



City of Richmond

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

Minutes

Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member

Debra Bowles, Assistant City Clerk
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Kristin Larson called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m. and presided.

Evacuation Announcement

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Debra Bowles provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

Fletcher Burns addressed the committee virtually regarding noise issues within the area of his home.

Discussion Item(s)

City's Noise Ordinance

Member Michael Jones requested to move the discussion on the city's noise ordinance forward on the agenda based upon the public comment of Fletcher Burns. Chair Kristen Larson and Vice Chair Katherine Jordan were in consensus to move the discussion.

Vice Chair Jordan stated that she requested the discussion item due to the difficulty of enforcing the current noise ordinance and how it affects citizens' quality of life. Ms. Jordan stated that the noise can be the result of businesses, loud vehicles and protests, which can be heard within citizens' homes. Ms. Jordan also inquired on the noise decibel readings and quiet zones.

Deputy Chief Administrator Officer (DCAO) for Operations Robert Steidel stated that representation from the Richmond Police Department (RPD) was present to discuss enforcement of the current noise ordinance.

Lieutenant (Lt.) Warren Andorfer informed the committee that the main challenge for the RPD regarding the current noise ordinance, is that a citizen must be involved in many of the processes, and that many times the citizen does not wish to be seen by the police or be present in court, which means that the police cannot act on the complaint. Lt. Andorfer stated that decibel readings have been taken at certain times of the day, in specific areas of the city, and many of the RPD readings do not meet the decibel criteria as specified within the current ordinance.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders stated that he was not aware of a quiet zone review and deferred to Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown. Mr. Brown stated that he was not aware of the quiet zone concept and he will review the current noise ordinance that requires citizen involvement.

CAO Saunders stated that a meeting including Deputy Civilian RPD Chief Victoria Pearson, Interim City Attorney Brown and himself, regarding the next steps towards finalizing changes of the current noise ordinance, is possible with the office of Vice Chair Jordan.

Member Jones asked Interim City Attorney Brown and CAO Saunders to engage code enforcement for pulling business licenses, as opposed to engaging RPD, of businesses that are going against the current noise ordinance. Mr. Jones stated that he would support the code enforcement process through city legislation.

Chair Larson summarized that areas of improvement are definitely needed regarding the noise ordinance, RPD Civilian Deputy Chief Pearson has taken the lead in reviewing the process, and it is requested that she be at the January 26, 2022, Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting to share input. Chair Larson also stated that if a meeting can occur prior to the January 26th committee meeting, only one member of the committee will be in attendance.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations for consideration.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following agenda amendments were considered:

RES. 2021-R082

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the development of a process for the designation of development project areas within the city of Richmond to be funded through tax increment financing pursuant to Va. Code § 58.1-3245.2 and the preparation of a report concerning the feasibility of designating certain development project areas within the city of Richmond.

Patrons: Mr. Addison

To be forwarded to the January 10, 2022 City Council meeting with no recommendation

ORD. 2021-345

To amend ch. 2, art. VI of the City Code by adding therein a new div. 6, consisting of §§ 2-1301.1-2-1301.20, concerning collective bargaining, for the purpose of providing for collective bargaining with certain City employees.

Patrons: Ms. Trammell

To be forwarded to the January 10, 2022 City Council meeting with no recommendation

ORD. 2021-346

To amend ch. 2, art. VI of the City Code by adding therein a new div. 6, consisting of §§ 2-1301.1-2-1301.20, concerning collective bargaining, for the purpose of providing for collective bargaining with certain City employees.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

To be forwarded to the January 10, 2022 City Council meeting with no recommendation

RES. 2021-R086

To request that the Mayor propose, as part of his annual budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the necessary amendments to the City Code and appropriations to establish a Department of Mobility and Multimodal Transportation.

Patrons: Mr. Addison

To be forwarded to the January 10, 2022 City Council meeting with no recommendation

Ms. Larson talked about requests of patrons to refer above legislation to other committees. Also allowed public hearing.

Public Hearing

Everett Fields, a city public works employee for 26 years, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-345 and ORD. 2021-346 stating that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) states the average median income for the city should be approximately \$89,000 while the average median income in public works is approximately \$44,000.

Citizens were provided an opportunity to offer comments in writing regarding pending legislation prior to the committee meeting. All written comments received by the Office of the City Clerk were provided to members of the committee and are included as an attachment to the December 15, 2021 Governmental Operations meeting minutes, which can be accessed at <https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5351135&GUID=741C2C85-2333-4364-BA26-A178116609A3&Options=&Search=>.

Member Michael Jones moved to amend the agenda as presented, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the work session minutes of Friday, October 1, 2021, the work session minutes of Friday, October 22, 2021, and the meeting minutes of Wednesday, October 27, 2021, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-347

To establish the 2022 City Charter Review Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the City Charter with the objective of making recommendations for appropriate revisions thereto.

Patrons: President Newbille and Vice President Robertson

Interim Council Chief of Staff (CCOS) Joyce Davis introduced ORD. 2021-347, and stated that the proposed ordinance is to create a City Charter Review Commission that will complete a comprehensive review of the City Charter.

Chair Kristen Larson stated that during the committee work sessions, there was discussion regarding the creation of a commission and the proposed ordinance is to codify the previous discussion. Chair Larson also stated that the commission should be provided with the previous information from the last commission's report in order that the previous information will not be ignored.

Interim CCOS Davis outlined that Council would make decisions on the preliminary or final recommendation to Council in June 2022 or June 2023. Ms. Davis also stated that June was specified based upon the appointment of individuals to the commission that might not occur until March 2022, and it would be January 2022 before final consideration of the proposed ordinance. Ms. Davis further stated that if the proposed ordinance is adopted, it would be February or March before appointments to the commission are finalized, and that would only give three months for the commission to consider detailed areas. Ms. Davis stated that the review on the mayor - council form of government, outdated language and outdated policies could take much longer than three months, and June 2022 may not be a realistic date for final recommendations.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan stated that the timeline appears to be elongated, especially with all the work that the committee has already completed; however, the commission would be researching areas that would require more detailed discussion.

Member Michael Jones asked the reason why it would take over a year for recommendations.

Council Budget Analyst Bill Echelberger provided specific information regarding the estimated timeline for the commission's report. Mr. Echelberger's information included an estimated six months for research, preliminary reports, and Council budget sessions for 22 - 23 and 23 - 24 fiscal years. Mr. Echelberger also stated that after the commission's final report, Council would review for approval or make amendments, discuss items with the legislative delegation and then provide draft items for the General Assembly. Mr. Echelberger stated further that upon completion, a referendum may need to go on the ballot for citizens the following November.

Member Jones stated that his desire is that the commission not delay the work that is needed and proceed at a pace that Council expects.

Chair Larson asked committee members if they desire to move forward with appointments to the commission, or if the committee would like to consider continuing of the committee's work on City Charter changes. Ms. Larson stated that she does not want to wait two years for a final report by the commission.

Interim CCOS Davis stated that there are items within the proposed ordinance that could be separated from the initial listing for separate review.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved forward ORD. 2021-347 to the January 10, 2022, Council meeting with no recommendation, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-348

To amend ch. 2, art. IV of the City Code by adding therein a new div. 23, consisting of §§ 2-757-2-759, concerning the Office of Sustainability.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney and Ms. Jordan

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan introduced ORD. 2021-348, and informed the committee that the request in the proposed ordinance was included in the city's climate emergency resolution. Ms. Jordan also stated that the proposed ordinance will create the infrastructure to maintain the city's climate mitigation plan.

DCAO Robert Steidel stated that administration is in support of ORD. 2021-348.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward ORD. 2021-348 to the January 10, 2022, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R084

To adopt redistricting criteria and a redistricting schedule for the 2021 decennial redistricting of Council and School Board election districts.

Patrons: City Council

Attorney J. Gerald (Gerry) Hebert provided an introduction on RES. 2021-R084 regarding the redistricting of election districts within the city. Attorney Hebert stated that Council elected to use a redistricting plan that is more attentive and responsive to citizen's requests. Mr. Hebert also stated that the city needs to be consistent with the publication of citizen notices.

Member Michael Jones inquired on the date of retaining Attorney Hebert and why the city has been criticized as being late in the redistricting process.

Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown stated that Attorney Hebert was contacted in May regarding the redistricting process and retained through an agreement in June; however, there was no census data available at the time of retention.

Attorney Hebert noted that the census data became available in August and Virginia law states that until the census data is adjusted, the information cannot be used. Mr. Hebert also stated that it is not fair that Richmond is being criticized for adopting a process that allows for more citizen input as opposed to pushing information early that would allow very little input of citizens.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan stated that the city needs to do a better job of educating the public on the process. Ms. Jordan also stated that the available website appears to be insufficient in managing the data as opposed to the planning department websites, and she requested assistance from administration to help with the process.

Chair Larson asked DCAO Robert Steidel if his department would help in facilitating the website process.

DCAO Steidel stated that the department builds their own website from the department level and also stated that assistance would be available for Council to be able to manage the needed information.

Member Michael Jones moved to forward RES. 2021-R084 to the December 21, 2021, Council special meeting with no recommendation, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R085

To request that the Council Chief of Staff cause the preparation of a study of the City's delinquent tax sale program.

Patrons: Vice President Robertson

Interim Council Chief of Staff (CCOS) Joyce Davis introduced RES. 2021-R085 and stated that the study for the city's delinquent tax sales program adds to additional information requested by Vice President Ellen Robertson and Councilor Michael Jones in previous papers that relate to tax study and the Homestead Act. Interim CCOS Davis stated that she has been working with the assessor's office regarding the studies for organization and procuring data.

Member Jones stated that the previous papers requested certain specifics that are in alignment with the request of proposed RES. 2021-R085.

Member Michael Jones moved to forward RES. 2021-R085 to the January 10, 2022, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Board Vacancies

There were no vacancies for consideration.

Staff Report

Council Budget Analyst Bill Echelberger, provided the committee with the December staff report.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.