



CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 17, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Council Chamber

The Charlottesville City Council met on Tuesday, February 17, 2026. Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order, 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 Fleisher, Council unanimously approved the meeting agenda.

REPORTS

1. REPORT: Affordable Dwelling Unit Tax-Abatement Program Proposal Presentation

Kellie Brown, Director of Neighborhood Development Services, provided background for bringing the item forward. On April 21, 2025, City Staff presented the concept of the Affordable Housing Tax Abatement Program ("Program") at a City Council Work Session as a potential option to incentivize housing construction within the context of the AADU requirement in the City's new Zoning and Development Code. At that Work Session, City Council charged Staff with conducting a study ("Study") of the necessary housing market research and analysis to determine if the Program could have a material impact to incentivize housing construction within the context of all the costs associated with planning, financing, and building housing in the city. This Study was also intended to define an optimal Program structure to maximize housing construction and minimize administrative complexity as a potential option for City Council consideration. In June 2025, City Staff contracted with 3TP Ventures to lead and conduct this Study, market analysis, and model building to test the impact of the Program on the feasibility of housing construction projects.

Ms. Brown introduced Jeremy Goldstein, Director of Technical Planning & Analytics at 3TP Ventures, who presented the Affordable Housing Tax Abatement Study, including pros and cons of tax abatement. Following extensive data collection, data analysis, and engagement with housing builders and advocates of affordable housing, a model known as the Charlottesville Development Feasibility Assessment Tool was created and refined. The process yielded several key findings:

- Market conditions are challenging regardless of City Policy.
- Inclusionary Zoning is a material financial burden.
- A Traditional Tax Abatement provides financial relief, but not equivalent to the cost of Inclusionary Zoning.
- A tax abatement based on a rent gap approach merits consideration.
- Other incentives and policies merit consideration.
- Conditions will change, and the Tool has lasting utility.

2. REPORT: Westhaven Redevelopment Update

John Sales, Executive Director of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA), made the presentation. Westhaven is the City's largest public housing community and was originally constructed in 1965. Westhaven currently has 126 public housing units and the proposed plan includes 242 total units across two primary phases. The City has identified \$15 million in its Capital Improvement Plan to support the redevelopment of the Westhaven site to both improve and expand the number of units. For approximately three years CRHA worked with a resident planners group and several technical advisors on the Westhaven Redevelopment plan. Resident planners worked through the livability of the site for the current residents, future residents and respect for the rest of the 10th & Page neighborhood.

CLOSED MEETING

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, City Council voted unanimously to close the open meeting and convene in a closed session, as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as follows:

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. Board of Architectural Review
 - b. Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund Committee
 - c. Charlottesville Economic Development Authority
 - d. Charlottesville Redevelopment & Housing Authority
 - e. Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee
 - f. Community Development Block Grant & HOME Taskforce
 - g. Housing Advisory Committee
 - h. Human Rights Commission
 - i. JABA Advisory Council on Aging
 - j. JABA Board of Directors
 - k. Local Board of Building Code Appeals
 - l. Minority Business Commission
 - m. Piedmont YMCA Board
 - n. Sister Cities Commission
 - o. Social Services Advisory Board
 - p. Thomas Jefferson Water Resources Protection Foundation
 - q. Towing Advisory Board
 - r. Tree Commission
 - s. Vendor Appeals Board
 - t. Youth Council

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council certified by a vote of 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none), 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 meeting began with a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Wade announced the death of a member of "The Charlottesville 12" on February 4, Marvin L. Townsend.

BOARD & COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

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

- Charlottesville Economic Development Authority - Denise Herndon
- Community Development Block Grant & HOME Taskforce - Laura Brown
- Housing Advisory Committee - Heather Griffith, Dan Rosensweig, Terry Tyree

- Human Rights Commission - Jessica Cocciolone, Emily Currier, Elizabeth Stark, Jayson Whitehead
- JABA Advisory Council on Aging - Evelyn Boatwright
- JABA Board of Directors - Richard Brugh, Elliott Weiss
- Minority Business Commission - Terry Tyree
- Piedmont YMCA Board - James Brown
- Sister Cities Commission - Caja Edwards
- Social Services Advisory Board - Nicole Hawker
- Tree Commission - Jordan Hackworth, Worthy Martin, Elizabeth Mizell, Woodson Parish, Helen Snyder, Cole Thornton, Shea Wales

RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

- **PROCLAMATION: Recognizing CHS Boys Tennis Coach John Neal as National Federation 2025 Coach of the Year**

Councilor Fleisher presented the proclamation to Coach John Neal, who was joined by the Charlottesville Boys Tennis Team.

- **PROCLAMATION: Invasive Species Awareness Week, February 23 - 27, 2026**

Vice Mayor Oschrin presented the proclamation to Rowena Zarman, Director of the Blue Ridge Invasive Species Coalition, who accepted with remarks.

- **PROCLAMATION: Benefit Programs Specialist Appreciation Month**

Mayor Wade presented the proclamation, which was accepted with remarks by Social Services Director Leon Henry.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public.

1. Alicia Lenahan, Albemarle County resident, spoke about the need for policies, planning, and preparation for ICE immigration enforcement.
2. Nikuyah Walker, city resident, asked Council to reconsider remote speaker participation. She spoke about honoring the late Eddie Harris and requested that Council think about the Vibrant Communities funding process for which Mr. Harris's efforts may not have qualified. She asked where 40-90 home units will come from for affordable housing in the city, related to a Kindewood presentation by Sunshine Mathon of Piedmont Housing Alliance.
3. Bill Atwood, city resident, made suggestions for helping the Downtown Mall.
4. Richard H. Allan, Albemarle County resident, spoke about the need for restoration of the slate sign memorializing enslavement on the East Jefferson Street curbside.
5. Emily Dreyfus, organizer with the Legal Aid Justice Center, shared comments from Angela Carr, a member of PHAR (Public Housing Association of Residents), regarding affordable housing and displacement of residents with the building of luxury housing developments.
6. Heidi Dhivya Berthoud, city resident, shared facts about people enslaved and sold at the Court Square enslavement auction block, requesting restoration of memorial signage.
7. Paul Mack, Albemarle County resident, requested a March 2026 City Council affirmative vote to replace a sign honoring enslaved persons on East Jefferson Street curbside.
8. Rachel Mulvaney, Friends of PHAR, spoke about the LV Collective proposed luxury student

- housing development, and justice in the face of resident displacement in adjacent neighborhoods.
9. Colonel Robert Guest III, Albemarle County resident and member of the enslavement memorialization project group, spoke in support of restoration of the slate sign memorializing enslavement on East Jefferson Street.
 10. Susan McCulley, city property owner, thanked City Council for passing a resolution regarding recent immigration enforcement actions, with followup letters to Virginia legislators, and she requested that Council continue to build transparency with the community by iterating intended local actions.
 11. Frank Bechter, city resident, spoke in support of the December 18, 2025, denial by the Board of Architectural Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a development project on 7th Street.
 12. Sophia Merrero, PHAR community organizer, spoke about the need for affordable housing for students instead of luxury student housing. She spoke about the continued existence of race-related injustice, and advocated strengthening the Council resolution regarding immigration.
 13. Sylethia Carr, city resident, spoke about resident displacement, and she requested help to educate residents with local government jargon. She spoke in opposition to luxury student housing, and in favor of affordable housing options.
 14. Latricia Giles, PHAR Executive Director, spoke about resident displacement and the loss of future housing and redevelopment because of gentrification. She reiterated that hope is not a strategy and urged Council to stop and slow down displacement in the face of student housing developments.
 15. Joy Johnson, PHAR Chair, asked Council to change the Zoning Code to prevent displacement of residents by luxury student housing.
 16. Wendy Gao, Friends of PHAR, reading a statement on behalf of city resident Terry Tyree, thanked Council for appointing her to city committees, and she requested stronger zoning protections for core neighborhoods to improve affordable housing versus luxury student housing, sharing her personal experience.

CONSENT AGENDA

Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas read the following Consent Agenda items into the record, and on motion by Fleisher, seconded by Oschrin, Council by a vote of 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none) adopted the Consent Agenda.

3. MINUTES: January 29 budget work session; February 9 joint Council-School Board budget work session
4. RESOLUTION to Appropriate National League of Cities Southern Cities Economic Initiative Program Funds - \$60,000 (2nd reading)

RESOLUTION

Appropriating National League of Cities Southern Cities Economic Initiative (SCEI) Project Grant - \$60,000

WHEREAS the City of Charlottesville has received a Southern Cities Economic Initiative grant from the National League of Cities (NLC) Southern Cities Economic Initiative (SCEI) Program in the amount of \$60,000; and

WHEREAS the funds will be used to support the implementation of a local project with United Way Greater Charlottesville that seeks to expand and sustain the economic mobility of residents and our communities' access to quality Early Learning care; and

WHEREAS the grant award covers the period from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the sum of \$60,000 is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

Revenue - \$60,000.00

\$60,000.00 Fund: 210 Order: 1900637 G/L: 451022

Expenditures - \$60,000.00

\$60,000.00 Fund: 210 Order: 1900637 G/L: 530550

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this appropriation is conditioned upon the receipt of \$60,000.00 from the National League of Cities Southern Cities Economic Initiative Program.

5. ORDINANCE Amending Section 11-131 of the Charlottesville City Code Regarding Compromise and Payment of Claims Against the City (2nd reading)

ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 11-131 OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY CODE REGARDING COMPROMISE AND PAYMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE CITY.

6. RESOLUTION Appropriating Existing Funds to the E-Bike Voucher Program (2nd reading)

RESOLUTION

**Appropriating funds to a new fund for electric bicycle programs
\$100,000**

WHEREAS the expanded use of electric bicycles in the community provides a more sustainable transportation option, which meets the City's transportation and climate action goals;

WHEREAS Council has appropriated funding for sustainability goals in the Climate Action Fund and for transportation goals associated with biking in the Bicycle Infrastructure capital fund;

WHEREAS revenues from the dockless mobility permit program are used as part of the Bicycle Infrastructure capital fund and are dedicated to expanding the use of bicycles in Charlottesville;

AND WHEREAS the City has pilot projects associated with electric bicycles that are coordinated between Neighborhood Development Services and the Office of Sustainability;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the sum of \$150,000 is hereby appropriated as follows:

Transfer From:

\$50,000 Fund: 426 I/O: 1000028 G/L Account: 599999

\$50,000 Fund: 426 WBS: CP-083 G/L Account: 599999

Transfer To

\$100,000 Fund: 426 WBS: P-01121 G/L Account: 599999

7. RESOLUTION Appropriating \$198,910 in Additional Virginia Department of Transportation ("VDOT") Funds for Construction Engineering and Inspection ("CEI") on the Project Bundle of 10th and Grady UPC 113916, Monticello 2nd UPC 113917, and Preston Harris UPC 113918 (1 of 2 readings)

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Budget Director Krisy Hammill provided a quarterly financial update.

City Manager Sam Sanders announced the resuming of leaf collection services, and he announced the Pothole Blitz beginning February 23.

ACTION ITEMS

8. PUBLIC HEARING and RESOLUTION of Appropriation to Amend the FY26 Budget- \$10,001,875.49 (layover)

Chris Cullinan, Director of Finance, presented the year-end appropriation resolution for FY2025.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing.

- Nikuyah Walker, city resident, advocated for using funds to take care of Black and Brown residents, and descendants of the enslaved community. She requested that Council increase contributions to subsidy programs approved by previous City Councils. She suggested using one-time funds to support entities such as Piedmont Housing Alliance.

Mayor Wade closed the public hearing.

Councilor Payne requested that Council explicitly earmark a portion of surplus funds for land acquisition.

With no objection, Council laid over the item to the March 2nd consent agenda for second reading and vote.

9. PUBLIC HEARING and ORDINANCE for City Code Chapter 34 (Development Code) Zoning Text Amendments Tiers 1 and 2

Matt Alfele, Development Planning Manager with Neighborhood Development Services, presented the ordinance Tier 1 and Tier 2 amendments, an annual process.

Following clarifying questions from Council, Mayor Wade opened the public hearing.

- Emily Dreyfus, Legal Aid Justice Center, requested a correction to ensure public engagement and to build public trust by amending the Zoning Text for protecting core neighborhoods.
- Wendy Gao spoke in opposition to the Tier system, and she stated that the Tier 3 process needs to move faster, using no further studies. She stated that the professionals are the people who live in the neighborhoods and should be listened to.
- Frank Bechter, city resident, spoke about the need for significant zoning changes as-needed instead of waiting for months. He suggested the city purchase property to be responsive to the community's needs.
- Rosia Parker, city resident, expressed concern about waiting for zoning changes and about the

negative impacts of tall buildings looming over low-income neighborhoods.

- Joy Johnson, PHAR Chair, spoke about the need for outreach from the Planning Division to residents.
- Latricia Giles, PHAR Executive Director, spoke about Neighborhood Development Services prioritization of zoning amendments and the need to improve community engagement.

Mayor Wade closed the public hearing.

Councilor Payne acknowledged that the Zoning Text Amendments presented at this meeting are more technical versus substantive, and he warned that the proposed tier approach to zoning amendments will not address concerns heard from the community. He suggested adjustments to the amendment process.

Answering a question from Vice Mayor Oschrin, Mr. Alfele stated that Tier 3 items are incorporated into the NDS Work Plan.

Councilor Snook added comments about the feasibility of affordable housing in high-rise construction. Council engaged in further discussion.

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council voted 4-1 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Snook, Wade; Noes: Payne) to adopt the Zoning Text Amendments as presented and discussed.

ORDINANCE AMENDING AND RE-ENACTING CHAPTER 34 (CHARLOTTESVILLE DEVELOPMENT CODE) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, TO CORRECT ERRORS AND MAKE MINOR CHANGES TO THE CODE SECTIONS OUTLINED IN THIS ORDINANCE

10. PUBLIC HEARING and ORDINANCE for Update to Neighborhood Development Services Fee Schedule for Land Use Development Review

Matt Alfele, Development Planning Manager with Neighborhood Development Services, presented the ordinance to update the Neighborhood Development Services Fee Schedule for Land Use Development.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing and with no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Councilor Payne requested explicitly earmarking a portion of the surplus funds for land acquisition.

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Fleisher, Council voted 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ADOPTION A SCHEDULE OF FEES APPLICABLE TO VARIOUS SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS ADMINISTERED BY THE CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, RELATED TO APPLICATIONS, INSPECTIONS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS REQUIRED BY THE CHARLOTTESVILLE DEVELOPMENT CODE

11. PUBLIC HEARING and ORDINANCE for Quitclaim Natural Gas Easement (Belvedere Subdivision 5B)

Jason McIlwee, Utilities, presented the quitclaim to convey portions of an existing natural gas easement to VDOT, allowing acceptance of these roads into the State Highway Maintenance System. The natural

gas facilities will continue to be owned and maintained by the City, even after the easement is quitclaimed to the State. The City's natural gas facilities are required to remain in their present locations, and if any of the streets cease to be part of VDOT's Highway System, the gas line easement in that street will revert to the City.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing and with no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council voted 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

ORDINANCE QUITCLAIMING RIGHTS TO EASEMENTS LOCATED IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA (TMP: 06200-00-00-016D1)

COMMUNITY MATTERS (2)

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public and no speakers came forward

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrin, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council