



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming, Council Member Laura Dent, Council Member Nasser Alsaadun and Council Member Monica Robinson

Also Present: 4 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer and Deputy Police Chief Rod Pollard

2. Moment of Silence

Vice Mayor Fleming offered a moment of silence

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Mayor Fleming led the Pledge of Allegiance

Authorize electronic participation

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated Mayor Reed would like to attend virtually from her home due to recovery of a medical procedure and due to the electronic participation guidelines Council needs to approve her remote participation.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve remote participation of Mayor Reed. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

4. Special Recognition

5. Consent Agenda (any item placed on the consent agenda shall be removed and taken up as a separate matter, if so requested by any member of Council, otherwise all items will be voted on with one (1) motion)

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

5.a. Consider the special event application request for Harrisonburg City Public Schools End of Year Celebration on Thursday, June 4, 2026 at Turner Pavilion.

This special event was approved on the consent agenda

- 5.b.** Consider the special event application request for Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance's Best.Weekend.Ever on Saturday, June 13, 2026.

This special event was approved on the consent agenda

- 5.c.** Consider the special event application request for the Valley 4th Run on Friday, July 4, 2026.

This special event was approved on the consent agenda

- 5.d.** Consider a request from Katherine S Moran and Marcie E Harris to rezone (proffer amendment) 361 Franklin Street

This rezoning request was approved on second reading

- 5.e.** Consider a request from Center for Health and Human Development to rezone 851 Madison Street

This rezoning request was approved on second reading

- 5.f.** Minutes from the April 14, 2026 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

6. Public Hearings

- 6.a.** Public hearing regarding the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget

Ande Banks, city manager, stated the full proposed FY 2026/27 Budget is posted on the city's website as well as the Budget in Brief. He noted that this proposed budget maintains the current real estate tax rate and maintains existing services while also meeting the capital needs of our community. He provided the schedule of the adoption of the budget.

At 7:05 pm Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Thursday, April 16, 2026 and Monday April 20, 2026.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on the budgets for the following: city schools, the Department of Community Development, the golf course, and the income from the photo enforced speed limit citations.

Candy Phillips, executive director, First Step, thanked Council and staff for allowing non-profits to apply for support through the Civic and Community Organization grant. She spoke on how these funds have helped First Step through past year funding provided by the city.

At 7:13 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

No action required.

- 6.b.** Consider a request from Trenton Inc. and Bernard LC to rezone 435, 445, 457, 473, 483 & 495 South Main Street and 282, 288, 294 & 298 South Liberty Street (The Link Apartments)

Vice Mayor Fleming reviewed public hearing procedures.

Thanh Dang, deputy director, Community Development, presented a rezoning request for property located at South Main Street and South Liberty Street (The Link) from R-3 to B-1C. She reviewed the rezoning history and community engagement for this development. She reviewed the property, currently the Lindsey Funeral Home, the proposed development, revised rendering of the apartment building, submitted proffers, concept plan, comparisons to the Urban Exchange development, the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) study, and referenced the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan.

She stated staff and Planning Commission (5-1) recommended approval of the rezoning request.

Council and staff discussed the TIA results, traffic calming measures, the Paul Street extension, parking concerns, proffers offered, and access to the park once developed.

At 7:59 pm Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 and Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

Todd Rhea, representative of the applicant, spoke on the efforts made since the last public hearing, including community engagement concerns. He reviewed the following:

- The history of the developer;
- The history of the development process to date;
- The Downtown 2040 Downtown;
- Similar developments just outside of city limits;
- Valuation of B-1 property in the downtown area;
- The concept plan;
- The recent redesign of the development related to vertical appearance;

- Changes in numbers of bedrooms available;
- Six areas of positive impact from the development;
- Parking deck specifications;
- Comparisons of the B-1C versus R-3 development on this property;

He thanked Council for their consideration to approve this rezoning request.

Mayor Reed stated her concern are on the size of the development and asked for clarification of the number of units that would be studio and 1 bedroom units. Mr. Rhea stated they were increased to 44% and the 4-bedroom units were decreased to 34%. Discussion took place regarding the 2 and 3-bedroom units. Mayor Reed stated she would prefer that this development be more for workforce housing and families rather than students.

Council Member Robinson spoke on the different bedroom units and multi-generational housing needs. She asked if there is an anticipated length of time that the developer will maintain ownership and management of this development. Mr. Rhea stated since this property is in an opportunity zone and being designed as an opportunity zone project it is likely the developer will be the owner for a decade at least. More discussion took place regarding this development when student housing needs are reduced due to JMU's plan for additional on-campus housing. She shared her concerns on what happens to such a large development after the newness wears off.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if this will be a gated community and how parties/events will be managed. Mr. Rhea stated it will be a secured community and management will be onsite for control of residents.

Council Member Dent stated she appreciates that there will be onsite management.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked for clarification of the necessity of a six floor development versus five floors. Mr. Rhea replied with several reasons. Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the economic study and some of his concerns on the information provided in that study. He spoke on the mixed-use designation of this development, and asked if the public facing uses could be increased to best fit the mixed-use designation. Mr. Rhea explained the reason for the current square footage of the public facing uses, mostly related to parking. Further discussion took place regarding the convertibility of the 4-bedroom units and JMU's plan for additional on-campus housing.

At 8:57 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming called the meeting into recess.

At 9:03 p.m., Vice Mayor called the meeting back into session.

The following individuals spoke against the rezoning request:

David Bernstein, Ott St.
Andrew Berker
Gary Provanka 317 S Liberty St.
Valerie Solfaro 611 Ott Street
Todd Alexander, Paul Street
Mr. Kaslan,
Roger
Elizabeth Swallow
Ellen Hopkins
Aaron Garber, Paul St.
Rich Ayers, 250 Franklin St.
Phillip Harrington, 28 W Rock St.
Mark Facknitz, 221 E Grattan St.
Marsha McGrath
Sarah Leichty, Paul St.
Carl Larson, 487 S. Mason St.
Sierra Lambert, E. Elizabeth St.
Sarah Koontz, 1040 Moore St.
TW Johnson, 98 Perry St.
Jennifer Cunningham, 286 Campbell St.
Cathy Moran, 361 Franklin St.
Stephanie West, 531 Myers Ave
John Mansfield , 505 S Mason St.

The following individuals spoke in favor of the rezoning request:

Peter Denby
Gary Flory
Sarah Baker-Everly
Will Harriston
David Miller Dernstein
Jordan Layman
Ed Rodriguez
Weston Marcus
Isaac Whitmore
Laura Commorado
Ashley Schwartz
Keith May, listing agent for Lindsay property
Jay Miller, 826 Stuart St.
Bucky Berry

The following individuals spoke neither for nor against, but recommend further study and considerations:

Ryan Mornell
Steven Horn, 285 Campbell St.
Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros

At 11:43 pm Vice Mayor Fleming closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Mayor Reed stated Council has heard from the community and learned a lot from both sides, and stated if a vote is required now, she would vote against the rezoning as this development is not at the point she would like it to be. She stated her vote could change if certain things were amended such as size and more workforce/family housing.

Council Member Robinson agreed with Mayor Reed. She stated she does appreciate the developer's willingness to work towards a solution that is more acceptable for all. She spoke further on her concerns of the development.

Council Member Dent stated she is in favor of this project but wants to make sure that all on Council are on the same page and address the additional concerns that were addressed.

Council Member Alsaadun thanked the community for staying engaged in the process, changes have been made to the proposed development due to comments from the public. He thanked the developer for being so willing to listen to the communities concerns and adjusting what they have done to date. He stated the city is bound to continue to develop, things will change, and some decisions will be hard, Council just needs to keep on track with the 2040 Council Vision and work towards that.

Vice Mayor Fleming stated the project itself is a viable project, the question is whether this is the right location for this development. He spoke on the many investments the city has made to the parks throughout the city; the questions that need answered for this development; the Downtown Plan; some of his concerns on this development;

Further discussion took place regarding tabling this agenda item.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun to table this item until the June 23, 2026 City Council meeting. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider nominations for the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Policy Committees 2026

Vice Mayor Fleming pushed this item to the May 12, 2026 City Council meeting

7.b. Consider adopting a resolution authorizing participation in the six remnant defendants National Opioid Settlement

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a resolution related to the Opioid Litigation/Settlement. He stated this should be the last of the settlements.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

8. Other Matters

8.a. Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not on the regular agenda. (Name and address are required)

Sarah Koontz, asked if there will be a mockup of the redesign of Liberty Street.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun stated he was appointed to the executive committee for Central Shenandoah Planning District Committee (CSPDC).

9. Adjournment

At 12:18 a.m., April 29, 2026, there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

NOTE TO THE PUBLIC:

Residents/Media will be able to attend the meeting.

The Public can also view the meeting live on:

- The City's website, <https://harrisonburg-va.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
- Public Education Government Channel 1072

A phone line will also be live where residents will be allowed to call in and speak with City Council during the Public Hearings and the Public Comments portion of the night's meeting. We ask those that wish to speak during the public comment period to not call in until after all the public hearings and public comment on those have been heard. This will avoid anyone calling on any other item from holding up the queue and then being asked to call back at a later time.

The telephone number to call in is: (540) 437-2687

Residents also may provide comment prior to the meeting by visiting this page:
www.harrisonburgva.gov/agenda-comments

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