



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

3:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Nicole Jones – Chair
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Vice Chair
The Honorable Andrew Breton – Member
The Honorable Kenya Gibson – Councilmember (via Microsoft Teams)
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure via Microsoft Teams)

Staff in Attendance

Bonnie Ashley, Deputy City Attorney
Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Nahdiah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Nicole Jones called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

Kim Taylor, Richmond Chapter of Virginia Organizing member, addressed the committee concerning tenant living conditions. Ms. Taylor stated that the living conditions she experienced have placed a strain on her family's health. Ms. Taylor proposed that the city establish rental inspection districts.

Jennifer Loper addressed the committee concerning living conditions at her mother's residence, and she stated that a rental inspection program was needed.

Paul Fleisher, Virginia Organizing member, addressed the committee regarding a rental inspection program in the city. Mr. Fleisher stated that low income renters were forced to live in inadequate housing, and that the rental inspection program would identify and remedy some of the city's worst apartment complexes.

Caroline Toby, Student Support Coach for United Methodist Family Services (UMFS), addressed the committee regarding the need for more extended and far reaching bus services for travel outside of city lines.

Emma White, Richmond Chapter of Virginia Organizing member, addressed the committee regarding tenant living conditions in the city. Ms. White also stated that no one should have to live in unhealthy and unsafe conditions. Ms. White further stated that she was in full support of a rental inspection program.

Thomas Courtney addressed the committee concerning land use compliance at 2915 Grove Avenue, the site of warehouse construction for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA). Mr. Courtney requested that the committee enforce the associated special use permit.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of January 21, 2025 and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.043](#) January 21, 2025 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250121 LUHT Minutes - DRAFT](#)

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for consideration by the committee.

[CD.2025.077](#) March 18, 2025 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Board Vacancy Report

Attachments: [20250318 - Land Use Housing and Transportation Board Vacancy](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Nicole Jones asked why the appointments to the Public Art Commission would be interim appointments before final appointments were made in June 2025. Chair Jones asked how long the commission had been inactive.

Ms. Nichols stated that the appointments would be interim due to the requirements of ORD. 2024-212, which stated that all appointments would be considered in June and member terms would start on July 1. Ms. Nichols also stated that the interim appointments would allow the work of the commission to begin.

Monica Kinsey, Department of Planning and Development Review (DPR), Planner and Secretary of the Public Art Commission, stated the commission last held a meeting in November 2024, and ORD. 2024-212 required that the previous Public Art Commission be abolished before new appointments were made.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward the following board appointment applications to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Public Art Commission:

Taron Sparks

Brian Barr

Holly Gordon

Elizabeth Dolan Wright

Ricky Parker

Andrea Almond

Jessie Gemmer

Nicole Jones

Presentation(s)

Rental Inspection Program Update

Kevin Vonck, Director of the Department of Planning and Development Review (PDR), presented the committee with a rental inspection program update.

[CD.2025.081](#) March 18, 2025 - Rental Inspection Program Update Presentation

Attachments: [20250318 Rental Inspection Program Update Presentation](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Member Andrew Breton asked what the inspection protocols were after a complaint was received.

Mr. Vonck informed the committee about the inspection process before and after a complaint was received and filed.

Member Breton expressed his concerns regarding the possible displacement of residents if a property was deemed unfit to be inhabited.

Mr. Vonck provided the committee with information regarding the protocols for assisting residents when apartments were deemed unfit and tenants were displaced due to failed inspections.

Member Breton asked for additional information regarding a 10-year cycle inspection.

Mr. Vonck provided the committee with further details regarding a 10-year cycle inspection with two rounds of inspections. Mr. Vonck stated that once a rental inspection district is established, a timeline would be set for when inspections would be conducted. Mr. Vonck also stated that for larger apartment complexes, 10% of the units could be inspected.

Member Breton asked about using data points as a method to establish rental inspection districts or the use of data as a tool for the inspection process.

Mr. Vonck stated that the Commonwealth of Virginia only required that identified districts have blight. Mr. Vonck also stated that he would not recommend a specific threshold of reported issues be used to create districts.

Vice Chair Robertson stated she wanted to ensure that tenants' rights were protected from retaliation and unintended consequences. Vice Chair Robertson asked how landlords would be held responsible for fixing violations and the options available to the city to provide resources for tenants. Vice Chair Robertson requested a template of the ordinance that would enact the rental inspection program.

Michelle Coward, Deputy Director of Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement for Planning and Development Review, stated that under the Virginia Maintenance Code, written notification was sent to the property owner for any violations found, and a timeframe for property owners to address violations was established. Ms. Coward also stated that property owners would be asked to temporarily relocate residents while the violations were being addressed. Ms. Coward provided the committee with additional information regarding holding property owners and management companies accountable.

Vice Chair Robertson asked could assistance be provided to tenants, such as putting their rent payments into an escrow account, until violations were addressed.

Ms. Howard stated that she would recommend assigning someone to establish and maintain an escrow account for residents.

Vice Chair Robertson stated that the proposed ordinance to establish the rental inspection program needed to address the rights and protections of residents, while holding landlords accountable for the maintenance of their properties.

Councilor Kenya Gibson requested the number of renters in the city, the number of violations, and where violations were located. Ms. Gibson stated that the additional data would give Council a better understanding to establish the rental inspection districts. Ms. Gibson requested data from other localities that have established rental inspection districts.

Mr. Vonck stated that 57% of city residents are renters, and he would provide Council with additional data regarding previous code violations once legislation was introduced to Council.

Chair Nicole Jones asked about implementing best practices regarding the rental inspection program.

Mr. Vonck continued discussion of the rental inspection program with the committee.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch left the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-041](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant Agreement between the City of Richmond and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the purpose of funding green infrastructure improvements at Whitcomb Community Park.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-041](#)

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward Ord. 2025-041 to Council, with a recommendation to approve.

Vice Chair Robertson asked for additional information regarding the status of the development plans of Whitcomb Community Park.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development, provided the committee with additional information regarding the grant agreement of Ord. 2025-041. DCAO Ebert stated that city administration expected to break ground on the playground within three months.

There were no further comments or discussions and the motion to forward ORD. 2025-041, to Council with the recommendation to approve, was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following resolution was considered:

2. [RES. 2024-R041](#) To express support for the study and installation of photo speed monitoring devices in high-risk intersection segments, including the 600 and 700 blocks of South Belvidere Street and certain other locations, pursuant to Va. Code § 46.2-882.1 and through the City of Richmond's

Department of Police “Safety Camera Program” and to request that the Chief Administrative Officer consider identifying additional locations for the installation of photo speed monitoring devices and increasing the number of photo speed monitoring devices deployed by the City. (5th District)

Patrons: Ms. Lynch, Ms. Jordan and Ms. Robertson

Attachments: [Res. No. 2024-R041](#)

[Public Comments Council](#)

Member Andrew Breton asked about the data and study results that the committee previously requested regarding RES. 2024-R041.

Carla Childs, Senior Management Analyst for the Department of Public Works, provided the committee with additional information regarding state law on the implementation of speed monitoring cameras for RES. 2024-R041.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson stated that it would be beneficial for the committee to have all the data requested to make an informed decision regarding RES. 2024-R041.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development, addressed the committee regarding RES. 2024-R041.

Chair Nicole Jones stated that the committee requested additional information when the proposed legislation was first reviewed by the committee.

Amy Robins, Fifth District Council Liaison, provided the committee with additional information on behalf of patron Councilor Stephanie Lynch, regarding RES. 2024-R041.

Vice Chair Ellen recommended to continue RES. 2024-R041 to the Tuesday, April 22, 2025, Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee meeting, to provide additional time for the committee to receive the information requested.

Bobby Vincent, Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), provided the committee with additional information regarding the proposed resolution, and he stated his support of a continuance pending action by the state.

Member Breton asked if the state law would impact the proposed legislation.

Bonnie Ashley, Deputy City Attorney, stated that she needed to do further research regarding the state law's potential impact on the proposed resolution.

The committee and city administration continued discussion of the proposed resolution.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to continue RES. 2024-R041, to the April 22, 2025, Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following resolution was considered:

3. [RES. 2025-R012](#) To designate the property known as 809 Oliver Hill Way as a revitalization area pursuant to Va. Code § 36-55.30:2. (6th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Res. No. 2025-R012](#)

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward RES. 2025-R012 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the March Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee staff report.

[CD.2025.082](#) March 18, 2025 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Staff Report

Attachments: [20250318 - Land Use Staff Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.