CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 5, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Council Chamber

The Charlottesville City Council began its regular meeting on Monday, January 5, 2026, with an organizational meeting at 4:00 p.m., City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., presiding over the election of officers. Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called the roll, noting all councilors present: Jen Fleisher, Natalie Oschrin, Michael Payne, Lloyd Snook, and Juandiego Wade. Mr. Sanders welcomed Ms. Fleisher to her first meeting as a member of City Council.

On motion by Wade, seconded by Oschrin, Council by a vote of 5-0 adopted the meeting agenda (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

1. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Mr. Sanders explained the process for electing the positions of Mayor and Vice Mayor for two-year terms ending December 31, 2027, both positions being elected by majority vote of the City Council. Mr. Sanders opened the floor for nominations of individuals to serve as mayor.

Councilor Oschrin by motion nominated Juandiego Wade to remain as mayor, seconded by Councilor Snook. Councilor Payne self-nominated. With no additional nominations the slate was closed. By a roll call vote of 5-0, Council selected Juandiego Wade as mayor.

Mr. Sanders called for nominations of individuals to serve as vice mayor. Newly elected mayor Wade nominated Councilor Oschrin, seconded by Councilor Snook. With no additional nominations the slate was closed. By a roll call vote of 5-0, Council selected Natalie Oschrin as vice mayor.

Following comments from Mayor Wade and Vice Mayor Oschrin, Council recessed briefly to rearrange seating. Mayor Wade called the meeting back to order and began the Work Session.

WORK SESSION

2. REPORT: Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project

Victoria Kanellopoulos, City Planner, presented the report. The Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project ("Project") will develop new policies, implementation recommendations, and regulatory revisions to align the City of Charlottesville, Virginia's ("City"), policies and regulations for natural resources with the City's Comprehensive Plan ("CP"). City Neighborhood Development Services ("NDS") Staff developed a draft Project scope and identified six recommended topic areas: stormwater management, floodplain management, tree canopy, stream buffers, critical slopes, and energy efficiency.

Staff requested direction from City Council on the proposed Project phasing and Project topics, using the following questions to guide the Work Session discussion: 1. Do the recommended areas of study capture the key areas of needed study for the six (6) topics identified for this Project?; and 2. Are there additional topics or supporting information that should be included?

Staff answered questions regarding floodplain maps, collaboration with the Office of Sustainability and other departments, benchmarking, environmental regulation considerations, incorporating Planning Commission additional topic suggestions, and tree preservation.

Council agreed generally that Staff was moving in the right direction with the Project, and emphasized the need for equitable implementation and engagement, and planning for resiliency.

3. REPORT: Rivanna Authorities Presentation

Bill Mawyer, Rivanna Authorities Executive Director, presented a review of the Rivanna Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Refuse/Recycling Programs managed by the Rivanna Authorities (Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority, and Rivanna Solid Waste Authority).

CLOSED MEETING

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council voted 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none) to meet in closed session as authorized by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712 for the following reasons: 1. Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) for consultation or briefing with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. The subject matter to be discussed is a case filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and 2. Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) for discussion and consideration of prospective candidates to be appointed to the following boards and/or committees: Board of Architectural Review.

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council by a vote of 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none) certified that to the best of each Council member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the Motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed session.

BUSINESS SESSION

The business session of the meeting began with a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Mayor Oschrin announced a program on January 19 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Carver Recreation Center, "Continuing His Dream and Works".

Mayor Wade announced a program and dinner on January 19 at which he will be speaking, at Abundant Life Ministries in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Councilor Payne announced the open application process for boards and commissions.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council by a vote of 5-0 appointed the following members to the Board of Architectural Review:

- Cheryl Lewis - Business Owner/commercial property
- Katherine Snider Tabony - Licensed Architect
- David Timmerman - Licensed Architect

RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Wade presented a proclamation honoring the life and legacy of Eddie Harris, a visionary leader in the community, and founder of Vinegar Hill Magazine. Mr. Harris's son thanked the community for support and thanked City Council for the proclamation.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Mayor Wade invited comments from Toyosi Ogunseye of Presidential Precinct, who shared information about the organization which engages emerging global leaders and seasoned professionals to address the most pressing challenges in their countries. Presidential Precinct programs include professional fellowships, leadership exchanges, and global forums, bringing over 200 international leaders to Charlottesville each year and investing heavily into the community. Ms. Ogunseye stated that over 300 international leaders will participate in programs in Charlottesville during 2026 and they hope to engage with City Council and local leaders.

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public.

1. Colonel Robert Guest III, member of the Court Square Memorial Advocacy Group, spoke in support of installing a slate marker at East Jefferson Street to memorialize the enslavement auction block.
2. Dr. Paul Mack, member of the Court Square Memorial Advocacy Group, urged City Council to install a slate memorial marker at East Jefferson Street to acknowledge Charlottesville's role in auctioning enslaved people.
3. Martize Tolbert, city resident, made remarks about the impact that Eddie Harris made on him as his mentor, and in the community.
4. Wendy Gao, Organizer for the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), encouraged Council to change the zoning code regarding by-right zoning around core neighborhoods to provide more protection for low-income and historically Black communities.
5. Alicia Lenahan, Albemarle County resident, encouraged Council to adopt a resolution protecting Constitutional rights from ICE immigration enforcement and intrusive surveillance. She also spoke about Metropolis technology in the city parking garages, and concerns about misuse of collected data.
6. Angilee Shah, CEO and Editor-in-Chief for Charlottesville Tomorrow made comments to honor the legacy that Eddie Harris left in local media.
7. Taneesha Hudson, city resident, spoke about Eddie Harris and encouraged Council to honor people before they pass away.
8. Sophia Merrero, Organizer with PHAR, spoke in opposition to the proposed LV Collective luxury student housing project near the Westhaven community, and in support of changing the zoning code.
9. Sarad Davenport, city resident, made remarks about Eddie Harris's "others-centered" impact in the community.
10. John Hall, city resident, spoke about the Montgomery Alabama Bus Boycott, and asked for consideration of honoring Uriah J. Fields, Charlottesville resident, who organized the boycott.
11. Mike Henrietta, city resident, spoke about local history of enslavement auctioning, and the need to have a public monument.
12. Rachel, city resident, spoke about the impacts of gun violence and voiced support for funding of violence interrupters, The BUCK Squad.
13. Deanna McDonald thanked City Manager Sanders for communicating with the community about a new grocery store coming to the Fifeville neighborhood, and she asked Council to keep the project moving forward.
14. Frank Bechter, city resident, referred to a letter of appeal submitted to City Council regarding actions of the Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and he stated that the letter's argument is disingenuous with incorrect information.
15. Richard Allan, Albemarle County resident, spoke about tradition and agency as related to memorializing the Charlottesville enslavement auction block.

CONSENT AGENDA

Clerk Thomas read the following Consent Agenda items into the record, and on motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrin, Council unanimously adopted the Consent Agenda (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

4. MINUTES: December 9 joint CIP public hearing with Planning Commission; December 15 regular meeting; December 18 joint meeting with School Board

5. RESOLUTION to Grant $50,000 to the Residential Energy Retrofit Mini-Grant Program (2nd reading)

RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT ENERGY RETROFIT MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville has adopted climate goals for the Charlottesville community, which include 45% reduction by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the City has established that approximately 30% of greenhouse gas emissions are associated with the residential sector, and has identified that climate action in the residential sector involves implementing energy efficiency measures, and

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville has worked with the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) for over a decade in delivering energy efficiency and other clean energy initiatives; and

WHEREAS, LEAP is currently providing Home Energy Audits to Charlottesville homeowners, is a key partner in the recently-launched Community Energy Resource Hub, and has been successfully delivering the Residential Energy Retrofit Mini-Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the Residential Energy Retrofit Mini-Grant Program has been designed to address barriers to implementing energy efficiency improvements in the residential sector; and

WHEREAS, City Council has previously appropriated funding for clean energy actions in the in the Climate Action Initiatives Fund and the Residential Energy Retrofit Mini-Grant Program is an initiative that aligns with the intended use of those funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the sum of $50,000 from previously appropriated funds is hereby approved to be granted to LEAP to further support the Residential Energy Retrofit Mini-Grant Program, and the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with the Local Energy Alliance Program to govern the use of the funds.

6. RESOLUTION to appropriate $303,660.00 from the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program for the City of Charlottesville - Rock Creek Watershed Management Plan (2nd reading)

RESOLUTION
Appropriating Funding in the Amount of $303,660 To Be Received from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant Program

WHEREAS, The City of Charlottesville has been notified that it will be awarded a grant from the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (B.R.I.C.) grant program from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management in the amount of $303,660.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that upon receipt of the B.R.I.C. funding the Commonwealth of Virginia, said funding, anticipated in the sum of $303,660, is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

Revenues

$231,360	Fund 209	Order: 1900621	G/L 430120
72,300	Fund 209	Order: 1900621	G/L 498641

Expenditures

$303,660	Fund 209	Order 1900621 G/L 530550

Transfer of Previously Appropriated Funds

$72,300	Fund 643	CC: 6431001000	G/L 561209

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this appropriation is conditioned upon receipt of $231,360 in funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

7. RESOLUTION to appropriate Stormwater Local Assistance Grant Fund for the Rivanna Restoration at Riverview Park in the amount of $607,610.00 (layover)

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., called on Chris Engel, Director of Economic Development, who provided an update on Downtown parking management, specifically management of the Market Street and Water Street garages by Metropolis Parking using license plate readers. Councilors asked questions and expressed concerns about data access, data security, privacy, operational issues, and about the implementation of this system after Council voted to remove Flock cameras from the city. Mr. Engel stated that supplemental kiosks are being installed in the parking garages to accept different payment forms.

Mr. Sanders acknowledged the lack of public engagement prior to implementing the new parking system and contracting with Metropolis. He then introduced new Assistant City Manager Evan Pilachowski and Economic Mobility Officer Abigail Matthew Wade. He announced the City Council Retreat on January 9, and the City Manager Budget Forums on January 13, 14 and 15.

ACTION ITEMS

8. **RESOLUTION** to Establish Days, Times and Places of Regular Meetings of the Charlottesville City Council During Calendar Year 2026

On motion by Fleisher, seconded by Snook, Council voted 5-0 to approve the Resolution Establishing Days, Times and Places of Regular Meetings of the Charlottesville City Council During Calendar Year 2026, as amended (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none):

RESOLUTION
Establishing Days, Times and Places of Regular Meetings of the Charlottesville City Council During Calendar Year 2026

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, THAT pursuant to Virginia Code Sec. 15.2-1416, the regular meetings of the Charlottesville City Council shall be conducted on the following days, times, and places during calendar year 2026:

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING DATES		
January 5, 2026	May 4, 2026	September 21, 2026
January 20, 2026 *(Tuesday)*	May 18, 2026	October 5, 2026
February 2, 2026	June 1, 2026	October 19, 2026
February 17, 2026 *(Tuesday)*	June 15, 2026	November 2, 2026
March 2, 2026	July 20, 2026	November 16, 2026
March 16, 2026	August 3, 2026	December 7, 2026
April 6, 2026	August 17, 2026	December 21, 2026
April 20, 2026	September 8, 2026 (*Tuesday)*	

TIME: 4:00 p.m. work session
5:30 p.m. closed meeting (if called)
6:30 p.m. business meeting upon conclusion of the closed meeting agenda

LOCATION: City Hall Council Chamber
605 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor
Charlottesville, VA

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT any regular meeting may be adjourned from day to day, or from time to time, or from place to place, not beyond the day and time fixed by this resolution for the next regular meeting, until the business before this City Council is completed. Notice of any regular meeting continued in this manner shall be reasonable under the circumstances and shall be given as provided in subsection D of Virginia Code Section 2.2-3707.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, in the event that the Mayor, or the Vice Mayor if the Mayor is unavailable or otherwise unable to act, finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend a regular meeting, that regular meeting shall be continued to the next business day on which the said hazardous conditions no longer exist or to the next regular meeting date. Such finding and declaration shall be communicated to all city councilors and to the press as promptly as possible, along with the date and time on which the continued meeting will commence. All public hearings and other agenda matters previously advertised shall be conducted at the continued meeting with no further advertisement.

9. **RESOLUTION** authorizing the acceptance and installation of a city-sponsored commemorative display recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Jefferson High School

Steven King, Assistant to the City Manager, presented the resolution request and described the historical significance of the Jefferson School. The City was asked to support the recognition of the Jefferson School's 100th Anniversary through the acceptance and installation of commemorative banners to be placed along West Main Street and McIntire Road as a tribute to generations of Black excellence. The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center proposed a series of banners featuring historic photographs of former students of Jefferson High School to commemorate the school's centennial anniversary. The City determined that City-owned streetlight poles are not generally available for the posting of private signage, banners, or displays, and that their use does not constitute a public forum.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Payne, Council unanimously adopted the ordinance, waiving the second reading with at least a four-fifths vote (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

RESOLUTION
Authorizing a City-Sponsored Commemorative Display
Recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Jefferson High School

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville recognizes the historic significance of Jefferson High School and its lasting contributions to the African American community and to the City as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Jefferson High School through a temporary, City-authorized commemorative display reflecting the City's history, values, and commitment to racial equity and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that City-owned streetlight poles are not generally available for the posting of private signage, banners, or displays, and that their use does not constitute a public forum; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may, on a limited and case-by-case basis, authorize the use of City property for artwork or commemorative displays selected by the City Council to express the City's own message; and

WHEREAS, the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center has proposed a series of banners featuring historic photographs of former students of Jefferson High School to commemorate the school's centennial anniversary; and

WHEREAS, City Council has reviewed representative images proposed for the commemorative display and finds that the images portray individuals and events directly related to the City's history, are consistent with the aesthetics and character of Main Street, and effectively communicate the City Council's Vision of a community committed to mutual respect, racial and cultural diversity, inclusion, racial reconciliation, economic justice, and equity; and

WHEREAS, City Council intends that the authorized banners constitute a City-sponsored commemorative display expressing the City's viewpoint, and not the creation of a public forum for private expression;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the City Manager is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center to install and display a temporary series of commemorative banners on designated City-owned poles along Main Street for the period from February 20, 2026, through February 20, 2027, with installation commencing on or after February 1, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the content, design, placement, duration, and maintenance of the commemorative display shall be subject to City approval and oversight, and that the City retains the right to remove or modify the display if it no longer satisfies the purposes and criteria set forth in this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this authorization is limited to the commemorative display described herein and shall not be construed to create a policy, precedent, or public forum requiring the City to permit other private signs, banners, or displays on City-owned streetlight poles or other City property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Council may, by future resolution, authorize other City-sponsored artwork or commemorative displays on City property when such displays are selected by the City Council and are intended to communicate the City's own message consistent with the City Council's Vision and the City's historical and cultural values.

10. BY MOTION Board and Commission Appointments for City Council

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Fleisher, Council voted 5-0 to appoint councilors as referenced below to the following boards and commissions (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none):

COUNCIL-CREATED BOARDS	
Charlottesville Redevelopment & Housing Authority (CRHA):	Payne
Historic Resources Committee (ad-hoc as needed by committee):	Snook
Housing Advisory Committee (HAC):	Payne
Legislative Committee:	Snook, Oschrin
Minority Business Commission:	Wade
Retirement Commission:	Wade
School Capital Projects Committee:	Snook, Oschrin
Social Services Advisory Board:	Fleisher

REGIONAL and OTHER BOARDS	
Albemarle Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ) Authority Board:	Snook
Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau (CACVB):	Wade
Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA):	Fleisher, Oschrin
Charlottesville Community Scholarship Program:	Oschrin
Darden Towe Memorial Park Committee:	Fleisher, Snook
Jefferson Area Board for Aging Board of Directors (JABA:)	Wade
Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board:	Fleisher
LEAP Governance Board:	Payne
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):	Fleisher, Oschrin
Piedmont Housing Alliance – Kindlewood Advisory Committee:	(upon PHA invitation)
Regional Housing Partnership:	Payne, (Oschrin, alt.)
Rivanna River Basin Commission:	Fleisher, Payne
Rivanna Solid Waste Authority (RSWA):	Snook
Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA):	Snook
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC): __	Payne, Fleisher
Virginia Career Works-Piedmont:	Wade
Virginia First Cities:	Wade (Snook, alt.)

GENERAL BUSINESS

11. REPORT and Discussion on Request for Investment in Housing Development Projects and Off Cycle Funding Requests

City Manager Sanders presented an overview and initiated discussion to receive feedback from Council on items they would like to consider at a later date for action. The 2026 Request for Investment round produced three requests for investment consideration by Council. The projects reflect affordable housing needs in the community, but collectively extend beyond the commitment of $10 million per year for 10 years as outlined in the Affordable Housing Plan. The report acknowledged that the collective impact of the projects does not fully address the recent reporting that the City's efforts are not fully reaching the area median income targets identified in the Plan.

Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) requested reconsideration of the plan for Phase 4 of the Kindlewood Development. Currently, there is a $4.5M commitment from the City which will produce approximately 90 units, and 131 units are needed to meet the original commitment of at least 425 units. To produce that number of units, an additional $3M is needed to offset the budget gap. An alternative is the reduction of units delivered and additional targeting to the lowest AMI to connect to the gap in the achievements of the Affordable Housing Fund.

PHA requested additional investment in the previously funded 501Cherry development project, including additional tax abatement totaling $1 million over the performance period and $700,000 cash to support an April 2026 closing for construction to begin in 2026.

PHA confirmed a rental arrears priority at Kindlewood, in both new housing units and existing, the persistence of which suggests a need for critical financial assessment and counseling intervention. PHA asked for consideration of an $85,000 grant to pilot the program delivery through the PHA Financial Opportunity Center along with a fund to retire arrears for successful program participants.

Emergency funding requests were received from PACEM for $65,000 to fill a current year operating gap, Piedmont Family YMCA for $45,000 to address state-mandated physical improvements to continue operations, and BRACH for up to $250,000 projected budget erasure in support of approximately 30 local households for BRACH due to federal changes to the Permanent Supportive Housing program managed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Salvation Army also advanced a Family Shelter initiative with support from Albemarle County and the Perry Foundation to renovate space for immediate implementation of facilities to support 24 occupants at full capacity. The request was for annual operational support with a priority for securing $340,000 to cover the first-year operating expenses so the spaces can be utilized in January 2026.

Council provided guidance to Mr. Sanders on considerations for presenting the items as discussed at a future Council meeting for action.

COMMUNITY MATTERS (2)

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public.

- Genevieve Keller, city resident, congratulated the Jefferson School on their 100th anniversary, and she shared some historical context about the Jefferson Foundation and the Jefferson School. As President of Preservation Piedmont, she expressed concerns about the Zoning Map and developments with increased density and height encroaching on the city's most sensitive areas in terms of culture, history, previous designations locally and nationally, and areas that had not been recognized because of the patriarchy of previous leaders in Charlottesville.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrin, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council

Date Adopted: March 2, 2026

Certified: Kyna Thomas
Clerk of Council