



CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, August 11, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Regular Session, 6:30 PM, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

WORK SESSION

WORK SESSION IS CANCELLED FOR AUGUST 11, 2025

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Salem, Virginia, was called to order at 6:30 p.m., there being present the following members to wit: Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor; Anne Marie Green, Vice-Mayor; Councilmembers: Byron Randolph Foley (participated remotely), Hunter Holliday, and John Saunders; with Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor, presiding together with Chris Dorsey, City Manager; Rob Light, Assistant City Manager and Clerk of Council; Rosemarie B. Jordan, Director of Finance; Chuck Van Allman, Director of Community Development; Mike Stevens, Director of Communications; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Turk requested that Mr. Light read a request from Councilman Foley to participate remotely in this meeting.

Mr. Light noted that Councilman Foley asked him to read the following request on his behalf: "In accordance with Section 2.2- 3708.3 B(4) of the Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Remote Participation Policy of the City of Salem, I hereby request to participate remotely due to a personal matter, specifically that I am out of town."

John Saunders motioned to accept the remote participation of Councilman Foley. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: Randy Foley

3. Bid Opening, Awards, Recognitions

There were none this evening.

4. Consent Agenda

A. Citizen Comments

Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not already having a public hearing at the same meeting.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, addressed Council with concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and adherence to Salem's governing documents, including the City Charter and Ordinances. Mr. Breen requested that Council permit citizen-initiated referendums, hold public hearings for any site plans involving three or more acres, cease the use of 2 X 2 meetings via public vote, facilitate early citizen input for any site plan or rezoning involving three or more acres, obtain an independent written legal opinion regarding the binding use of "Shall" in the Charter and Ordinances, and treat "Shall" as mandatory unless advised otherwise in writing by legal counsel.

Jonathan Constantine, 1726 Victoria Street, was not present this evening.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, spoke in support of early opportunities for citizen involvement in the development of large parcels of land. She suggested a citizen advisory committee. She also expressed concern about the future of the remaining open spaces in Salem. Ms. Reinhard noted a number of factors from the City's Zoning Code for consideration in rezoning requests.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the July 28, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

5. Old Business

There was no Old Business this evening.

6. New Business

A. Public Hearing for Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and Special Exception Permit

Hold a public hearing for the request of J Cline Properties LLC, property owner, to rezone the property located at 106-110 Butt Hollow Road (Tax Map #174-1-7) from BCD Business Commerce District to LM Light Manufacturing District with proffered conditions **and** to request the issuance of a Special

Exception Permit to allow athletic instruction services. (Advertised in the July 24 and 31, 2025 issues of *Cardinal News*.)

Mayor Turk requested that the petitioner come forward to provide information on this request.

Jerry Cline, 106 Butt Hollow Road, noted that they were requesting the rezoning of the property to better suit the needs of the current tenant and for future tenants. He noted that an individual from the wrestling group that is desiring to move in was with him this evening to answer any questions, also.

Kyle Milette, 1816 Connors Run, noted that he was representing Reaper Wrestling Club, a youth wrestling club that serves kids from all over the New River Valley from Radford to Staunton River. Their current location is the Salem Sports Complex across from Walmart. They have found Mr. Cline's facility more conducive to their needs. Their client ages range from four to fourteen.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman if he had any further information.

Mr. Van Allman noted that this request was explained well in the Planning Commission minutes and that he did not have any further information to share.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

B. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of ordinance on first reading for the request of J. Cline Properties, LLC, property owner, to rezone the property located at 106-110 Butt Hollow Road (Tax Map #174-1-7) from BCD Business Commerce District to LM Light Manufacturing District with proffered conditions. (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote.)

Hunter Holliday motioned to adopt the ordinance on first reading for the request of J. Cline Properties, LLC, property owner, to rezone the property located at 106-110 Butt Hollow Road (Tax Map #174-1-7) from BCD Business Commerce District to LM Light Manufacturing District with proffered conditions. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk
Nays: None
Abstaining: None

C. Special Exception Permit

Consider the request of J. Cline Properties, LLC, property owner, for a Special Exception Permit for the property located at 106-110 Butt Hollow Road (Tax Map #174-1-7) to allow athletic instruction services. (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote) The approval of the Special Exception Permit is contingent upon final Council approval on second reading of the ordinance to rezone the property from BCD Business Commerce District to LM Light Manufacturing District.

John Saunders motioned to approve the request of J. Cline Properties, LLC, property owner, for a Special Exception Permit for the property located at 106-110 Butt Hollow Road (Tax Map #174-1-7) to allow athletic instruction services. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk
Nays: None

Abstaining: None

D. Special Exception Permit

Hold a public hearing to consider the request of McJohn Investments LLC, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a telecommunications tower on the property located at 319 Rowan Street (Tax Map #232-1-1). (Advertised in the July 24 and 31, 2025, issues of *Cardinal News*.) (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote.)

Mayor Turk asked if the petitioner would like to come forward to speak.

Lori Schweller, Attorney with Williams Mullen, addressed Council representing Verizon Wireless and shared a presentation that described the project in detail. With her this evening was Stuart Squier, Zoning Manager with GDNsites for the project. Ms. Schweller explained the location of this property and shared that the nearest residentially zoned district was slightly over 612 feet to the south of this property. She noted that towers are permitted by Special Exception in the HM Heavy Manufacturing Zoning District. Ms. Schweller shared a photograph of the subject property and stated that the entire parcel was paved. As part of their request, they are asking for an administrative waiver of the landscaping requirement as there is no ability to landscape here as the entire parcel is paved. She added that another feature of this property is that it is located in the flood zone and that, if approved, the applicant would construct the cell tower and ground equipment on a six-foot platform to protect it. Ms. Schweller indicated that there were no collocation opportunities in the area to be served, which means that there are no tall towers or structures on which Verizon Wireless could place its antennas to avoid needing to build a new tower. This tower will provide such collocation opportunities for other providers. She shared other photographs with details of the site location and abutting properties. In addition, details and results of a balloon test to evaluate visual impact were shared

with Council. Ms. Schweller reiterated that the request for Council was for a Special Exception Permit. She noted that the application complied with the Zoning Ordinance and that the project was consistent with Salem Comprehensive Plan goals. This project would improve telecommunications for economic development, for schools, working from home, and government communications. She offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Turk thanked them for their preparation and for the information they had provided ahead of time, which allowed Council to go and look at the property.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Hunter Holliday motioned to approve the request of McJohn Investments LLC, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a telecommunications tower on the property located at 319 Rowan Street (Tax Map #232-1-1). Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

E. Public Hearing for Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and Special Exception Permit

Hold a public hearing for the request of Brad Graham Real Estate LLC, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 638 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #33-2-3) from AG Agricultural District to RSF Residential Single-Family District **and** to request the issuance of a Special Exception Permit for 638, 672 and 696 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #s 33-2-3, 33-2-2 and 33-2-1) to allow the inclusion in the Cluster Housing Overlay. (Advertised in the July 24 and 31, 2025, issues of *Cardinal News*.)

Mayor Turk asked if the petitioner would like to come forward and present information on this request.

Brad Graham, 726 Ambler Lane, referenced the plat maps and commented on lot width. He indicated that this project will be done in phases and that the plan is to start with 60-foot lots and that they hope to have larger lots as the project continues. He shared a presentation with graphics of house designs and noted that these would be custom-built homes.

Councilman Holliday asked about the price range of the homes.

Mr. Graham gave the approximate price of several of the homes shown in his

presentation and said that it was very difficult to build a quality home for less than about \$450,000 to \$500,000 and that would be his starting point. He reiterated that he planned to cater to individuals who wished to have a lot of input and customization of their homes.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, asked how many homes were to be included in this project.

Mayor Turk responded that there would be approximately thirty-seven.

Ms. Reinhard spoke of the beauty of the land and open spaces. She expressed the feeling that a different entrance would be preferable because of the steep grade. Ms. Reinhard also expressed concern about the surrounding road. She asked if there could be a community meeting to discuss with the developer potential solutions for the road around the development. She also suggested that further input for the model could be shared at such a meeting.

Mr. Graham explained the site distance issues and the addition of the three properties to allow for grading to allow for appropriate site distance and reiterated that this issue had been addressed.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

F. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of ordinance on first reading for the request of Brad Graham Real Estate LLC, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 638 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #33-2-3) from AG Agricultural District to RSF Residential Single-Family District with proffered conditions. (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote.)

Hunter Holliday motioned to adopt on first reading the ordinance for the request of Brad Graham Real Estate LLC, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 638 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #33-2-3) from AG Agricultural District to RSF Residential Single-Family District with proffered conditions. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

G. Special Exception Permit

Consider the request of Brad Graham Real Estate LLC, contract purchaser, for a Special Exception Permit for 638, 672 and 696 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #s 33-2-3, 33-2-2 and 33-2-1) to allow their inclusion in the Cluster

Housing Overlay. (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote.) The approval of the Special Exception Permit is contingent upon final Council approval on second reading of the ordinance to rezone the property located at 639 Dalewood Avenue from AG Agricultural District to RSF Residential Single-Family District.

Hunter Holliday motioned to approve the request of Brad Graham Real Estate LLC, contract purchaser, for a Special Exception Permit for 638, 672 and 696 Dalewood Avenue (Tax Map #s 33-2-3, 33-2-2 and 33-2-1) to allow their inclusion in the Cluster Housing Overlay. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Mr. Light explained that the item preceding this was the first reading of the rezoning ordinance, which included proffers. This action included only one parcel of property. The Special Exception Permit included three parcels. He noted that included in the agenda packet was a recommendation to add conditions, which Council may do at their discretion, for the minimum lot width to be 60 feet, excluding cul-de-sac lots, and that walking trails to be installed as part of the project would be open to the public.

Vice-Mayor Green asked to confirm that the motion needed to be amended to include this information.

Mr. Light confirmed that this was correct.

Anne Marie Green amended the motion to add the conditions as stated in the Staff Recommendation section of the Council report in the Agenda Packet. These conditions are that the minimum lot width will be 60 feet, excluding cul-de-sac lots, and that walking trails to be installed as part of the project would be open to the public. These conditions would run with all of the properties under consideration. Hunter Holliday seconded the amended motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

H. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Hold a public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading for the request of ABoone Real Estate Inc., contract purchaser, to rezone the properties located at 1002 and 1108 Newman Drive (Tax Map #s 58-1-1 and 58-1-2) from LM Light Manufacturing District with proffered conditions to RMF Residential Multi-Family District with proffered conditions. (Advertised in the July 24 and 31, 2025, issues of *Cardinal News*.) (The Planning Commission recommended approval by a 4-0 vote with one member recusing himself.)

Mayor Turk noted for full transparency that she had worked at Q99 Radio Station, owned by Mr. Wheeler, from 2011 to 2013. She explained that this station was on Electric Road and not a part of the site under discussion this evening. She continued

that this was not a conflict of interest and she would not be recusing herself.

Mayor Turk asked the petitioner to come forward to provide information on their request.

Leonard Wheeler, President of Wheeler Media, 6181 Mount Chestnut Road, Roanoke, addressed Council regarding the future of a site on Newman Drive, which has been in their family for nearly 50 years. The property was historically used as a broadcasting site for an AM radio station that was prominent in the 1960s and 1970s but has seen a significant decline in relevance and viability due to the rise of FM radio and digital streaming platforms. Operating costs now outweigh the station's value, and the AM broadcasts will be discontinued. He explained that, after initially exploring the possibility of light manufacturing for the site, with assistance from Alexander Boone, they ultimately decided residential development would better serve the community and align with their values. The property will now transition away from its historical use as an AM transmission site and move toward a new residential purpose.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Wheeler what course of action he would take if this request did not pass.

Mr. Wheeler noted that if the request for residential rezoning is denied, they would likely return to seek approval for light manufacturing use, which would require exceptions to current zoning conditions. If both the residential rezoning and manufacturing exceptions were denied, the owner expressed concern that the property would become economically unviable. The existing AM radio infrastructure is no longer sustainable due to ongoing operational costs and significant maintenance expenses, including over \$200,000 required to repaint transmission towers. The owner emphasized that without a viable path forward, the property would have little to no practical value.

Alexander Boone, 5760 Reserve Point Lane, Roanoke County, addressed Council representing ABoone Real Estate, Inc. He also introduced Court Rosen, Director of Development for ABoone Real Estate, and Chris Burns, Engineering Manager with Balzer and Associates that were in attendance with him this evening. He provided an overview of the proposed residential project on Newman Drive, emphasizing the intention to create a well-designed, community-oriented townhome development. Mr. Boone expressed appreciation for the public input received during community meetings, Planning Commission hearings, and through numerous phone calls and emails, noting that residents' passion for their neighborhood reflects a strong sense of community. He drew historical comparisons between the post-WWII creation of Forest Lawn and the current proposal, asserting that townhomes today are equivalent to the small ranch homes of the 1950s—providing attainable housing options for modern families, first responders, teachers, and young professionals. He noted that several development options were evaluated for the site, including single-family homes, patio homes, apartments and condos, assisted living, and Warehousing and

light industrial uses. Ultimately, townhomes were identified as the most viable and appropriate use of the land, both economically and in alignment with community needs. The developer stated that while the per-unit cost of infrastructure is the same across housing types, townhomes allow for more attainable pricing due to higher density. Concerns about grading, infrastructure cost, and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods were addressed, and the developer committed to ensuring the project is well-maintained and includes amenities such as parks and trails. It was emphasized that the project will be an extension of the Forest Lawn community, not separate from it. Mr. Boone pledged that there would be ongoing transparency and responsiveness throughout the process and invited Council to direct further questions to the team, including representatives present to discuss traffic and engineering details.

Chris Burns, Balzer Associates, 1208 Corporate Circle, Roanoke, provided a technical overview of key infrastructure considerations for the proposed townhome development. He began by noting that, compared to other development scenarios, the townhome layout allows for more flexible grading and greater preservation of the site's perimeter and floodplain areas, making it a less disruptive development approach. Regarding floodplain and stormwater management, Mr. Burns explained that the development site represents less than 2% of the overall Gish Branch watershed (which drains approximately 1,000 acres). While neighborhood concerns about drainage are valid, he emphasized that this project would have minimal impact on regional drainage patterns. The developer is required to comply with all local and state stormwater regulations, with the City of Salem's standards being among the most stringent in the region. The current plan preserves a significant area of floodplain, exceeding what is required by ordinance. In regard to traffic, Mr. Burns explained that a formal traffic impact study was conducted in accordance with standard procedures, using accepted national software and metrics. The scope was coordinated with the City of Salem Engineering Department. The study focused on key intersections during peak morning and evening hours and used actual weekday traffic counts while school was in session, with growth factors applied. The analysis showed no significant degradation in the level of service at studied intersections. The difference in peak-hour trips between the proposed townhomes and a single-family alternative is minimal, approximately one additional vehicle every two minutes. The City of Salem engineering staff reviewed the study and issued a formal concurrence with its conclusions, confirming that the existing roadway network can accommodate the proposed development.

Court Rosen, 3934 Electric Road, representing the development team, briefly addressed Council to reiterate that significant public input, including community meetings, emails, and discussions, has led to a stronger, more responsive development plan. He highlighted secondary access concerns and noted that in response to community questions, the development team re-evaluated the feasibility of a secondary access route to North Mill Road. Due to challenging topography, private property constraints, and traffic safety concerns, including a misaligned intersection and potential for increased cut-through traffic, it was determined that a

secondary access point is not feasible or advisable. Mr. Rosen also addressed the preservation of open space. He stated that the development team is committed to preserving designated open space areas. While conservation easements cannot yet be finalized due to pending stormwater design, the open space will be protected within the HOA declaration, remain undeveloped, and ultimately be encumbered. Additionally, the adjacent 1.37-acre parcel at 1108 Newman Drive will become a community park and playground, accessible to both existing and future Forest Lawn residents. Access to these amenities is secured through project proffers. Mr. Rosen also noted the economic impact this project would have on the community.

Mayor Turk explained the time and guidelines for the public hearing and opened the public hearing.

Dr. Jake Roudebush, 1124 Newman Drive, spoke in opposition to the proposed project. He noted that his primary concern was the increased amount of traffic on Newman Drive.

Becky Thomas, 1316 Forest Lawn Drive, expressed opposition to the rezoning. She expressed that she felt that there had not been sufficient time for the community to understand the impact and to organize meaningful input. She also expressed that she did not feel that this project was appropriate for the character of this neighborhood. She requested a second entrance, suggested stop signs, and requested that the decision be paused.

Peggy Campbell Hale, owner of 446 and 478 Parkdale Drive, expressed the concern that there had been insufficient time for public review and input. She also expressed concern about traffic and access issues. She suggested adding a second access point. In addition, Ms. Campbell Hale spoke of stormwater and flooding concerns.

Suzanne Hickerson, 509 Doyle Street, expressed that while the density of the proposed townhome development was a concern, the project was seen as preferable to continuing light manufacturing on the site. She expressed appreciation for the developer's inclusion of open space, walking trails, and playgrounds. She requested that the following additional proffers be considered as part of the rezoning approval: limit construction activity to 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM on Saturdays, with no activity on Sundays; a 20-foot buffer yard with two rows of trees at least 5 feet tall be planted between the development and adjacent properties; due to the large deer population, planting of deer-resistant species, such as junipers or Japanese maples; a natural tree buffer of at least 4 feet in height be established at the Newman Drive entrance and along adjacent properties.

Elizabeth Roberts, 566 Parkdale Drive, shared concern about the permanent loss of green space if the development proceeds and the impact on the unique character and charm of the City. She encouraged consideration of alternative uses and shared suggestions. Ms. Roberts asked for more time to collaborate on a solution for this property that reflects community values. Traffic and safety concerns were also

raised. She requested that Council pause the decision and asked for another entrance if the request was approved.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, referenced a PowerPoint that she had shared with Council and commended the developer's commitment to preserve some of the land around the development, but urged Council to require a formal conservation easement. She expressed concern that more time was needed for this decision and urged Council to table the decision and utilize the full review window to allow for additional public input and collaboration with the developer. Ms. Reinhard also raised concerns that this did not meet the goals of affordable housing outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan. She expressed concern about traffic and concluded by recommending several possible locations for a secondary access point.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, urged Council to pause their decision for 60 days to allow further review of the proposal in light of the City's zoning code and comprehensive plan, citing concerns about density, traffic, and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Breen called for more detailed and enforceable proffers which included architectural standards, construction time limits, and substantial conformity requirements. He concluded by requesting a public hearing for site plans.

Conner Kinkema, 566 Parkdale Drive, presented an economic analysis of the proposed development that included estimated revenue and expenditures. He also expressed concern about the loss of community character and negative impacts of increased density. He encouraged Council to consider whether the development aligns with Salem's values and identity. He shared copies of his information with Council.

Kathryn Chrisfield, 948 North Mill Road, expressed concern over the density of the proposed townhome development, calling it inconsistent with the surrounding single-family neighborhood. She criticized the notice given to residents compared to the developer's extended planning period. Requests were made for independent traffic, hydrology, and environmental studies to assess downstream impacts, runoff, and overall infrastructure strain. Ms. Chrisfield urged Council to consider the impact on the community and their concerns.

Russ West, 556 Chamberlain Lane, urged Council to table the rezoning request and personally visit the site to observe existing traffic limitations on Newman Drive. He also challenged claims that a secondary access point is unfeasible and raised concerns about the scale and effectiveness of the proposed stormwater retention. Mr. West concluded by suggesting that Salem consider forming a Development Review Board.

Lauren Strong, 613 Doyle Street, requested Council to take four steps before moving forward with the proposed development: 1. Pause the decision to allow more time for public input, review of concerns, and exploration of alternatives. 2. Assess the

necessity of this project given recent residential developments already approved in Salem. 3. Revise the proffers, including language ensuring that a conservation easement protecting at least 20 acres of undeveloped land be notarized following final site plan approval. 4. Include a second entrance. She emphasized the need for additional time to determine the most feasible location. She ended by urging Council to ensure that community voices were heard and respected in decisions affecting the City's future.

Patrick Helvey, 1129 Newman Drive, expressed that his main concerns were that there be a second entrance and traffic.

Maureen Meagher, 1381 Stoutamire Drive, expressed concerns about the steep grade of the road, which contributes to stormwater runoff. She also highlighted the family-friendly and walkable character of the current single-family neighborhood, noting that increased traffic volume and density from the proposed development would significantly alter the safety and livability of the area.

Sheila Via, 1342 Forest Lawn Drive, expressed concern about flooding and stormwater runoff. She also noted concern about traffic and blind spots at driveways on the hill.

Leslie Bauguss, 1113 Forest Lawn Drive, requested that City Council delay the decision to allow for further discussion and consideration. She questioned the need for further units at this time and suggested exploring other options as a compromise. Concerns were also raised about traffic impacts, and she supported the idea of pursuing an independent traffic study. She did express the feeling that they did not wish for the land to remain as light manufacturing.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing and requested that the petitioner come forward to comment and respond to Council questions.

Mr. Boone clarified that while an earlier rendering shown at a community meeting depicted three-story townhomes, the current plan is for two stories above grade, with a potential third story as a walkout basement, depending on the grade of the land. Due to favorable site topography, most units will not require elevated living space. Approximately 50% of the units are expected to be built on slab (two stories total), and the remaining 50% may include basements (appearing as two stories at grade with a basement level at the rear due to the slope).

Mr. Boone affirmed that all contractors would comply with City of Salem's work hour ordinances. While construction timelines can be affected by weather, typical work hours are expected to begin around 7:00 AM, especially during hot weather when crews start earlier and often finish by mid-afternoon. Developers acknowledged public concerns and emphasized their intent to adhere to City rules. Mr. Boone, also a real estate broker, reported that the number of active residential listings in Salem has ranged between 49 and 58 homes in recent weeks, according to MLS data. This was

described as a very low inventory for a city of approximately 25,000 residents. He noted that the project will include substantial natural buffers, with existing trees preserved where possible. Mr. Boone indicated that the land already contains significant buffer areas, and the site design will meet or exceed zoning code requirements for separation between different zoning classifications. He reiterated a commitment to maintaining the wooded perimeter of the development.

Vice-Mayor Green noted that she understood that Mr. Boone's intent was to include a conservation easement in the project and questioned if there was a way to include this in the proffers.

Mr. Boone responded that they would be happy to work with Planning and the City Attorney's office. He explained that while the exact size and placement of open space cannot be finalized at this stage, due to the need to first determine the location of the stormwater management facility, the intent is to conserve approximately half of the total land area. It was clarified that many of the specific concerns raised by the public relate to the site review and development plan phase, not the current rezoning process. The developer expressed willingness to enter into a conservation easement on open space following site plan approval, ensuring long-term preservation of that area.

Mr. Light, deferring to City Attorney Guynn for confirmation, noted that the Code of Virginia requires proffers to be voluntarily submitted in writing prior to the beginning of the public hearing. This was confirmed by Mr. Guynn.

Chris Burns added that the area closest to the development, shown in green with a crosshatch pattern, lies within the floodway and is largely undevelopable. Additionally, land to the south and southwest of the site is extremely steep and is also expected to remain natural and undeveloped. While limited infrastructure, such as utility lines, may need to pass through, he stated that, for all practical purposes, this portion of the property will remain in its natural state.

Mr. Dorsey asked for confirmation that the developer has already proffered a maximum of 171 townhome units, meaning no additional structures could be built beyond that number, indicating that the remaining land would remain natural.

Mr. Boone confirmed this. He reiterated that the maximum of 171 townhomes has been carefully planned based on the site's physical and regulatory constraints. The townhomes are located where the land allows for viable development, and there is no intention or need to expand beyond the 171 units. The developer noted coordination with Planning staff to confirm this cap is appropriate and stated a commitment to finalizing the full development plan in a way that benefits both the future residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

Mayor Turk asked to confirm if it was correct that the development of the 171 townhomes, which are actually single-family homes that are sharing a wall would take

place over a period of time.

Mr. Boone confirmed that this was correct. He explained that, if approved, site work would likely begin in winter or spring, with home construction starting approximately six months later. Based on market conditions, the project is expected to build out gradually over 3.5 to 4 years, with an estimated 35 to 50 homes sold per year. The developer emphasized that the pace of development will depend on market demand, which is currently believed to be strong.

Mayor Turk asked if this would also translate to a gradual increase in traffic.

Mr. Burns acknowledged that the project will have a single entrance, but noted that it immediately branches into two internal routes, helping to disperse traffic within the development. While multiple entrances would be ideal, the site does not feasibly allow for additional access points. Mr. Boone confirmed that traffic impacts will be managed through a phased approach as the development progresses.

Mayor Turk addressed concerns about public awareness of the project, stating that while the project has been in development for approximately two years, early stages, such as feasibility studies and initial planning, are not typically disclosed to the public. This approach aligns with standard practice in other communities, as early disclosure could undermine negotiations or development viability. She compared the process to a private real estate transaction, emphasizing that public involvement appropriately begins once formal applications are submitted and the project enters the public review phase.

Mr. Burns confirmed that the City's process is very standard compared to other localities that they work in, as far as the zoning process and the timeframes associated with it.

Mr. Boones emphasized that they have followed all required procedures and have been open and transparent throughout the process. He noted proactive efforts to engage with City Planning, Utilities, and Transportation departments early on to understand feasibility and requirements. While early-stage discussions were not public, consistent with standard business practices, Mr. Boone stated they have been willing to meet with and talk to community members on multiple occasions as the project has progressed.

Councilman Holliday stated Council has conducted extensive due diligence throughout the review process, including site visits, consultations with the developer, and efforts to explore alternative access options with Balzer and Associates. While additional road access was considered, it was determined to be infeasible. He emphasized that the property is privately owned and that decisions are being made with careful consideration of the best use for the site, the needs of the City of Salem, and the surrounding community. Mr. Holliday also noted that the developer has been cooperative and that Council has taken the decision-making process seriously, giving

it thoughtful and deliberate attention.

Mr. Boone expressed appreciation for the high level of engagement and communication from City Council members throughout the process, noting that this project has involved more one-on-one interaction, calls, emails, and feedback than any other in their career. He believes this collaboration has strengthened the project and looks forward to continuing to work with City staff during the development phase, if approved.

Councilman Saunders referenced prior experience with the Simms Farm project, noting that the City of Salem fulfilled its responsibilities, including addressing road improvements such as Franklin Street and Upland Drive, where possible. He emphasized that if issues arise during the current development, the City will respond promptly, and concerns will be addressed by staff. Mr. Saunders also thanked the developer for their openness and responsiveness throughout the process and expressed overall satisfaction with the current plan.

Mr. Boone acknowledged that while no development is perfect, the focus should be on how effectively issues are addressed as they arise.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman to address the concern of stormwater runoff. She asked to confirm that the state law requirement was that there be no more runoff from that property than there was prior to development.

Mr. Van Allman provided an overview of Salem's stormwater management requirements, emphasizing that the City's standards exceed state minimums. While state law requires that post-development runoff rates match pre-development rates for common storms (e.g., 2-year and 10-year storms), Salem applies stricter controls. Post-development runoff from a 5-year storm must be equal to or less than runoff from a 1-year pre-development storm. Similarly, runoff from a 10-year storm must be released at a 2-year pre-development rate. These stricter standards help manage peak discharge and reduce the impact of heavier storms. The City also adheres to water quality standards, prioritizing environmental protection alongside volume control. It was noted that stormwater impact is determined by impervious surface area, not the number of homes. For example, ten large homes with the same total impervious area as 170 townhomes would generate comparable runoff. Mr. Van Allman also clarified that in larger storm events, such as 10- or 25-year storms, grass and pervious surfaces behave similarly to pavement, as the ground becomes saturated and excess water flows off at similar rates.

Mayor Turk acknowledged the increasing severity of storms and noted that while the City is responsible for maintaining public infrastructure, such as streets and drainage systems, individual property owners also bear responsibility for protecting their own properties from flooding. She shared a personal example of investing in home flood mitigation efforts, emphasizing that although such measures can be costly, they are

sometimes necessary to prevent damage. Mayor Turk also asked Mr. Van Allman to confirm that the City engineers had studied traffic impact in addition to the study done by Balzer.

Mr. Van Allman confirmed that the traffic study submitted by the developer was completed in accordance with all applicable professional and regulatory standards, including those set by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). It was noted that the study could be submitted to VDOT for review and would likely be accepted, aside from individual preferences, because it adhered to established protocols. He emphasized that licensed professional engineers, including the engineer who prepared the report, are legally and ethically bound to prioritize the public interest and cannot misrepresent data without risking their license. The study was independently reviewed by City staff, including multiple licensed engineers, who concluded that it met all required standards and was conducted appropriately.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman to comment on the citizen concern about the impact the development would have on Fire, EMS, and City schools. She noted that a standard review form is distributed to the heads of each City department, who evaluate proposed developments in the context of existing and approved projects. Their feedback and assessments are incorporated into the overall review process to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of potential impacts.

Mr. Van Allman explained that the site plan review process is coordinated by the Planning Division within Community Development and involves input from all relevant City departments, including Public Works, Public Safety, and others. Site plans are distributed electronically, and each department is required to submit a response, positive or negative, before the project can proceed. Particular emphasis is placed on feedback from the Fire Department, especially regarding building access and safety. He confirmed that no project moves forward without interdepartmental review and approval, ensuring a comprehensive and expert-driven process. This approach is consistent with common practices in other localities.

Mayor Turk noted that, in addition to formal staff review, individual Council members have consulted directly with City departments to address questions and concerns raised by residents. Specifically, she shared that the school system is not expected to be negatively impacted by the proposed development, citing a decline in enrollment of over 400 students since 2007 and the availability of approximately 250 additional tuition-based spaces. Mayor Turk emphasized that Council has done its homework on key concerns, including infrastructure and community services.

Mr. Van Allman emphasized that the Planning Department maintains a transparent process and is open to meeting with members of the public to discuss concerns and share available materials, including site plans. Residents are encouraged to contact the department directly, and staff are willing to provide information in person or via email. It was noted that constructive public input is taken seriously and may lead to

further internal review if warranted.

Mayor Turk asked to confirm that site plans are not subject to public hearings and that, due to a recent change in state law effective July 1, site plans are no longer required to go before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Van Allman declined to comment on the specifics of the law change as he did not have the applicable section at hand. He clarified that, regardless of legal standing or residency, the department is willing to meet with any member of the public to discuss development concerns. Individuals may request access to documents, and while electronic copies are encouraged and provided free of charge, there may be a fee for printed copies. He emphasized their commitment to transparency and open communication.

Mayor Turk addressed public concerns regarding density, noting that the density of the proposed townhomes is actually lower than that of other existing townhomes, duplexes, and homes in the surrounding community. This information was shared in response to questions received from residents.

Mayor Turk asked for a motion.

Hunter Holliday motioned to approve on first reading the ordinance for the request of ABoone Real Estate Inc., contract purchaser, to rezone the properties located at 1002 and 1108 Newman Drive (Tax Map #s 58-1-1 and 58-1-2) from LM Light Manufacturing District with proffered conditions to RMF Residential Multi-Family District with proffered conditions. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Renee Turk

Nays: Anne Marie Green

Abstaining: None

I. Appropriation of Funds

Consider request to accept and appropriate grant funds received from the Virginia E-911 Services Board.

Mayor Turk asked Ms. Jordan if there was any information that she would like to share on this item.

Ms. Jordan noted that the City of Salem had been awarded a grant totaling \$150,000 from the Virginia E-911 Services Board for the Police Department's Communications 911 Center. These grant funds will be used to purchase a variety of equipment and supplies to promote wellness, retention, and recruitment efforts, technology to enhance public and responder safety, technology to enhance training and efficiency, and operational environmental improvements. No local match is required.

Anne Marie Green motioned to appropriate \$150,000 in state grant revenue to the

Police State Grant Revenue account and increase the budget for the State Grant Expenditure account by \$150,000. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

J. Boards and Commissions

Consider appointments to various boards and commissions.

Mr. Light noted for reference the staff recommendations. Staff recommends reappointing Chelsea Dyer as an alternate for a 5-year term ending August 9, 2030, to the Board of Appeals (USBC Building Code). In addition, it is recommended to reappoint Margaret Humphrey and J. Chris Conner to the Personnel Board for 2-year terms ending August 12, 2027.

Hunter Holliday motioned to accept the recommendations as presented. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

7. Adjournment

Mayor Turk noted for those present that there is a vacancy on the Economic Development Authority. She explained that there is an online application that citizens may use to apply and that Council would likely wait a couple of weeks for application submissions and then would be holding interviews. She encouraged those present to spread the word if they knew someone that would be a good candidate for this position on this seven-member board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Submitted by:



H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

Approved by:



Renée Ferris Turk
Mayor