



CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Council Chambers, 715 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

HON. MARY KATHERINE GREENLAW, MAYOR
HON. CHARLIE L. FRYE, JR., VICE -MAYOR, WARD FOUR
HON. KERRY P. DEVINE, AT-LARGE
HON. MATTHEW J. KELLY, AT-LARGE
HON. JASON N. GRAHAM, WARD ONE
HON. WILLIAM C. WITHERS, JR., WARD TWO
HON. DR. TIMOTHY P. DUFFY, WARD THREE

Council Work Session

January 10, 2023

Council Priorities - Phase 4 Update

New Visitor Center

Renwick & Stone Warehouse Properties

The Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia held a work session on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Large Conference Room of City Hall.

Council Present. Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw, Presiding. Vice-Mayor Charlie L. Frye, Jr. Councilors Kerry P. Devine, Timothy P. Duffy, Jonathan A. Gerlach, Jason N. Graham, and Matthew J. Kelly (6:43).

Also Present. City Manager Timothy J. Baroody, Assistant City Manager Mark Whitley, Assistant City Manager David Brown, City Attorney Kathleen Dooley, Community Planning and Building Director Charles Johnston, Zoning Administrator Kelly Machen, Economic Development Director Bill Freehling, Assistant Director of Tourism Margret Morris, Budget Analyst Donna Leahy, and Clerk of Council Tonya B. Lacey.

Council Priorities - Phase 4 Update. City Manager Baroody reported that Phase 3 had been closed out and they were moving forward with Phase 4. He said if Council had no changes the next step would be to bring a resolution for formal adoption to the January 24, 2023 meeting. (See Attachment I for more information.)

Councilor Graham asked about Priority 12, and if there was any feedback about the joint session with the School Board. Mr. Baroody responded it was still a work in progress.

Councilor Graham asked about Priority 15, and who in the government would be responsible for trails. Mr. Baroody stated there were staffing challenges. They have not landed on that because it is important to have the Public Works Director and the Transportation Administration positions filled.

Councilor Gerlach asked if there was a way to get Ficklen Island in the priorities, and Mr. Baroody said it was covered in the Old Mill Park master planning process. He said they would expand the footprint to include Ficklen Island.

Councilor Graham brought attention to housing, and the importance of providing diverse housing that meets the needs for the community. Mr. Baroody responded that there has been a lot wrapped into the Small Area Plans. Mr. Johnston said there were amendments coming forward that would enable the zoning.

Mr. Baroody stated they were building towards addressing the issue, and it may get woven into other issues. Mayor Greenlaw believes that Councilor Graham is on point based on the housing presentations Mr. Craig has given. Ms. Dooley stated that it would be a big focus for Council and staff for the next 3 years. Mr. Baroody states that they are looking at a total rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Johnston said this topic would be an 18-month project.

New Visitor Center. Mrs. Morris gave a PowerPoint presentation and she discussed the Virginia Tourism Cooperation (VTC) Grant, Visitor Centers, Mary Washington Lodge, Lodging Statistics and Renwick Building and Old Stone Warehouse. (See Attachemnt II for more information.)

The Virginia Tourism Corporation gave the council a grant that will go to product development. The product development will include architectural and design services. The architectural Request for Proposals (RFP) period has closed. There will be interviews with three of the companies that responded to the RFP. There are plans to have public input to get the community excited about the new visitor's center. The old visitor's center was sold on December 1st.

Lodging Statistics. The year over year travel occupancy rate from 2021 to 2022 went from 57% to 61% which means the City is trending in the right direction. The average daily room rate is up \$15 a night which means the price is hovering around \$110 a night. The revenue per available room raised from \$54 in 2021 to \$67 in 2022.

There will be a continuation of doing sports marketing, and social media which is going well.

Renwick & Stone Warehouse Properties. The Old Stone Warehouse needs work. Last year there were talks about doing a two-step process for Renwick. The first step would be a

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to see what possible private sector partners vision would be for the property. The next step is a Request for Proposal (RFP) to give a more in depth look at what was submitted in the RFQ. Some of the items from the request for qualifications draft was read.

Mayor Greenlaw said she would like to move forward with Renwick because it is a valuable and interesting piece of property. She also said the Council needed to move forward with something that would allow them to see viable proposals.

Councilor Graham believes that the use of the words strongly preferred in the proposal would make people think that the City is not open to suggestions, and he suggested the word “preferred” would be better.

Vice-Mayor Frye said each time the discussion on Renwick or Old Stone Warehouse has come up there has been talk in the community for a Black History Museum at either site. He warned that these discussions may come back around. Mayor Greenlaw has heard the Old Stone Warehouse and the Original Walker-Grant.

Mayor Greenlaw said the Old Stone Warehouse and the Renwick properties are two very different properties and she would not mix the two.

Councilor Gerlach noted that the study was done in 2019 and a lot has changed since then, the tourism market has changed. Although things have changed he would like to keep an open mind.

Councilor Duffy isn't thrilled with the building not remaining public, and he would be interested in seeing a public-private partnership.

Mrs. Dooley told the Council to be aware, that it would be complex because of many challenges. She reminded the City Council that the selling of Maury School floundered the first 2 times, and the attempt to land a baseball stadium floundered the first time. She followed up by stating that this may lay the ground work for future success.

Vice-Mayor Frye said he believes that people have lost enthusiasm in having a museum at the original Walker-Grant. He said there are some great stories that could be told. Councilor Devine said she was at a meeting at Walker-Grant and she asked about the shadow box with pictures when you enter the building and she asked Michael George about having a rotating screen so the pictures rotate.

Councilor Duffy brought up the issue with the annex flooding and the amount of work and money to make it ADA accessible.

Council agreed to move forward, but not packaging Old Stone Warehouse and Renwick together.

Mr. Baroody asked the Council if they wanted to retain Old Stone Warehouse. The building is about 200 years old and one of the last remaining warehouses along the river. Mr. Johnston stated that the property was structurally challenged. Mr. Brown said in order to make the building habitable the structure would need to be made secure and it would be a significant investment. The property also has restrictive easements on both sides of the building. Mr. Johnston said an RFQ would be appropriate.

Councilor Duffy said he would like the City to have a stake in the property because it is clear the City is not going to be able to do the work. He also believed the idea of leaving the properties to flounder was not viable.

Mr. Baroody summarized that the City Council wanted him to issue a request for qualifications for the buildings, but not tying the properties together.

Closed Meeting Approved. Upon a motion Councilor Devine, moved approval to convene in closed session under Va. Code 2.2-3711(A)(7), for for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual litigation, namely, CVAS P8 and CVAS P8A v. City Council, where such consultation or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body and Code 2.2-3711(A)(8) for consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, namely, the NEON zoning map amendment application.; motion was seconded by Councilor Graham and passed by the following recorded votes. Ayes (6) Councilors Greenlaw, Frye, Devine, Duffy, Gerlach and Graham. Nays (0).

Return to Open Meeting Approved. Upon the motion of Mayor Greenlaw; seconded by Councilor Devine and passed by the following recorded votes, Council approved a return to an open meeting. Ayes (7) Councilors Greenlaw, Frye, Devine, Duffy, Gerlach, Graham and Kelly. Nays (0).

Resolution 22-60, Approved, Certifying Closed Meeting. Upon the motion Mayor Greenlaw, approved Resolution 23-01 certifying the closed meeting; seconded by

Councilor Devine and passed by the following recorded votes. Ayes (7) Councilors Greenlaw, Frye, Devine, Duffy, Gerlach, Graham and Kelly. Nays (0)

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council at this time. Mayor Greenlaw declared the session officially adjourned at 6:50 p.m.



**Tonya B. Lacey, MMC
Clerk of Council
City of Fredericksburg**