that given the contract was signed so late, they had a year from the date of signing, which began in June. Therefore, the planting season would be from December to March. This also coincided with when the funding would expire. Consequently, they needed to design and plant within this one-year time frame.

Council Member Jones asked if they were moving forward with that planting as quickly as possible.

Ms. Siodmok confirmed that yes; they were working with Public Works on this.

Council Member Jones stated that he had noticed that many trees were overhanging into the street so far that taller recreational vehicles may have their roofs scraped by them. He asked if Public Works could trim the trees, without butchering them, so that they would not damage vehicles.

City Manager Altman confirmed that staff could look into that, and if there were specific areas of concern, he would ask them to let staff know so the City Arborist could work on trimming street trees.

Ms. Siodmok noted that they were also partnering with their new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst to utilize GIS for mapping their inventory of public trees in the right-of-way, their health, and maintenance needs. This data would be essential in helping them regularly maintain the City trees and they were very excited to get that started.

Council Member Jones noted that one of the objectives in the Tree Canopy Strategic Plan was to prioritize preservation of trees before and during development projects. He noted that in Berkley Manor, someone butchered every tree around their park, so the park lost all of its shade and was a hot zone now. He knew it was from the development and it was very concerning that neither the City nor the residents received any notice that they planned to do that. He expressed concern that when his constituents asked him what was going on, he did not have an answer, and this reflected poorly on him, despite it being the fault of the developer rather than the City.

City Manager Altman acknowledged that the developer of the next phase of Berkley Manor had clear cut the property rather than selectively clearing trees. They were close to the park so the City made sure they were not damaging City property, but unfortunately, it was private property and the developer chose to clear-cut the lot, which affected the existing residents of the area and the shade that benefited the adjacent park.

Ms. Siodmok added that she believed Council would be pleased to hear that staff would be presenting regulations, Zoning Ordinance changes, and City Code updates to help manage trees on City property as well as trees on private property. She explained that as they were located within the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, they would be able to establish preservation standards for trees on private property, giving them more authority to protect trees on private property. She said that they were quite excited about this development.

Council Member Jones expressed his gratitude to everyone working on these improvements.

Council Member Jones made a motion to adopt the Resolution of Council Support for and Adoption of the Strategic Tree Canopy Plan as submitted. Council Member Smith-Lee 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

14. NEW BUSINESS

a. FIRST READING/SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING FOR: An Ordinance to Amend and Re-Adopt Section 46-92 of the City Code to Change the Polling Place for the First Ward to Lakemont Elementary (****Public Hearing/Consideration for Adoption to be held on July 1, 2025**)

This item was discussed after Item 8f.

b. Adoption of a Resolution to Re-Appoint Mr. Kenneth Pritchett to the Brightpoint Community College Board to Serve a Second Four-Year Term from July 1, 2025 until June 30, 2029

Council Member Myers made a motion to adopt the Resolution to Re-Appoint Mr. Kenneth Pritchet to the Brightpoint Community College Board to Serve a Second Four-Year Term from July 1, 2025 until June 30, 2029. Council Member Smith-Lee 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

c. Multi-Year Strategic Plan Finance Update – Davenport & Company, LLC

This item was discussed after Item 8f and Item 14a.

d. Adoption of Resolution in Support of Expanding the Federal Child Tax Credit Proposed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Mayor Parham explained that this resolution aimed to expand the child tax credit, which would help reduce childhood poverty. He said that under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, they experienced the largest recorded decline in child poverty in U.S. history, reducing it by nearly half, from 9.7% in 2020 to 5.2% by 2021.

Council Member Smith-Lee made a motion to adopt the Resolution in Support of Expanding the Federal Child Tax Credit Proposed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Council Member Jones 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, Smith-Lee, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A; Absent: Westbrook, Hill.

15. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT AND SPECIAL REPORTS

John Altman, City Manager, stated that he would like to take a moment to recognize their Planning Director, Ms. Siodmok. Tonight marked her last meeting with them, as she was moving on to a new opportunity with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). He thanked Ms. Siodmok for all of her hard work with Petersburg. He also wanted her to explain the Jamestown Award the City would be receiving at the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association conference this summer.

Ms. Siodmok stated that she was thrilled to share this news with them. They had been nominated by the Berkeley Group, one of their consultants, to receive the Jamestown Award, which recognized the Locality of the Year for their planning efforts. As a result, they had been identified as the City of the Year by the Virginia Association of Planning. She was very excited about this recognition and for her team, who had been outstanding in their work.

Ms. Siodmok said that Mr. Jared Crews was there tonight and would be a key contributor to their efforts. She was also excited about the progress they were making in their department, particularly in their tree conservation and transportation initiatives. They had received numerous grants that were yet to be realized, but she was eager to see them come to fruition.

City Manager Altman noted that this award was a testament to the hard work that Ms. Siodmok and the department had accomplished over the last few years. He congratulated Ms. Siodmok on this well-deserved recognition, wished her good luck, and said they would all miss her.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

Tangi Hill, City Clerk, stated that she had nothing to report this evening.

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY

Anthony Williams, City Attorney, stated that he had nothing to report this evening.

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 8:05 p.m.

Adopted 07/15/2025

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk