

May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

The Martinsville City Council Retreat was held May 6, 2023 in the Walker Hall at the Virginia Museum of Natural History beginning at 8:00pm with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Vice Mayor Rawls, Council Member Pearson, Council Member Lawson, Council Member Mitchell, and Clerk of Council Karen Roberts along with facilitators Kimball Payne and Margaret Schmitt from the Berkley Group.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 8:00am. Facilitator Kimball Payne went over suggested goals and ground rules for the retreat.

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| <p><b>Martinsville City Council Strategic Planning Retreat</b></p> <p><b>May 6, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Pre-retreat Input from Council Members</b></p> <p><b><u>Review mission and vision statements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I think this is part of our conflicts and issue. We never reference the vision and mission to ensure our understanding and how we/boards/city align to it.</li></ul> <p><b><u>City Council Review &amp; Communications</u></b></p> <p>➤ <i>What are we doing well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Becoming more actively involved in the direction of the city. Examples: meeting with outside partners, boards, staff/city manager to find out the why/what/how of initiatives and ensure our input is heard.</li><li>◦ Shorter and more concise meetings</li><li>◦ Involvement of the community</li><li>◦ Taking action!</li><li>◦ Some more than others are visible throughout the community</li></ul> <p>➤ <i>What are we not doing well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ When city council members are conducting 1:1 (2:1) meetings, this information needs to be shared with all cc members after the meeting in order to keep us informed and possibly to engage us more in taking action items.</li><li>◦ Need to hold city manager, staff, boards, outside partners more accountable to follow through</li><li>◦ Need to communicate better with outside partners, boards, commissions on our needs, vision, etc. and determine how they can help</li><li>◦ Marketing our city</li><li>◦ Need to communicate more consistently, in various ways and provide more info to our citizens</li><li>◦ Communicating with ALL members of council. Hand-picked individuals for a newly formed committee without receiving public input.</li></ul> <p>➤ <i>What should we stop doing?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Stop talking about each other and our closed session discussions with others (such as past city council members, etc.)</li><li>◦ The proclamations and resolutions need to be more meaningful to our citizens</li></ul> <p>1</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Housing Authority (turn this over to a newly developed commission, such as in Danville)</li><li>◦ Holding "illegal meetings", 3 members of council meeting violating the meeting rules of order and code 3711. This has occurred regularly.</li></ul> <p>➤ <i>What are we not doing that we should?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Become more active in economic development and uptown revitalization</li><li>◦ Ensure outside partners are in line with our vision so they are aligning to and supporting one vision for the city instead of fighting against each other</li><li>◦ Better communication with ALL members of council. Not excluding certain some from certain discussions.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Relationship &amp; Communications</u></b></p> <p>➤ <i>Best method for communication between all members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ I prefer email if people would respond in a timely manner. There have been some emails sent in the late afternoon before a council meeting pertaining to that night's meeting. Our agenda was issued on Friday before. emails pertaining to that agenda should be sent no later than Monday to give sufficient time for response. However, I am open to group texting for matters that do not require a lengthy response or calls.</li></ul> <p>➤ <i>Emails prior to meetings to prepare for discussions, votes, etc. – how far in advance, needed materials, etc.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Our agendas are sent out no later than Friday morning before our council meeting on Tuesday. If there is additional information or a discussion that needs to occur for Tuesday night's meeting, that email should be sent by midday Monday to allow sufficient time for response.</li></ul> <p>➤ <i>When and how to keep all council members updated with discussions/emails/calls by any member of council with city manager, city staff, group, organization, and individuals regarding city affairs/opportunities/feedback</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Communication with city staff should be directed through the City Manager. Department head and employees do not answer to members of council and out of respect for the line of authority, any questions for staff should be directed to the city manager. There is an exception if we are reporting a property maintenance issue and those can be reported directly to Mr. Price (as all citizens can do). If there is a matter that all members should be aware of-email to the city manager with all members of council included. I believe we all receive emails from citizens, and it depends on whether it's a matter of a simple answer or if it's a topic that all members</li></ul> <p>2</p> |
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should be made aware of. If I get a complaint about a property, I do not feel the need to send that to all of council.

## ➤ Communication with city manager and staff

- City manager is available almost always for members of council, whether it's an email, phone call, text, or visit. Sometimes it's not convenient for him as he may be in a meeting, but he always responds at the first opportunity. Communication (directives) for staff should be directed through the city manager's office. There are always exceptions to that but it is the protocol.

## ➤ Council participation in city projects

- Clarification needs to be made on this. It is not the responsibility of a council member to be directly involved in lieu of staff. However, there are times that members of council do participate, whether it's planting a tree, groundbreaking for a new program, etc. Members of council should be invited by city manager/staff to participate.

## City Manager/Staff Operational Review

### ➤ What are they doing well?

- Daily upkeep activities
- Leon is outstanding in communicating with council. He keeps everyone in the loop. Staff reports to the city manager who then shares the information with council. There are times that we receive information directly from a department but normally the city manager is included and has knowledge of the project/event.

### ➤ What are they not doing well?

- Customer service is very poor
- Focus on completion of big projects with impact
- Engagement of city council in projects, feedback, etc.
- Utilization of staff and holding them accountable
- Making it easy to do business in Martinsville
- Too much "we can't do this" and not enough "let's find a solution"
- There are times when we would like a follow up by staff and we don't receive that. But there again, they may have reported directly to the city manager as they should. If a member of council has made an inquiry, all members should receive the reply.

3

### ➤ What should they stop doing?

- Complaining not enough staff
- Working independently of council, outside groups, boards and doing what they want to do
- If a response or information is given to one member of council it should be given to all.

### ➤ What are they not doing that they should?

- Increase MiNet in residences and businesses
- Property inspections, maintenance of both businesses and residences
- Keeping city council and citizens abreast of projects, timelines, completion
- Engage more with boards, commissions
- Thinking outside the box
- Finding ways to increase revenue
- Staff reports to the city manager, not council. City manager should be in the loop with any staff communications

## City Boards/Commissions Review & Relationship with Council

### ➤ What are they doing well?

- Some boards are very active while others are not
- Most boards work independently without the oversight of council. They know what their responsibilities are and do it.

### ➤ What are they not doing well?

- Providing input to city council on issues, projects, votes, etc.
- Need to better define mission of each
- Very little impact to city
- Should a member of city council be assigned to each board, commission to increase collaboration or is this too much?
- Hard to say on that one. Most boards meet and depending on the nature of their "tasks" they have to come before council before action is taken or not taken. There are processes in place and I believe those are being followed.

### ➤ What should they stop doing?

- Stop working in a bubble without direction from council
- Some people let their personal opinion get in the way of being impartial. When you serve you should serve without a personal agenda.

4

### ➤ What are they not doing that they should?

- Be more proactive in recruiting members if needed
- Work more closely with city council, staff, and city manager
- Citizen Advisory Board – need to quickly get them up and running
- Quickly get Industrial Development Authority up and running
- Depends on the board/commission. Most boards have policies in place that are followed.

### ➤ Re-define boards/commissions:

- Consolidate
- Eliminate
- Create

### ➤ Determine their influence and direction with both city staff and council

- Board and Commissions have specific areas in which they are "involved". If a board is releasing information it should be to all members of council at the same time. Some boards are appointees to local organizations/agencies/etc. and they participate as a board member representing the city. If a situation were to arise where guidance was needed, they should know to seek advice.

### ➤ Determine when and how to communicate with both city staff and council

- Depends again on what their purpose is and what the protocol is.

## Outside Partners Review & Relationship with Council

### ➤ Who do we currently work with and why?

- Piedmont Community Services
- Parks & Rec
- Martinsville Mustangs
- EDC
- Chamber
- We have a number of outside agencies that we work with. Some of these are joint with Henry County. Joint with HC is the Regional Library, Health Dept, 911 Center, Social Services. We also have a relationship with the Blue Ridge Regional Airport, Piedmont Arts, West Piedmont Planning District Commission, and a few others. These are organizations that benefit our community and our citizens.

### ➤ Who are we not working with and should be, why?

- Need to work more closely with Harvest, Chamber and UP
- In years past we have reduced the number of outside agencies because of financial constraints and some just because the state should be doing their job and properly funding.

5

### ➤ Define expectations of outside partners

- Implement their mission statements which should align to the city's vision and goals
- Our outside partners send reports to the city as required on a regular basis. They are always available to come to a council meeting if needed. Expectation is that funding never be requested if not essential and never be wasteful.

### ➤ For each partner, what is going well and what can we do differently to improve relationships and outcomes?

- There is a difference between "working with" and "supporting." We support various groups with funding, but we don't work with them.
- Not enough two-way, consistent communication
- The city has very good relationships with all our outside partners.

## Parking Lot

- Charter Changes
- Closed session involving organization and personnel
- Changes to city codes, ordinances
- Incentives (need to follow up to ensure fairness and specifics of incentives per our approval for the new brewery)

6

City of Martinsville  
2023 Strategic Plan and Action Work Plan

Vision Statement

TBD

Mission

TBD

Values

*Open to New Ideas – Creative and Questioning of the Status Quo*  
*Excellent Internal and External Customer Service – Providing a Positive Experience*  
*Proactive and Responsive Problem Solving*  
*Citizen Engagement – Transparency, Visibility, and Approachability; Open, Two-Way Communications*  
*Collaboration/Partnership*  
*Diversity/Equity*  
*Financial Responsibility*  
*Continuous Improvement and Accountability*  
*Legitimacy*

**Major Strategic Goal Areas**

**Housing** – Provide an environment that supports the development of safe, affordable, and diverse housing options to accommodate growth and enhance quality of life in the City.  
**Education** – Support life-long learning and training for all residents and businesses.  
**Revitalization and Redevelopment** – Reduce blight in the City by using statutory authority to address dilapidated structures.

1

**Government Performance** – Continually work to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in service delivery with an appropriate organizational structure and through the adoption and revision of appropriate policies, procedures, and practices; adapt and implement best practices that support a culture of customer service.

**Economic Development** – Support business development and expansion that increases the tax base, provides gainful employment, and enhances quality of life.

**County Relations** – Build stronger relations with Henry County and seek opportunities to improve service delivery and increase community amenities through regional cooperation.

**Citizen/Community Engagement** – Actively engage citizens through outreach and effective two-way communications.

**Healthy Community** – Promote policies and programs that enhance community physical and mental well-being.

**Public Safety** – Protect life and property, plan for emergency management, mitigate risks, and respond to individual and community-wide crises.

**2023 Work Plan**

**By Strategic Goal Area**

Housing

- Develop a Housing Plan to facilitate the development of up to 500 new residential units over ten years. Start with an analysis of existing conditions to include:
  - A vacant building survey
  - A vacant lot survey
  - An inventory of properties for rehabilitation
  - A list of buildings to be demolished
  - A zoning ordinance and review

Identify staff support from the City, the planning district commission, the Danville Housing Authority, or some other agency.

- Follow with a feasibility study and hold a summit of stakeholders to share results and receive feedback and recommendations.

Lead: Vice Mayor Rawls  
Timeline: by November 1, 2023

2

Education

- Hold a joint meeting with the School Board. By August 1, 2023. Leads: Mayor Jones and the City Manager
- Explore joint education opportunities, particularly with respect to trades, with Henry County. Lead: Mayor Jones
- Receive a briefing on workforce development programs. By August 1, 2023. Lead: Mayor Jones.
- Sponsor a regional briefing on the New College Institute. By November 1, 2023. Lead: Vice Mayor Rawls.

Revitalization and Redevelopment

- Receive a briefing by legal counsel on the City's current practices and statutory authority to address blighted properties. By August 1, 2023. Lead: City Manager.
- Develop and adopt a new Uptown Master Plan. By December 1, 2024.
- Propose a plan to address short-term improvements to on-street parking, including new signage and enforcement. By December 1, 2023. Lead: Public Works.

Government Performance

- Recruit and hire a new City Manager.
- Adopt financial management policies, including a budget calendar, for FY 2025.
- Attain the GFOA Budget Award.
- Conduct a survey of customer service experience; identify appropriate standards of good customer service and conduct regular training of staff.
- Develop an asset management plan for City facilities and equipment for FY 2025.
- Craft and adopt revised Vision and Mission statements.
- Adopt Rules of Procedure for Council operations.
- Provide clear charters, expectations, FOIA and COIA training, and staff support to City boards and commissions.
- Conduct an organizational assessment to include an evaluation of human resources policies and practices.
- Implement an effective on-boarding process for new Council members.

Economic Development

- Explore the creation of an Economic Development Authority (EDA); understand their authority and the opportunities they create. By December 1, 2023. Lead: City Manager.
- Clarify the potential use of the 24-acre City-owned site; ensure the site is included on the State's VEDA list.

3

- Develop and adopt an Economic Development Strategy for the City by the end of calendar year 2024.
- Adopt an Incentive Philosophy/Policy for public support of desirable development.

City/County Relations

- Pursue opportunities for joint training in the trades as identified under the Education strategic goal area.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative ventures.
- Convene a joint meeting with the County Board of Supervisors within three months of the appointment of a new City Manager.
- Invite County officials to attend and participate in significant City events, starting now.

Community Engagement

- Utilize the Citizens Advisory Board to make recommendations to improve community engagement.
  - o Clearly define its purpose
  - o Provide staff support
  - o Use its input in the development of the Community Engagement Plan
  - o Sunset the board after 18 months unless extended by Council.
- Develop a Community Engagement Plan. Presentation to Council, January 2024. Lead: PIO.
- Develop an Events Policy that addresses City expectations and possible support by January 2024.
- Take actions to build a stronger relationship with the Harvest Foundation.

**2023/2024 Chronological Work Plan**

Ongoing or Immediate

- Recruit and hire a new City Manager.
- Invite County officials to attend and participate in significant City events.

Within Three Months (by September 1, 2023)

- Hold a joint meeting with the School Board. By August 1, 2023. Leads: Mayor Jones and the City Manager
- Receive a briefing on workforce development programs. By August 1, 2023. Lead: Mayor Jones.

4

# May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

## Within Six Months (by December 1, 2023)

- Develop a Housing Plan. By November 1, 2023. Lead: Vice Mayor Rawls.
- Sponsor a regional briefing on the New College Institute. By November 1, 2023. Lead: Vice Mayor Rawls.
- Explore the creation of an Economic Development Authority (EDA); understand their authority and the opportunities they create. By December 1, 2023. Lead: City Manager.
- Utilize the Citizens Advisory Board to make recommendations to improve community engagement.
  - Clearly define its purpose
  - Provide staff support
  - Use its input in the development of the Community Engagement Plan
  - Sunset the board after 18 months unless extended by Council.

## Within a Year (by June 1, 2024)

- Convene a joint meeting with the County Board of Supervisors within three months of the appointment of a new City Manager.
- Develop a Community Engagement Plan. Presentation to Council, January 2024. Lead: PIO.
- Develop an Events Policy that addresses City expectations and possible support by January 2024.
- Adopt financial management policies, including a budget calendar, for FY 2025.
- Develop an asset management plan for City facilities and equipment for FY 2025.
- Craft and adopt revised Vision and Mission statements.
- Provide clear charters, expectations, FOIA and COIA training, and staff support to City boards and commissions.
- Clarify the potential use of the 24-acre City-owned site; ensure the site is included on the State's VEDA list.

## Longer Term or Indefinite

- Explore joint education opportunities, particularly with respect to trades, with Henry County. Lead: Mayor Jones
- Attain the GFOA Budget Award.
- Conduct a survey of customer service experience; identify appropriate standards of good customer service and conduct regular training of staff.
- Adopt Rules of Procedure for Council operations.
- Implement an effective on-boarding process for new Council members.
- Conduct an organizational assessment to include an evaluation of human resources policies and practices.

5

- Develop and adopt an Economic Development Strategy for the City by the end of calendar year 2024.
- Adopt an Incentive Philosophy/Policy for public support of desirable development.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative ventures with Henry County.
- Take actions to build a stronger relationship with the Harvest Foundation.

6



**Martinsville**  
A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS

**Martinsville City Council  
Strategic Planning Retreat**

May 6, 2023

## Suggested Goals

- Get to know each other better and build relationships
- Work as a team and develop consensus
- Encourage input from all Council members
- Understand and agree on Council, Mayor, Manager, and Staff roles and responsibilities
- Identify major goals and priorities
- Identify objectives, with assigned responsibility and timelines, to advance the goals
- Craft a workplan for the next 18 to 24 months
- Understand constraints to progress and identify means to overcome them

## Ground Rules

- |                            |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Everyone participates      | Ask questions                                                                      |
| Engage                     | Seek consensus (formal action at a future Council meeting)                         |
| Be honest                  | Silence means consent – speak up if you disagree                                   |
| Listen to each other       | Use the parking lot for issues that may evade consensus or require more background |
| Respect different opinions | Have fun                                                                           |
| No idea is too outlandish  | We will take breaks when it seems appropriate                                      |
| Seek to understand         |                                                                                    |

## Common Themes

- Organizational structure
- Housing
- Education/Schools
- Uptown
- Blighted buildings
- Budget and financial sustainability
- Economic Development
- Vision
- Council/manager principles, roles, responsibilities, and boundaries
- County relations



Attendees discussed common themes related to the City mission and vision statements. Council Member Mitchell asked that Legislative issues be included in the themes. Payne explained that the mission statement is what we do day-to-day while the vision statement is an aspirational statement of where they want to get to in the future. Both statements should be an “elevator speech” and easy to remember and recite. Payne said Martinsville’s vision statement is lengthy and should not include Henry County. Council Member Pearson said it should reflect the future of Martinsville and not the past. Mayor Jones requested that Henry County be removed with focus on Martinsville City. Mitchell disagreed with the third sentence because he doesn’t feel that Martinsville is “vibrant”. Vice Mayor Rawls said Martinsville is a great City in southern Virginia to live and suggested Council hire a marketing firm to assist with branding. Pearson likes the “live work and play” part. Rawls asked that the word “family” be added. Schmitt said a marketing firm can help but the vision statement belongs to the City. Council Member Lawson said “location” and “affordability” are important terms. Mitchell asked if “growth” could be added. Rawls said if the City grows too much, the City would lose the small town feel and virtues. Lawrence said the vision statement it’s too general. Lawson said the statement is too long. Rawls suggesting adding “the opportunity to provide people lives and careers”. Lawson said “resolve problems and deliver services” should be considered. Pearson agrees with Rawls that Council’s job is to create opportunities, collaboration and partnerships. Kimball Payne asked what are Council’s values and operating principals? Council suggested that they are open to new ideas, creativity, collaboration/partnerships, visibility, and being approachable. Other suggested terms included “responsiveness, proactive, open and honest 2-way communication, diversity and equity, accountability, problem solving mentality, transparency, fiscal responsibility, financial responsibility, continuous improvement, and legitimacy.

## May 6, 2023 Council Retreat



Payne explained that he had only received input from two of Council Members. Attendees discussed what they felt they were doing well with including involvement and visibility in the community, setting the City's direction, holding more concise meetings, taking action and communicating with the community, and building relationships with County and state. Council felt they were not doing well sharing information from small meetings, accountability, communication with outside partners and citizens, marketing the City, or sharing information and concerns from citizens with all Council Members. Lawson disagreed and felt that communication with outside partners and citizens and Council is handled well.

Payne asked if Council Members knew the appropriate procedure for a Council meeting and what could be done to make those meetings more efficient and effective. Attendees discussed that they should stop managing the housing authority, breaking confidentiality rules and stop holding unannounced meetings. Council should work to improve communication between all Council Members, become more active in economic development and downtown revitalization, and align to one vision. Council should work on relationships and communication and identify preferred communication methods for each individual as well as commit to communications in advance of meetings.



## May 6, 2023 Council Retreat



Council stated that the current City Manager is not a personnel manager and some felt that he was not a strong City Manager. Lawson was the only Council Member who felt that an Assistant City Manager would be needed. Vice Mayor Rawls and Payne debated communication with The Berkley Group and about the status of hiring a replacement City Manager. Payne said there has been no request for a work order to recruit, only a proposal for today's retreat. Council discussed why MiNET is being kept small to prevent debt while City and County businesses are without service for up to 2-years and not getting callbacks. Rawls stated that he did not feel that MiNET needed office staff and felt operation with a good dashboard and field people would be sufficient. Payne explained that most residents would not go to the internet, most would prefer to call and by not having office staff, that would affect customer service for the department. Council will look at developing a plan for MiNET in the near future. City staff and customer service need work. Mayor Jones feels that staff are not shown enough appreciation and that a yearly lunch isn't good enough. This lack of appreciation will affect the City from a hiring standpoint, it's not just about the salary, but also the culture. Council discussed that staff should be held accountable for customer service. Rawls would like to discuss Human Resources Consulting with Schmitt. Lawson said she had voiced numerous concerns about a Utility Billing employee but the employee still has her job.

Payne explained that every Board and Commission should have a charter, purpose and specific intent and that Council should provide boards and commissions a better direction with 2-way communication. Payne asked if boards and commissions leaders understand that meetings must be advertised and minutes must be kept. Per Lawson, the Power Advisory Committee was temporary and no longer active. Pearson would like to know how Council

May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

appointed members to each board, how Council is working directly with the boards and how that is benefiting the City. Council discussed the possibility of terminating the Tree Board. Payne stated that the City Staff should hold the public sector and businesses accountable, not the citizens. Anyone who has served on a board and been terminated should be encouraged to serve on another board. Payed asked what Council expects from the Citizen Advisory Board and said that it appears that some of those responsibilities should be Council's.

Good relations with City and County agencies is vital. Council feels they should be working more closely with the Harvest Foundation, the Chamber and Uptown Martinsville. Mayor Jones stated that he is working more closely with the nonprofit sector, human services and with several religious groups and churches. Jones feels that the same citizens should not be serving on multiple boards.



*Closing Remarks*

*Adjourn*

Council Member Mitchell would like to see cultural diversity added because of the growing Latino community. Mayor Jones mentioned healthcare and services provided to residents to make Martinsville a healthier community. Council Members discussed the correctional system and how Council has no control over the court or the Commonwealth Attorney decisions. Rawls

May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

would like to see a jail consolidation; Patrick County and Henry County both built new jails but Henry County is not interested in a regional option or housing Martinsville inmates. Lawrence expressed concern that the City jail is one lawsuit away from having to build a new jail. Council discussed housing in the area, both rental and owned and what can be done to accommodate appropriate growth in the City with mixed income and diverse options. Concerns were expressed over the price of housing units; housing is a private capitalistic economic decision. Rawls offered to take lead on the housing evaluation project and mentioned a work session with local realtor organizations. Council discussed the educational program along with Council relationships with the School Board, the budget, and the process to appoint school board members. It was suggested that Council meet with the School Board by August 1; Mayor Jones said he would make that happen. Council Member Pearson said she would like to know what the City Manager and the School Superintendent meet about on a regular basis. Rawls said there is a need for trades programs in the schools and a potential collaboration with the County. Kimball thinks Council should be open to school consolidation and explore joint opportunities with the County schools; Jones said he would initiate that conversation. Council Member Lawson would like information about workforce development activities and responsibilities; a briefing within the next 60 days was suggested with Mayor Jones taking the lead. Some Council Members would like to see the School Board members be elected, and not appointed by Council. Concern was shared that NCI has no contracts with any schools of higher learning so Council Members would like to have a briefing from NCI leaders within 6 months, maybe around early November. Rawls said he would contact NCI staff and also encourage them to host a community outreach along with Henry County. Rawls plans to set a prioritization process in place related to blight; some properties will be listed on housing analysis and to ask new attorneys what authority we have that is not being used within next 60 days. Council expressed concern over the Uptown development plan from Frazier, some stating that they don't like the "cookie cutter" plan and that it is clear that citizens were not heard or in alignment with what the plan was. Rawls said Uptown Martinsville needs a parking structure which would cost approximately \$20,000 per space to build. There is no support for making Uptown a 2-way street. Council would like a master Uptown plan within 18 months related to parking concerns utilizing signs and police enforcement. They would like to see a solution to the parking concern within 60-90 days and signage installed within 30 days; Rawls said he would email the City Manager to get that started. Council discussed staffing and budget concerns, and the Martinsville Uptown Vision 2015 document. Per Rawls, the City should be making money otherwise it should contract utilities out. Henry County has approached Council Members about selling utilities to the City. There will be a need for financial management policies and a budget calendar for the fall. Lawson wants accountability; if you present an issue to someone you should get a response back. Staff accountability would be communication with City Manager, not the staff below him. Rawls said departments are expected to do their job especially related to inspections and code violations.

May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

Council would like to see customer service training for staff. An asset management plan is needed for Council to know how it affects the budget; the current budget doesn't explain why items are being postponed or deferred. Council discussed the Organizational Chart; Payne stated the span of control of 5-8 is normal, Martinsville City Manager is 13-to-1 which is why he recommends an Assistant City Manager. Council discussed combining the Telecommunications and the IT Department but there are also good reasons for Telecom to be a stand-alone department since its income producing. Payne explained that the top argument to hire an Assistant City Manager is to split up the span of control, it's simply too much on the City Manager. Council discussed a Department of Public Safety instead of separate Police Chief and Fire Chief. Rawls questioned the workman's comp increase related to EMS transport. Pearson questioned the Community Development Manager position and what would be the relationship with outside agencies and responsibilities with economic development. Pearson asked what Hannah Powell's position was and if there was a planning professional; Pearson said the department has missed out by not having a planner. Rawls asked what the purpose was behind so many Administrative Associates. The City's supplement for elected official including stipend was discussed and Council asked who would be responsible for paying the Law Clerk, Judges secretary and other court staff. There are equity issues between the Treasurer's office and the Finance office. Rawls asked about an organizational assessment, stating that the Treasurer's office doesn't generate revenue, they collect it. When a department head position comes available, the position's responsibility should be reviewed and the option to modify the job description considered. Council should hold the City Manager accountable for ensuring that the department head chosen for the vacancy is qualified. Payne confirmed that Council Members can require a vacant position not be filled by taking a vote in a Council meeting but that needs to be an informed decision. Rawls questioned whether the City needs both an Engineer and Public Works Manager position or can those positions be combined or even contracted out. Council decided that their shared philosophy on funding outside agencies should only be if they can provide a better service or save the City money in the future. Rawls stated that the City needs to increase tax revenues and grow the City to the point that it's sustainable with enough people and profits to support businesses. Focus should be on the quality of life, service culture and shopping. Pearson said the last thing Uptown Martinsville needs is another salon or fitness center; it needs diversity with offices and retail space and an increase in employment opportunities. Rawls said employment is tricky with a new business; who's going to do the work; there should be a focus on diversity. Rawls pointed out that local factory PressGlass cannot find enough qualified workers to fill their 500 positions; jobs are not a primary consideration. Baby boomers have tons of money and no need for a job. Rawls would like to see a growth in tax revenues and said the second generation that grew up in the "system" will continue to live off the system; economic development won't help them. Martinsville has more non-profits per capita than almost anywhere else in the US. Council discussed the need for an Economic Development

May 6, 2023 Council Retreat

Authority with a diverse set of professionals appointed by Council but independent to take responsibility for planning, negotiating, incentives, properties, etc. The EDA can get into housing where an IDA cannot. City Council does not control the Chamber or the EDC, they are more about marketing and coordinating; implementation would come from EDA. Mitchell asked how the EDC would work around local landowners who say no to new business or franchise. The local EDC should be marketing more actively for the City otherwise we need to restructure our agreement and what we pay them. Pearson would like to see an EDA be a priority. The EDA must be staffed by a City employee and the City must fund it to get it going. Council would like a report by December 1 and recommended that McGuire Woods be contacted with the Economic Development Strategy and the City Manager position filled by the end of 2024. Council would like to approach regional opportunities cooperatively, not separately. It appears that everything is a competition and that the City and County are not working together. There should be discussion about trade opportunities between the schools and with the school board. There should be cooperative ventures between the City and County jail. Council should invite the County to dinner to introduce the new City Manager and make that event open to the public. Council should invite the County to notable things like the local brewery's grand opening, the OctoberFest and other significant events ongoing within the City. There should be a Community engagement plan to include the Latin community. Council discussed the Cinco de Mayo event which was cancelled due to lack of interest. Rawls wants to see more public events Uptown and said an events policy is needed by early January 2025. Pearson would like to see the Citizen Advisory Board involved in this plan. Payne emphasized that the new Citizen Advisory Board should be following guidelines for boards, meeting minutes and announcements.

There being no further business, Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

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Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

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LC Jones, Mayor