



## City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
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### Minutes

## Education and Human Services Standing Committee

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Thursday, June 4, 2020

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

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### Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair  
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Committee Member  
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Alternate Member  
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Council Member  
Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst  
Meghan Brown, Deputy Council Chief of Staff  
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst  
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk  
M. Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

### Absent

The Honorable Chris Hilbert – Committee Member

### Call to Order

Chair Kristen Larson called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m., and presided.

### Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on May 28, 2020, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated members of the public were encouraged to provide comments in writing prior to the meeting and all comments received prior to 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 4, 2020, were provided to committee members. Ms. Isley indicated that members of the public who signed up to speak and provide comment would be called to speak at the appropriate time.

### Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, provided citizen speaker guidelines.

### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

*Chair Kristen Larson asked that the record reflect the attendance of Richmond School Board Chair Linda Owen.*

## **Approval of Minutes**

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Thursday, May 7, 2020, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

## **Board Vacancies**

There were no board vacancies for review.

## **Presentation(s)**

There were no presentations.

## **Paper for Consideration**

**The following resolution was considered:**

### RES. 2020-R037

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the development of a housing policy plan to address homelessness and affordable housing in the City of Richmond.

**Patron:** Ms. Robertson

Citizens were provided an opportunity to offer comments in writing regarding RES. 2020-R037 prior to the Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting. All written comments received by the Office of the City Clerk were provided to members of the Council prior to the meeting and are included as an Appendix to the June 4, 2020, Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting minutes.

*Councilor Ellen Robertson introduced RES. 2020-R037, and stated that the resolution would compile various city housing initiatives into an effective housing policy, to address a wide range of issues regarding homelessness and housing. She also expressed support for a policy that transcends Council terms.*

*Alternate Member Andreas Addison agreed with Councilor Robertson's remarks and stated that the city of Richmond must be as inclusive and equitable as possible.*

*Member Stephanie Lynch also agreed with Councilor Robertson's remarks, and discussed a previously mentioned task force which could serve as the executing body of such initiatives. She also asked for clarification regarding whether the intent of RES. 2020-R037 is to build a roadmap.*

*Councilor Roberson discussed seeking recommendations for citizen engagement in the process and stated that RES. 2020-R037 requires that city administration present the housing policy plan no later than September 8, 2020. She expressed the desire for all members of Council to be involved and requested that the members of the Education and Human Services Standing Committee to become co-patrons of RES. 2020-R037.*

*Member Lynch and Alternate Member Addison requested to be added as co-patrons to RES. 2020-R037.*

*Sharon Ebert, Department of Economic and Community Development deputy chief administrative officer, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R037, and mentioned city administration's ongoing work on an affordable and equitable housing plan.*

*Chair Kristen Larson mentioned the Richmond 300 Master Plan, and the recently adopted city of Richmond Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2020-2030, and expressed her desire for all housing initiatives, organizations and groups to work collaboratively. Chair Larson requested to be added as a co-patron to RES. 2020-R037, and informed the committee that the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust (MWCLT) has experienced challenges obtaining properties through the city. She inquired about the blighted homes and buildings within the city of Richmond which could be utilized for affordable housing and expressed support for the MWCLT.*

*Ms. Ebert clarified that city administration has worked with the MWCLT in supplying a list of city-owned properties that are eligible to be declared surplus, and advised that the land trust will be a component of the affordable housing plan.*

*A copy of the materials provided have been filed.*

**There were no further comments or discussions and **Alternate Member Andreas Addison moved to forward RES. 2020-R037 to the June 8, 2020, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.****

### **Discussion Item(s)**

There were no items for discussion.

### **Staff Report**

Joyce Davis, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the June staff report. She noted that the committee would need to consider whether to hold the August 6, 2020, committee meeting, and stated that upcoming meetings would need to address Virginia General Assembly legislative requests.

*A copy of the report has been filed.*

*Member Stephanie Lynch asked the committee to strive to identify racial disparities and create solutions to improve city of Richmond systems. Member Lynch asked the committee to hear from and uplift stakeholders whom could provide perspective and expertise, and to create an evaluation system for Richmond Public Schools, the Richmond criminal justice system and other institutions within the city of Richmond.*

*Chair Kristen Larson requested staff to recirculate a previously created list regarding Education and Human Services Standing Committee topics and a calendar of updates to be received by the committee.*

*Member Ellen Robertson requested staff to explore a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study that examined student grade level reading and used the outcomes to make projections regarding engagement with the judicial system and other domino effects. She also asked staff to determine if additional resources from the city or requested resources from the Virginia General Assembly could be helpful.*

*Richmond School Board Chair Linda Owen requested a copy of the JLARC study.*

*Chair Larson asked Richmond School Board Chair Owen to ensure the Education and Human Services Standing Committee is kept abreast of the Richmond School Board's plans for vacant non-instructional/surplussed property, specifically the Thirteen Acres School building. Chair Larson requested information from the Office of the City Attorney regarding the process for the sale of the RPS vacant non-instructional/surplussed properties. Chair Larson also asked that a Richmond Public Schools representative provide an update to the committee at the July 2, 2020, Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.*

*Richmond School Board Chair Linda Owen informed the committee that the Thirteen Acres School property has been addressed, and she advised that she will follow-up regarding future meetings of the Non-Instructional/Surplussed Property Committee. She also stated that the committee was formed for all non-instructional vacant buildings and that the list of properties is longer than anticipated.*

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

**From:** [Hannah M](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Comment for Education and Human Services Standing Committee Meeting on 5/4/2020  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 3, 2020 11:21:20 PM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Candice D. Reid,

My name is Hannah McHugh. I represent no organizations. I am a concerned Richmond citizen and am commenting on Resolution No. 2020-R037 because I feel that it personally concerns me, and it does not economically or professionally impact my relationships.

My comment is as follows:

"I am strongly urging that city council begin the necessary work of ending homelessness in Richmond by voting yes and moving forward with Res No 2020-R037. This is essentially the most minimal effort response that city council could possibly have—basically addressing that homelessness in Richmond needs to be addressed. There is absolutely no reason that we can somehow budget for the RPD to teargas its own citizens and aggressively enforce curfews (which we just witnessed) while we simultaneously cannot ensure all citizens have a home. Might I remind you that we are still dealing with a global pandemic, so ensuring the health and safety for even a single individual right now will greatly impact the health and safety for all of us. Please pass what seems to be an obvious commitment to justice and equality by helping our most vulnerable population. Thank you."

Best,

-Hannah McHugh

**From:** [Thomas Jakob](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Jun. 5 Education and Human Services Standing Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 3, 2020 10:09:27 PM

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Dear council,

I'll keep things short.

I think it is so easy for us to often and absentmindedly dehumanize homeless people. There is something so powerful about home ownership that affirms one has "made it" in this strange and symbolically-motivated world.

But, the fact of the matter is that having a roof over one's head is absolutely necessary for maintaining one's physiological and mental health. And yet, we still treat homelessness as an issue of privilege and not one of basic human rights.

This is only a fraction of the reason why we as a city must do our part to end homelessness and housing inequality in America. We must set an example. Our city has some of the worst eviction rates in the nation; housing inequality is most certainly an issue with racist correlation, which we all know our city struggles with as well.

All this makes it extremely pertinent that we do everything in our power to curtail this daunting problem. And with the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests we are seeing internationally, as well as in our own city, I deeply hope you all realize these issues we discuss today are also relevant to that fantastic movement as well.

That is why we are counting on the council to see through this formal request that would enact a broad-sweeping and progressive policy change to how our city addresses the issues of homelessness and affordable housing. No longer can we enact marginal changes; superficial solutions always lead to superficial results.

Regards,

Tom Jakob 