



City of Richmond

Informal Meeting Minutes

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk

Monday, June 10, 2019

4:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Chris Hilbert, Vice President (late arrival)
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Parker Agelasto
The Honorable Michael Jones
The Honorable Kristen Larson
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (late arrival)
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Reported Absent

The Honorable Kim Gray

Staff Present

Lisa Braxton, Assistant City Clerk
Meghan Brown, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Haskell Brown, Deputy City Attorney
Allen Jackson, City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and presided.

Upon the President's request, Assistant City Clerk Lisa Braxton provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Docket Review

Assistant City Clerk Lisa Braxton reviewed the following agenda items as indicated:

Consent Agenda:

1. Ord. 2019-012 – to be continued to Monday, September 9, 2019
2. Ord. 2019-119 – retained on the Consent Agenda
3. Ord. 2019-133 – retained on the Consent Agenda
4. Ord. 2019-134 – retained on the Consent Agenda
5. Ord. 2019-135 – retained on the Consent Agenda
6. Ord. 2019-136 – retained on the Consent Agenda
7. Ord. 2019-137 – retained on the Consent Agenda

8. Ord. 2019-138 – retained on the Consent Agenda

9. Ord. 2019-139 – retained on the Consent Agenda

Chris Frelke, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities director, introduced Ord. 2019-139.

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived at 4:08 p.m. and was seated.

Regular Agenda:

10. Ord. 2019-130 – retained on the Regular Agenda

11. Res. 2018-R092 – retained on the Regular Agenda

There were no further comments or discussions concerning Consent and Regular Agenda items reviewed.

Citywide Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Program Update and Recommendations

City Assessor Richie McKeithen provided Council with an update of the current partial tax exemption for rehabilitated structures program (also known as the tax abatement program) which included suggested recommendations by the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) at Virginia Commonwealth University, proposed changes to the program suggested by his office, statistical program facts and future policy enforcement efforts. A copy of the presentation has been filed.

Vice President Chris Hilbert arrived at 4:22 p.m. and was seated.

Responding to questions posed by Councilor Ellen Robertson, Mr. McKeithen clarified his present lack of endorsement for CURA's suggested recommendations to modify the tax abatement program on a sliding scale basis and to incentivize the preservation of affordable housing within the program. He explained that the suggested recommendations would be difficult for city administration to administer due to the current assessment cycle as well as the invalidity of his agency to oversee a proposed affordable housing component to the program.

President Cynthia Newbille requested the definition of the term "vacant lot" in regards to the tax abatement program.

Vice President Chris Hilbert expressed his desire to work with councilors and city administration to create and/or incentivize additional affordable housing opportunities within the city.

Councilor Michael Jones reiterated Vice President Hilbert's sentiments surrounding affordable housing incentives and opportunities.

Councilor Parker Agelasto expressed his support for the proposed tax abatement policy enforcement efforts, and he acknowledged the possible need for allowing gradual phase out in an effort to not cause an unnecessary financial burden on individuals participating in the program.

Councilwoman Reva Trammell requested the locations of the reported properties currently benefiting from tax abatement incentives.

Other Discussion

President Cynthia Newbille asked that Council be provided an update regarding the Police department's transparency and accountability efforts given the number of citizens scheduled to speak later that evening at the Formal Session of Council.

Interim Police Chief William Smith informed Council that crisis training for all department personnel will be completed by December 2020 and has been implemented as part of the training academy for new officers. Interim Police Chief Smith reported that policing data is readily shared on the department's website and a request for proposal for a new records management system has been solicited, due to the current system's inability to properly collect updated policing accountability measures data. Mr. Smith also informed Council of his efforts to meet and collaborate with the Richmond Transparency and Accountability Project group; however, he stated that he does not support the group's stance regarding expanded civilian oversight of his department.

Councilor Parker Agelasto reported recent incidents pertaining to the lack of non-emergency callbacks as well as expressed concern with law enforcement responsibilities of off-duty police officers.

Councilor Ellen Robertson thanked Interim Police Chief Smith for his leadership and requested his presence at the Formal Session of Council to hear citizen comments regarding police accountability and possibly respond to questions.

Councilor Kristen Larson moved that the City Council approve the execution of modifications to the City's employment agreements with the City Assessor, City Attorney, City Auditor and City Clerk to enable them to receive the across the board 3 percent increase in salary approved in the FY2020 budget, effective July 6, 2019.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

CITY CLERK