

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2024 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday
January 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Mayor
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor
Rita Joyner, Councilor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Janice Denton, Councilor
Brenda Pelham, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor (Late 6:18)

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to allow Councilor Harris and Councilor and
Vice Mayor Gore to participate remotely, Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	(Absent)
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Abstained
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	Abstained
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 4-0

CLOSED MEETING:

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-371 1 (A)(I) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments; the assignment and performance of specific appointee and employees of City Council, and 2.2-3711 (A) (29) "Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interview of bidders or offers, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affects the bargaining positions or negotiating strategy of the public body." and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, seconded by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	(Absent)
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	Yes
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Reconvene Open Meeting

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to reconvene open meeting. Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0**CERTIFICATION:**

CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE §2.2-3712 (D): Were only public business matters (1) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (2) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed session?

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to appoint Councilor Pelham as a non-voting member to the HRHA board and Councilor Joyner as a non-voting member to the EDA board and to have both of them provide monthly updates to city council, per the resolution. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

WORK SESSION

WS-1- Developmental Fees- Chris Ward, Director of Development explains how the fees are set up in the department and how the planning application fees cause the city to lose a little bit of money. The development department has two sets of fees, the building and trade permit fees for residential commercial construction, and planning application fees. Staff did a comparison of what we charge for permits and applications and the table shows, with building permits, for residential permits. We are on the low end in the region with Hopewell, Petersburg, Colonial Heights and Prince George. We are at \$25 plus the state surcharge, as a basic explanation for our permits. The primary applicants for residential building related permits are going to be property owner and builders and contractors. On the commercial side, we are in the middle for our pricing in the region. Petersburg is lowest and colonial heights also at \$75. We are at \$100 and Prince George ranges between \$100 and \$200. Mr. Ward states that for commercial related building permits, the primary person pulling those types of permits is a contractor or business owner. On the planning applications, such as re-zonings, variances, conditional use permits and zoning ordinance amendments, we are significantly lower than our counterparts in the region; ranging between \$2- \$300 per application. The others are significantly higher. The primary applicants for these type of applications are going to be developers, property owners, real estate investors and business owners. The costs come in is the state law requires us to advertise for public hearings for these applications and the cost of advertisement is really where we end up losing a little bit of money every time one of these applications is submitted. As an example, the fee to file a rezoning application is \$300 but the minimum advertising cost for the

public hearings is \$622.44. By virtue of that application being submitted, the City is going to lose \$322 and change. It's a little different for each one, as you down the list but the net result being the City, over a years' time, based off the average number of applications submitted, the City's going to lose about \$4,000. Mr. Ward states this is not huge amounts of money but he wanted to bring this to our attention. As a summary, our residential building permit fees are the lowest in the region. Our commercial building permit fees are second highest our planning fees are lowest. These planning fees do not cover the cost for advertisement. Mr. Ward concludes tonight's just a work session but at this point staff is proposing to keep residential building permit fees the same. My previous director brought this to you a number of years ago. There was some concern at council level we want to encourage property owners to improve their properties and, therefore, keep residential building fees at a reasonable cost; staff agrees with that. We are in the middle on commercial building permit fees and I think you can make the same argument with commercial building permit fees, staff's not recommending any changes there. We are recommending raising the planning fees to cover the cost of advertisement. We have come up with these numbers that puts us kind of right in the middle. He states they are not settled on these fees but thinks the fees should, at least cover the cost of advertisement.

WS-2- Re-Zoning for Proposed Hope Crest Development-Chris Ward, Director of Development. Mr. Ward states this is a rezoning request for particular parcels, 106-0200, 106-0105, 106-0285, 106-0490 and 106-0735. These parcels are locally referred to as the Butor Tract, near 295 and west of the former Colonial Corner Shopping center. The applicant on this rezoning is Mansour Real Estate, LLC. The owner is Abu M, LLC. The area we are dealing with tonight total is 27.71 acres located in Ward 7. It's commercially zoned B3 and R3 and the proposed zoning of what the applicants requesting is the R3 change to R4, the B3 remain the same and then have a planned unit development zoning overlay applied to all the parcels. In the comprehensive plan, the area is designated as interchange commercial. Mr. Ward states the application was received in October of 2022 and spent a long time working with the applicant on the plans, designs and guarantees that the company was willing to offer. Signs were placed out at this property back in November of 2022. Mr. Ward goes on to describe the actions taken by the applicant to notify adjacent property owners and the public of their property proposal. He also goes into detail of the units, townhomes and landscaping; laying out the concept plan. Mr. Ward talks about particular challenges associated with these particular properties, with the primary challenge being access. Staff has done an extensive review of the application. Mr. Ward has put together a table that shows how their proposal complies or doesn't comply with the comprehensive plan.

If you see a checkmark beside an item, means that staff believes their proposal agrees or is in alignment with the comprehensive plan. If you see a horizontal line, that means it doesn't necessarily align or not align with it; it's sort of even. There are two elements like this. Mr. Ward explains the mixed use element and the Parks and Recreation. An overview was given for the townhomes and multi-family units. Mr. Ward comments more detail will be given by Mr. Mons, the applicant. The applicant was willing to agree to substantial conformance with exhibit C, which I will show I the next slide, which means what's pictured is what they will build. Details for staff comments, the project is generally in alignment with the comprehensive plan. The development does provide new and varied housing the city's housing stock. With the proffers that have been offered by the developer, staff believes we have been able to secure a quality development. All city departments including the public schools, have provided general support and Development staff have provided general support. Planning commission voted 4-0 to recommend approval for the application. Mr. Ward ends his presentation and introduces David Mons, who is representing the applicant. Mr. Mons talks about being from the City of Hopewell, grew up in Hopewell and graduated in Hopewell. He gives the names and positions of the members of the Hope Crest team. Mr. Mons describes what is Hope Crest and gives details of the town homes, apartment units and the amenities. He discusses the location and rezoning the parcels. He states the estimated construction will begin on the infrastructure late summer of 2024 and gives the estimated units that can be built each year until completed. Mr. Monz gives several reasons why Hope Crest is important to Hopewell. He talks about the details of the landscaping to include a storm water pond and walking trails. Mr. Mons points to the site information and total acreage of the development. There will be a total of 173 townhomes in City of Hopewell and 56 townhomes in Prince George County, making it a total of 229. He gives the site plan legend information. The townhomes will be priced in the high 200s' to mid 300s' contingent upon market conditions. Mr. Monz hopes by the time these townhomes are erected, we'll be in a favorable position for the prospective owners. He concludes his presentation by giving his companies contact information.

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Partin calls the Regular Meeting to order

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Mayor
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor
Rita Joyner, Councilor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Janice Denton, Councilor
Brenda Pelham, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor

Prayer by Pastor Hart, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilor Holloway.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the Regular Meeting Agenda and second by Councilor Denton.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda and second by Councilor Joyner

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

INFORMATION/ PRESENTATIONS

- 1. Finance Report-Robert Bobb Group-** Jack Reid talks about the milestone of the week from the status report with successfully completing the reconciliation of your cash balances for the fiscal year 2020. He discusses what that has allowed them to do in moving forward on the next months to be 100 percent reconciled. He states he has met with the external auditors and confirmed they will begin working on the audit of 2020. The external auditors will send Mr. Reid a link to upload all of the 2019 remediated reconciliations and all of the 2020 reconciliation. He reminds council they will take a period of 45 to 60 days to complete the audit while Robert Bobb is doing the following fiscal year. He explains as they finish the last audit, we will give them the next years audit and we will keep exchanging that back and forth through the remainder of the winter and into the spring until we bring the accounts current, hopefully by mid-May or end of May of the year 2024. Mr. Reid states he is very optimistic about the status of the reconciliations, and being able to get the audits begun. I consider that a win for the city of Hopewell and I appreciate the tremendous support that we've gotten from the City manager certainly her staff, members of the finance dept., members of the Treasurers' office have been wonderful in providing with documentation and any institutional knowledge that they had of the transactions going on then. It's genuinely been a team effort in all of this. Mr.

Reid states that there has been a concurrent path on standard operating procedures and getting them updated. Robert Bobb greets the City Council and further discusses progress of the Standard Operating Procedures, stating it is moving along extraordinarily well. He talks of working with key departments and his plans and expectations for Standard Operating procedures for the City of Hopewell. Mr. Bobb discusses the Industry Teams and the City's' Enterprise Accountants having identified certain discrepancies in the preparation of the 2018 2019-year end reconciliations. In regard to the Industry of Accounts, we have had a pretty deep meeting this week to really look at the issues that our inner private accountants have. Mr. Bobb adds that they are receiving extraordinary cooperation from Dickie and his team at the utilities. Mr. Bobb gives information of having the Munis team on the ground next week. He gives some details of a very deep schedule for the Munis team and the different departments they will be training. He walks thru what the expectations are for the training while the Munis team is here and taking a harder look at how we staff the on-going work in terms of the Munis System going forward. The team will be here thru the current end of this fiscal year and roll out in early fall of next year. Mr. Bobb states information about an area of risk that he discussed with the city council and having a necessary internal working session with City Council on the utilization of red revenues and how they need to spend some time working thru this particular issue. In summary, we continue to be extraordinarily excited about our work. Mr. Bobb adds, there is no documented process that remediate the risk currently spending, particularly excess current cash balances. Again, we believe all of those issues we work together with the city staff, with the Treasurers' office, who have been most cooperative and with the finance department; that we will be in a position to mitigate these particular issues as well any risk that we see going forward as it relates to our work. Mr. Bobb highlights key points of information in his presentation. Information was given about the Munis training sessions, for the school system, this year and next year. The bottom line is we are continuing to focus on the overall City's' financial operations. Mr. Bobb acknowledges the work and dedication put forth by his colleagues and team. He recognizes the work being done with respect to the City of Hopewell departments.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

- 1. Sharah' Fuller-** Wanted to say she appreciates everything that you were talking about and appreciates some of the questions. Ms. Fuller talks about the heavy rain, downpours and flooding that has been in and around Ward 5 and what she had to do in her home during the storm. She would like to know what's happening with the storm water and the water flowing off the streets onto our properties. She states storm water fees are being paid when we pay our taxes but what's being done because I see storm water drive by everyday but I'm also seeing water flowing from the street onto my property. And I got to pay somebody to come pump it off to make sure my house doesn't sink or something else. Ms. Fuller asks council if anyone knows of an answer or if that is a fair question and if that is an allowed question. Dr. Manker answers Ms. Fuller to leave her information to the Clerk and will reach out to Public Works and get back to Ms. Fuller. Ms. Fuller apologizes and comments on the new properties coming to Hopewell and the military. She talks about the responsibility of homeowners and renters when it comes to regulations. She mentions the Serenity Prayer in noting to council everything you can do, you do.
- 2. Tommy Wells-** States he has noticed a big problem and he has heard it mentioned at council meeting in past times. When coming in tonight from Clay street, to get to the council meeting, counted seven cars that were parked on the wrong side of the street, one in two block space, that's how many cars were parked on the wrong side of the road. I thought something was being done to address that but I haven't seen anything happen. Mr. Wells also talks about the city not being kept very well. He says there is a house on the corner of Clay and Smithfield, where the grass has not been cut since July of last year. You can't run a city and let people let things run like the dickens all the time. It looks so bad. Mr. Wells states he has a next door neighbor that has not cut his grass. There was never a week that the previous owner didn't cut the grass when he lived there. He states we are letting the city go down, we have rules people are supposed to follow but it's not being done. He wants us to enforce the rules, it's dangerous for people to park on the wrong side of the street because they pullout and don't see you. Mayor Partin asks Dr. Manker if she can have Mr. Ward and Chief Taylor, whichever gets the Right of ways for citations, can someone be sent out to the Farming Dale neighborhood. Previous speaker, Sharah' Fuller, comes up to the podium to add some information to Mr. Wells stated information. Mr. Ward gave the phone number (804)541-2226, to report the code issues or citations for the City of Hopewell, which was then repeated by Mayor Partin.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1- Riverside Board of Commissions Resolutions-Dr. Concetta Manker, City Manager. There is a resolution that requires a board to appoint the City Manager to the Riverside Community Criminal Justice Board. The city is asking for your approval to appoint the city manager as the City liaison.

Councilor Denton makes the motion to appoint Dr. Manker to the Riverside Jail Board, per the resolution. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-2- Re-appropriate Faced Improvement Grants funds- Chris Ward, Director of Development. In February of 2022, City Council approved an appropriation of \$40,000 from rescue plan money to the downtown Façade grant money program. It was for four particular properties that had undergone some rehabilitation work. Monies from that \$40,000 were used as part of the Facade Improvement grant program to reimburse 50 percent of some eligible costs. Mr. Ward states that he thinks when the former director asked for the \$40,000, she was basing that number off \$10,000 per property. When staff reviewed all the documentation that was turned in to verify costs, there was \$8,622.57 that was not claimed. The money remains un-spent today. Tonight, Mr. Ward asks for re-appropriation of these funds back to the Façade Improvement Grant Program. If you are to do so, Staff

would put the word on the street with a revised program seeking applicants where an applicant could receive up to 50 percent of reimburse costs for eligible façade improvements and we were going to limit it to \$2,000 for specific Façade improvements or up to \$1,500 for just signage related improvements. Mr. Ward is here tonight to ask for council to re-appropriate those funds back to the Façade Improvement Grant Program.

Councilor Pelham makes the motion to re-appropriate the unspent Façade Improvement Grant funds totaling \$8,622.57 back into the city's Façade Improvement Grant fund for new eligible recipients. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	No
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-1

R-3- Resolution Adopting Emergency and Inclement Weather Operations and Safety Policy- Dr. Manager, City Manager. Every year, the first Tuesday in January, we vote to approve and adopt the Inclement Weather Operation Policy. It states that if we have to move a meeting, it is to be moved to the next Tuesday or if the council so chooses, they can choose another date. The city requests action on this tonight.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion that we adopt the resolution for Emergency and Inclement Weather Operations and Safety Policy. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore-	(Excused)
Council Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

For the sake of time, Mayor Partin moves the Reports of City Clerk item (Adoption of FY24 Council Meeting Schedule) to the next Regular City Council on January 23, 2024

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Holloway motions to adjourn

Yes- 6

No- 0



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor