City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final
City Council

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 | **7:00 PM** | **Council Chambers**

1. Roll Call

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to appoint Council Member Robinson as voting delegate and Council Member Alsaadun as alternate voting delegate for the NLC City Summit business meeting.

2. Moment of Silence

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Proclamation recognizing October 23, 2026 as National Lights On Afterschool Day

Mayor Reed invited all in attendance from the Boys and Girls Club, On The Road Collaborative, the Gus Bus and the Girls Scouts. to the front as she read the proclamation recognizing October 22nd, 2026 as National Lights On After School.

This Proclamation was read into the record.

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 Vice-Mayor Fleming, 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 September 22, 2206 City Council meeting.

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider a supplemental appropriation for an Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) grant

This supplemental was approved on second reading.

5.c. Consider adopting an ordinance granting a Lease of Certain Real Property of the City

This ordinance was approved on second reading

5.d. Consider approving the enactment of an Ordinance Prohibiting Procurement or Use of Automatic License Plate Recognition Systems by City

This ordinance was approved on second reading

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Consider a request to amend the definition of "Dwelling, single-family" within the Zoning Ordinance to include qualifying manufactured homes

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, presented a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment required by a Virginia Code change effective July 1, 2026 that mandates localities allow qualifying manufactured homes by right wherever single-family detached dwellings are permitted. The amendment would revise the definition of "single-family dwelling" to permit manufactured homes on individual lots when they are converted to real property under applicable Virginia law, receive a certificate of occupancy within five years of manufacture, and are placed on a permanent foundation with wheels, axles, and other mobile components removed. Mr. Fletcher stated that owners would need City permits and court-filed affidavits confirming the conversion, and staff is coordinating with the Commissioner of the Revenue to establish the process.

He stated staff and the Planning Commission (5-0), recommended approval.

During questions, Mr. Fletcher said he believed the property must be owned rather than rented but would verify the state-code requirement, and he could not comment on possible future federal changes concerning chassis-free manufactured homes

At 7:17 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, and Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros spoke on his support of the state-mandated change, criticized Dillon's Rule, and urged Council to represent the public rather than concentrated private interests.

At 7:19 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council Member Dent stated this is a case where the state helped by removing the need for a local debate. She stated we are bound by the state law whether we amend our ordinance or not. Council Member Robinson stated that by updating our ordinance it lessens the chance of confusion for residents who read the state law and wonder whether it applies locally.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Zoning Ordinance amendment 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

6.b. Consider a request to amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the minimum lot width for single-family detached dwellings in the R-8 district

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, stated that House Bill 1212 of the 2026 General Assembly amended Virginia Code Section 15.2-2286.2. The amendment requires localities with a population of 50,000 or more, including Harrisonburg, to adopt and maintain at least one zoning district that permits a single-family dwelling on a lot with a minimum area not exceeding 3,000 square feet and a width no greater than 30 feet. He said the R-8 district already allows a single lot of 2,800 square feet, so no change was needed for lot area. The lot width in R-8 for single-family detached dwellings must be reduced from 35 feet to 30 feet to comply.

He stated staff and the Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

At 7:21 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, and Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Panayotis “Poti” Giannakouros stated he agreed with Council Members Robinson and Dent that the state’s action was helpful, and referenced Planning Commission discussion about setbacks, including concerns that minimum setbacks on narrow lots could leave little buildable area and a suggestion to consider zero setbacks as used in Richmond. He argued that setbacks have historically been associated with exclusionary zoning and redlining, stated that fire-safety concerns can be addressed through modern building codes rather than zoning,

At 7:25 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council discussed that Harrisonburg is currently subject to the state law’s 50,000-population threshold but should adopt the change regardless of future census counts, and staff confirmed that the required ordinance update may establish a smaller-lot residential district similar to R-8, which has historically been used only for spot-zoning requests involving reduced setbacks or increased density.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this Zoning Ordinance amendment 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

6.c. Consider a request from Eastern Mennonite School to amend the master plan at 701 and 801 Parkwood Drive and 1251 Virginia Avenue

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, presented a request to amend the Master Plan of Eastern Mennonite School campus. He reviewed the property, the surrounding zoning districts, the property zoning, and noted it occupies an entire block between Parkwood Drive and Mount Clinton Pike.

Mr. Fletcher explained that a master plan under the institutional overlay allows reduced setbacks and deviations from parking and parking lot landscaping regulations. He said the overlay gives property owners additional flexibility rather than additional restrictions.

He described the plan's history and stated the school now seeks to maintain the 10-foot perimeter setback. He stated the 2026 amendments show planned additions, including additions to the elementary school and a concession and band stand building at the athletic complex. It also cleans up easements with Eastern Mennonite University and the Virginia Mennonite Missions property. He reviewed the deviations requested and the additional parking requests

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.

Council Member Dent asked whether the master plan was the City's plan with the overlay on it. Mr. Fletcher said the master plan is the applicants, and the institutional overlay provides additional permissions, and the owner must have the master plan approved to receive that flexibility. Council Member Dent and Mayor Reed noted that the topic had been discussed previously.

At 7:21 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the third public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, and Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Panayotis “Poti” Giannakouros urged Council to defer the zoning decision until completion of the zoning rewrite and Comprehensive Plan update, incorporate the applicant’s expertise and meaningful neighborhood engagement, reconsider zoning from first principles-including landscaping, ecology, and natural-context considerations-and noted support for the “people’s comp plan” process and public-sector collective bargaining.

At 7:25 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, that this request 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

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider Adopting a Resolution Dedicating a New Section of University Boulevard as a Public Street and Renaming a Section of University Boulevard to Driver Drive, a Section of Forest Hill Road to University Boulevard and Convocation Service Drive to Driver Drive.

Tom Hartman, Director of Public Works, presented a resolution that would change road names in the area of the University Boulevard realignment project, which is nearing completion. The resolution does four things:

- It names the new portion of University Boulevard, from Oak Hill to the connection with old University, as University Boulevard, effective immediately.
- It renames Forest Hill Road between Oak Hill and Port Republic Road as University Boulevard. University Boulevard would then run from Port Republic Road to East Market Street. This change would take effect January 1, 2027 because five properties in the segment must change addresses.
- It renames the old University Boulevard segment that remains open as Driver Drive.
- It renames Convocation Services Drive, west of the Convocation Center, as Driver Drive

Mr. Hartman stated staff has already drafted letters to affected property owners and had coordinated with utility companies, the post office, and the Emergency Communications Center. GIS had prepared the new address numbers, and affected JMU properties had been notified. Staff would begin communication with property owners upon approval, allowing about two and a half months before the January 1 change.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Resolution be adopted. 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

7.b. Introduction to the New Safe Streets Harrisonburg Planning Efforts

Jakob ZumFelde, planning manager, Public Works, introduced Safe Streets Harrisonburg, a planning effort funded by the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program. The program was established through the bipartisan infrastructure law and aims to prevent deaths and serious injuries on roads. The grant is for planning only, with no construction or street changes. The effort comprises four plans:

- A Roadway Safety Action Plan.
- A Complete Streets Design Guide.
- An update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- A Safe Routes to School Plan.

He provided a timeline of public engagement, evaluating community, consultant and staff input, and then final adoption by Council.
Discussion took place regarding this plan and overlapping efforts with the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program and concerns about federal transportation funding.

This Report was received and filed.

7.c. Presentation on Draft 2027 Legislative Agenda

Brian Vandenberg, assistant to the City Manager, presented a draft legislative agenda for Council feedback. He stated the draft agenda follows the July 28, 2026 overview of the legislative affairs program, it will be provided to the City's state delegation. He reviewed the recommended policy principals, legislative priorities, and budget requests.

Mr. Vandenberg said the next steps were to receive Council feedback, finalize the agenda for adoption, and deliver it to the City's delegate, state senator, and relevant committee members.

Discussion took place regarding process of submitting feedback, timeline for the finalize agenda, and including the Harrisonburg City Public Schools legislative agenda. Ande Banks, city manager, stated Council could also adopt the National League of Cities, Virginia First Cities, and Virginia Municipal League agendas. Council Member Robinson noted that the National League of Cities agenda would not be adopted until its November conference. She said the budget requests would be helpful, because many cities seek carve-outs in the state budget.

This Report was referred.to the City Manager's Office

7.d. Consider adopting a resolution requesting the Harrisonburg Planning Commission to consider and make recommendations concerning proposed amendments to the Harrisonburg Zoning Ordinance, and any necessary and correlating amendments, to provide appropriate local zoning and land use requirements for businesses licensed by the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority

Chris Brown, Attorney Brown presented a resolution that has been driven by the recently enacted Virginia Cannabis Control Act, which creates a state-regulated retail

marijuana marketplace. The Act creates eight classifications of businesses, from cultivation through retail sales. He stated localities cannot prohibit these businesses but may regulate them through zoning. Local options include deciding what can go where, whether a use requires a special use permit or is permitted by right, minimum distances from schools, hospitals, and other institutions, and spacing between facilities.

Mr. Brown identified several key dates, and noted the City wanted its ordinance in place before February 1, 2027, so that businesses would not be grandfathered under state regulations only. He noted that a business tax may come before Council separately and that the Commissioner of the Revenue was preparing analysis. He said the resolution only directs the Planning Commission and staff to prepare an ordinance and bring it back to Council.

Discussion took place on the cannabis law, consideration for a question-and-answer resource for residents and following up with the Cannabis Control Authority for any education campaign.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Resolution 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

7.e. Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions as Part of the 2030 Decennial Census

Ande Banks, city manager, stated that Council members had asked for discussion of changes proposed by the current federal administration to residence criteria and demographic questions for the 2030 census.
Council Member Dent reviewed the National League of Cities position on the proposals, including the following:

- Legal status. Possible exclusion of non-citizens and green card holders, and a possible question about legal or citizenship status that has never been on the form.
- Residence. A narrower definition of "usual residence" limited to a January 3 to April 1 window, which the Council Member said could skew counts and affect migrant workers.
- Administrative records. Heavier reliance on tax, immigration, and other government records instead of repeated in-person follow-up, which could miss renters, part-time workers, students, and young children.
- Demographic questions. Elimination of race and ethnicity questions, a ban on sexual orientation questions, and most other demographic questions becoming optional. The Council Member said communities rely on this data to track equitable service delivery, target economic development, and meet federal reporting requirements.

Vice Mayor Fleming stated the Census Bureau was accepting comments until November 2 and that Council needed to act by its next meeting.

Further discussion took place regarding the undercounted in 2020, how the census counts affect federal funding allocation, including transportation and school lunch programs, how the current proposal was designed to remove people from the count, the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, which lets cities verify their addresses, and the urgency of this matter.

Mayor Reed said that Council members were in agreement and no vote was needed. She asked staff to proceed. City Manager Banks said staff would prepare a draft letter for the next Council meeting for approval and submission before the deadline.

This Report was referred.to the City Manager's Office

7.f. Appoint one delegate and one alternate for the NLC Annual Business meeting at the NLC City Summit in Nashville, TN on Friday, November 20, 2026 from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to appoint Council Member Robinson as the voting delegate and Council Member Alsaadun as alternate for the NLC City Summit Business Meeting. The motion carried with 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)

Michael Holman, of Blue Ridge Drive, spoke on the high cost of living and the lack of jobs that pay well and treat workers with dignity. He state he works for Harrisonburg Public Transportation, he is concerned how many coworkers work 50 to 60 hours per week and hold second jobs, drivers must hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) but are not paid like skilled workers but many new hires quit after earning a CDL because they can earn more for other companies. He stated that he and his coworkers have been organizing and asked Council to follow Charlottesville and other Virginia cities in granting the right to collectively bargain.

Matthew Ray, lead steward for the Amalgamated Transit Union, said Charlottesville's City Council gave transit workers a collective bargaining ordinance two years ago. He acknowledged that bargaining costs the city more but said retention has improved in Charlottesville. He said the Governor vetoed a state collective bargaining bill that he believed would return. He urged Council to act first and avoid being told by Richmond what to do.

Victor Sukuk, thanked Council for all of their contributions to the city, and said he is a paratransit driver. He said the department has 10 to 12 drivers who handle about 200 to 250 calls and provide about 250 rides daily to people who cannot drive because of

physical limitations. He said City drivers contribute to street safety and asked Council to retain these workers in the community.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the recent Community Partners luncheon for the Eastern Mennonite University president and his attendance to the Hunt Institute.

Council Member Dent spoke on several conferences and events she attended including the New York Climate Week, ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) the Virginia Clean Energy Summit, and a private trip to Stockholm. She stated she attended the recent Virginia Municipal League conference and noted that a data centers section was added to the legislative agenda under the Infrastructure, Transportation and Environmental Quality committee.

Council Member Robinson spoke on her participation in the Bike, Walk and Roll to School, a recent NAACP meeting, and the EMU Community Partners Appreciation Lunch, a recent NLC REAL council meeting, a Mennonite Central Committee presentation, and a "Roots Run Deep" event in Lexington with a ShenValley Conservancy She encouraged residents to record their families' oral histories.

Vice Mayor Dent reported on the Virginia Municipal League conference, his election to the VML Transportation board representing the Staunton District, a recent Virginia First Cities legislative meeting, and recent speaking engagements of Governor Spanberger and Senator Kaine.

Mayor Reed spoke on the recent Eastern Mennonite University homecoming and inauguration and congratulated Dr. Shannon Dykes on her inauguration as the 10th president of EMU. She described Dr. Dykes as the first Black woman to serve as president of a Mennonite university in the United States.

City Manager Banks reported that he, Mr. Vandenberg, and Ms. Snyder will be attending the International City/County Management Association (IMCA) annual conference.

9. Closed Session

9.a. Closed Session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under:

Subsection 3 for a discussion of the acquisition of real estate for a public purpose where the discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating position of the public body, and

Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel on specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

@ 9:16 pm

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Council Member Dent moved to go into closed session under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), subsection 3, for discussion of the acquisition of real estate for a public purpose, and subsection 8, for consultation with legal counsel on specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming. 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

10. Adjournment

At 10:24p.m. the closed session ended and the regular session reconvened. City Attorney Brown read the following statement, which was agreed to with a unanimous recorded vote of Council: I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Chapter 37 of Title 2.2 of the Code, of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by the City Council.

At 10:24 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK MAYOR

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