



CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Council Chambers, 715 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

HON. KERRY P. DEVINE, MAYOR
HON. CHARLIE L. FRYE, JR., VICE-MAYOR, WARD FOUR
HON. JANNAN W. HOLMES, AT-LARGE
HON. WILL B. MACKINTOSH, PH.D., AT-LARGE
HON. MATTHEW D. ROWE, WARD ONE
HON. JOY Y. CRUMP, WARD TWO
HON. SUSANNA R. FINN, WARD THREE

Work Session February 24, 2026

Architectural Review Board (ARB) Interviews – (3) Washington Heritage Museum Annual Report on Mary Washington Monument and Caretakers Cottage – Anne Darron, Executive Director Water and Sewer Updates

The Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia held a work session on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Large Conference Room.

City Council Present. Mayor Kerry P. Devine, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Charlie L. Frye, Jr.; Council members Joy Y. Crump; Susanna R. Finn; Jannan W. Holmes; Dr. Will B. Mackintosh; and Matthew D. Rowe.

City Council Absent. None.

Others Present. City Manager Timothy J. Baroody, Deputy City Manager Mark Whitley, Deputy City Manager David Brown, Assistant City Manager Todd Flippen, City Attorney Kelly J. Lackey, Community Planning and Development Director Michael Craig, and Clerk of Council Molly Henderson.

Architectural Review Board (ARB) Interviews.

Morgan Caldwell – Vice-Mayor Frye asked how Mr. Caldwell explains Fredericksburg to people who don't know about it. Mr. Caldwell said he describes Carl's Ice Cream to explain the unique downtown vibe.

Councilor Mackintosh asked Mr. Caldwell how his experience working in commercial real estate will shape his approach to evaluating historic properties. Mr. Caldwell said working in commercial real estate involves knowing the ins and outs of reviewing all kinds of properties.

Councilor Rowe asked Mr. Caldwell how he approaches balancing historic preservation goals with individual property rights, and how to determine when the historical context or

architectural character of a property is significant enough to warrant preservation over change. Mr. Caldwell said there is a balance to be struck where property owners have their rights, but historically significant properties should be preserved.

Councilor Finn asked Mr. Caldwell to discuss his interest in the ARB. Mr. Caldwell said his interest is not specific to the ARB, but it seemed a good fit because he wants to get involved locally and has background in real estate and construction.

Councilor Holmes asked Mr. Caldwell to describe his interest and familiarity with historic preservation standards and guidelines. Mr. Caldwell said he does not have much experience with it, other than having some friends on the ARB who work in design, and he is interested in learning more about historic preservation. Councilor Holmes confirmed with Mr. Caldwell that he is willing to participate in preservation workshops and training.

Councilor Crump referenced the connection and difference between commercial and residential, citing adaptive reuse projects in the City, and asked Mr. Caldwell about his feelings or experience with adaptive reuse. Mr. Caldwell said he worked for four years with Vakos Companies which did the project where the Free Lance-Star used to be; he left before they started construction. Mr. Caldwell said adaptive reuse must make sense, and growth and improvement for growth and improvement's sake is not always a good thing.

Mayor Devine confirmed that Mr. Caldwell did not have any questions for Council.

Matthew Kelly - Vice-Mayor Frye asked how Mr. Kelly explains Fredericksburg to people who don't know about it. Mr. Kelly said Fredericksburg is a unique city in the middle of the fastest growing corridor in the country, and protecting its unique character is critical to its future.

Councilor Mackintosh asked Mr. Kelly to describe a recent successful preservation project in the City. Mr. Kelly referenced the Princess Anne St. project involving the maintenance and reuse of the commercial building which at one time was a gas station. Mr. Kelly said it would have been better if it were taken further such as to prompt the applicant to highlight the history of the building. Councilor Mackintosh asked Mr. Kelly to clarify if he sees that project as a success, and Mr. Kelly said it is a success every time City staff finds buildings in a project that can or should be maintained, but the City could spend more time showcasing the historic character of building that are subjects of reuse.

Councilor Rowe asked Mr. Kelly how he approaches balancing historic preservation goals with individual property rights, and how to determine when the historical context or architectural character of a property is significant enough to warrant preservation over change. Mr. Kelly said when an individual buys a property in the historic district, they know the rules, regulations, and restrictions. Mr. Kelly said the City can do a better job incentivizing preservation so that living in the historic district is less of a financial burden on property owners. Mr. Kelly said determination of historic significance has been a long-time debate which is often a case-by-case basis, and he leans in favor of maintaining historic character as much as possible while reducing burdens on owners.

Councilor Finn asked Mr. Kelly what role the ARB can play in telling a more complete history and incorporating missing pieces in preservation efforts. Mr. Kelly said the ARB could do more to represent a complete history and could be a resource to both Council and the public in preservation initiatives aligned with this effort. Mr. Kelly gave the example of telling a more complete story of Fredericksburg during the Reconstruction Era, including the African American community recommending a Council member in one of the City's first elections, and J.D. Harris, a community member working for the Freedmen's Bureau who became the first African American candidate for state office. Mr. Kelly said Fredericksburg was not a sleepy little town, and it had a diverse post-Civil War demographic with a lot of stories that have yet to be told, and ARB can help play that role.

Councilor Holmes asked Mr. Kelly how he would balance redevelopment with historic preservation. Mr. Kelly said he is proud of his reputation for being hardcore on preservation, adding he was involved in projects such as the downtown hotel and parking garage, which included many meetings that debated how the garage should look, and resulted in a building that fits within the context of the downtown and has won awards. Mr. Kelly said in the City's rush to secure bigger projects and fear of losing a project, there is less drive to engage in discussion with developers. Mr. Kelly said most developers have decided they want to be in the community when they come to a project, and he clarified he is not saying "no" to projects, but rather prefers the City to ask for what they want and incentivize projects if developers are willing to make requested changes, referencing a similar process with the downtown Courtyard by Marriott hotel project.

Councilor Crump asked Mr. Kelly if he could think of a recent project where the City collaborated with the ARB with the goal of encouraging economic vitality while respecting the City's history. Mr. Kelly said no.

Mayor Devine asked if there was a project for which that collaboration did not happen. Mr. Kelly said there have been large projects where the City could have done more to push preservation goals, and this is a long-standing debate from his time on City Council. Mr. Kelly said he is not disputing that the City must have new development, but development must maintain the City's character. Mr. Kelly said historical significance is a question that requires review, and it may be better for economic development if the community can designate which buildings and areas are important and require protection.

Councilor Crump asked Mr. Kelly whether the City has already determined historic significance with the historic preservation district. Mr. Kelly said no and stated that there are historic buildings both in and outside of the historic district, and for those outside of it, the property owner has the right to do anything they want with the property, and the historic district is the only area where the ARB has oversight.

Mayor Devine asked Mr. Kelly if he had any questions for Council.

Mr. Kelly said he was involved with starting the interview process with City committees, and the City used to have a mix of people on boards and commissions that did not necessarily agree with each other, which is important because through argument and debate, questions get asked, views are tested, and the best solutions come forward. Mr. Kelly said the current view is that Council wants boards and commissions that align with their views, and to continue down that road would be a mistake and a disservice to the community.

Vice-Mayor Frye stated he disagreed with Mr. Kelly, and said it was difficult when there are multiple applicants for a board or commission to pick one person because it may discourage denied applicants from future engagement such as applying for another position. Mr. Kelly said when he was on Council making appointments, he went out of his way to pick people who he did not agree with because it is important for their voices to be heard.

Washington Heritage Museum Annual Report on Mary Washington Monument and Caretakers Cottage – Anne Darron, Executive Director. After presentation by Anne Darron, Executive Director for Washington Heritage Museums (WHM),

Mayor Devine stated that in gifting the monument and Caretaker's Cottage to WHM, the City's goal was that WHM could be better caretakers to the property, and Ms. Darron and her team have affirmed that by bringing positive attention to the site.

Councilor Mackintosh stated he is excited for WHM's plans to host events on the site's patio and to see the building full of life again. Michael O'Malley, WHM Board Chair, stated they hope the site continues to draw people in, and they expect many good things to come.

Councilor Crump asked if WHM will be involved in the City's 300th anniversary celebration. Ms. Darron said WHM was involved with the 250th celebration, so they expect to be involved with the 300th anniversary as well.

Councilor Mackintosh stated that on March 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., Kate Haulman, author of *The Mother of Washington in Nineteenth Century America*, will be speaking at the Fredericksburg Area Museum.

Architectural Review Board (ARB) Interviews, continued.

Evan Lawson – Vice-Mayor Frye asked how Mr. Lawson explains Fredericksburg to people who don't know about it. Mr. Lawson said it is a typical American city with concentric rings of development which are more automobile dependent as they progress farther away from its center. Mr. Lawson added it is a rare, classic U.S. main street.

Councilor Mackintosh referenced Mr. Lawson's curriculum vitae (CV) and asked about his experience with traditional neighborhood design and how it might shape his approach to the classic American main street. Mr. Lawson said he believes that suburban sprawl is destroying the American dream, so walkable cities are attractive in that a family can park their car and fulfill different needs all in one place. Mr. Lawson said people underestimate the effect of built environment and referenced Léon Krier's cartoons on zoning by human anatomy, stating if essential parts of human anatomy such as bones and organs are separated to different sections of the body, it would be inefficient. Mr. Lawson said *Suburban Nation* by Andres Duany is a reference to the built environment and its decline, but to heal it, he references *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander. Councilor Mackintosh asked Mr. Lawson to clarify how this would shape his approach to ARB cases. Mr. Lawson said ARB guidelines are derived from those books and promote prioritization of human scale environments over the efficiency of vehicle mobility. Mr. Lawson said he prefers walkability over vehicular travel.

Councilor Rowe asked Mr. Lawson how he approaches balancing historic preservation goals with individual property rights, and how to determine when the historical context or architectural character of a property is significant enough to warrant preservation over change. Mr. Lawson said it is important to ensure buildings are used, and that it is a case-by-case basis that requires considering the location and whether the intended use enhances the area around it or is prohibitive to its neighbors.

Councilor Finn asked Mr. Lawson how he would view requests to adapt historic structures for modern requirements such as accessibility of entrances or stairs and modern heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment. Mr. Lawson said permanent, built solutions for accessibility are preferred, when possible, but they can also take up a lot of space, so a mechanical lift could be an accessible alternative to a zigzagging ramp leading to a porch to avoid compromising the existing structure. Mr. Lawson said good building respects what exists and elaborates on latent patterns, and he is inclined to look for solutions that do not remove historic parts of a building.

Councilor Holmes stated that ARB has specific guidelines, and asked Mr. Lawson how he would work within those guidelines to progress toward walkability goals. Mr. Lawson said he thinks the guidelines already address human scale needs. Councilor Holmes asked Mr. Lawson to clarify how the strict guidelines of the ARB reconcile with the need to repurpose buildings and have walkable cities to enhance community and benefit the environment. Mr. Lawson said the guidelines promote traditional neighborhood design and temper zoning ordinances, the infrastructure has been laid, and the guidelines do their best to reconcile human scale needs.

Councilor Crump stated one of Fredericksburg's best traits is the collaboration of its boards and commissions, and one of the historic reference points that the ARB and Arts Commission are working on is the debate of what to do with the slave auction block. Councilor Crump asked Mr. Lawson how he feels about what is currently happening with the slave auction block. Mr. Lawson said the removal of the auction block was the right thing to do, and he disagreed with the former owner of the butcher shop who protested its removal. Mr. Lawson said collaborative design is important, and he knows this from working with his brother and for James McGhee. Mr. Lawson added that he does not know what is currently happening with the auction block. Councilor Crump clarified that she was referring to human storytelling which Fredericksburg does well.

Mayor Devine asked Mr. Lawson if he has worked on a historic building in his business. Mr. Lawson said he does two or three historic buildings each year and his business specializes in renovations and additions, and much of his work is in downtown Fredericksburg. Mr. Lawson stated that if his business has a project to go before the ARB, he knows he must recuse himself but asked whether he can present to the ARB for his business during his term. City Attorney Kelly Lackey stated he would receive conflict of interest training, and if he has an independent interest in a project he is not prohibited from bringing it before the board, but he would be recused from discussing it outside of the public environment.

Water and Sewer Updates. Assistant City Manager Todd Flippen presented an update on utility projects; Mr. Flippen said the theme for all four projects presented is that they are forward-facing to proactively address future economic growth.

Regarding materials and equipment for the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade and expansion, Councilor Finn asked if there are any expected long lead times or delays for difficult to procure items. Mr. Flippen said in effort to anticipate and identify possible lead times, the City has had conversations with the design-builder to ensure construction deadlines are met.

Regarding the Water and Sewer Master Plan, Councilor Holmes stated there have been community questions about the Greenbrier development and confirmed with Deputy City Manager David Brown that the Greenbrier project is being addressed as part of the Upper and Lower Hazel Run interceptors.

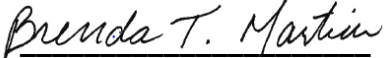
Councilor Holmes asked if the equipment at Dixon Park is impeding the soccer fields. City Manager Timothy Baroody stated that it has been long planned that some athletic fields would be temporarily taken out of play, but upon completion the contractor is required to restore the affected fields. Mr. Baroody and Mr. Brown confirmed two existing fields will be impacted by the project.

Councilor Rowe confirmed with Mr. Flippen that the Motts Run Water Treatment Plant upgrades necessitate raising the water level and asked when the affected recreational facilities will become available again as the project concludes. Mr. Baroody said it is a work in progress involving collaboration with Spotsylvania County to kick off the next round of master planning for parks, with Motts next in line, which will bring more clarity in the coming months. Councilor Rowe asked if the nature center area is safe from the rising water levels. Mr. Brown said the

water elevations will come close to the trail, so rain events may impact the area, which has happened in the past. Mr. Baroody said the modeling planned for the next steps will better answer those questions, and impacts are possible.

Councilor Mackintosh asked about the scope and scale of the Water and Sewer Master Plan and whether there will be opportunities for public participation in the process. Mr. Flippen said there will a public involvement meeting and updates to Council to give detail about the water and sewer models, population projections, and how the models will be associated with the master plan. Mr. Brown confirmed that the purpose of the plan is to address future needs based on the comprehensive land use plan (Comprehensive Plan). Councilor Mackintosh confirmed with Mr. Brown that direct physical assessment of existing infrastructure is a separate process and is not part of the master plan project presented. Councilor Mackintosh confirmed with Mr. Flippen that the City can speak to the consultant about incorporating public involvement into the project guidelines at the March kickoff meeting.

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, Mayor Devine declared the session officially adjourned at 6:41 p.m.



Brenda Martin,
Deputy Clerk of Council
On behalf of Molly Henderson,
Clerk of Council

Approved
03-10-26