

September 12, 2023 Council Meeting

A meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on September 12, 2023 in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:00 PM with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Kathy Lawson, Aaron Rawls, Lawrence Mitchell and Tammy Pearson. Staff present included Interim City Manager Glen Adams, Stephen Durbin, Attorney for Sands Anderson participating by phone, Public Information Officer Kendall Davis, and Police Chief Rob Fincher.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and advised Council would go into Closed Session beginning at 5:30 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Council Member Lawson and seconded by Vice Mayor Rawls with the following 5-0 recorded vote: Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; Council Member Pearson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; and Council Member Lawson, aye. Council Member Mitchell joined the Closed meeting a few minutes later. Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters: (A) Personnel Discussions and Appointments to Boards and Commissions, as authorized by Subsection 1, (B) Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, as authorized by Subsection 6, (C) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members, attorneys or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, or other specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, as authorized by Subsection 7, and (D) Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, as authorized by Subsection 29.

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 and seconded by Vice Mayor Rawls with the following recorded 5-0 vote: Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; Council Member Lawson, aye; Council Member Mitchell, aye; and Council Member Pearson, aye. No action was taken out of closed session.

Out of Closed Session, Council Member Lawson made a motion to appoint Efigenia Mota to the Citizen Advisory Board (Northside) for a 3-year term ending April 30, 2026; Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Council Member Lawson made a motion to appoint Alfonza Martin to the Citizen Advisory Board (Northside) for a 2-year term ending April 30, 2025; Mayor Jones seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

No other action was taken out of Closed Session.

Pledge to the flag and invocation were led by Council Member Lawson. Mayor Jones

September 12, 2023 Council Meeting

welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that agendas could be found in the back of the room and on the City website.

Approve minutes from the August 16, 2023 Joint Session with the Planning Commission, the August 22, 2023 Council Meeting, and the Closed Sessions on August 25 and 26, 2023 – Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve all minutes as presented; Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Present a proclamation to Ms. Alberta Wilson to honor her 101st birthday – Vice Mayor Jones read the proclamation and presented that to Ms. Wilson who was in attendance. Wilson thanked Council and said she appreciates the love.

Read a proclamation acknowledging the week of September 17th through the 23rd as Constitution Week – Council Member Mitchell read the proclamation which was presented to Ms. Beverly Woody, Martinsville Middle school teacher who was in attendance with three students who shared brief comments related to Constitution Week.

Present awards to Martinsville Middle School students who recently participated in Virginia Municipal League's "If I Were Mayor" contest – Mayor Jones announced the winners and presented them with a plaque, certificate and gift card to Uptown Pinball.

Read a proclamation acknowledging the week of September 18 through 22, 2023 as Adult Education and Family Literacy Week – Council Member Tammy Pearson read the proclamation which was presented to Lealice Hagwood, Coordinator and Lead Teacher for Martinsville Adult and Career Education Services. Hagwood thanked Council and spoke briefly on continued education.

Consider funding request for Warming Center for 2023-24 Winter Season – Interim City Manager Glen Adams explained that they are waiting on additional information and requested any discussion on this request be tabled until the next Council meeting.

Conduct a public hearing on the proposed lease and disposition of the Armory Building to I Won't Stop, LLC for youth recreational purposes – Interim City Manager Adams explained that Council has approved the agreement but a public hearing is required to finalize the lease. Mayor Jones opened the floor to public comment; no one approached the podium so the public hearing was closed. Adams summarized the agreement. Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve the lease; Council Member Pearson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Hear an update regarding the Uptown Survey – Building Inspector Kris Bridges, Police Lieutenant Jim Lovell and Fire/EMS Investigator and Inspector Andy Powers presented a PowerPoint detailing the survey. Council Member Lawson mentioned that there are no recycle containers uptown. Vice Mayor Rawls said a work session may be needed but they are already discussing priorities and which concerns can be addressed immediately. Council Member Pearson confirmed that they are considering options for the rest of Martinsville outside of Uptown Martinsville. Lawson likes the idea of elevated crosswalks and stop signs at pedestrian

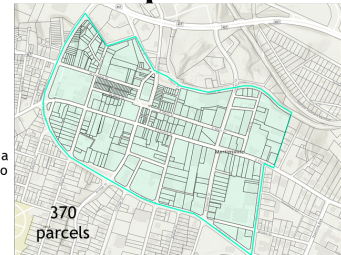
September 12, 2023 Council Meeting
crosswalks add safety to Uptown. Lawson expressed concern about uptown businesses putting trash out days before scheduled pickup and said education and enforcement of business owners is needed.

Uptown survey August 2023

Survey & Recommendations
Rob Fincher, Andy Powers, Kris Bridges

Purpose & Scope

- Compile a thorough list of needed and recommended improvements to buildings and infrastructure in the uptown area to use as a catalyst to making improvements to public and private property.
- Conduct a street level survey by means of a walking tour of the uptown area in order to provide a holistic approach to solution based recommendations on improvements to buildings and infrastructure.

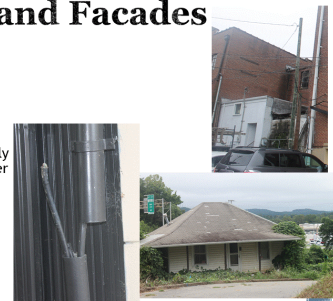


Focus areas

- Buildings & Facades
- Parking
- Trash policy
- Speeding
- Addressing & Emergency Services
- Storm Drainage & Runoff
- Trees & Planters
- Sidewalks & Crosswalks
- Accoutrements

Buildings and Facades

- A story of the Good, bad, ugly
- A wide range of buildings that are either being cared for very well to ones that are in a significant state of disrepair
- Many buildings are old and tired, especially the rear portions - some of the worst never get complaints
- Some haven't seen positive change in decades



Buildings & Facades solutions

- Start fixing the City's buildings first, from washing and painting to structural repairs
- Add a maintenance program that prioritizes uptown & puts our buildings on a 7 sided (foundation, roof, front, rear, left side, right side, inside) continuous improvement program as a model for others to follow
- Encourage uptown building owners to make needed repairs
 - Sponsor building clean up day with a hot dog lunch(MFD), extra trash bins and pickup, free trash bags, cleaning supplies, \$100 gift card to Sherwin Williams, an uptown business
- Code Enforcement actions as a last resort



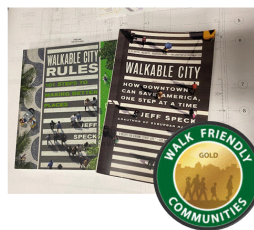
Parking

- Not a parking problem, a walking problem
- Accessibility - there are currently no on-street ADA accessible parking spaces. There are designated parking spaces in lots but few if any that actually meet the current guidelines.
- Stepped up enforcement of the 2 hour parking limit - mixed reviews



Parking solutions

- Paid on street parking - keep parking lots free
- Survey of all parking spaces and add Accessible parking in all lots and along all streets to the maximum extent practical
 - Target 5% of all available parking
 - Equally dispersed
 - Pay attention to the accessible routes
- Pursue walk friendly community designation
 - www.walkfriendly.org
- Adopt the principles of "Walkable City Rules" - Jeff Speck
 - "A recipe for Vibrant street life" - Los Angeles Times



Trash

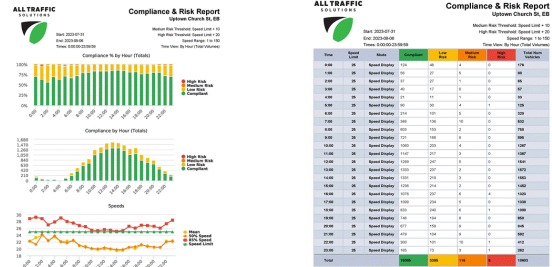
- Trash outside of receptacles for pickup
- Locations on sidewalks
- City's trash bins
 - Location of both large dumpsters and small sidewalk receptacles
- Current policies promote rodents

Trash solutions

- Consider adding receptacles and dumpsters to keep trash bags off the sidewalks as a general practice.
- Consider adding sufficient locations to serve all food based businesses
- Clean the dumpsters routinely
- Consider changing the sizes of receptacles & locations

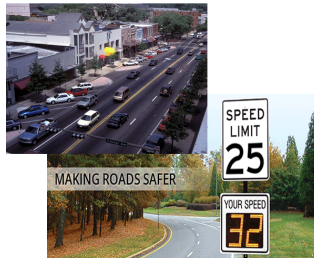
Speeding

- Speed trailer set up on E Church St July 27, through August 14, 2023



Speeding solutions

- Install signage
 - Speed plus blinkers when exceeded
 - Non-standard speed limits
 - 23 mph
 - 18 mph
- Adopt "traffic calming" practices
 - Diagonal parking on one side only
 - Two way vs. one way streets
 - Elevated crosswalks
 - Change lights to stops



Addressing and Emergency Services

- Improper addressing of buildings
 - Missing
 - Not large enough
 - No contrast
- Hard to see/identify hydrants
- Fake hydrants



Addressing and Emergency Services Solutions

- Painting address numbers on the curb
- Painting hydrant symbols on the pavement
- Public education about addressing and hydrants



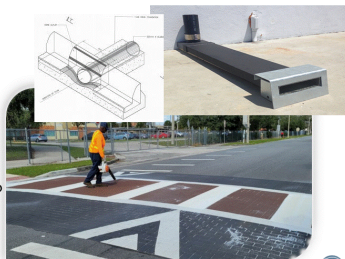
Storm Drainage & Runoff

- Numerous areas along curb aprons where water stands at the crosswalk
- Numerous building drains that under sidewalk drainage is blocked or missing
- Gutter downsouts flowing across sidewalks can create slip hazards and add to early deterioration of the sidewalk



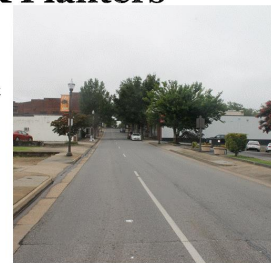
Storm water Runoff solutions

- Improve curb line areas that pond water
- Elevate crosswalks to match the sidewalk
 - No pooling water at crosswalk curb apron transition
 - Fixes multiple challenges.
- Install new downspout drainage to the curb apron.
 - Provide a cleanout



Trees & Planters

- Pros
 - Shading lowers temperatures and makes for a nice walking environment overall
 - Trees and plantings increase air quality & reduce runoff
 - Increased property value
 - Increases natural beauty and aesthetics
 - Promotes healthy lifestyle choices - walking



Trees & Planters

Cons

- Significant amount of overgrowth above roof lines, leaves on roof leads to clogged drainage and eventual roof leaks and building damage
- Root ball moves surrounding sidewalk slabs, some drastically
- Some trees block sidewalks
- Root ball can negatively affect underground utilities
- Blocked signage for some buildings



Trees & Planters solutions

- Find the right balance of pros and cons
- Significant trimming of some trees
- Remove a good number of very large trees
- Replace some with low and slow growth species that are kinder to our sidewalks and buildings with lower overall maintenance
- Renew interest in maintaining the planters by creating an "Adopt a Planter" program that the adoptee gets to paint and use for signage.



Sidewalks & Crosswalks

- ADA Accessibility issues throughout
- Numerous areas with misaligned sidewalk slabs
- Previous trees that were removed, nothing was added back, nor was the sidewalk slab re-established
- Previous grinding efforts lacked sufficient oversight and did not fix the issue of slab movement
- Signaling that doesn't work, takes too long to cycle, doesn't acknowledge the pedestrian presence



Sidewalks solutions

- Provide an overhaul of our existing signaling to account for accessibility - acknowledgement, East-West vs North-South sounds
- Survey all accessible curb cuts for correctness and repair as needed.
- Elevated crosswalks to sidewalk height removes several issues.



Accoutrements

- Trash cans - some not emptied
- Benches are not secured properly
- The big chair not maintained
- Lending libraries
- Pocket Parks
- Murals



Accoutrements solutions

- Adopt a planter program
 - See above
 - Continue the success of Rob King Alley in other areas
- Task the Arts & Cultural Committee
- Secure the benches in a tamperproof way, when replacing/upgrading consider an alternate design
- Community wide day of volunteering - uptown centric have tasking ready first to help logistics
 - Remove grass from curbs in the sidewalk curb, minor painting, planter boxes, window washing, Hula Pin approach
 - Pocket Park maintenance
 - Mural maintenance



The End



Business from the Floor – No one approached the podium

Mayor Jones requested Public Information Officer Kendall Davis to update citizens on the parks survey. Davis encouraged residents to provide their input on the City Park survey.

Comments from Members of Council – Council Member Pearson encouraged residents to participate in the park survey even if they are unable to attend the meetings. Council Member Mitchell said he's known Ms. Alberta all his life and he had the privilege to document her history.

September 12, 2023 Council Meeting

Council Member Lawson remembered working with Ms. Alberta in the past. Hazardous Waste Day is October 7 from 9:00am-noon. OctoberFest is October 7. Pleasure with former Mayor Turner to present a flag to the AMVET organization. Sunday is Constitution Day and the flags uptown will be flown. Council Member Pearson thanked everyone who attended and it's a joy to celebrate with Ms. Alberta. It was fantastic to share the meeting tonight with Ms. Alberta who is 101 years old along with Martinsville Middle School Students. Last TGIF concert is Friday. OctoberFest organizers said that there are still vendor spots available. Vice Mayor Rawls thanked the City Manager and the staff for their efforts on the Uptown Survey even during the hot summer months. Rawls spoke at the Martinsville Middle School and received a stack of thank you letters from those students. Mayor Jones thanked the residents for attending. Jones thanked the Public Works, Electric and Water crews for their efforts during recent storms and their fast response

Comments by Interim City Manager – Interim City Manager Glen Adams is learning from the City Directors every week. He looks forward to working with Keith Holland, the new Community Development Director as well as Greg Maggard who's been hired as the Public Works Director. Unfortunately, they have not found a qualified applicant for the City Engineer.

There being no further business, Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

LC Jones, Mayor