

From: [Susan Rebillot](#)
To: [City Clerk's Office](#)
Cc: [Gibson, Kenya J. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for Ordinances 2026-092 and 2026-096
Date: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:14:15 AM

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Dear Members of the Organizational Development Committee,

I am writing to support recommending that proposed Ordinances 2026-092 and 2026-096 be referred to City Council for full review and public hearings. Since I learned about the City's plan for zoning reforms, I delved into the data about zoning reform outcomes and processes around the U.S. for the past 10 to 20 years. I firmly believe that Richmond's final plan should be evidence based and should reflect best practices developed over the past decade in its zoning technology, its complimentary and necessary tools, and in its community engagement and education processes. There is a tremendous amount of data that Richmond can benefit from in order to achieve the stated goals of Code Refresh, but the first two drafts and the processes followed to create those drafts do not reflect an understanding of available evidence or of best practices for processes. City Council has an opportunity to improve the final draft and to decrease polarization and to broaden community input so that the voices of special interest groups do not dominate our outcomes.

Studies from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, American Planning Association, National Civic League, and Kettering Foundation suggest that the most successful formula for zoning reform processes consists of the following. First, a Citizens Community Advisory Commission, which both proposed ordinances provide. For Richmond, the strongest approach would be a commission that reflects:

- Homeowners and renters
- Northside, Southside, East End, West End, and Downtown residents
- Affordable housing advocates
- Neighborhood association representatives
- Young adults and seniors
- Small business owners
- Transit users

I believe that the number of members of the commission provided in both ordinances is inadequate and likely needs to be 25 to 35 to be adequately representative and balanced across the city and demographics.

In addition to the tasks of the commission members that are outlined in both ordinances, the process for community engagement, education and honest discussions about tradeoffs or secondary consequences of upzoning should shift from on-line and poster board post-its at

open houses to face to face small group discussions. The process should also shift to a more deliberative process where citizens evaluate multiple growth scenarios, conduct neighborhood workshops, and make recommendations before final zoning decisions. Research suggests that this type of representative deliberative process is more likely to reduce polarization than relying primarily on presenting a plan and then requesting responses at public hearings, where participation is often dominated by the most organized interest groups.

Finally, I would like to encourage all City Council representatives to take advantage of the readily available data and best practices recommendations regarding zoning reform outcomes, obstacles to effectiveness, and effective planning and community engagement processes. The future of Richmond will be shaped by zoning reform

Warmest regards,

Susan Rebillot

727-744-3779

“There is no power greater for change than a community discovering what it cares about.”
Margaret J. Wheatley

From: [Doug Allen](#)
To: [City Clerk's Office](#)
Cc: [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Robins, Amy E. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: Oppose ORD 2026-092
Date: Wednesday, June 3, 2026 1:12:49 PM

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I oppose ORD 2026-092 which would create an unnecessary and duplicative Code Refresh Review Committee.

v/r
Doug Allen
513 S Pine St
Richmond, VA
5th District

Sent from iPhone