

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016, at the Union Train Station. Mayor Myers called the closed session meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

**1. CLOSED SESSION MEETING – 6:00 P.M.**

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present:

- Council Member David R. Coleman
- Council Member John A. Hart, Sr.
- Council Member Darrin L. Hill
- Council Member Brian A. Moore
- Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith
- Vice Mayor Samuel Parham
- Mayor W. Howard Myers

Absent: None

Present from City Administration:

- Acting City Attorney Mark Flynn
- Acting City Manager Dironna M. Belton
- Executive Assistant to City Manager Stephanie Harris

**3. CLOSED SESSION:**

Acting City Attorney Mark Flynn, stated that it was City Council's desire to enter into a closed session under Section 2.2-3711.A (1) of the Code of Virginia under Subsection 3 to discuss the disposition of publicly held property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City; and under Subsection 7 to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matter requiring the advice of counsel relating to the water bill issue.

Vice Mayor Parham moved that the City Council go into closed session for the purposes noted by the Clerk of City Council. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. There was no discussion on the motion, which was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

City Council entered closed session at 6:00 p.m.

**CERTIFICATION:**

Council Member Hill made a motion to return City Council into open session and certify the purposes of the closed session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hart. There was no discussion on the motion, which was approved on roll call vote.

On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

**16-R-26      A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING, AS REQUIRED BY THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, SECTION 2.2-3712, THAT TO THE BEST OF EACH MEMBER'S KNOWLEDGE, ONLY PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS LAWFULLY EXEMPTED FROM OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS OF VIRGINIA LAW WERE DISCUSSED IN THE CLOSED SESSION, AND ONLY SUCH PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS AS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE MOTION CONVENING THE CLOSED SESSION WERE HEARD, DISCUSSED, OR CONSIDERED.**

1. **REGULARLY-SCHEDULED MEETING – 6:30 P.M.**

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Present:

Council Member David R. Coleman  
Council Member John Hart, Sr.  
Council Member Darrin L. Hill  
Council Member Brian A. Moore  
Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith  
Vice Mayor Samuel Parham  
Mayor W. Howard Myers

Absent: None

Present from City Administration:

Acting City Attorney Mark Flynn  
Acting City Manager Dironna M. Belton  
Executive Assistant to City Manager Stephanie Harris

3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

- a. Executive Assistant to City Manager, Stephanie Harris, led council and the audience in a moment of silence.

4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

- a. Mayor Myers led council and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. **PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: (Each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes.)**

- a. 2016 Sesquicentennial Year for Ladies Memorial Association.

**BACKGROUND:** The ladies Memorial Association has spent in excess of \$250,000 improving City property throughout its history.

**RECOMMENDATION:** For information only.

Pat Rowland gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the 2016 Sesquicentennial Year for Ladies Memorial Association.

- b. A Proclamation to observe May 2016 as Business Appreciation Month.

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Petersburg wishes to observe May 2016 as Business Appreciation Month. The City will highlight and host events throughout the month that support and acknowledge the contributions of local businesses.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend Mayor Myers read and present proclamation.

- c. Proclamation designating April 22<sup>nd</sup> as Earth Day.

**BACKGROUND:** The concept of Earth Day was created to encourage everyone to contemplate the damage being done to the earth and through pollutions. It is understood that the citizens of the global community must step forward and take action to create a green economy to combat the global challenges.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend Mayor Myers read and present proclamation.

Aimee Gleason, Administrative Assistant in the Public Works Department, accepted the proclamation.

d. Financial Briefing.

**BACKGROUND:** An FY16 financial update will be provided to residents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Informational purposes only.

Dironna Belton, Acting City Manager, gave a brief presentation on the FY16 finances.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:**

a. Schedule a public hearing for a Special Use Permit pursuant to Article 23, Section 4(23) of the Zoning Ordinance to operate a stand-alone vehicle repair business, subject to certain terms and conditions at 3022-A South Crater Road T.P. 081-04-0807. The property is zoned B-2 General Commercial District.

b. Schedule a public hearing on the FY17 Budget.

Vice Mayor Parham made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda that schedules two public hearings for May 3, 2016, regular City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

**7. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS: (In accordance with the Rules of Council, public comment will be heard before discussion by Council. Once discussion has started, no further input from the public will be accepted. Each speaker will be limited to three (3) minutes.)**

a. A public hearing to amend §110-265 of the Petersburg City Code with respect to parking violations; issuance, payment, contest, etc., parking citations.

**BACKGROUND:** The City has grown over the last decade in the Downtown area, with numerous new merchants, residential living and businesses. AS a result, the Police Department has realized an increase in complaints related to violations of the parking limits and restrictions on a regular basis. First, due to the growth of tourism and greater volume of visitors from outside of the City of Petersburg, it is recommended that the City allow for an additional 5 days to remit payment of parking fines. Second, driving over city curbs to park on either private or public property has increased causing damage and resulting in expensive repair costs to the City. Therefore, it is recommended that the City include, as a violation for City Code 110-265, driving over a City curb to park on private or public property shall result in a \$40.00 fine; and the fine will double if not paid or contested within 10 business days. Finally, the City also shall increase fines associated with parking citations as indicated in the ordinance proposal. Increased fines will assist in the reduction of violations and will more reflect those costs associated with enforcement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend City Council approves changes to the City code.

Police Lieutenant, Sheldon Wills, gave a brief summary on the request for an amendment of §110-265 of the Petersburg City Code with respect to parking violations; issuance, payment, contest, etc., parking

citations. He stated information on parking in a two hour period. He stated that the fine would be to increase from \$10 to \$50 fine.

Mrs. Harris opened the floor for public comment.

Seeing no hands, Mrs. Harris closed the public hearing.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Vice Mayor Parham made a motion to approve the changes to the City code and add the changes to the commercial vehicles. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

**16-ORD-18 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND §110-265 OF THE PETERSBURG CITY CODE WITH RESPECT TO PARKING VIOLATIONS; ISSUANCE, PAYMENT, CONTEST, ETC., PARKING CITATIONS WITH ADDITIONAL CHANGES TO THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.**

- b. A public hearing to receive citizen comment on a petition for the City of Petersburg Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2017-2021.

**BACKGROUND:** The Code of the State of Virginia allows a local planning commission to, and at the direction of the governing body shall, prepare and revise annually a capital improvement program based on the comprehensive plan of the locality for a period not to exceed the ensuing five years. The commission shall submit the program annually to the governing body, or to the chief administrative officer or other official charged with preparation of the budget for the locality, at such time as it or he shall direct. The capital improvement program shall include the commission's recommendations, and estimates of cost of the facilities and life cycle costs, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement the locality chooses to include in its capital improvement plan and as provided for in the comprehensive plan, and the means of financing them, to be undertaken in the ensuing fiscal year and in a period not to exceed the next four years, as the basis of the capital budget for the locality. In the preparation of its capital budget recommendations, the commission shall consult with the chief administrative officer or other executive head of the government of the locality, the heads of departments and interested citizens and organizations and shall hold such public hearings as it deems necessary. This plan is prepared and reviewed each year even if the funds have not been identified to fund the Capital Improvement Program. There is no funding identified for FY17 of the proposed Capital Improvement Program. If funding is identified for FY17 then City Council will be required to approve the appropriation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Following a duly advertised public hearing, Council may affirm the Planning Commission recommendation, overturn the Planning Commission recommendation, table for further consideration, or return the item under consideration to the Planning Commission requesting further review. The recommendation of the Planning Commission was to approve the request with a vote of 7-0.

Michelle Peters, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief summary and PowerPoint presentation on a petition for the City of Petersburg Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2017-2021.

Mrs. Harris opened the floor for public comment.

Larry Smith, 1151 Normandale Avenue, stated that this was fast. He asked City Council where was Irvin Carter.

Mayor Myers stated that the whereabouts of Mr. Carter does not have anything to do with this agenda item.

Mr. Smith stated that he thought that this did have something to do with it. He stated that the

presentation was kind of fast for City Council to approve this. He stated that he would like to know if Mr. Carter had anything to do with this because he is not here any longer. He stated that he does not want City Council to approve anything that may be way off track based on him.

Ms. Belton stated that the development of the CIP projects is done by the Department of Public Works and specific departments submitting budgets and scopes of work for specific projects. She stated that if the finance director were to seek funding for these projects these would be the estimated cost. She stated that this is why the previous finance director was a part of this process to certify that the amounts would be those that would apply for funding.

Mr. Smith asked that he was the previous finance director.

Ms. Belton said yes. She stated that based on what she just stated, Mr. Carter services were no longer required by the City of Petersburg.

Mayor Myers stated that this was quiet inappropriate at this time. He stated that this was for the CIP. He stated that they do not deal with personnel issues during open session.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, thanked Mrs. Peters. He stated that he hopes that City Council approves this presentation. He stated that in particular this summer he would definitely like to see the Farmer Street and playground kept a part of this and hopefully that something can be done. He stated that he is hoping that recreation will get some type of funding to hire personnel at the pool. He stated that this summer it was not cute being able to go to the pool. He stated that a lot of people were getting on Mrs. Yerby. He stated that he told people that before they talk about Mrs. Yerby they should go talk to her. He stated that this problem came about because she didn't have personnel for a certain number of people. He stated that the Farmer Street playground is a nice playground. He stated that they hope that recreation gets funding so that they can get staff. He stated that with the extra wear and tear at Peabody Middle School they are going to need the gym replaced. He stated that the gym floor has needed to be replaced ever since he was a student at Peabody Middle School. He stated that one thing they have to remember is that if they are going to be proud of the schools then the buildings have to look like they are proud of the schools. He stated that it is bad enough that they are cutting funding for public education. He stated that a lot of people get it twisted when he supports the police department. He stated that they need equipment along with the fire department. He stated that this is the City's public safety. He stated that they need equipment upgrades. He stated that they do not want the radio going out at the time of a fire or the fire truck going to a fire and cannot squirt any water.

Willie Noise, 1508 Circle Drive, stated that he wants to remind them that Youngs Road, he has not heard too much of anything being said about it. He stated that no one is listening to him about his request on Youngs Road. He stated that now that they are talking about the mosquito thing, a while back these retaining ponds in the subdivisions have a lot of problems. He stated that one of the former City Manager's self-walked the ones off Young's Road and a couple of other places. He stated that the water does not drain out of them properly. He stated that the ditch or trail leads from the retaining ponds to the main stream. He stated that is a lot of standing water. He stated that this needs to be checked into this. He stated that there was a project going on in the Western Hills area concerning curbing. He stated that half of the project was done. He stated that he would like to have some details on it or at least the City have it on their plan to complete this. He stated also the recreation department as well.

Michael Edwards, 409 Grove Avenue, stated that he is very disturbed by the first slide. He stated that he is very disturbed that the City classifies a tangible asset of \$50,000 or more in the City. He stated that yet they have the Hustings Courthouse Clock Tower for construction services and construction for \$900,000 and \$85,000. He stated that he is on Sycamore Street every day and that he does not see any work going on. He stated that to say that construction is ongoing the only thing that he has seen is that braces need to be put up to keep the clock tower from falling. He stated that he sees nothing in the CIP but a structural analysis for museum buildings, cultural affairs, arts and tourism for \$100,000. He stated that he does not want to lead them into what he is going to do in the public information period. He stated that it baffles him when they say tangible asset of \$50,000 or more. He stated that the Siege museum shut down with no start date for work. He stated

that Centre Hill was supposed to get a HVAC system. He stated that this has been put aside. He asked where the priorities are. He asked do they really have to keep putting the golf course on this information. He stated that they just did the clubhouse. He stated that they really need to look at whether the golf course is a priority.

Brandon Martin, 1546 Berkeley Avenue, stated that he recalls that the previous CIP projects at times have listed a new City Hall and also major improvements to both the General District Court and Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court. He stated that he does not see them on the information at hand. He stated that maybe he is missing something. He stated that years ago there was also discussion of a new home for Buildings & Grounds, Public Works and Public Utilities. He stated that these three operations are still in substandard locations operating under great duress. He stated that he realizes that with \$6 million owed already owed to vendors for work and services already delivered to the City, he stated that he wonders if the City should be talking about bankruptcy. He stated that it bothers him where the City has been going for the last couple of years. He stated that he thinks that these things need to be flushed out and that he suggested some time earlier this year that they have some sort of town hall meeting to talk these issues through. He stated that sometimes you are not going to appreciate what you hear but that this is tough. He stated that he thinks that the citizens are a bit annoyed.

Ken Pritchett, 1113 Overbrook Road, stated that he is not disappointed that there is nothing up on the CIP program for City Hall. He stated that there are a lot of other things that he would like to talk about and that one of them is the schools. He stated that they have been talking about a field house for the football team for about three or four years. He stated that he would like to see this become a priority because there are teams that will not play Petersburg High School because they do not have a facility to change in before and after the games. He stated that some of the teams that are close by who have field houses and nice facilities do not schedule games with Petersburg anymore. He stated that Petersburg has to go way down the country somewhere to play those teams rather than the ones right in the City's backyard. He stated that a field house is estimated at \$1.2 million dollars. He stated that he would like to see the Planning Director and City Council direct someone to look into what a field house could cost and that he thinks that it would be half of \$1.2 million. He stated that it is a priority and that he does not remember seeing it on the CIP project list. He stated that it may have been in the 2019 or 2020 CIP plan. He stated that he would like the status of the Southside Depot. He stated that there was money allocated to this by VDOT and the Civil War Trust. He stated that construction issues stopped all this. He asked was the monies put back in the general fund fund balance and used for other things. He stated that there is nothing regarding the Jarrett House. He stated that they do not need a study to see that it is already falling down. He stated that in 2014 he took an expert brick person over there and asked them what needed to be done to it. He stated that they said that they need to point the bricks up and then stabilize the building. He stated that there is a lean to holding part of the wall that has not collapsed. He stated that this is a major building in Petersburg. He stated that they missed the Jarrett House to the Sesquicentennial War last year in \$2 million dollars. He stated that this may have taken up the deficit in the City. He stated that there are a couple things that need to be addressed. He asked the status of the Southside Depot and the Jarrett House.

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Myers closed the public hearing.

There was discussion among staff and City Council.

Council Member Moore made a motion to approve the City of Petersburg Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Year 2017. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Coleman, Hart, Hill, Moore, Wilson-Smith, Parham and Myers

**16-ORD-19 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE CITY OF PETERSBURG CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017.**

- c. A public hearing for Special Use Permit pursuant to Article 23, Section 4(23) of the Zoning Ordinance to operate a stand-alone vehicle repair and accessory towing service, subject to certain terms and conditions at 100 Bollingbrook St., T.P. 011-15-0802.

**BACKGROUND:** The property is currently vacant, but was last used as a retail store by Petersburg Pickers. The property has been used over the years as a tire shop and an automotive repair shop, sometimes associated with a dealership and other times independent of the dealer. The applicant currently operates his business in a neighboring locality operating off of a temporary home occupation permit. The applicant has to find a location other than his home to operate his business. This property was rezoned in 2012 to the B-2 zoning designation to allow the continued use of the subject property, mid-twentieth century buildings for automotive related uses. The interior of the building is designed for this type of use with several floor lifts. There are currently 5 bay doors on Bollingbrook Street, 2 bay doors on the South side of the building and 4 bay doors on the East side of the building. A special use permit is required for this type of use in this district.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Following a duly advertised public hearing, Council may affirm the Planning Commission recommendation, overturn the Planning Commission recommendation, table for further consideration, or return the item under consideration to the Planning Commission requesting further review. The recommendation of the Planning Commission was to deny the request with a vote of 7-0.

Michelle Peters, Director of Planning and Community Development, gave a brief summary on the public hearing.

Mrs. Harris opened the floor for public comment.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, asked Mrs. Peters if he heard her currently when she stated that there was a vote against it. He stated that in this case he would almost say to uphold staffs decision. He stated that he has seen this on too many occasions where persons have invested and try to bend the way that staff has asked them to bend only for City Council to shoot them down. He stated that this is one of the reasons why a lot of businesses put out in the air that it is hard to start a business in the City of Petersburg. He stated that one of his reasons as a citizen he would ask them not to abide by staff ruling is that when they talk about the gateway and what they want to see, he is trying to understand their vision. He stated that when you look at the gateway and some of the entrances to the City it still looks like bad and that nothing has been done about this yet. He stated that when you look at Crater Road it literally looks like a crater road. He stated especially near Flag Ship Hotel. He stated that they have people that are trying to help boost the economy yet they want to make them jump through hoops. He stated that they should just put this to sleep. He stated that he does not want this man to come forward thinking that he I going to be able to get this done and then City Council shoots him down anyway. He stated that he would hope that this not be the case. He stated that he hates to come into the City and his car starts acting up. He stated that it is bad enough that when you come to the City during a certain hour off the highway the only place that is open to eat is WaWa. He stated that he needs to get his car fixed so maybe he may stay in the City you never know. He stated that it may take overnight and he may have to stay at one of the finer hotels in Petersburg. He stated that hopefully he won't get robbed, mugged or rapped at the hotels which are the gateway to the City.

Charlie Cuthbert, 132 South Adams Street, stated that he is opposed to this Special use Permit. He stated he thinks that they will follow the unanimous recommendation of the Planning Commission and deny the request for a Special Use Permit. He stated that he attended the public hearing before the Planning Commission and spoke against it at that time. He stated that one of the comments of the applicant stayed with him and that he has a copy of the minutes March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Planning Commission. He stated that the minutes recollected his information. He stated that the minutes stated that the applicant explained that he hopes to be at this location for 10-15 years. He stated that there is a real opportunity clause here. He stated that if they put a stand-alone repair shop at this location this means that more appropriate businesses cannot be there. He stated that if they put an auto repair shop there this is what they will see at the gateway of the City for the next couple of years. He stated that he hopes that they will vote this down.

Edward Moore, petitioner, stated that basically he is present to make things a little bit easy. He stated that he has been looking at the proffers and that they have changed since they started this process. He stated that he started this process in November. He stated that in December he turned in his application. He stated that they called him back in January to come in and pay the fees and get the process moving. He stated that

they are now here five months later. He stated that he has listened to the arguments that people have in the City including everything about the beautification. He stated that the City has a beautiful parking lot across with the old foundation that they are using. He stated that he does not feel like anyone wants him here. He stated that he has chosen a place that has been an auto repair shop for 15 years. He stated that he kind of feels bad for the owners of the building. He stated that he would like to pull himself out. He stated that he has found another location. He stated that five months later they are still dealing with this. He stated that he has found a location in Chesterfield County. He stated that he went in and got a business license in 15 minutes and now he has a shop already ready to run. He stated that he is withdrawing his application.

Dale Patton, previous President of Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, stated that Petersburg is a place of business. He stated that it is pro-business and not anti-business. He stated that he has adjacent property across the street that he has invested millions of dollars in to the west of the property. He stated that in the late 80s and early 90s there were pioneers in the City. He stated that it was Lena Whitt, Charlie Cuthbert and himself that spoke that say mixed-use in the Old Towne Petersburg. He stated that they have seen the federal money that is coming in the City for the warehouses. He stated that they were the foundation and that they saw the vision in the City. He stated that when he renovated The Ark that is across the street on the gateway to Colonial Heights. He stated that he they wanted to see what is wrong with the gateway they should go across the bridge into Colonial Heights and look to the east. He stated that they have a gateway to the City of Petersburg and that they are on the right track. He stated that this is a land issue and not a City issue and that the gentleman is welcomed in the City.

Lee Clay, 121 Bollingbrook Street, stated that his business is the only retail business across street from subject property other than the barbershop. He stated that he spoke to someone that rented the building and the guy would not spend any money to renovate the building and fix the heat and air. He stated that this really needs to be done. He stated that if they want a gateway to the City then they need more retail. He stated that when they had the BBQ Porkfest in the City it was great. He stated that a lot of people came. He stated that a lot of people walked by his store and came through his store. He stated that they need more retail business and that they can spruce up the gateway and the parking lot across the street. He stated that there are men spending millions of dollars on apartments and restaurants and doing things for the City and they won't get everyone in line to go with it. He stated that he has been going through the historical guidelines with signs and everything. He stated that he opposes and he hopes that someone fixes the gateway. He stated that his shop has been there for five years.

Seeing further hands, Mayor Myers closed the public hearing.

There is no need for a motion. The petitioner withdrew application.

- 8. PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD:** The Public Information Period is established by the Rules of Council to hear input from City residents or owners of businesses in the City. It will last for a maximum of 30 minutes. Speakers will be called in the order that they have signed up to speak. If there are ten or fewer speakers, each shall speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. If there are more than six (6) people desiring to speak, the time allotted to each person may be adjusted or the number of speakers limited to meet the time limitation. A speaker may speak on items **except those that are listed on tonight's Council agenda**. Any matter brought before the attention of the City Council during the public information period will not be acted upon by the City Council at this meeting.

Fatimah Rasheed, 1861 East Boulevard, stated that has a citizen she is a shareholder in the City. She stated that it is her responsibility to be aware of the state of the financial health of this historical City. She stated that she respectively ask that the Petersburg City budget be put online. She stated that while this request may be new to them other localities are already doing it. She stated that this could be an incentive for delinquent taxpayers and for them to see where their tax money is going. She stated that she is asking them to set up a website with Petersburg's budget online and have it running by the next City Council meeting.

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated that the water meter and water billing issue has become the excuse of almost everything City government does and does not do. She stated that the Mayor needs to

explain why his fellow council members pulled the plug on his investigation. She stated that the Mayor stated that they did not want the truth to come out about the sweetheart deal with Johnson Controls. She stated that the City Treasurer cannot keep up with billing citizens with overdue taxes. She stated that he had to stop doing his job and have his staff to help the water billing department. She stated that they need to fire a City Manager. She stated that he is implicated in a multitude of questionable activities including presenting a bogus budget. She stated that it's not the one that they are currently working on. She stated also in not paying the City's bills but the main reason cited for his termination is the water bill issue. She stated that yet at the same time people now working in City government does not know how the City got in the current water services predicament. She stated that it was all the fault of the former City Manager and the former Utilities Director. She stated that on top of that where was the former City Attorney when Johnson Controls contract should have been reviewed. She asked did Johnson Controls hoodwink or force the City to sign up for a contract that did not give the City what they need or were the employees not competent enough to manage contract negotiation and implementation of the system. She stated that whatever it is that happened somewhere in between those extremes ultimately the buck stops with City Council. She stated that the former City Manager and former City Attorney were appointed by City Council and reported to them. She stated that if this was not on a group to manage these employees who else can be held responsible. She stated that City Council needs to acknowledge that they are accountable for this monumental mess and demonstrate some leadership in fixing it.

Gina Harrison, 1687 South Crater Road, stated that she and Barb Rudolph started a Facebook page to discuss simple City issues without censorship. She stated that they have a mission statement that says, "Do you have a mission statement and do you read it." She stated that the group is a forum for the Petersburg citizens and friends of the City who seek to shine sunshine on the conduct of the Petersburg City government. She stated that their number one goal is to encourage well informed and activist citizens committed to the rescuing of the City from its current decline. She stated that they are fearless in their resolved clean-up City government unencumbered by political agendas. She stated that they collectively demand honest, effective responses and transparency of City leadership. She stated that while they don't adhere to the wait for change, being patient will come. She stated that they do respect the law of the City and the Commonwealth. She stated that they are not a hate group. She stated that the definition of a hate group is that it is an organized group or movement that advocates and practices hatred, hostility or violence towards race, ethnicity, nation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other designated sector of society. She stated that if they are a hate group then every person in this group is considered a hate group. She stated that she encourages the entire room to let City Council know that this title of the public will not be tolerated. She stated that she did not move to Petersburg because they had to. She stated that she moved here because she fell in love with it. She stated that she also because from with several of the people present. She stated that she is not sure if they have thought about this but that if the Mayor is removed then the next Mayor would be black too. She stated that making this a race issue and a white only thing is not appropriate at all.

Beth Whitten, 1765 Fairfax Street, stated that it has come to her attention that the Fire Department has been awarded a grant for \$625,000 in 2015. She stated that this was to pay for breathing apparatus and special equipment for the fire department. She stated that after talking to firemen that she cannot name because they are afraid to speak or have a gage order put on them, they have said that they have not seen any equipment. She stated that they have said that it was supposed to be 80 sets of personal protective equipment and 35 set of bleeding apparatus. She stated \$625,000 for 115 pieces of equipment. She stated that there should be some accounting for this. She stated that she would like to ask City Council to provide an accounting of \$625,000 of equipment monies given by FEMA and where it went to. She asked how she can expect to receive this answer.

Mitchell Pradia, 517 High Street, stated that he would like to speak briefly concerning the City's ordinance Chapter 18, Section 18-7. He stated that to the Vice Mayor that he stated in February that he was going to hold the City accountable for all about doing what is right for the people. He stated to Mayor Myers that he stated recently that it is not all about him and that it is about serving the people. He stated that the people came to council and that the ordinance was approved and amended and then approved. He stated to Mayor Myers that he is not doing his job and enforcing this ordinance. He stated that he ask that they would do the right thing and enforce this ordinance. He stated that a couple of meetings ago someone came forth and

stated that donkey crap does not stink. He stated that they know that their intelligence was insulted and that it does have a smell. He asked that if they find this enjoyable then he ask that they have this on their property to smell day in and day out in the heat of the summer. He stated that he moved to a residential neighborhood and not the country. He asked why have on the books if they are not going to enforce it. He stated that they voted for it and approved it so why not enforce it. He stated that the Mayor sent him a letter back in December saying that he was not going to pursue this and that he wants him to do his job and for him to enforce it. He stated that this is the Mayor's job not his.

Patricia Nunnally, 1205 Rome Street, stated that everyone is making accusations about what the Mayor did wrong and what he didn't do and all other things. She stated that she heard or read on Facebook that Mr. Brown put out 41 pages of people that have delinquent taxes. She stated that while she does not agree with the cost of \$21,000 for putting this out it lets them know that some of them are responsible for the deficit as well. She stated that some of the provisions that were made are not necessarily beneficial; however, as she heard that some people are trying to come up with a solution. She asked are there going to be liens put on the property that they are sending to the companies. She stated that if there are going to be liens then they know the people that cannot afford to make the payment will end up losing their house. She stated that People's Advantage Credit Union has come in and that they do not lend out money without collateral. She asked are they going to end up with someone else owning her land because she cannot afford to pay the delinquent taxes in time. She stated that she wishes City Council the very best.

Carl Ridley, 15 North Crater Road, stated that his concern is also concerning the recent listing of delinquent taxes and the proposed collection plan. He asked was the listing of names really worth \$21,000. He asked how much financial irresponsibility one can take from so called leaders that try to make the citizens responsible for the City's money woes. He stated that this could have been avoided if they listed the total amount of each tax year for another year's delinquent therefore by shortening the list. He stated that a level was taken to embarrass citizens to pony up and cause waste of money. He stated that now there's a plan to contact a collection agency to collect outstanding personal property taxes. He asked at what cost. He stated that everyone knows that most collection agencies operate on a percentage of monies collected or a set fee. He asked what percentage of the millions of dollars collected will the collection agency get and how much will go back to the City. He asked did the leadership even consider part-time workers to man the phones and all that is involved with collection therefore providing jobs and disposable income that will eventually find its way back to the City. He asked what the comparable cost to this is. He stated that when you take out loans to pay taxes that will create double trouble. He stated that as they know the taxes will keep on coming. He stated that it creates the question on whether they pay their taxes or pay on the loans during tax time. He stated that if you are on a fixed income and you get lower payments you are subjecting yourself to increased penalties and unfavorable credit rating. He stated that he cannot understand the rationale of persons selected, appointed or elected to run this City.

Willie Noise, 1508 Circle Drive, stated that some of them are not praying at the moment of silence. He stated that some of them are not tiding there 10%. He stated that he wants to thank the City Manager for an outstanding job in his opinion so far. He stated that he wants to thank the Recreation Department, Public Works and Buildings and Grounds Department. He stated that he has taken some issues to them on these problems that he had. He stated that some of them took two or three attempts to get things done. He stated that for those that have not gone out to Wilcox Lake and taken a look recently they should go out there now and look. He stated that they can see some of the improvements that have been going on. He stated that this is same for some of the businesses on Washington Street Corridor. He stated that he has quite a few questions because every time his list to speak comes and then something else comes up. He stated that he cannot review it. He stated that they should lighten up. He stated that everyone should bring someone with them sometime to teach them the road sometimes to show them something in case of an emergency. He stated that he wanted to say thank you to everyone.

Michael Edwards, 409 Grove Avenue, stated that they always leave it up to one citizen to break up everything. He stated that he rises to great concern with the tourism and museums. He stated that Petersburg has a rich and diverse history dating back as far as the mid-1600s. He stated that there are so many historical buildings possessing exceptional examples of architecture. He stated that this gives Petersburg an enormous

potential of revenue to be generated through tourism. He stated that in order to do this preservation is the key. He stated that the City must set the example for preserving the past. He stated that although they are all worthy of preservation the City has in its possession the rarest of antique buildings. He stated that they are the Hustings Courthouse, the Siege Museum, Centre Hill Mansion and others. He stated that it seems that the City does not value these great assets. He stated that the courthouse clock tower has had braces around it for more than two years while it continues to deteriorate. He stated that the Siege Museum was closed in November for supposed renovations but there is no sign of work. He stated that as residents and taxpayers they deserve to know why the City continues to allow these irreplaceable treasures and pieces of history to rotten away. He stated that with a new potential hotel coming to Petersburg, it would seem in its best interest to keep the museum and its historical sites maintained and open to the public and ultimately generating revenue. He stated that this is the only way that they can attract people to the City as this time. He stated that Petersburg is the tourism hub. He asked when the Siege Museum is anticipated to reopen. He asked that if the City has no reopen date then why. He asked what the status of the supposed renovations is. He asked has the bidding process begun. He asked has any effort been made by the City to stop the roof leaks and if not then why. He asked why the museum was closed without a known start date for work. He asked when they can expect to see repairs to the courthouse. He stated that these are not projects that can be simple put off. He stated that they have been delayed as much as possible. He stated that it is time to take action and preserve the City's treasure. He stated that he understands like many others that the City is experiencing financial difficulties but that this is still no excuse. He stated that the buildings have been deteriorating long before our current financial status. He stated that the City's main priority should building and road maintenance, public utilities and public transportation while all maintaining a functional budget. He stated that the work that these buildings are in need of have been known about for years and should have been repaired long ago. He stated that these are rare and historic buildings and that he is sure that the City can find assistance through grants which there are grants for these and other sources of funding for restoration and preventive maintenance to make sure that these buildings are not lost due to neglect like the former Rialto Theater.

Raymond Crockett, Jr., 248 Southwood Drive, stated that he is present tonight because his water bill is still high at his business. He stated that it has jumped up over \$200. He stated that he has a big problem. He stated that he has customers coming in complaining about the water bill. He stated that he understands about the tax collection. He stated that there are people collecting taxes and there is a problem with people paying taxes. He asked what the percentage is for these people to pay their taxes. He stated that then there is a tax bill that is coming up and people are having a hard time paying for this. He asked are the citizens going to lose their property because they cannot pay both taxes. He stated that they need to work out something with the people. He stated that a payment plan needs to be worked out instead of going to a collection agency. He stated that the citizens are on a fixed income. He stated that they talk about the gateway coming into Petersburg. He stated that the gateway coming into Petersburg is a disgrace. He stated that the landfill is so high. He stated that he does not understand how they allow a landfill to get so high with the air and pollution that is blowing off of it onto Washington Street. He stated that they talk about cleaning up the City but that this is a disgrace. He stated that the City was supposed to close the landfill before it got as high as it is then the City sold it. He stated that then they turn around and let the people go higher and higher and purchase more land to bring dumps from other areas into the City. He stated that they can do better and that they should do better. He stated that they have to come together as a group of people. He stated that they look at City Council and then ask what responsibilities are. He stated that as council it is there job to manage the Mayor. He stated that the Mayor reports to all of them and just not the Mayor. He stated that there are seven council members present. He stated that they all need to come together. He stated that this got out of hand when Mr. Johnson was here. He stated that Mr. Johnson brought all these people to Petersburg from out of Richmond and paid them high bucks. He stated that nobody said that the City cannot afford this. He stated that they should look at Chesterfield and Henrico and look at what they pay. He stated that they have a lot of revenue coming in. He stated that they should look at the City's budget and what they have to deal with. He stated that they have qualified people that live in the City that are willing to sacrifice to bring the City back again. He stated that they need to look at what they have at home in the City. He asked why they cannot hire someone to answer the phone for six months to a year to help bring in the revenue then to hire someone to come in and take the poor people property. He stated that people work too hard for what they have. He stated that a lot of people in the City do not make over \$40,000

Ken Pritchett, 1113 Overbrook Road, stated that he has one question to ask the City Manager. He asked that once they knew that the water bills were messed up why they didn't collect the \$17.75 a month when they knew that the garbage and stormwater amounts. He stated that at least these would have been paid for. He stated that he is really present to speak on the Farmer's Market again. He stated that he wants to know what plans they have on getting the vendors back and where. He stated that on Washington and Jefferson Street it is not the right place. He asked what happened to the persons with the letter of intent to purchase the property under the bridge. He asked can this be sold to someone when it is under a federal highway. He stated that this may be something that the City Attorney can answer. He stated that these vendors were very good. He stated that they brought down 350 to 600 people on a Saturday. He stated that he has not seen 25 people on Washington Street. He stated that it is time for the Farmer's Market to crank up. He stated that he would like to see it be where it was to start with. He stated that if it needs more space then go up the yellow brick road. He stated that there have been some vendors that talked about the requirements. He stated that he has not heard about it lately and that may be it has been taken care of. He stated that the requirement was on the use of the SNAP program. He stated that a lady made a comment that people that use food stamps don't usually get up until after 12noon and that by then the market is over with. He stated that he thought that this was a really interesting observation. He stated that someone mentioned that City Council hires the City Manager, City Attorney, Clerk of Council and the City Assessor. He stated that they should get off their butts and not consult with everyone to get it done. He stated that they should make a decision on their own. He stated that they should get the Farmer's Market back running and cranked up.

Linwood Christian, 410 Mistletoe Street, stated that with all of the decisions that City Council has made there are two decisions that he is definitely glad they made. He stated that one decision is when Mrs. Peters became director of planning and another decision is appointing Ms. Belton interim city manager. He stated that Ms. Belton did wonderful for the bus station and that she is doing the same for the City. He stated that in their thoughts this is who they need as the City Manager. He stated that many of them that are sitting in the meeting are presidents of various organizations and that many of them are members of various social media groups. He stated that he is a member of a social media group. He stated that they are not attempting to take over the City of Petersburg government. He stated that if they were it does not pay enough money. He stated that just as City Council was elected they were elected in their various positions. He stated that they have to deal with the criticism, the good and the bad. He stated that they as citizens love them as people but as elected officials they have disappointed them. He stated that when he votes to put them in he has the right to vote to get them out. He stated that he has the right to stand up and protest his government.

Dolores Smith, 410 Mistletoe Street, stated that she is very disappointed in this City Council. She stated that there are some people on City Council that she has need seen at City Council meetings. She stated that a lot of the decisions that have been made have been wrong. She stated that they are the leaders to come back with the help for the citizens of Petersburg. She stated that there are meetings they go to that they are to report back what happened at the meeting. She stated that the citizens are paying for this. She stated that it is one thing to another. She stated that the citizens have a right to get up before them and voice their opinions whether they like it or not. She stated to Mayor Myers that as a person she has nothing against him. She stated that he was thrown under the bus. She stated that he does not have what it takes to manage this City. She stated that she hopes that he does the right thing and step down. She stated that this City needs people that are there for them. She stated that she was disappointed when she heard what happened with Mrs. Smith as well as other things that happened. She stated that she has been coming to council meetings for over 30 years. She stated that they need to be concerned about the City. She stated that she would like to see a few of them gone off City Council. She stated that they need people to be concerned about what is going on in the City.

## **9. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FOR/FROM THE MAYOR OR OTHER MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL:**

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated that she would like to once again thank all of the citizens for being in attendance tonight. She stated that this is their meeting and their City. She stated that she will be having a Ward 1 neighborhood meeting on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, with Timberland Heights Neighborhood Association. She stated that it will be 6:00pm-8:00pm. She stated that the flyers and announcement are all on Facebook with the name and location. She stated that she would like to thank Ms. Moore-Belton for attending the

Blandford neighborhood ward meeting and for her anticipated attendance to the upcoming meeting on Thursday. She stated that on Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup>, she has partnered with Senator Rosalyn Dance and Delegate Aird in presenting the first series of citizens academy 101. She stated that they will seek to inform the citizens about issue with local government. She stated that they will answer questions. She stated that this event will take place at the Union Train Station and it will be 4:00pm to 6:00pm. She stated that she is asking for City Council Members to be in attendance. She stated that the business that she wanted to discuss is in reference to the Anti-Poverty Commission. She stated that the policy has been written and sent via email to everyone to get feedback. She stated that Mr. Flynn has reviewed the policy. She stated that it appears that there is one change needed to it. She stated that once this change is made she would like to send it back out to council and for them to review it. She stated that once they get the policy corrected then it is put on the agenda for review.

Mr. Flynn stated that this is correct.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated that she sent everyone an email in reference to the criteria for the Citizen Committee. She stated that she also sent it to the City Attorney and he has looked at it and edited it. She stated that hopefully when they meet again they can say if they want it or not. She stated that she will submit it again.

Council Member Hart stated that he is asking Ms. Belton to look into the potholes around the City. He stated that several of the exits are really looking back. He stated that if they can look into any funds to do this. He stated that Ward 7 will have a meeting on next Thursday at J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School at 6:00pm. He stated that this will be an open discussion. He stated that the school board members will be in attendance as well. He stated that as he was reviewing and discussing the audit committee he considered the City of Petersburg having standing committees. He stated that there were several committees that were empty. He stated that he read information on the Petersburg Standing Committee. He stated that he is not asking that this be a motion but something for City Council to consider as they look to make improvements in the City. He stated that this is not a motion but something to help the City as a group.

Council Member Coleman stated that Ward 6 had a meeting last night. He stated that he wanted to take this time to thank the Interim City Manager, Dironna Moore Belton, for her presentation. He stated that Senator Rosalyn Dance also made a presentation along with Captain Gray at the Sheriff Department and the Deputy Police Chief Major Hamilton was present as well. He stated that they had a very good meeting.

Council Member Hill stated that he would like to thank Mrs. Harris for filling in today for the clerk. He stated that he would like to thank Ms. Belton for the excellent work that she has done and is doing. He stated that he would like to thank the runners that attended the race this past Saturday. He stated that it was a lot of people that was in the City especially Old Towne. He stated that he would like to thank the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the BBQ event. He stated that it brought a lot of people in the City which brought in revenue. He stated that he would like to say he would like more accuracy on the list when it comes out. He stated that he knows that it is a hard process and that they do support the treasurer on this. He stated that he ask the citizens and City Council to do their civic duties. He stated that at the end of the day they have to collect their funds. He stated that he would like to say to City Council that at the end of the day they need to work together. He stated that there is some friction among some of them. He stated that they do have thick skin and that they can handle it when people come to the mic. He stated that moving forward he looks for better days for the City of Petersburg.

Council Member Moore asked Ms. Belton for an update on the procurement audit and what the closing date is. He stated that he would like to also ask the state police to come in and brief them on their audit process that they are doing.

Vice Mayor Parham stated that he appreciates Ms. Harrison for filling in as clerk and that she has done a great job. He stated that he wanted to make note that Ward 3 will be having a joint meeting with school board member Ken Pritchett on May 23, at 6:00pm at Dogwood Trace Golf Course. He stated that the speakers will be confirmed at the next meeting.

Mayor Myers stated that he would like to thank everyone for being present tonight. He stated that he would not sit here if he did not love this particular City. He stated that he did choose to be here. He brought a home here and renovated this house. He stated that he loves being in the City of Petersburg. He stated that he has been friends with many of the people in the audience. He stated that they have to believe him. He stated that if he did not have a thick skin Howard Myers would not be sitting in this seat. He stated he understands where they are coming from. He stated that they have a hard job as a force on City Council. He stated that if he has a disagreement with anyone on council they work it out outside of this. He stated that unfortunately it becomes public. He stated that he has to defend himself. He stated that they defend their selves as well and that this is why they walk up to the mic and make their statements. He stated to Mr. Smith that he loves his wife to death. He stated that it is very unfortunate. He stated that it is okay for them to do what they have to do but it's not okay to defend his self.

#### **10. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:**

Ms. Belton stated that she would like to say that administrative is working diligently to work along with City Council when it comes to the creation of advisory committees. She stated that they are working to ensure that the website does have a place for citizen committees. She stated that they have a list of committees. She stated that there will be an area to upload appropriate resume' and letters of recommendation.

##### a. City Manager's Report

1. Why is City Council hiring an outside firm for the forensic audit?
  - The City Council Members are soliciting an outside firm to ensure the fair and impartial investigation of financial and administrative records. They are inclusively accurate as well as to any mismanagement and/or criminal misuse of City funds have occurred.
2. How will City Council pay for the forensic audit?
  - The cost of the forensic audit will be proposed in the FY17 budget. The public hearing on the FY17 budget will be on May 3, 2016.
3. How is City Council able to justify the prior City Attorney's severance when he resigned?
  - The City is required to abide by negotiating terms of the City attorney's separation agreement. It is outlined by the employee contract which was exceptive by a majority vote of Council Members and appointee.
4. Can the street be repaired by Farmer to Halifax Road and including Youngs Road and can a walkway be built for pedestrians?
  - The Department of Public Works have sent staff to review this particular area and will provide an assessment report on the necessary repairs. Once this assessment I completed the Public Works Department will begin to work on repairs with available funding.
5. Can a cross be made by the Family Dollar where the child was hit by a car?
  - The location where the fatal accident occurred is not recommended for the installation of a cross walk. This secondary highway is not built to accommodate pedestrian traffic.
6. Can a finance report be made to the public with actual dollars of received and collected and uncollected delinquent property taxes?
  - Today's presentation, which will be available online. It has addressed actual revenues received as of March 15<sup>th</sup>. The treasurer's office will provide a report from propel financial services and TACF on a monthly basis which will be shared with City Council and the public starting the first week of May. The treasurer's office will also keep the public updated through a new delinquent tax payer list which will be available following the month of each real estate quarter so that everyone can see the progress of the treasurer's office.
7. Can the City of Petersburg implement a City checkbook online like other localities?
  - The City has explored the implementation of a City checkbook online to be more

transparent. Currently they are researching what other areas are doing to determine how to best present this information so that the public would best understand it and afford it.

8. On 209 High Street, the lamp post needs to be replaced?  
-Unfortunately, the parts to repair the lamp post are on back order. The parts will be in on July 2016.
9. What is the update on hiring a new City Manager?  
-During today, it is asked that in future council meetings that the Mayor asks City Council for discussion of the process.
10. What is the process regarding personal property taxes on a car if they do not live in the City?  
-The individual may contact the Commission of Revenue office to see what address DMV has on file. The Commission of Revenue will verify this with DMV. If this individual is residing in another locality and has already paid their tax bill they must provide a paid receipt of taxes paid to that other locality. Then the tax bill can be removed, however, if the vehicle has been disposed of the resident should notify DMV. If this step has been completed the individual should call the Commission of Revenue to ensure that information from the DMV has transmitted to the City of Petersburg Revenue's Office. They may be reached at 804-733-2352. This is also located on the Commission of Revenue portion on the website as well.
11. Is there a strategy to address the financial issues stated in the financial audit?  
-The City is currently developing a short term and long term financial stability plan. This plan will incorporate the effort of the treasurer as it is proposed to reduce the overall spending Citywide.

**11. CLERK OF CITY COUNCIL'S AGENDA:**

No items for this portion of the agenda.

**12. CITY ATTORNEY'S AGENDA:**

No items for this portion of the agenda.

**13. CLOSED SESSION (IF NECESSARY):**

No closed is necessary.

**14. ADJOURNMENT:**

City Council adjourned at 9:03p.m.

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Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

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Mayor