



July 22nd, 2025
Martinsville City Council
Meeting Minutes

5:30 PM Work Session: Room 208, Municipal Building

1. Comprehensive Plan Briefing by Berkley Group

Joint Update with Planning Commission

a. Comprehensive Plan Update

A joint meeting of the Martinsville City Council and Planning Commission was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Attendance

All members of City Council were present. A quorum of the Planning Commission was also established.

Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Update

Staff and consultants presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan, which addresses the following key elements:

- Community Health and Safety
- Housing
- Transportation
- Future Land Use
- Economy and Workforce Development
- Natural and Historic Resources



Community Engagement Summary

Three types of community engagement were conducted as part of the planning process:

1. Community Drop-Ins

Held at:

- Martinsville Middle School
- YMCA
- New College Institute (NCI)
- Ground Floor Coffee Shop

2. Public Survey

- Open for 3 months
- Conducted online and with printed handouts
- 201 total responses received

3. Focus Groups

- Seven total
- Included participants from:
 - Boards and Commissions
 - Economic Development Organizations
 - Students and Youth Stakeholders



Survey Findings

Positive Community Attributes Identified:

- Natural Beauty
- Trails and Outdoor Recreation
- Friendly Community
- Affordability
- Rich History and Culture
- Proximity to Urban Areas
- Small-Town Charm
- Community Pride
- Eagerness for Proactive Planning

Identified Needs for Investment:

- Public Schools
- Hospitality Services
- Family-Friendly Activities
- Infrastructure Upgrades
- Healthcare Access
- Partnerships with Henry County and Regional Service Providers

Top Priorities Expressed by Respondents:

- Living-Wage Jobs and Career Advancement
- Support for Small Businesses
- Revitalization of Uptown
- Youth Development Programs
- Expansion of Arts and Cultural Resources
- Wayfinding and Public Art
- Creation of Third Spaces (e.g., parks, Ground Floor, mini-parks, patios)
- Mental Health Services and Spaces
- Youth Programs and Career Exploration
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Youth Business Development Workshops
- Targeted Maternal Care Programs



Housing and Development Concerns:

- Increased housing options
- Reduced housing cost burden
- Support for mixed-use and infill development
- Addressing neglect in certain neighborhoods

Key Plan Themes: “THRIVE”

- **T**ransformative Vision
- **H**ealthy Community
- **R**esilient Economy
- **I**ntentional Development
- **V**ibrant Uptown
- **E**nhanced Infrastructure

Additional Discussion

Council and Planning Commission discussed the possibility of future solo meetings between the Planning Commission and the Berkeley Group. Staff noted that such meetings would require approval from City Council and an allocation of funding.

The next City Council Comprehensive Plan Work Session with the Berkeley Group is scheduled for **October 28, 2025**.

2. Discuss Consent Agenda Items

- a. Discuss and Consider June 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes and June 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- b. Discuss and Consider Appropriation Resolution



7:00 PM Regular Session: Council Chambers, Municipal Building

1. Call to Order
 - a. Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 7pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation
 - a. Councilwoman Lawson led the Invocation.
4. Presentations and Proclamation
 - a. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (FY 24)
 - i. No incidents of non-compliance.
 - ii. Two deficiencies: Material Audit Adjustments, timely reimbursements for Grants.
 - b. YOYO's Film -- Presentation of Local Film Being Produced (Filming July 28th - August 12th)
 - i. Filming of a local movie showcasing the natural beauty of Martinsville. "Unpacking," a political coming-home movie. A feature length film that will be submitted to festivals around the world. Currently in pre-production and photography will begin next Tuesday.
 - c. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Update
 - i. An update from the Fire Department that also included EMS updates. 2,574 total emergency responses, 328 Smoke Detector Installations and over 30 Car Seat Installations.
5. Consent Agenda
 - a. Discuss and Consider June 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes and June 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes
 - i. Motion to approve was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
 - b. Discuss and Consider Appropriation Resolution
 - i. Motion to approve was made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Julian Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



6. Regular Agenda or New Business

a. Hold Public Hearing for Request for Rezone and Council Discussion

- i. Public Hearing held for First Presbyterian Church.
- ii. Motion to Open Public Hearing made by Kathy Lawson and Seconded by Julian Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- iii. Motion to Close Public Hearing was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- iv. Motion to approve ordinance on first reading was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.

b. Hold Public Hearing for Request for Street Abandonment and Council Discussion

- i. Public Hearing held for Request of Right of Way Abandonment on East Church St.
- ii. Motion to Open Public Hearing Motion to approve was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- iii. Motion to Close Public Hearing was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



- iv. Motion to approve right of way abandonment and in the preparation of an ordinance request was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- c. Discuss and Consider Setting August 28th as Community Meeting Date
 - i. 5pm Precinct 4 Tour with a 6pm Meeting Start Time
 - ii. Motion to approve was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- d. Discuss and Consider Setting a Special-Called Closed Session Meeting Date
 - i. July 23rd at 5:15 pm. Open Session in Council Chambers and Closed Session Room 208
 - 1. Motion to alter closed session agenda language made by Aaron Rawls to set a special-called session for July 23rd at 5:15pm with open session expected to resume before or around 6:15 pm in City Council Chambers and seconded by Kathy Lawson.
 - 2. Motion to add Addendum to Closed Session Meeting in regards to Opioid Litigation with an option to take action in Open Session made by Councilman Rawls and seconded by Kathy Lawson.
- e. Discuss and Consider Board Appointments
 - i. School Board
 - 1. Motion to Appoint Michael Williamson to school board for a term ending in 06/30/2028 was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



- ii. Planning Commission
 - 1. Motion to Appoint Brandon Martin to Planning Commission with a term ending in 12/31/2030 was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- iii. Board of Appeals
 - 1. Motion to Appoint Wayne Draper to Board of Appeals with a term ending 12/31/2030 was made by Kathy Lawson and seconded by Councilman Gravely. Motion was approved with the following 3:2 vote; Councilman Rawls, no; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, no; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- f. Discuss and Consider Drawn Together Project Hope Application for Project Hope Grant
 - i. Interactive art on City areas. Chalkboard frames and chalk stations for interactive art on areas such as the Dick and Willie Trail. Through Harvest Project Hope Grant.
 - ii. Asking for City Approval and Fiscal Support
 - 1. Motion to approve application and authorize Mayor to sign letter of support was made by Julian Mei and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



- g. Discuss and Consider Tree Boards' Application for Project Hope Grant
 - i. Tree Board aims to have a Tree Giveaway in collaboration with Virginia Museum of Natural History through the Project Hope Grant. Grant request is for \$12,500 to distribute 100 native trees this October to City Residents.
 - ii. Motion to approve application and authorize Mayor to sign letter of support was made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Julian Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- h. Discuss and Consider Youth Advisory Committee's Application for Project Hope Grant
 - i. The YAC aims to have a Movies in the Park series through a Project Hope Grant.
 - ii. Motion to approve application and authorize Mayor to sign letter of support was made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Julian Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- i. Discuss and Consider Sunsetting of Citizen Advisory Board and Emergency Housing and Community Support Commission
 - i. Chairman of Emergency Housing and Community Support Commission would like to Sunset the board.
 - ii. Motion to keep Boards the same made by Mayor Jones and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



- iii. Motion to Table Mayor's motion for consideration at a later date made by Julian Mei and seconded by Mayor Jones. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- j. Discuss and Consider Authorizing the Mayor to Sign MiNet Environmental Review Record
 - i. Motion to approve application and authorize Mayor to sign made by Aaron Rawls and seconded by Mayor Jones. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- k. Discuss and Consider March 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes
 - i. Motion to approve minutes made by Kathy Lawson and Seconded by Rayshaun Gravley. Motion was approved with the following 3:1:1 vote: Councilman Rawls, abstain; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, no; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
 - ii. Amended Motion to ratify and confirm a change City Manager's Salary to \$215,000 and deferred compensation from \$7,000 to \$10,000 effective April 1, 2025. Motion was approved with the following 3:2 vote; Councilman Rawls, no; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, no; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



1. Discuss and Consider Refuse Ordinance
 - i. Amended Motion: Motion to adopt Refuse Ordinance as written to be effective in ninety days upon this second reading made by Councilman Rawls and seconded by Julian Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- m. Discuss and Consider Temporary Space Solutions to Support Emergency Relocation Needs
 - i. Emergency Relocation of City hall is now a more pressing issue. Second Floor, Administrative Staff relocating to a temporary location in order to allow for City Hall workers in the basement to move to more habitable working spaces. Office Options being considered: Patrick Henry Mall, Modular Trailers, and Clocktower.
 - ii. Holding off on Council Action until Walk-Through and Proposed Lease being Reviewed by Legal Counsel, suggested by Sands Anderson.
 - iii. Motion to start a negotiation pending Legal review and sign-off by the Attorney. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- n. Discuss and Consider Financing for Electric Department Indian Trail Transformer
 - i. Motion to Approve Staff to obtain financing information for replacement project to be brought back to Council made by Kathy Lawson and seconded by Councilman Mei. Motion was approved with the following 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.



- o. Discuss and Consider Wastewater Treatment Plant Emergency Repairs and Consider Funding Resolution
 - i. Wastewater Treatment Plant Grit Remover has now experienced failure. Needs to be Repiped. This was an unexpected failure that was not captured in the Asset Management Plan.
 - ii. Motion to approve Resolution approving funds for the repairs with the following motion made by Kathy Lawson and seconded by Julian Mei. Roll Call 5:0 vote; Councilman Rawls, aye; Councilman Gravely, aye; Councilman Mei, aye; Vice Mayor, Lawson aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
- 7. City Hall Reporting
- 8. Business from the Floor
- 9. Comments from Council
- 10. Comments from City Manager
- 11. Adjournment
 - a. Motion to recess until 5:15PM, July 23, 2025.