

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

A Work Session was held at 5:00 pm on May 14, 2024, in Room 208, Conference Room, Municipal Building. Mayor Jones, Vice Mayor Rawls, Council Member Lawson, Council Member Pearson, Council Member Mitchell, City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, Chief Operating Officer Edena Reese-Atmore, Public Information Officer Kendall Davis, Finance Director Mandy McGhee, Assistant Finance Director Crystal Ferguson, Public Works Director Greg Maggard, Community Development Director Keith Holland, and Human Resources Director Travis Hodge were in attendance.

Council Members discussed VML Policy Committee appointments.

Public Works Director Greg Maggard discussed details on the Five Points Housing Project Completion Funding

Staff discussed the FY2024-25 Proposed Budget. Uptown Partnership and Virginia Cooperative Extension were in attendance with requests.

Keith Holland presented a PowerPoint and a quarterly update on Community Development.

 Community Development Department Overview May 14, 2024	Community Services Team Community Services combine the focus of Community Development, Economic Development, and Housing Development • Keith Holland, Community Development Director • Kris Bridges, Building Official/Zoning Administrator • Hanna Powell, Community Development Specialist • Mark Price, Inspector • Devontae Jordan, Code Compliance Inspector • Loretta Richardson, Code Compliance Inspector • Tammy Davis, Permit Technician • Kim Walker, Housing Administrator • Economic Development position currently vacant
Community Revitalization • Parks Improvement Plan • CDBG Fayette Street Revitalization Grant • Wayfinding Signage Update • Community Forest Revitalization Program • Opportunity Appalachia/ Amphitheater Project • Climate Action Plan	Housing • Aaron Mills Senior Housing • Fayette Street Lofts • Pine Hall Housing Project • BB&T Rehabilitation Project • Housing development at Beaver St./Fayette St.
Planning & Zoning • Amendments to Zoning Ordinance • Amendments to Enterprise Zone Incentives • Creation of City Policy for Murals and Public Art • Creation of a new Comprehensive Plan • Creation of Arts & Cultural Master Plan • Updates to the Historic District Guidelines	Economic Development • Administer 2 Enterprise Zones and 1 Opportunity Zone • Redevelopment of 51 Lester Street • Brownfield Grants • Uptown Partnership/MHC Chamber of Commerce • Industrial Development Authority

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

Neighborhood Services

Building

- Plan Reviews
- Issuance of Permits
- Building Inspections

- Strategic use of ARPA and CDBG funds for addressing blight and dilapidated buildings
- Rotating areas throughout the City for proactive nuisance code violations
- Building assessments and inspections for the Uptown area and matching façade grants
- Establish Redevelopment and Conservation Districts to strengthen access to grants for code enforcement
- Maximize capabilities of SDL for building permits, inspections, and responding to complaints

Code Enforcement

- Complaints
- Nuisance Inspections
- Property Maintenance

Boards & Commissions

- Architectural Review Board (ARB)
- Arts & Cultural Committee (ACC)
- Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
- Planning Commission (PC)
- Industrial Development Authority (IDA)

Things To Do....

- Secure a qualified consulting firm to begin developing a new Comprehensive Plan with an emphasis on community engagement
- Strategic use of grant funding to conduct building maintenance conditions in Uptown business district and work with building owners to address code compliance issues and continue demolitions of unsafe and derelict buildings
- Review current incentives in Enterprise Zones to address effectiveness and targeted private investment
- Seek CDBG and Virginia Housing grants for housing rehabilitation, code enforcement, blight remediation, small business revolving loans, and capacity development to help nonprofit development (i.e. re-establish and grow a Habitat for Humanity chapter for MHC)
- Develop RFP for development/redevelopment of publicly held properties and increase tax-producing properties in the City
- Develop an Arts & Culture Master Plan
- Many, many more



Kendall Davis presented a PowerPoint and a quarterly update on the Public Information department and upcoming events.

Travis Hodge presented a PowerPoint and a quarterly update on Human Resources

Organizational Development Update



Key Topics

- New Hires
- Retirements
- Health Insurance
- Employee Training/Professional Development
- Slate-Wilson-Davis Scholarship
- Citizen Feedback QR Code

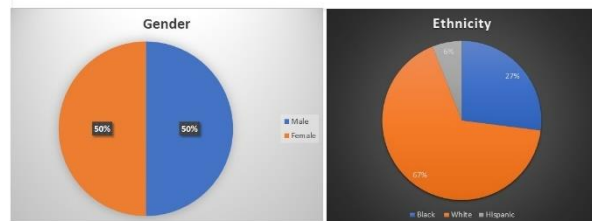


New Hires

Since January 1, 2024 Organizational Development has processed 36 new employees.



New Hire Demographics



May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

Recruiting



In order to boost recruitment efforts, actively connect with prospective candidates through focused advertisements and consistent updates on available positions. Encourage staff members to distribute job postings within their personal networks to broaden outreach. Include the use of inclusive language in job listings, showing our dedication to fostering diversity and inclusion. Cultivate an inclusive work environment that promotes diversity and embraces individual differences.

Continue to promote our employer brand that mirrors the organization's values, ethics, and objectives, spotlighting employee testimonials, and organizational accomplishments to attract top-tier talent. Maintain a favorable online presence across employer review platforms and social media channels to reinforce our organization's brand.



Retirements

- This year, Organizational Development has processed 9 retirements.
- 5 in January
- 2 in February
- 2 in March
- 23 employees are eligible for unreduced retirement in 2024.
- 7 employees are eligible for reduced retirement in 2024.



Health Insurance Update

- 0% increase to health insurance premiums for FY 24-25.
- Remaining with Anthem will progress our agency into a mature plan.
- HSA contributions have been revised to transition employer contributions from an annual Fiscal Year Frontload model to a monthly format. Health Incentives are no longer required to receive HSA contributions.
- Health Incentives will continue, and will now encompass drawings for gift cards, vacation days, and other innovative incentives.
- Open Enrollment begins on May 13th



Other Benefits

- Delta Dental and Aetna Vision are both on a rate hold for FY 24-25 (no increase)
- Supplemental benefits such as Critical Illness, Short-Term, and Long-Term Disability will remain available through Colonial Benefits.



Employee Training/Professional Development

In our ongoing commitment to employee training and professional growth, we have recently conducted performance documentation training for front-line supervisors, managers, and superintendents on May 3rd. This training was tailored to emphasize the significance of workplace documentation and its role in facilitating introductory period reviews, annual evaluations, and corrective actions.



Slate-Wilson-Davis Scholarship



The Slate-Wilson-Davis Scholarship was established to honor Billy Slate, Mike Wilson, and Tony Davis who passed away as the result of on-the-job accidents.

The Scholarship is \$500 and available at Patrick & Henry Community College.

To qualify, students must be enrolled full-time, maintain a GPA of 2.5, and be dependents of City or Constitutional employees.



Citizen Feedback

- The Public Information Office in collaboration with Organizational Development created an initiative to enhance citizen engagement with the Municipal building by implementing a QR code feedback system.
- This system will allow visitors to conveniently provide feedback on their experience using a QR code displayed prominently within the building.
- Upon scanning the code, citizens are directed to a user-friendly feedback form where they can share their thoughts, suggestions, or concerns.
- Organizational Development will be notified of all responses, including any complaints or grievances raised by visitors.
- This collaborative effort ensures that any issues or concerns are swiftly addressed, contributing to improved service delivery and citizen satisfaction.



Questions?
Comments?



City Council Executive Session began at 6:00 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act to discuss the following: (1) 2.2-3711.A.1: Discussion consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, concerning Board and Commission appointments, (2) 2.2-3711.A.3: Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

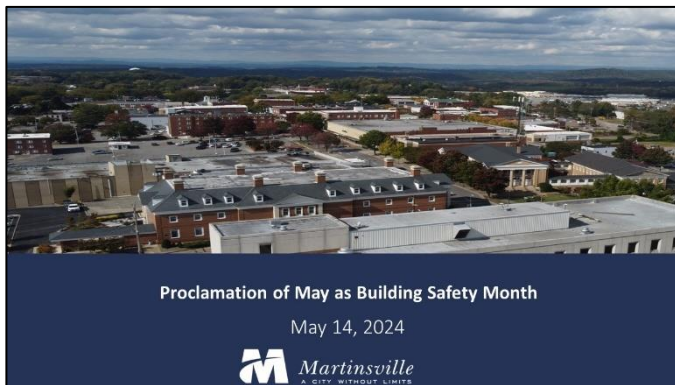
for a public purpose or disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, concerning the former BB&T Building agreement. At the conclusion of Closed Session, each returning member of Council certified that (1) only public business matters exempt from open meeting requirements were discussed in said Closed Session; and (2) only those business matters identified in the motion convening the Closed Session were heard, discussed, or considered during the meeting. A motion was made by Council Member Lawson; seconded by Council Member Pearson with the following 5-0 recorded vote in favor to return to Open Session: Council Member Lawson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Council Member Mitchell, aye; Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; and Council Member Pearson, aye.

Regular Session began at 7:00 PM with additional attendees including Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Deputy Police Chief Chad Rhoads, Fire Chief Dan Howell, and Building Inspector Kris Bridges.

Call to Order – Mayor Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting, pointing out that agendas could be found in the back of the room and on the City’s website.

Pledge to the American Flag and Invocation by Council Member Pearson.

Proclamations and Presentations – Community Development Director Keith Holland recognized the staff of the Inspections Department and accepted the annual proclamation. Council Member Pearson read the proclamation for Building Safety Month which was presented to the Inspection staff.



Purpose

- Recognize the importance of safe buildings and resiliency of the community through efforts of professional building safety and fire prevention officials, architects, engineers, builders, tradespeople, design professionals, laborers, plumbers and others in the construction industry—who work year-round to ensure the safe construction and maintenance of buildings
- Bring attention to the theme of “Mission Possible” for Building Safety Month 2024 and raise awareness of building safety on a personal, community, and global scale

Building Safety Month Proclamation

Questions?

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting



Proclamation

Building Safety Month — May 2024

WHEREAS, Martinsville, Virginia, is committed to recognizing that our growth and strength depend on the safety and essential role our homes, buildings, and infrastructure play, both in everyday life and when disasters strike, and;

WHEREAS, our confidence in the resilience of these buildings that make up our community is achieved through the devotion of vigilant guardians—building safety and fire prevention officials, architects, engineers, builders, tradespeople, design professionals, laborers, plumbers, and others in the construction industry—who work year-round to ensure the safe construction of buildings, and;

WHEREAS, these guardians are dedicated members of the International Code Council, a nonprofit that brings together local, state, territorial, tribal, and federal officials who are experts in the built environment to create and implement the highest-quality codes to protect us in the buildings where we live, learn, work and play, and;

WHEREAS, these modern building codes include safeguards to protect the public from hazards such as hurricanes, snowstorms, tornadoes, wildland fires, floods and earthquakes, and;

WHEREAS, Building Safety Month is sponsored by the International Code Council to remind the public about the critical role of our communities' largely unknown protectors of public safety—our local code officials—who assure us of safe, sustainable, and affordable buildings that are essential to our prosperity, and;

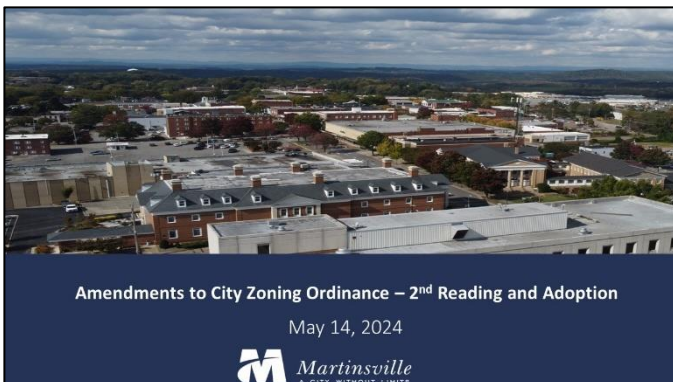
WHEREAS, "Mission Possible," the theme for Building Safety Month 2024, encourages us all to raise awareness about building safety on a personal, local, and global scale and;

WHEREAS, each year, in observance of Building Safety Month, people all over the world are asked to consider the commitment to improve building safety, resilience and economic investment at home and in the community, and to acknowledge the essential service provided to all of us by local and state building departments, fire prevention bureaus and federal agencies in protecting lives and property.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LC Jones, Mayor of the City of Martinsville, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2024 as Building Safety Month. Accordingly, I encourage our citizens to join us as we participate in Building Safety Month activities.

LC Jones
Mayor

Consent Agenda - Items Previously Discussed – Five Points Housing Project Completion Funding and 2nd Reading and Adoption of Amendment to Zoning Ordinance related to Building Height Restrictions and Handicapped Parking Space requirements – Vice Mayor Rawls made a motion to approve consent agenda items; Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.



Purpose

- **Zoning Amendment Procedures** (Section VII.-Zoning Amendments)
 - To allow for future changes to the city's zoning ordinance
 - To accommodate broad changes that affect the city as a whole
 - To accommodate specific proposals on individual parcels
- **Removal of Building Height Restrictions**
 - Current building height restrictions would prohibit future development in the city, including the proposed Holiday Inn Express on Commonwealth Blvd.
 - Building height restrictions are not required in the Zoning Ordinance as they are regulated by the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and fire code.
 - Elimination of regulation redundancy
- **Removal of Handicap Space Requirements**
 - Handicap Space Requirements are currently regulated by the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and are not necessary in the Zoning Ordinance.
 - Elimination of regulation redundancy

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

Ordinance Sections Containing Amendments

- Section I. Administration and Enforcement
- Section III. General Provisions
- Section IV. Site Plan Regulations
- Section V. Nonconformity
- Section IX. R-E, Estate Residential District
- Section X. R-N, Neighborhood Residential District
- Section XI. R-C, City Residential District
- Section XII. R-T, Residential Transitional District
- Section XIII. C-N, Neighborhood Commercial District
- Section XIV. C-UB, Uptown Business District
- Section XV. C-C, Corridor Commercial District
- Section XVI. ED-MA, Economic Development District- Medical & Academic
- Section XVII. ED-G, Economic Development District- General
- Section XVIII. ED-I, Economic Development District - Intensive
- Section XIX. TND-O, Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District
- Section XX. EC-O, Entrance Corridor Overlay District
- Section XXIII. Off-Street Parking and Loading

Questions?

Regular agenda or new business - Overview and Summary of a 2024 Regional Housing Study prepared by the West Piedmont Planning District Commission – A representative of the WPPDC presented a PowerPoint and an update on the 2024 Regional Housing Study.

WPPDC Regional Housing Study

Regional and
Martinsville
Presentation

Scope of Work

- Phase 1 Needs Assessment, Market Analysis, Training
- Phase 2 Analysis of Barriers & Community Outreach
- Phase 3 Strategy Development

Regional Analysis Population

- Total Population of the WPPDC Region 240,482
- 76% of the region's population lives within the four counties
- The region comprises 99,190 households
- 24% of households spend more than 30 percent of income on housing
- 21,000 of those have income less than 80% AMI
- It is estimated that more than 10,000 households are at risk of homelessness
- Point-in-time count identified 100 residents experiencing literal homelessness. Data reported from K-12 schools shows 221 students experiencing Homelessness.

Regional Solutions

1. Designate WPPDC as Regional Land Bank

Problem: Property vacancies and blight are consistent issues throughout the region.

Create a regional land bank to receive or acquire vacant, blighted, foreclosed properties and tax auctions

- Can work to clear cloudy titles
- Work with localities to determine properties' end-use.
- Properties can be sold to developers, developed by local government or WPPDC
- While you wait for the right end user to come along, stewardship uses can remediate the negative effects of vacancy short-term

Types of uses for vacant lots



2. Coordinate home repair and rehabilitation programs at the regional level

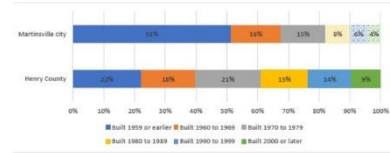
- Conduct outreach with existing providers, program administrators, and others to explore opportunities to collaborate and partner.
- Create a matrix of all current programs, including their funding sources, application processes, eligibility requirements, eligible uses, and compliance regulations.
- Identify unique needs within the region that are not adequately served by existing programs.
- Develop a centralized system to align waitlists across programs.
- Develop a process to assess and prioritize applications, based on client needs, program eligibility, and funding availability.

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

Martinsville Analysis Population/Housing Market

- 13,476 Residents
- 5656 Households
- 57.7% Homeowners
- 25.5% of households are cost-burdened (more than 30% on Housing)
- 19.8% are severely cost-burdened (more than 50% on housing)
- From 2014 to 2021 the Median Sale Price increased from \$58,500 to \$114,450
- In the same period Median Days on Market decreased from 158 to 69.5

Housing Stock



82% of Martinsville housing stock built before 1980

Martinsville solutions

1. Outline specific objectives and leverage best practices to ensure a new comprehensive plan promotes housing opportunities.

- Review the current comp plan and zoning ordinances to identify outdated ordinances and inconsistencies
- Work with residents, developers, and other stakeholders to determine how current practices affect them

2. Develop a strategic process for redeveloping scattered site properties through public-private partnerships

- Utilize lots owned by Martinsville RHA to add new homes on unused lots
- Issue Request for Proposal for private developers, requesting innovative housing projects
- Support the creation of sustainable Low to Moderate-income housing by working with non-profit organizations and WPPDC.
- Work with WPPDC to identify grant opportunities to offset cost of LMI Housing
- Offer incentives to reduce construction costs
- Establish a review committee to ensure that projects align with the city's objectives

Key Takeaways

1. Any new housing should be smaller and respond to the preferences of new workers and seniors who are downsizing, smaller households require efficiency-style, one- or two-bedroom units.
2. New workers often seek rental opportunities where they can access amenities, save, and evaluate whether they want to stay in the area in the longer term
3. Small households can benefit from the addition of smaller, multifamily units with more-appropriate square footage and number of bedrooms. In this case, land costs will be distributed among a larger number of units, which can in turn increase the number of affordable units.

Communications from Visitors / Business from the Floor – Barbara Shively, owner of Prillaman's Market since 1977 is concerned as a business owner how the parking will work with the new apartments. There are already few spots available; some people exceed the 2-hour limit and double park. She is concerned that it will affect parking for her customers. Shively recommended that the City rent parking spots.

Comments by Members of City Council – Council Member Mitchell participated in the 25th Anniversary of NSBE; he was inspired to hear from the students about their accomplishments. Council Member Pearson Martinsville congratulated Martinsville High School and other local and high school and college graduates. The kids are out for summer so a reminder to parents about the many camps available in Martinsville and Henry County; some are free, and others offer scholarships. Pearson expressed concern about the summer food program availability. The Farmer's Market is now open on Saturdays. Council Member Lawson thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers after her hip surgery and congratulated Council Member Pearson's son for graduating from Virginia Tech. Congratulations both men's and women's ball teams who are

May 14, 2024 Council Meeting

headed to Championship rounds. The Hooker Furniture warehouse sale fundraiser for the SPCA is on June 8 and they are looking for volunteers. Congratulations to NSBE; Helen Howell is a pillar in the community. Vice Mayor Rawls thanked the City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, COO Edena Reese-Atmore and others who worked on the budget along with partners in the community who discussed their budget. Mayor Jones thanked staff for the work on the budget and thanked PIO Kendall Davis and Shasta Carmichael for planning the Cinco de Mayo event.

Comments from City Manager – Aretha Ferrell-Benavides attended the Virginia First Cities 25th Anniversary and she applauds them on the anniversary. She recognized the Kappa Delta Omega for celebrating their 50th anniversary; they will be recognized on Thursday with a proclamation. Thanks to the Special Events team. She feels it is important to welcome people to the community in hopes they'll consider relocating. Juneteenth will be June 15 with several events. Ferrell-Benavides recognized Finance Director Mandy Muse and Assistant Finance Director Crystal Ferguson for their work on the budget.

PIO Kendall Davis presented a PowerPoint with an update on Public Information and upcoming events, the Get Fit challenge, City website management and social media growth and what to expect in the next quarter. Vice Mayor Rawls recommended making the events easier for vendors to participate in. Davis also shared details on MiNET marketing.

Adjournment – Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn at 8:15pm

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

LC Jones, Mayor