



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, August 25, 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: 6 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, Deputy City Manager Amy Snider, Chief Matthew Tobia, Michael Parks and Police Chief Joseph Tucker

2. Moment of Silence

Mayor Reed offered a moment of silence.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Special Recognition / Presentation

4.a. Presentation of the Virginia Department of Health Central Shenandoah Health District

New CSHD Director Xavier Crockett introduced himself, his experience, and his public health service philosophy.

He provided an overview of the health district's 10 locality service area and intention to develop a 3-year strategic plan. He listed the day-to-day services offered by CSHD including communicable disease control, maternal and child health, environmental health, clinical services, emergency preparedness, and vital records. He presented the FY2026 data on usage of CSHD services in Harrisonburg: 5,659 immunization clinic visits, 789 long-term care screenings, 444 food safety inspections, and 22 community outreach events. He outlined the top priorities for FY2027: support the public health workforce, keep core services reliable and accessible, strengthen access for families, and communicate early and clearly.

This Presentation was received and filed.

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 Vice-Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, that the consent agenda be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

5.a. Minutes from the August 11, 2026 City Council meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda.

5.b. Consider a request from Jose Antonio Lopez Montiel to rezone 704 N Liberty Street

This rezoning request was approved on second reading

5.c. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the Public Works Department

This supplemental appropriation request was approved on second reading

6. Public Hearings

6.a. 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 Lindsey Apartments)

Thanh Dang, Deputy Director of Community Development, presented a request from Trenton Inc. and Bernard LC to rezone from R-3 to B-1C for property located at 435, 445, 457, 473, 483 & 495 S. Main Street and 22, 288, 294, and 298 S. Liberty Street for a development called the Lindsey Apartments, formerly called The Link. She shared the history of re-zoning requests for this property dating back to July and August 2025 and March and April 2026, with City Council tabling the request on April 28, 2026. She stated re-zoning request was heard again by Planning Commission in August 2026 before returning to City Council this evening.

Ms. Dang described the re-zoning as a proposal for a four-story multifamily building consisting of a maximum of 180 units, between 2,500-5,000 square feet of non-residential space, and a five-level parking garage consisting of a minimum of 320 parking spaces. She displayed the elevations. She reviewed Proffer 1G related to renderings and final materials. She reviewed Proffer 1A related to building footprint and called attention to the addition of residential units in the interior adjacent to the parking deck with a reduced courtyard footprint compared to previous layouts.

She summarized the amendments to the proffers compared to the set of proffers previously reviewed by City Council in April 2026:

- Reduced the maximum number of dwelling units from 250 to 180
- Reduced the maximum number of bedrooms from 555 to 440
- Reduced the number of studio or one-bedroom multifamily units from 110 to 72 and
- Maintained the previously planned maximum number of four-bedroom units at

85

- Reduced minimum number of structured parking spaces from 480 to 320
- Reduced minimum number of electric vehicle charging stations from 14 to 10
- Reduced minimum number of secure indoor/covered bicycle storage spaces from 120 to 90
- Maintained minimum number of exterior bicycle parking spaces at 16
- Reduced cash contributions for
 - Traffic-calming improvements from \$60,000 to \$45,000
 - Parking enforcement or enhancements from \$30,000 to \$22,500
 - Affordable housing from \$93,738 to \$70,000
- Reduced maximum building height from 75-feet to 52-feet - Rooftop structures can be 55-feet if screened
- Changed the minimum square footage of non-residential uses from 2,000 to 2,500 square feet and retained maximum 5,000 square feet
- Removed occupancy restrictions
- Removed the Parking Agreement with the City

Ms. Dang stated staff encouraged a mix of bedroom types, as there can be disadvantages to a 4-bedroom/4-bath design. She said 4-bedroom/4-bathroom units is the intended design of The Lindsey. She described the advantages of placement of college student-focused housing in walkable proximity to the James Madison University campus and related reduction to vehicle trips.

Ms. Dang reviewed the 2018 Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the property as Mixed Use and conforms with the Mixed Use designation. She stated the proposed project supports the Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan's goal to "Grow Downtown as a Neighborhood" by encouraging mixed-use and residential development in key clusters of currently underutilized space and to see opportunities to add density and improve urban design at key Downtown sites. She stated the Downtown Plan describes housing units in Downtown as in high demand with little vacancy, and a need for more housing to support businesses.

Ms. Dang stated the James Madison University Board of Visitors in April 2026 endorsed a new campus strategic plan which included a goal to grow enrollment and to build more on-campus housing to house approximately 60% of students on campus by 2040. She stated the anticipated decline in off-campus student population has led City staff to question the need for continued growth in off-campus student-oriented housing over the long term. She stated City staff believes student-oriented housing easily walkable to campus with convenient access to services will continue to be appealing to students.

Ms. Dang shared City staff recommends approval of the project as rezoning the property to B-1C more advantages than disadvantages and it generally conforms with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 plan. She

shared the motion to recommend approval of the rezoning failed at Planning Commission with a split vote (3-3).

Todd Rhea, Clark and Bradshaw, representative of applicant, reviewed the project, the revenue the project will generate in the form of property taxes, comparisons of the project versus a townhome concept allowed by-right with R-3 zoning for these parcels, and the project's alignment with the Downtown 2040 Plan. He shared the Lindsey family who owns the property does not support the park concept for the property proposed by community members.

Mr. Rhea reviewed the five key areas of impact from the project from the applicant's perspective as follows:

- Transportation improvements
- Parking solutions
- Affordable housing
- Community cohesion & downtown businesses
- Fiscal benefits

Mr. Rhea reviewed the concept of the 30 townhomes he says the property owner will pursue instead if the re-zoning is not approved. Mr. Rhea stated the proffered project represents the best effort of Timberwolf Capital to present an economically viable and politically approvable project arrived at with public engagement and its approval will send a receptive signal to those looking to investing in the area. He said a vote of approval is consistent with staff recommendation.

After the conclusion of the presentation, Council Members directed questions to Mr. Rhea.

Council Member Alsaadun asked Mr. Rhea about proffer 1G and whether they intend to change the exterior colors and materials from what is shown in the elevations included in the application. Mr. Rhea said that is not the intent and that Timberwolf Capital will build a building that looks like the proffered elements and will not build something different due to use of the phrase "general conformance." He said developers are wary after the experience of COVID-19 and tariffs with material unavailability and the flexibility is only to get around possible supply bottlenecks or challenges.

Council Member Alsaadun asked Mr. Rhea about the difference in height between South Main and Liberty Street. He asked if it will be 4 stories viewable from Main Street, to which Mr. Rhea responded affirmatively. He asked how many stories will be viewable if someone is standing on Liberty. Mr. Rhea compared it to City Hall and the Ice House, where from some viewing perspectives each structure has an additional story than from other views. Mr. Rhea says the structure will be generally 4 stories, with it being a little taller on the parking deck entry side based on topography.

Council Member Alsaadun asked about on the Liberty Street side about the lowest

portion of the building that looks like a wall and if it's part of the 1st floor. Mr. Rhea said it's an architectural foundation element and it's decorative to match other historic building stone finishes and is part of the 1st floor or the foundation of the 1st floor.

Council Member Dent asked about the chalk sign boards from 2025 shown in the presentation and why Mr. Rhea said 2026 was different. Mr. Rhea said these are not different other than different designs and are put out by the businesses when students and families come back in Summer, and students are an important part of what make Downtown businesses viable. CM Dent stated many restaurants in Downtown have closed. Mr. Rhea says the Lindsey will not solve keeping Downtown businesses open, but is part of the solution due to walkability for the future Lindsey residents.

Mayor Reed asked why the number of non-four bedrooms were reduced, and she thought this was the wrong decision. Mr. Rhea said Timberwolf Capital deemed it necessary to have the core student apartments to make it a buildable project with reducing the size of the building, retaining a parking deck, and taking two floors off the top. He said they did not want it to be a project that gets approved but not built.

The following spoke in support of the rezoning:

- Isaac Witmer, Rockingham Drive;
- Peter Demby, Monticello Ave, owner of The Innovation Hub;
- Leigh Evans, 1150 Lincolnshire Drive, Rockingham County;
- Ed Rodriguez, barber in Downtown Harrisonburg;
- Sarah Baker-McEvilly, owner of BMC Bakes;
- Manny Fisher, local contractor and realtor;
- Sam Nickels, 340 Maryland Avenue;
- Jeremy Litwiller, real estate broker and City resident;
- Keith May, real estate broker for the property.

The following spoke in opposition to the rezoning:

- Steven Sites, W. Market Street;
- Jennifer Cunningham, Campbell Street;
- Sherri Good, Campbell Street;
- Sara Lichty, Paul Street;
- Nicole, Old Windmill Circle;
- Sunny, Harrisonburg resident;
- Valerie Sulfaro, 611 Ott Street;
- Elizabeth Swallow, 45 East Fairview Ave;
- Marsha McGrath;
- Candy Graham, Campbell Street;
- Jack McCaslin, 611 Ott Street;
- Cathy Schwartz, 457 Ott Street;
- Joe Whitehill, Franklin Street;
- Leanne McMurray, 450 Ott Street;

- Carl Larsson, S. Mason Street;
- Aaron Garber, Paul Street;
- Frank Steller, Paul Street;
- Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, Harrisonburg resident;
- Heriberto Cortes Mendez, Harrisonburg resident;
- Matt Winters, North Star Terrace, Rockingham County and senior pastor of Harrisonburg Baptist Church;
- John Mansfield, 505 S Mason Street;
- Sierra Lambert, E Elizabeth Street;
- Jennifer, Harrisonburg resident;
- Bob Corso, Chestnut Drive;
- Stephanie West, Myers Ave;
- John McMurray, Ott Street;
- Bucky Berry, Harrisonburg resident.

The following spoke neither in opposition nor support:

- Steve Horn, 285 Campbell Street

At 9:54 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

City Council began its discussion on the re-zoning request.

Council Member Dent shared her previous votes of support on earlier versions of the re-zoning request, and why she had supported tabling it previously despite her desire to see it passed in its earlier forms. She thanked the developer for listening to community and making the adjustments heard from the community to make it smaller. She said community has now pivoted and wants a park, which is not realistic. She stated the City needs to grow inward and upward or development will go to the County. She wants even more height of buildings in Downtown, but thinks the current height is more in proportion with the neighborhood. She believes there are environmental advantages for walkable, bikeable housing as it reduces traffic. She cited the Housing Study, housing mismatch, and the need for higher-cost housing as well as affordable housing. She stated this project will not be the type of student-oriented housing associated with parties and trash as it will be a contained building and have property management. She said a thriving Downtown is produced by residents who can walk and bike to support the businesses.

Mayor Reed stated she has consistently been a no. She thanked the developer for making some adjustments to the project. She stated she continues to not support the re-zoning. She said she looks at requests as to fit for the location, and she does not agree this is the right fit. She is not comfortable with the size or the four-bedroom units.

Council Member Robinson stated she has been thinking about the need for housing, the tax base, and loss of people because they lack places to live. She does not think Downtown businesses should be dependent on student support to thrive. She does not agree that housing mismatch means students should live in high-cost housing and that the Housing Study did not say students need new, updated housing. She said the arguments about economic development and tax base does not equate to the problems produced by student-oriented housing. She spoke on neighborhood compatibility with Downtown, and her desire to see families enjoying Downtown. She does not think this is the proper development for this property. She thinks students will drive. She spoke on the need for 2-, and 3- bedroom types, not upscale housing for students. She stated she is opposed to the re-zoning. She said the property tax revenue potential and affordable housing proffer does not provide enough justification for her. She wants to see easier development processes, and wants to attach a requirement for public engagement to proposed development.

Council Member Fleming spoke on evaluating this project against the alternative use of the R-3 zoning designation by the property owner to construct townhomes with surface parking. He stated the City does not have ability to determine an alternative use for this private property, such as a park. He acknowledged the developer reduced the height in response to feedback on height and massing. He described his comparison of the re-zoning request against an alternative of townhomes, touching on the following points:

- Parking deck versus surface parking
- Professional third-party property management versus no property management
- Proffered design versus no design control
- Larger building and unit count versus small buildings and unit counts
- What would be the better gateway to Downtown

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on student-oriented housing. He shared examples of student housing-oriented housing complexes with greater height in other Virginia communities with colleges, and noted this proposal is shorter. He said the preference is for students to be Downtown in student structured housing in the City to limit traffic coming into the City. He shared he thinks as JMU builds more housing on campus the decline in occupancy of units by students off-campus will likely be felt more by the County than the City.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked fellow Council Members if they support a townhome project. Council Member Robison responded a vote should be on the merit of the re-zoning on the table, not what may be an alternative.

Vice Mayor Fleming stated he supports the project because it increases customers to Downtown businesses, brings student housing closer to campus, aligns with the

Downtown 2040 Plan, is professionally managed, and provides parking. He said this is not a perfect project.

Council Member Alsaadun said he is in-between on this project, and initially was not in support when the project was first presented. He states this project has been under consideration and revision for a long time, and investors usually hope the outcome of delays and revisions will be approval for a project. He shared he thinks a denial after a long delay and revisions would send a bad message to investors. He learned a lot from the residents and sought out answers from the developer. He does not think it is a perfect project. He stated he is concerned about the loss of potential tax revenue if the re-zoning is denied and thinks increased taxes is causing businesses to leave. He does not want taxes to increase due to impact on families. He likes the idea of the park, but does not produce revenue for the city to use to pay for services like schools. He said many businesses rely on students.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, to approve the rezoning request on first reading. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 3 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent and Council Member Alsaadun

No: 2 - Mayor Reed and Council Member Robinson

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider a request to amend the Subdivision Ordinance

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, presented. He discussed the 2025 code changes. He shared that the documents presented two weeks ago had some unintended consequences staff wanted to ensure were not included in the final adopted document. This adds a new sentence about lot line adjustments.

A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, that this Subdivision Ordinance be approved on second reading with the amendments as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

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)

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on the recent primaries for City Council, concern about marginalization and suppression, and care for the social fabric.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Dent spoke on her interest in the City filing as a participant in the

hearings on the Dominion merger in order to advance clean energy goals and wants this done before September 11, she also spoke on contesting the repeal of the roadless rule. She spoke on the presentation from Blue Ridge Rail about passenger rail. She shared she met with Ben Cline today and found some areas of agreement. The Sustainability Success Summit by ESPAC is Friday, Sept 18 at Simms.

Council Member Alsaadun shared about a letter he wants signed by City Council to send to the State Department in support of refugee resettlement.

Council Member Robinson shared a workshop by SVBHP at the NENA Center about how to use the runaway ads to tell stories of resistance and for genealogy. She shared on Sept 2 she will be on a forum for CCJB about how these boards can be more effective. She is on a panel for the summit hosted by EPSAC.

Vice Mayor Fleming shared he met with the Southern Cities Economic Initiative and the first round of applicants just finished.

Mayor Reed shared the ribbon cutting for the Lucy Simms exhibit at Rocktown High School was last week. She shared that Harrisonburg Baptist Church holds a weekly prayer for city leadership. Mayor Reed spoke to her welcoming the Dukes Making a Difference students. She attended the presidential address by all the area college presidents. She spoke to Rotary the morning of August 25. She mentioned downtown Block Party is Saturday, August 29.

9. Adjournment

10:53pm adjournment