



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Work Session, 5:30 PM, Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall,
114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

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

WORK SESSION

1. Call to Order

A work session meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in the Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, at 5:30 p.m., on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, there being present the following members of said Commission, to wit: Denise P. King, Reid Garst, Jackson Beamer, Mark Henrickson, and Nathan Routt, constituting a legal quorum, with Chair King, presiding; together with Christopher Dorsey, City Manager and Executive Secretary ex officio member of said Commission, Charles E. Van Allman Jr., Director of Community Development; Mary Ellen Wines, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Maxwell S. Dillon, Planner, and Jim Guynn, City Attorney; and the following business was transacted:

Chair Denise King reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Commission to hold a work session. The work session meeting was called to order at 5:36 p.m.

2. New Business

A discussion was held regarding the following items on this agenda:

A. 522 South Market Street rezoning from RSF to HBD

B. Energy Storage Project Siting Agreement

A discussion was held regarding the items on the November agenda.

1. Mrs. Dorsey's Clothes Closet
2. Dalewood Avenue Cluster Housing Overlay addition
3. Roanoke Valley – Alleghany Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

3. Adjournment

Chair King adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in the Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, at 6:30 p.m., on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, there being present the following members of said Commission, to wit: Denise P. King, Reid Garst, Jackson Beamer, Mark Henrickson, and Nathan Routt, constituting a legal quorum, with Chair King, presiding; together with Christopher Dorsey, City Manager and Executive Secretary ex officio member of said Commission, Charles E. Van Allman Jr., Director of Community Development; Mary Ellen Wines, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Maxwell S. Dillon, Planner, and Jim Guynn, City Attorney; and the following business was transacted:

Chair Denise King called the October meeting of the City of Salem Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. Chair King reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Commission to hold a public meeting.

A. **Pledge of Allegiance**

B. **Roll call**

Mr. Routt - Here
Mr. Henrickson - Here
Mr. Beamer - Here
Mr. Garst - Here
Chair King – Here

2. Consent Agenda

A. **Minutes**

Consider acceptance of the minutes of the September 10, 2025, regular meeting.

Chair King stated that under the consent agenda, they have the minutes of the September 10, 2025, Commission work session and regular meeting. Chair King asked the Commission if anyone had any questions, additions, or comments. Hearing none the minutes will be considered accepted.

3. New Business

A. **Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance**

Hold a public hearing to consider the request of Pillis Enterprises Inc., property owner, to rezone the property located at 522 South Market Street (Tax Map # 160-4-2) from RSF Residential Single Family to HBD Highway Business District. Proper legal notice has been given and all adjoining property owners have been notified of said hearing.

Chair King invited the applicant on this petition to come forward to provide information regarding their petition. She instructed all speakers to state their name and address for the record.

Patrick Pillis, 1726 Amy Lane, Salem, Virginia, addressed the Commission. He explained that his father had purchased the property in the 1990s. The house on the property was in sever disrepair, and approximately 15 years ago it was demolished due to safety concerns and reports of unauthorized individuals occupying it. Following the demolition, a neighboring property owner, Mr. Everett, built a home and a fence adjacent to the lot. After being approached by a code enforcement officer Mr. Pillis contacted Ms. Wines at that time to ask if any action was required on his part. She indicated that as long as no one complained, no immediate action would be necessary, and the property remained unused for several years. During the previous summer, due to an overflow of business at Pillis Brothers Garage, Mr. Pillis parked several vehicles on the vacant lot behind the garage. He admitted that some of these vehicles were in poor condition and had to be towed. After receiving a notice of violation for parking multiple vehicles on a residential lot, Mr. Pillis consulted again with Ms. Wines, who outlined potential options for bringing the property into compliance. Based on that conversation and at the suggestion of his wife, Mr. Pillis decided to pursue rezoning the parcel.

Mr. Henrickson asked Mr. Pillis whether he needed additional space and intended to continue parking vehicles on the lot.

Mr. Pillis responded affirmatively.

Mr. Henrickson noted that another option would be to maintain the lot as green space, and asked Ms. Wines whether this was permissible.

Ms. Wines confirmed that the lot could remain undeveloped as green space.

Mr. Pillis stated that since receiving the violation notice, he had begun cleaning the lot and removing debris. He asked whether he could park there under current conditions. Ms. Wines responded that parking was not allowed for employees unless the area was paved or concreted, in accordance with code requirements

Mr. Pillis then inquired about parking as the owner of the lot. Ms. Wines clarified that the distinction becomes less clear in that scenario. If Mr. Pillis is working and parking there, he is still considered an employee under the zoning regulations. She emphasized that the lot is zoned residential single-family, and if he wished, he could build a house on it or

sell it in the future.

Robin Pillis, also of 1726 Amy Lane, stated that the request for rezoning was due to the lot's location adjacent to the garage. She clarified that the lot had only been used for parking vehicles, not for vehicle repairs. The Pillis family is considering selling the property as they get older and believe it would be more attractive if zoned for business use. Even if the lot remains green space, future buyers may appreciate the flexibility that business zoning offers.

Mr. Henrickson summarized that the property could be rezoned to highway business district (HBD) and remain unused. A future buyer could then further develop or alter its use. He reiterated that parking is not allowed under current conditions

Mr. Beamer asked Mr. Pillis if he still intended to park on the lot and expressed empathy, noting that garages often face delays due to part availability.

Mr. Pillis added that he had also considered placing a storage building on the lot.

Ms. Wines explained that depending on the type of structure and intended use, a storage building could change the zoning classification and would require a separate discussion. She also noted that paid parking differs from simply parking a vehicle owned by the business.

Chair King asked if there were any further questions or comments.

Mr. Beamer remarked for clarification that although the business can currently line the street with vehicles, it cannot park them on the empty lot. Chair King confirmed that this is due to the property's residential single-family zoning. To legally park on the lot, it must be rezoned and paved or concreted.

Mr. Pillis mentioned that there are three newly constructed houses adjacent to the garage and that he regularly parks vehicles in front of them.

Chair King asked for further questions or input from the Community Development Department. Hearing none, she opened the public hearing at 6:39 p.m. No additional speakers came forward, and the public hearing was closed at 6:39 p.m.

Chair King asked for Commission discussion. Hearing none she entertained a motion on the matter.

On motion by Mr. Henrickson, seconded by Mr. Routt, and duly carried, the Planning Commission of the City of Salem hereby recommends to City Council that the request to rezone 522 South Market Street from residential single family to highway business district be adopted as presented.

Chair King asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. Routt - Aye

Mr. Henrickson - Aye
Mr. Beamer - Aye
Mr. Garst - Aye
Chair King – Aye

- B. Hold a public hearing to consider an Energy Storage Project Siting Agreement between the City of Salem and Salem VA BESS 1 LLC proposing a 4 – megawatt battery energy storage facility within the existing electric substation located at 407 Electric Road (Tax Map # 150-2-4). The purpose of the hearing will be to receive public comments in the Planning Commission’s review, per Code of Virginia 15.2-2232, of the proposed facility to confirm it is substantially in accord with the City of Salem Comprehensive Plan. Proper legal notice has been given.

Chair King reminded the Commission of its duty to confirm compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that the city is the applicant and asked if anyone wished to speak on its behalf. Hearing none, she summarized that the Commission had already received and reviewed the Siting Agreement and the Comprehensive Plan prior to the meeting.

Chair King opened the public comment period at 6:42 p.m. No additional speakers came forward and the public hearing was closed at 6:42 p.m.

Chair King asked for Commission discussion. Hearing none she entertained a motion on the matter.

On motion made by Mr. Garst and seconded by Mr. Beamer and duly carried, the Planning Commission of the City of Salem confirms the Siting Agreement is in accordance with the City of Salem Comprehensive Plan.

Chair King asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. Routt – Aye
Mr. Henrickson – Aye
Mr. Beamer – Aye
Mr. Garst – Aye
Chair King – Aye

4. Adjournment

Chair King noted that there was no additional business for the Planning Commission and the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.