CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Council Chamber

Mayor Juandiego Wade called to order the Tuesday, January 20, 2026, City Council Meeting and Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called the roll, noting all councilors present: Mayor Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor Natalie Oschrin, and Councilors Jen Fleisher, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrin, Council unanimously adopted the meeting agenda.

REPORTS

1. REPORT: Discussion on Student Housing

City Manager Sanders stated that the topic of student housing is being presented and discussed at the request of City Council. Kellie Brown, Director of Neighborhood Development Services, presented the work session report, requesting guidance from City Council.

The Affordable Dwelling Unit Monitoring and Procedures Manual ("ADU Manual") must be updated annually. The intent of these annual updates is to ensure that the Affordable Dwelling Unit Requirement and Affordable Dwelling Unit Bonus provisions in the City's Development Code continue to support the affordable housing goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Since its 2024 adoption, the manual has not yet been reviewed or updated. The focus of this update process will be to evaluate and potentially refine expectations for in-lieu fee payments if affordable units are not provided on site as part of a development project, for both student housing projects, non-student housing projects, and projects requesting bonus height. The evaluation will also look at the criteria (building features and geography) for which student housing project affordable housing expectations apply. Staff developed background information and scope of work for this study, including a community engagement process and timeline, and requested feedback from City Council on the scope of work to inform Staff's approach.

Councilors each shared their ideas on student housing, displacement of local residents, population growth at the University of Virginia, the need to increase housing options beyond core neighborhoods, trickle-down effects of catering development to students and investors, impacts on services and amenities, and opportunity costs of conducting further studies and not implementing strategies sooner. Councilors requested a future report with additional data and scenarios, a recalibration schedule, keeping in mind the tax abatement study and mixed-use commercial development.

Councilor Oschrin encouraged the community to visit the city's community engagement online hub at www.Connect.charlottesville.gov.

City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., summarized comments from Council to confirm direction for zoning-specific matters:

- Overlay district for student housing
- Moving the overlay districts conversation in regard to sensitive neighborhoods forward on the timeline
- Revisiting Board of Architectural Review oversight
- Updating the rate of growth for the university, and if unable to confirm, use a growth rate of 1%
- Consideration of a student housing overlay district in the JPA neighborhood.

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 reason:

1. 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:

   a. Police Civilian Oversight Board
   b. Council Finance Committee

2. Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically, contemplated council action with respect to federal immigration enforcement.

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.

RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Wade made brief comments in honor of Ms. Sarah Pool who passed away recently. Councilor Payne read a proclamation recognizing Ms. Pool's contributions to accessibility education and accountability citywide and beyond. The proclamation was accepted with remarks by her widower, Mr. Kevin Cox.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council by a vote of 5-0 appointed the following members to the Police Civilian Oversight Board: Caron LeNoir-Kelly and Nathalie Reaves.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Mayor Wade read a statement from City Council:

"Charlottesville is a community that cares for one another. We know that recent ICE actions and rhetoric in Minneapolis are alarming and impact many of us personally. We want to be clear: we do not tolerate any enforcement actions that are illegal or create fear or instability for Charlottesville residents. We also support efforts at the state level to protect the civil rights of all residents and to strengthen privacy and access protections under Virginia law. We are actively creating a resolution that reflects our values. We will share that resolution publicly as soon as it is ready. We also honor that speaking out and peaceful protest are at the core of an American healthy democracy, and we support residents who exercise those rights as part of civic life. In the meantime, we stand with the communities, agencies, and organizations that work with those most at risk. We will continue to use Council's voice, partnerships, and authority to foster trust, dignity, and a sense of belonging for all of Charlottesville."

Mayor Wade invited comments from the public.

1. Alicia Lenahan, Albemarle County resident, spoke about an "Unmask ICE resolution" presented to City Council in July.
2. Susan McCulley, property owner in the city, spoke about actions of ICE agents and an "Unmask ICE resolution" resolution presented to City Council in July.
3. Heidi Berthoud, member of the Court Square Enslavement Memorial Group, requested the City reinstall a commemorative marker to a post at 0 Park Street to read, "Traditional Site of Enslavement Auction Block".
4. Michael Beaudet, city resident, spoke in support of Council passing a resolution regarding federal law enforcement operating within the city, unmasked and with proper identification.
5. Emily Little, city resident, spoke in support of Council passing a resolution to require ICE agents to be unmasked and show identity.
6. Jody Sweeny, member of the Court Square Enslavement Memorial Group, requested that the City reinstall a commemorative marker for the enslavement auction block at 0 Park Street.
7. Richard Allan, member of the Court Square Enslavement Memorial Group, requested that City Council vote on whether the enslavement auction block should be restored.
8. Rosia Parker, city resident, spoke about student housing developments being built around the 10th & Page core neighborhood and areas of low-income housing, displacing residents.
9. Don Gathers, city resident, spoke in support of the resolution to appropriate funds to help the neighborhood grocery store move forward. He stated that the city needs to be prepared for ICE, and he advocated that Rosia Parker be appointed to the Police Civilian Oversight Board.
10. Kristen Szakos, city resident, spoke in support of the future community market, and she gave historical context to the law regarding wearing masks in public, requesting that City Council pass a resolution opposing the wearing of masks by ICE agents.
11. Angela Carr, city resident, spoke: 1) about the need for community engagement before approving student housing developments; 2) in support of signage to memorialize the enslavement auction block in the city; and 3) in support of immigrant families being impacted by ICE enforcement.
12. Wendy Gao, city resident, spoke in opposition to luxury student housing development in proximity to low-income neighborhoods near UVA.
13. Mel Warthog, city resident and UVA law student, spoke in support of the proposed resolution to unmask ICE agents in the city. She mentioned the impact that it could have on legal cases.
14. Terry Tyree, city resident, spoke in support of protecting core neighborhoods while addressing housing needs thoughtfully and equitably.
15. Genevieve Keller, city resident, spoke about recommendations made by Preservation Piedmont during the Zoning Code development process, to protect core neighborhoods from intrusions by developers. She encouraged Council to use the Neighborhood Conservation Tool to help residents manage change.
16. Anna Figueroa, UVA law student specializing in immigration, emphasized the importance of the ICE resolution to the average resident in ensuring their rights.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

2. MINUTES: January 9 retreat; January 12 special meeting

3. RESOLUTION to appropriate Stormwater Local Assistance Grant Fund for the Rivanna Restoration at Riverview Park in the amount of $607,610.00 (2nd reading)

RESOLUTION
Appropriating Funding in the Amount of $607,610 To Be Received from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Stormwater Local Assistance Fund

WHEREAS, The City of Charlottesville has been notified that it will be awarded a grant from the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (S.L.A.F.) grant program from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in the amount of $607,610.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that upon receipt of the S.L.A.F. funding the Commonwealth of Virginia, said funding, anticipated in the sum of $607,610, is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

Revenues

$607,610	Fund 209	Order: 1900620	G/L 430110

Expenditures

$607,610	Fund 209	Order 1900620	G/L 599999

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this appropriation is conditioned upon receipt of $607,610 in funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

4. RESOLUTION to appropriate funding from the Supreme Court of Virginia Behavioral Health Docket Grant - $78,150.09 (layover)

5. RESOLUTION to appropriate the Virginia Department of Social Services Family Assistance Management (F.A.M.) grant in the amount of $125,754.06 (layover)

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., presented his quarterly work plan and provided an overview of positions within the reorganized City Manager's Office.

ACTION ITEMS

6. **ORDINANCE Approving Amendments to Previous Ordinance Authorizing a Forgivable Loan to SupportWorks Housing for Vista 29 (**layover**)**

Brenda Kelley, Redevelopment Manager, summarized the proposal. In August 2024, City Council approved an Ordinance authorizing a forgivable loan to Virginia Supportive Housing ("VSH") in the amount of $750,000. VSH, now known as SupportWorks Housing ("SupportWorks"), requested amendments to the Loan Agreement and the Declaration of Affordable Housing Covenants to comply with all the requirements.

Council agreed unanimously to move this item forward to the February 2nd meeting for second reading and vote on the consent agenda.

7. **ORDINANCE Authorizing a Forgivable Loan to Piedmont Housing Alliance to Support Redevelopment of 1025 Park Street/MACAA for the Purpose of Producing New Housing for Low- and Moderate-Income Persons (layover)**

Brenda Kelley, Redevelopment Manager, summarized the proposal and noted a correction to materials presented, to remove references to the Head Start program, which is no longer run by the Monticello Area Community Action Agency ("MACAA"). City Capital Improvement Project funding totaling $3,770,000 has been allocated for the proposed affordable housing development at 1025 Park Street (a/k/a the MACAA site). City Staff requests City Council's approval of an Ordinance approving the execution of necessary legal documents to disburse these funds and ensure the housing units remain affordable over time. Staff requested waiver of the second reading.

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

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A FORGIVABLE LOAN TO PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE TO SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT OF 1025 PARK STREET/MACAA FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRODUCING NEW HOUSING FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME PERSONS

8. **RESOLUTION Supporting the Dogwood Veterans Memorial Pedestrian Bridge and Parking Area**

Brennen Duncan, City Engineer, presented the request, asking City Council to reaffirm policy support for the Dogwood Veterans Memorial Pedestrian Bridge and Accessible Parking Area Project ("Project"), and, through Resolution, confirm the City's intent to accept the completed bridge, parking lot, and associated shared use paths into the City's asset system upon completion, provided the Project is constructed in accordance with City and VDOT approved plans, permits, and applicable standards.

Councilors asked questions and made comments about design aesthetics, maintenance costs, alternatives that were considered before reaching this recommendation, environmental impacts, and being good stewards of funds, optimizing accessibility.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Payne, Council voted 3-2 to approve the following resolution (Ayes: Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: Fleisher, Oschrin):

RESOLUTION
REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE DOGWOOD VETERANS MEMORIAL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND ACCESSIBLE PARKING AREA AND EXPRESSING INTENT TO ACCEPT THE COMPLETED INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia ("City Council"), adopted Resolution R-22-161 on December 5, 2022, expressing its support for a pedestrian bridge and parking area to improve accessibility to the Dogwood Veterans Memorial ("Memorial") and the eastern portion of McIntire Park; and

WHEREAS, the Dogwood Veterans Memorial Foundation ("Foundation") has proposed the development of a pedestrian bridge over John Warner Parkway, an accessible parking area, and associated shared use paths to improve safe and ADA accessible access to the Memorial and surrounding park amenities ("Project"); and

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville, Virginia ("City"), has awarded grant funding to the Foundation to support planning and design activities associated with the proposed Project; and

WHEREAS, the City has encouraged the Foundation to advance the Project using a public right-of-way plan delivery approach, with the Foundation responsible for fundraising, final design, permitting, and construction, subject to review, inspection, and approval by the City and other applicable agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation has advanced the Project design and has represented its intent to construct the pedestrian bridge, accessible parking area, and associated shared use paths in compliance with City approved plans, permits, specifications, and applicable standards; and

WHEREAS, City Council recognizes that formal policy direction regarding future acceptance of the completed infrastructure is necessary to support continued design advancement and private fundraising efforts, while preserving the City's authority to ensure compliance with all applicable requirements prior to acceptance.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by City Council that it hereby reaffirms its support for the Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Council expressly agrees and formally resolves, subject to final inspection and approval by the City Engineer and appropriate City officials, to accept the completed pedestrian bridge, accessible parking area, and associated shared use paths into the City's asset system, provided that the infrastructure is constructed in accordance with City approved plans, permits, specifications, and applicable standards; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that nothing in this Resolution shall be construed as authorizing additional City funding for construction of the Project, nor as obligating the City to accept the infrastructure, unless and until all applicable requirements for acceptance have been satisfied.

9. RESOLUTION appropriating $700,000 and Initiating an Amendment to the Terms of a Performance Agreement Supporting the 501 Cherry Avenue Mixed-Use Development Project (layover)

James Freas, Deputy City Manager, introduced the item, and Madelyn Metzler, Acting Housing Manager, presented the resolution request from Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) for additional investment in the previously funded 501 Cherry Avenue Mixed-Use Development Project ("Project"). The request includes increasing the Performance Agreement from 50% to 100% of the incremental real estate value created by the Project over the performance period and $700,000 cash to support commencement of the Project in 2026.

Sunshine Mathon, Executive Director of PHA, provided additional context and stated that the draft Memorandum of Understanding between PHA and the food co-op is 95% complete to move forward with the food co-op as the occupant for 501 Cherry Avenue commercial space, and there is still a lot of work to be done to get the co-op ready. He shared suggestions for getting the Project over the finish line, and he expressed urgency in having this resolution request approved in order to leverage additional funding sources.

Following clarifying questions from Council, Deputy City Manager James Freas stated that the Performance Agreement will be considered by the Economic Development Authority before bringing a final version to City Council. Director of Economic Development Chris Engel explained the Performance Agreement Grant parameters.

Councilor Snook expressed concern about the viability and sustainability of a neighborhood grocery store. Council agreed to carry the item to the February 2nd Council meeting for second reading and vote on the Consent Agenda.

10. RESOLUTION appropriating $390,000 to Support a Rental Arrears Intervention Pilot Program (layover)

Madelyn Metzler, Acting Housing Manager, presented the resolution request. Piedmont Housing Alliance ("PHA") has confirmed a rental arrears priority at Kindlewood, in both existing and new housing units. The persistence of arrears suggests a critical financial assessment and counseling intervention is needed, and PHA requested consideration of $390,000 to support a Rental Arrears Intervention Pilot Program ("Pilot Program"). Rental arrears at PHA properties have grown to over $450,000, creating financial strain for PHA and increasing eviction risk for residents. This challenge prompted consideration of interventions that combine financial counseling with partial arrears payments to stabilize households and property operations.

PHA is experiencing a growing rent delinquency crisis that may be indicative of a larger trend among affordable housing residents. CRHA (Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority) indicated similar trends in its properties, and both organizations face financial strain and the increasing risk of eviction. This challenge threatens property operations and long-term affordability unless addressed through targeted intervention. PHA proposed a two-year Pilot Program that would combine financial counseling through its Financial Opportunity Center with partial arrears payments. The requests include City funding to cover up to 50% of arrears (approximately $220,000) and $170,000 for a dedicated financial literacy counselor for a total of $390,000. If implemented, the Pilot Program would pair payment assistance with accountability measures and financial education, aiming to stabilize households and reduce eviction rates. The Pilot Program would include performance metrics and would be monitored under the City's Grant Monitoring and Compliance Program, with funding for the Pilot Program coming from the City's CIP Contingency Fund. The funds will be disbursed to PHA as a grant and in accordance with the terms of a signed Grant Agreement. The terms of the Grant Agreement will be finalized after the appropriation is approved by City Council.

Sunshine Mathon, Executive Director of PHA, stated that the arrears problem is not limited to the local community. In response to Councilor Fleisher, Mr. Mathon stated the Pilot Program could start Mid-March or early April.

Councilors generally spoke in favor of the Pilot Program and agreed to carry the item to the February 2nd Council meeting for second reading and vote on the Consent Agenda.

11. RESOLUTION to appropriate funding from the International City / County Management Association (ICMA) Economic Mobility and Opportunity Special Assistant Grant in the amount of $354,000 (layover)

Ashley Marshall, Chief Prosperity Officer, presented the resolution request. The City of Charlottesville applied for and was awarded the ICMA Economic Mobility and Opportunity Special Assistant Grant in the amount of $354,000 to support the hiring of an Economic Mobility and Opportunity Special Assistant for the period of September 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028.

The funding will support the hiring of a senior-level staff member to drive the implementation of comprehensive economic mobility strategies for the City of Charlottesville. The position title for the City of Charlottesville is Economic Mobility Officer (EMO) who will serve under the supervision of the Assistant to the City Manager, Steve King. The EMO will work across departments and external partners to identify strategic priorities and develop and execute a tailored implementation plan informed by a community-engaged co-design process. In addition to advancing local EMO activities, the Economic Mobility Officer will participate along with other grant awardees in regular coaching, training, and networking activities facilitated by ICMA. They will contribute to ongoing measurement, learning, and evaluation efforts to help develop a model for replication by other local governments.

Roles and Responsibilities include:

1. Conduct a co-design process to develop a community-informed workplan for EMO priorities and activities over the period of performance
2. Implement EMO activities outlined in the community-informed work-plan
3. Develop and enhance formal networks of local EMO stakeholders
4. Participate in all required virtual and in-person meetings.
5. Develop a strategy/resource roadmap for sustaining the EMO work beyond the duration of the grant
6. Comply with reporting and evaluation requests from ICMA and funding partners
7. Utilize customizable templates provided to deliver progress reports in a timely manner

Council agreed to carry the item to the February 2nd Council meeting for second reading and vote on the Consent Agenda.

GENERAL BUSINESS

12. WRITTEN REPORT: Rivanna Authorities Quarterly Report

Council acknowledged receipt of the written Rivanna Authorities Quarterly Report.

COMMUNITY MATTERS (2)

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public:

- Don Gathers, city resident, congratulated Councilor Fleisher on her election to City Council. He encouraged Council to be mindful of spending funds wisely, and he spoke about hope in the face of ICE.
- Angela Carr, city resident, thanked Council and staff for their work. She spoke about the need to unmask ICE and to welcome refugees. Regarding core Black neighborhoods, she requested that the City not take more from them.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrin, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

BY Order of City Council   BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council