



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

3:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Special Meeting

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Kristen Nye, President
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert, Vice President (late arrival)
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille
The Honorable Ellen Robertson

Absent

The Honorable Nicole Jones
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Call to Order

Council President Kristen Nye called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the President's request, Deputy City Clerk RJ Warren provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Papers for Consideration

The following ordinances were considered:

2. [ORD. 2024-111](#) To authorize the issuance of general obligation public improvement bonds of the City of Richmond in the maximum principal amount of \$170,000,000 to finance the costs of the design, acquisition, construction and equipping of a new baseball stadium to be developed in connection with the redevelopment of the area known as the "Diamond District" and to pay the issuance and financing costs incurred in connection with such bonds (including, but not limited to, certain

capitalized interest on such bonds); to authorize the Director of Finance, with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City, to sell such bonds for such capital improvement project, to provide for the form, details and payment of such bonds; and to authorize the issuance of notes of the City in anticipation of the issuance of such bonds.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Jordan, President Nye, Ms. Newbille, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Addison, Ms. Lynch and Ms. Robertson

4. [ORD. 2024-113](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute the Diamond District Redevelopment Project Purchase and Sale and Development Agreement by and between the City of Richmond, Virginia, Diamond District Partners, LLC, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond, Virginia, for the purpose of providing for the financing, construction, maintenance, and operation of public improvements and private development within an area generally known as the Diamond District along North Arthur Ashe Boulevard and Hermitage Road.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Jordan, President Nye, Ms. Newbille, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Addison, Ms. Lynch and Ms. Robertson

5. [ORD. 2024-114](#) To approve a plan to finance certain public infrastructure in connection with the redevelopment of the area known as the “Diamond District” through the issuance of revenue bonds by the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond, Virginia (the “Authority”); to approve the form of a Cooperation Agreement pursuant to which the City of Richmond, Virginia (the “City”), will undertake, subject to annual appropriation by the Council of the City of sufficient amounts for such purposes, to make available to the Authority such funds as may be necessary to enable the Authority to (a) satisfy its undertakings pursuant to the Purchase and Sale and Development Agreement, the Stadium Development Agreement and the Stadium Lease, each to be entered into in connection with the Diamond District redevelopment project, (b) pay the debt service on the revenue bonds to be issued to finance such public infrastructure and (c) pay certain other costs and fees and fund other obligations required pursuant to the terms of the financing documents pursuant to which such revenue bonds are to be issued; and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and other appropriate officers of the City to execute and deliver the Cooperation Agreement and such other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the plan of finance with respect to the public infrastructure.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Jordan, President Nye, Ms. Newbille, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Addison, Ms. Lynch and Ms. Robertson

Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert arrived at 3:15 p.m. and was seated.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Planning and Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the ordinances and proposed Diamond District development project.

Public Hearing

Grace Washington, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of J&G Workforce Development and Workforce Development Coordinator for the Diamond District Development Project, spoke in support of the proposed ordinances, and she stated that she was excited about the economic opportunities the development will provide.

Charles Skelly, President of the Richmond Building and Construction Trades Union Council and Business Manager of IBEW Local 666, spoke in support of the proposed ordinances and stated that the city is ready for continued growth in the surrounding area of the proposed development. Mr. Skelly also stated the development would benefit labor unions in the city.

Zule Panetta, Organizer with the Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 804 (LiUna!) spoke in support of the proposed ordinances, and she stated that the development will help create and maintain good union paying jobs in the city.

Charles Willis, United Communities Against Crime Executive Director, spoke in support of the proposed ordinances, and stated that he was excited about the opportunities the project will provide.

Sebastian Feculak, Government Relations Mid-Atlantic District at Ironworkers Association, spoke in support of the Diamond District development and stated that the project would provide high-wage jobs for ironworkers that live in the city.

Griffin Green, IBEW Local 666 member, spoke in support of the Diamond District development and stated that the project would provide jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for city residents.

Chris Franders, IBEW Local 666 member, spoke in support of the Diamond District development, and he stated that he could potentially complete his electrician apprenticeship working at the proposed stadium site.

Elizabeth Greenfield, Home Building Association Vice President of Government Affairs, spoke in support of the Diamond District development and stated that the development was a transformative project for the city. Ms. Greenfield also stated that the development would help create more affordable housing in the city.

John Easter, Senior Vice President of Government and Community Affairs for ChamberRVA, spoke in support of the Diamond District development, and he stated that the development would be a great opportunity for the city's infrastructure and economy. Mr. Easter also stated his support for how the city planned to finance the stadium development.

Layla Tatiana Calderón, Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council Union member, spoke in support of the proposed Diamond District development, and she stated that the project would provide safe union jobs for city residents.

Sir James Thornhill, Diamond District Development Project Art Director, spoke in support of the proposed Diamond District development and stated the project would provide several artistic opportunities in the city.

Jason Guillot, Thalhimer Realty Partners Principal, spoke in support of the proposed Diamond District development and stated that Thalhimer Realty Partners was excited to partner with the city regarding the project.

Jennifer Yox spoke in opposition of the proposed Diamond District development, and she noted her concerns about how the city would be issuing bonds to finance the construction of the project. Ms. Yox also stated she did not believe enough public engagement occurred regarding the proposed development.

Marcus Thomas, KEI Architects Managing Principal, spoke in support of the proposed Diamond District development and stated his support for the proposed financial plan for the project.

Norman Jenkins, Capstone Development Partners President and Chief Executive Officer, spoke in support of the proposed Diamond District development, and stated that Capstone would be the hotel developer for the project. Mr. Jenkins also stated Capstone was excited about the job opportunities the proposed hotel would provide.

Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert inquired about the timeline for public engagement for the proposed Diamond District development and why a special meeting was necessary to adopt the proposed ordinances. Vice President Lambert also inquired about the development's impact on the Arthur Ashe, Jr. Athletic Center.

DCAO Ebert provided information regarding the history of public engagement for the proposed development, and she stated that the special meeting was necessary due to special advertisement and public hearing requirements for the ordinance related to the creation of a community development authority (CDA).

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders stated that city administration was collaborating with Richmond Public Schools regarding the facility and how the Diamond District development would provide similar services at the center while continuing to honor Arthur Ashe, Jr.

Councilor Andreas Addison discussed with city administration the responsibilities of the CDA and how the city would ensure revenue was received in the future. Councilor Addison also inquired about the impact of the development and bond issuance on the city's debt service.

Councilor Katherine Jordan addressed the history of the proposed Diamond District development, and she stated her support for the change in the city's plans regarding financing the development through city-issued bonds.

Councilor Cynthia Newbille stated her appreciation for city administration's efforts regarding the proposed development, and she also stated she believed the development was a major economic development project and that the stadium would be a city asset.

Councilor Ellen Robertson spoke in support of the proposed development, and she stated her appreciation for city administration's work regarding how to finance the Diamond District development.

President Kristen Nye stated her initial concern regarding how the city planned to finance the Diamond District development. President Nye also stated that the area surrounding the proposed stadium needed development, and she noted her support for the city's plans for financing the development.

There were no further comments or discussions and ORD. 2024-111, ORD. 2024-113 and ORD. 2024-114 were adopted: Ayes 6, Addison, Jordan, Robertson, Newbille, Lambert, Nye. Noes None.

Introduction and Expedited Consideration

Councilor Katherine Jordan moved to expedite consideration of the following resolution:

1. [RES. 2024-R015](#) To appoint the initial members of the Board of Directors for the Diamond District Community Development Authority.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

The motion was seconded and approved, Ayes 6, Addison, Jordan, Robertson, Newbille, Lambert, Nye. Noes None.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed resolution.

Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert confirmed that the community development authority members did not receive financial compensation for serving on the authority.

There were no further comments or discussions and RES. 2024-R015 was adopted: Ayes 6, Addison, Jordan, Robertson, Newbille, Lambert, Nye. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

3. [ORD. 2024-112](#) To create the Diamond District Community Development Authority.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Jordan, President Nye, Ms. Newbille, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Addison, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Robertson and Vice President Lambert

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance.

Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert requested to be added as a co-patron of ORD. 2024-112

Councilor Cynthia Newbille stated her support for ORD. 2024-112.

**There were no further comments or discussions and ORD. 2024-112 was adopted:
Ayes 6, Addison, Jordan, Robertson, Newbille, Lambert, Nye. Noes None.**

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

CITY CLERK