



City of Richmond Special Meeting Minutes

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk

Monday, January 6, 2020

5:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Chris Hilbert, Vice President
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Michael Jones
The Honorable Kristen Larson
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (late arrival)
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Absent

The Honorable Kim Gray

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m., and presided.

CHAMBER EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN AND CITIZEN 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.

MOTION

Councilor Michael Jones moved that due to the cancellation of the December meeting of Council's Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee, Rule VI(B)(1) of Council's Rules of Procedure be suspended so that Council may consider and vote on RES. 2019-R071 that evening as originally scheduled. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 5, Jones, Lynch, Addison, Hilbert, Newbille. Noes 2, Larson, Trammell. Robertson had not yet arrived.

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2019-R071

To request that the General Assembly of Virginia enact legislation to exempt the City from the requirements of Va. Code §§ 15.2-1812, 15.2-1812.1, and 18.2-137, and from § 17.02 of the City Charter so that the City Council may determine the disposition of memorials and monuments located on public property owned by the City as it deems appropriate and to the extent otherwise permitted by law.

Patron: Mr. Jones

Councilor Michael Jones provided an introduction of RES. 2019-R071.

At the request of President Cynthia Newbille, Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown provided additional information regarding the proposed resolution.

Opposition

Wendy Hazlett spoke in opposition of Res. 2019-R071, and stated she was in favor of protecting American history and Civil War memorials honoring Confederate States of America veterans.

Councilor Jones referenced Council's Citizen Speaker Guidelines and noted speakers are prohibited from addressing members directly. Councilor Jones expressed his concern with comments that associated him with hate and exclusion.

Tammy Hugate spoke in opposition of Res. 2019-R071, and stated she was defending the citizens of Virginia and the need to preserve history. Ms. Hugate also stated the removal of statues would erase history.

Support

Peter Gillis spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and inquired why Virginian, George Henry Thomas, a United States Army general during the Civil War, did not have a statue erected in his honor.

Breanne Armbrust spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and stated she believed that Richmond City should have the local authority to decide how to address statues. Ms. Armbrust also stated individuals from outside of Richmond speaking to the matter did not speak for Richmond residents.

Phil Wilayto, Virginia Defender newspaper editor, spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and stated statues do not truly represent history. Mr. Wilayto also stated individuals who fought for the preservation of slavery should not be honored.

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived at 5:32 p.m., and was seated.

Joseph Rodgers spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and informed Council he was the descendent of James Apostle Fields, a former slave and member of the Virginia House of Delegates. Mr. Rodgers addressed his ancestor's protest against the establishment of a statue honoring Robert E. Lee.

Whitney Whiting spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and expressed her appreciation that such a resolution was before Council.

Christopher Goad spoke in support of Res. 2019-R071, and expressed his concern that resources were being diverted from city needs in order to accommodate protests that supported statues remaining on Monument Avenue.

Vice President Chris Hilbert expressed his belief that local government should have jurisdiction over issues such as statues and memorials.

Councilor Andreas Addison addressed his prior involvement with the Monument Avenue Commission. Councilor Addison stated the recommendations issued by the commission could not be enacted because Richmond City was prohibited by state code. Councilor Addison expressed his belief that the proposed resolution would allow conversations to begin on how to address the issue of statues on Monument Avenue.

Councilor Ellen Robertson requested to be added as a co-patron to Res. 2019-R071, and asked that a time-line be drafted by Council staff on procedural next steps if the General Assembly of Virginia grants the city authority to determine the disposition of statues and memorials.

There were no further comments or discussions and **RES. 2019-R071 was adopted:** Ayes 6, Jones, Robertson, Lynch, Addison, Hilbert, Newbille. Noes 2, Larson, Trammell.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

CITY CLERK