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Manassas City Council 3/17/2025

Date Monday, March 17, 2025
Place Manassas City Council, Virginia
Length 1h 59m (video)

- Official meeting video (Wistia / RegionalWebTV): <https://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/af0mbo8fiu>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-17. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:10] Can you hear me? Can you hear me okay? I'm saying you can't hear me. Okay, I'll keep talking. It's on. You still can't hear? Yes, it's on. Hello, hello. Ooh, okay. Welcome to our town hall meeting. Mr. Smith, I will ask you to please call the roll.

[00:00:28] Mayor Davis Younger. Present. Vice Mayor Wolfe. Here. Council Member Ellis. Here. Council Member Smith. Here. Council Member Osina. Here. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Present. Council Member Hudson. Here. O'Quorum is present. Thank you very much.

[00:00:44] I want to also recognize we have our Commissioner of the Revenue in the audience, Mr. Tim DeMaria, and our Treasurer, Patricia Ritchie, folks, is also here. I have a sign-up sheet partially filled out, but we have others down there on the table. So if you don't get on this one, please come forward and sign up, and I'll just go down the list. And this is your time to address council. Members of staff are also here to take notes about any issues that you bring forward so we can address them.

[00:01:11] but this is definitely your time to speak with counsel and kelly if you want to come up and give the notice about our translation let's start over thank you buenas noches a todas mi nombre es kelly coach soy intérprete municipal y bienvenidos a todos a este foro público esta noche

[00:01:47] si alguien quisiera venir aquí al frente y hablarles a los concejales esta noche tienen Thank you.

[00:02:14] We also are pleased to be joined by the chair of our school board, Suzanne Seberg is also in the back. Sorry, I overlooked you earlier. Okay, the first name I have on the list for tonight is Alex, and please forgive me if I say it wrong, Shaitanova? Close enough. Did I get close? Okay, thank you.

[00:02:30] Hey, yeah, hello. Alex Shaitanova. I'm a resident here, and I went to, you know, middle school, high school here. I'm the one that I think, I'm not sure who I emailed back and forth, but it was Chris and Matt, maybe. This is for the chicken petition, and I started this process maybe about a year ago, just kind of being interested in how this works, what I need to do, And I was just told kind of to collect signatures and then email the signatures to Matt or Christian and the process will go there to some other committee and then it'll get a vote.

[00:02:59] And that's when I should invite all the people that supported that. So that's not what I'm doing today, I guess. But I saw that there was a, that was brought up on the 12th of March to some meeting that you guys had. And there was really no discussion. It was just a quick, oh, snicker here.

[00:03:17] No, let's move on. So I wanted to understand kind of what the concerns are, how they can be mitigated, what the process is. What is the roadmap if your citizens want something to be implemented and how to address those concerns? I think you mentioned that you had followed the roadmap of how to get it addressed.

[00:03:35] The roadmap sounded like just get signatures and email them to us. And after that, there's been nothing besides the talk you guys had on Tuesday or on the 12th. And from my understanding this was brought up, I saw a recording like three years ago where there was a built draft, red lines of, hey, this much acreage, you can have three or four hens, something like that.

[00:03:56] And one person came to these and spoke up against it and it was shot down. So it's almost like you're almost there and now I have 60 people that are willing to support that with signatures and it was very quickly shot down on the 12th. So what's going on? I think we asked for a head nod at a work session to see if we wanted to go forward, if there was any council members that were interested in pursuing it.

[00:04:18] And at that time, I don't believe there were. So I don't know how, what other discussions have happened since then. Have you talked with anyone else? I didn't know I was supposed to. No, you're not. I'm just asking you if you did. No, no, I haven't. No, I don't know the process, but I figured enough showing enough signature support.

[00:04:37] I didn't know it's needs, is there a requirement of specific council members, Three out of four, four out of, you know. Yeah, it has to be a council vote for the majority for it to pass. So, yeah, but you can continue to pursue getting your petition signatures and all that.

[00:04:54] I don't know what else to say about it. If you want to add to, yeah, Mr. O'Shea. Prior to today, did you send, I'm trying to forgive me for not remembering. Because I got a certain number of emails.

[00:05:11] Did you send an email to each city councilor or collectively about this whatsoever? Okay, very good. I was also, during that meeting, I know somebody was like, oh, it's just because prices of eggs are high. That's not when I started this. This has nothing to do with egg prices. That was the comment made on the 12th.

[00:05:28] So that's not it. It's just, it's a good educational. It's good for, you know, there's a lot of pros to this. So waste management. So I guess at what point can we hear some of your concerns? and how they

can be addressed.

[00:05:45] I was told this would be the back and forth session, not just me speaking. Yeah, go ahead, Steve. Ms. Ellis, and then Steve will. I was on, okay. I do remember when we discussed it a couple of years ago.

[00:06:01] One of the complaint, well, there were a couple of complaints, you know, that we might have received by email. There were people that were for it because, you know, healthier, you know, eggs are good for you. one was the complaint of the smell for neighbors another was the complaint of roosters you know you you can put in something in place that says no roosters but sometimes you don't know that it's a rooster until later that's what we

[00:06:32] heard anyway then there was a discussion about what to how do you you know and keep enforcing it, you know, keep enforcing the rules. I know, like, for example, when we started the Bee City USA, I always go back to bees, but this was a good example. People wanted to start having beehives. And there are people who said, no way, I don't want bees in my yard. Well, there's already bees in your yard, but, you know, this was a little different. So we did a lot of work to find out what is the safest way to have beehives in your yard. And it was like setting restrictions

[00:07:10] on how far to be from property, the size of the property, things like that. I have not seen anything except a little bit of discussion we had in a work session was, do you want to pursue this? If you have, like, information about what other jurisdictions are doing with the chickens that's working.

[00:07:28] I know that I had done research at that time, and I heard a lot of headaches and complaints about, you know, what we just talked about, noise, smell, things like that. So if you can find jurisdictions that have a good model in place.

[00:07:43] But you did. You sent the email that had like three outlines. That was your email today, right? Or am I not right? Today, I don't think. No, I don't think I emailed it today. That was somebody. Oh, I'm sorry. I thought that was you. So that's another gentleman. Okay. I know we got someone that had sent us. So I know your previous jurisdiction was kind of mimicked, I don't want to say copied, other jurisdictions already.

[00:08:04] So that's kind of what Fairfax and Richmond and all those are doing. Yeah, that's what we got. that's already pretty close to what you had two years, three years ago, but otherwise, yes, I mean, those other concerns of roosters, obviously that was mitigated in your plan because it wouldn't allow for that. Anything of, you know, what do we do if you get a rooster?

[00:08:22] Well, what do we do if you buy an exotic animal and you're not allowed to keep it in your house? The city has policies to enforce that, right? That's just with any violation you make. So with respect to, I'm sorry, your other concerns were I think-- - Smell. - Smell?

[00:08:38] Are there any restrictions on how clean and how little poop you have in your yard and how often you clean up after your pet when you don't have a fenced-in yard? I don't think so. I don't think that's enforceable. With respect to, I mean, there's quantitative data on stats of how much waste a chicken produces compared to a dog, pound for pound, how quickly it deteriorates into the ground.

[00:09:02] So I guess through looking at any of that, I couldn't see a point that was more like, oh, wait, this is actually, you know, could be considered worse. I mean, I didn't even think to think of bees, but bees are

you can't keep them contained versus this is specifically not only are they in a coop, but also your backyard needs to be fenced.

[00:09:21] We allow fenceless yards with faceless collars on your dogs to walk around, so they don't have the chickens, so you'll have a fence on your house. I think what we'll do is we'll work with our community development and department, reach out to you and see what we need to do to reconsider this request.

[00:09:43] I appreciate it, and that's great. And I guess for some history and understanding, what happened three years ago when this was, I guess, did it come up to a vote, and how many people voted against it versus pro it, how many of those people are still here, how many people still have issues, what their issues are, so we can work on that list of, well, is it the size, is it the number, is it the male versus female, is it, you know, like the chicken.

[00:10:09] We can have all that when you do the meeting, we can we can have all of that information when you do the meeting with community development okay sound good yeah are we invited to those this is my first time speaking at town hall or any other city yeah we would we would have you there as okay yeah invite a guest so okay okay all right thank you all right zach murphy thank you everybody good evening uh eight years ago i asked the chicken question i called the police department because they were responsible for it and i found out the

[00:10:49] the rules. And then I found out that the chicken policy was about to be redone. That was three years ago where I asked the questions again. I'm not sure if that's where it came from and that's why you guys had it again, but I definitely asked those questions a long time ago. And I watched your meeting on the 12th because my neighbors have been working on this for a long time. I watched you guys laugh at him. Years of work and other people, myself included, put in work that you guys just laughed off. I don't know why. And that was after comments made by our commissioner of the

[00:11:25] revenue about veterans and veteran disabilities. Twice he made it. Twice he commented on why it's too hard to provide tax relief or relief for senior citizens because of veterans with service connected disabilities. And those are people with 100% total and permanent service connected disabilities. I have trouble walking. I've had multiple surgeries. I am not at 100%. For that comment to be made and you guys, none of you stood up or said anything about our veterans. You just

[00:12:03] laughed it off. Completely disrespectful. You laughed at our work that we put in, the work that on the chickens, the work on the community garden, the work on the speeding in front of our house, all of it. You laugh it off like and nonchalantly too. Like we're not doing work for you guys.

[00:12:21] You spend our money at will, and we can't get the basic, we can't get chickens. Like, we can't get ivy cleaned up behind our house because you don't have the budget. So we have groups of citizens out there busting our ass, sweating, cleaning up this stuff.

[00:12:36] And we get nothing from you guys but laughter. It's disrespectful, and I'm sorry every time I come here, I sound like this. I don't want to be here. I want to stay at home with my wife and kids. Like, you guys are constantly, maybe it's just me. Maybe you didn't get that answer because three years ago I asked.

[00:12:54] Maybe we can't get speeding taken care of in front of our house because it's me asking. It's not just me. It's my neighbors, too. And there's an entire street of them. I'm just the only one willing enough to come here and look you guys in the face and tell you. But now we have others, and I appreciate that.

[00:13:11] I'm sorry. Thank you for your service. I know it doesn't sound like it, but I do appreciate it. But we're putting in work, and y'all are laughing at us. And the stuff about the vets, like, disrespectful. Go back and watch it and listen. You all owe all of us an apology for that.

[00:13:27] Thank you. Thank you. Go ahead, Ms. Vasquez-Lona. I will say it's not something that we all talk about, but as a former active-duty military family, the father of my kids is a 100% disabled veteran, so I'm sorry that it felt like that, but I have great respect not only for veterans, but as being part of my family, it makes a difference.

[00:13:59] So all I can do is, because it was taken like that, I can apologize for that. But I not only have great respect for everybody they serve, all the veterans they are serving and the ones they serve before. Do you live in a million-dollar home? Do you live in a million-dollar home?

[00:14:14] I don't believe there is a million-dollar home. Do you have a Lamborghini in your front yard? I don't think there is a house. I think there was one that was advertising for a million dollars that it was brand new. The living here conditions are not like that. Right, but those were the comments that were made.

[00:14:32] And if you were that, you were the direct audience that he was talking to, and you just sat there. Like, at no point. Like, there's veterans in your family. You people have lost people from this. And you sat there and listened to them say that. Like, that's a significant portion of our community.

[00:14:50] And you say, we can't spend money on other shit because of service-connected disabilities. You buy property constantly, but write off tax breaks for elderly and blame it on the veterans. I will say it was a commitment that we have to continue to honor that.

[00:15:10] It was a, what do you call it, unfunded liability that the city is paying for. But not only that, because we want to take care of the elderly, we even talk about increasing the rate so more people can be there.

[00:15:30] And we also have discussed that it's only 2% right now that in the future it might have to change. So I do understand, again, the only thing I can apologize for the way it was taken, you know, I'd be mindful of that in the future. But I just, just like you stated, there's people right here, sitting here, they have different connections.

[00:15:50] Maybe we just don't talk about it all the time. Thank you. But please, instead of blaming our money problems on the veterans, blame it on the wasteful spending. Blame it on the buildings that aren't producing any money for us. We're not getting tax revenue from a giant bald spot right across the street.

[00:16:08] How about that's the what, Ralph, that's why we can't raise your benefits. It's not because of the veterans. I heard what they said. I implore everybody to go back and watch the meeting from the 12th. Thank you for at least saying something here. You're the only one that did. I appreciate it. I want to say, Mr. Murphy, though, that perhaps you misread the room because never in my life have I laughed at veterans or first responders.

[00:16:32] didn't say you laughed at veterans. You laughed at his work on chickens. You guys sat there silent when he made the comments about the veterans. You can all go back and watch it. Any discussion I've had about chickens, I'm not going to debate you on that. I smile a lot. But my concern then was, first of

all, were they going to be allowed in townhouses, yards, and also the concern was appropriate distance between the coop location and the neighbors, those kinds of specifications.

[00:17:01] I don't recall having any fun discussing it or laughing about it. If my friendliness and smiles misled you, then that's what they were, and I apologize. I never discount any work anybody in the community wants to do. I encourage you.

[00:17:17] It was laughing, right? I heard laughing. Maybe you didn't. I appreciate you speaking up, but we can all go back and watch it. There was a lot of laughing. If you interpret it as laughter, a part of me says I'm glad you did because that's how I try to come across as being friendly. I don't laugh at anybody.

[00:17:33] Appreciate that. I never do. Thank you. Next on the list, I have Alina Chetanova. Just retired elementary school teacher. Ma'am, ma'am, can you speak into the microphone, please? Thank you. Yeah, I'm just retired elementary school teacher. And as I noticed in my long life with high school and middle school experience, I see that people do not change. So we act like elementary school, I see.

[00:18:10] First, I would like to go over four points. The chickens. Chickens are important for the kids, for the community. It's a therapy. If you want to restrict chickens in Manassas City, of course you can do that.

[00:18:30] You may put, for example, 0.3 acres allowance. That will exclude all townhouses, communities like condominiums and everything. But there are old houses, like I live on Main Street, right across the high school, and we have almost half acre. Two chickens would not bother anybody. But I sent you those emails that my son Alex created, and they explain all pros and cons that you might want to consider.

[00:19:07] and I wonder why Manassas City is behind Fairfax, Richmond and big cities in that. There is a way to restrict and put some general rules, the same rules like for dogs.

[00:19:24] My neighbors have three dogs one side, two dogs other side. We live happily. I don't have dogs. I travel a lot. But I want to have two chickens. They would not bother anybody. So consider that, please. Take it seriously.

[00:19:41] It is for many people, older and disability people, this is some kind of relief, emotional. Second thing I would like to go over is the park of the historical museum.

[00:20:01] You cleaned it very well, thank you. But right on the border with the five historical houses, there are fallen trees. Nobody took care about the ivy, English ivy, and these big trees fall in.

[00:20:18] I have, personally, one fallen tree this winter. Nobody probably noticed you guys and your services there, but it is your tree. It is your tree. You should come and pick it.

[00:20:37] It's very heavy. I don't have those machines, and it is not my job. I pay all taxes in advance, and I'm very, very particular following the rules. Next thing, speeding. I'm a teacher, and I know that kids and adults, of course, but mostly kids, you cannot teach them what is safe.

[00:20:58] And I cross several times the intersection of the school and across the big multi-level parking. At five o'clock, if you sit there and notice people are spitting, unbelievable.

[00:21:18] Those people coming from the trains, school hours, dismissal schools, unbelievable. Nighttime, that big street, nobody could make them slow down. But whatever you want, whatever signs, the only thing works is bumps.

[00:21:40] Nobody wants to pay repairing. You know the human nature. You take care of yourself until you go to court. So why don't you put some all the way from the high school to the elementary school?

[00:22:00] Nighttime, people are speeding. Daytime, anytime. And the last thing, personally, we are five houses there. And summertime, there is a remote control cars competitions on a regular basis on Sunday from 11 o'clock.

[00:22:28] Till five o'clock, big speakers, five clients with cars and big speakers unknowingly doing announcement, stop, three minutes, three seconds left, Sunday from 11 to 5.

[00:22:45] It's a good thing. Can they move this further close to the, not in front of the houses, further inside the parking lot? It's not going to make any difference for them because the parking lot is huge, but not in front.

[00:23:08] Sunday, there is no restriction, right? Officially, no noise restriction in the city, right? From 12 to 4. There is a noise restriction. It is louder than at night.

[00:23:27] Not night. I'm talking about from 12 to 4. I have, because I lived in community, and there was noise complaint of some loud music. The police came and said, Sunday from 12 to 4 or 3, no noise.

[00:23:46] Now, which parking lot are you talking about? I'm talking, I'm sorry, condominiums on Prince William's County. They are very across Wellington. But I guess Manassas has the same thing, Sundays, afternoons. Is this the Osborne parking lot where they park the school buses? Yeah. Yeah. I'm talking about Osborne. That is a, I'm going to be willing to bet that's not a city permitted or anything like that would be through Ms. Seberg.

[00:24:11] That is the school's responsibility. And I would ask if the schools could work with you. Could you please communicate with them? The lady back in the corner. It's not going to make a difference. And I really appreciate this because I remember Alex was sixth grade and they hired him to run and that was his first job.

[00:24:33] sixth grade yeah but thank you that was all for me and chickens are important yeah if i might um yes mr murphy talked about the ivy first i've heard of this i don't know if anything was reported i assume we were talking about trees on the uh don't let's say that i'm i'm we're talking about trees on the on the museum property yeah okay yeah no i don't know if this has been reported to yeah nobody goes there but i understand you're going to build a you're going to build a walking

[00:25:08] carrier like a path eventually there'll be a walkway it's a nice great idea now staff is aware of that we have fallen trees i'm sure they will be working to yeah if you can't fix what we don't know about i know but now you know these are five five historical houses and we keep them very presentable It costs thousands to keep the city looking great.

[00:25:34] So we expect you guys also to help us in our backyards. Thank you. So before you leave, yeah, before you leave, so first of all, the arborist is aware of this situation, even as last fall has been working with Mr. Murphy, perhaps you as well.

[00:25:58] So have you been meeting with the arborist? All right. Well, Mr. Murphy can help you and we connect you that way or we can do that. The arborist is aware, has been working with Mr. Murphy on that situation. There's been some cleanup. Obviously, there's a lot more that has to be done, but the city staff is aware along the way here.

[00:26:22] Secondly, about the traffic. So last fall, there was a meeting. Mr. Murphy participated, and who was the other gentleman or family that was there? The people in the blue house. Okay, that was there to talk about traffic.

[00:26:40] Mitigation. Again, staff from community development was at that meeting along the way and presented a variety of possibilities of what could be done along the way. Were you aware of that meeting? No, but I don't see nothing change.

[00:26:57] So I saw at one point that we put something to say, slow down, that's your speed. It does not work, believe me. Put some bumps and everybody's going to be fine. Well, there, you know, to be, first of all, at that meeting, as I said, a variety of possibilities were presented, of which have to be done in tandem with the construction, the new subdivision construction that's going along.

[00:27:21] The reason I mention this is, to first of all let you know, the city has been responsive. I, along the way, in terms of being proactive about once they're aware about it, Mr. Murphy was good enough to reach out to me.

[00:27:36] We had some discussions back and forth. We had some people from community development attend along the way. I believe you were at that meeting as well, Mayor, to get started with. And since that time, in the CIP, that's our capital improvement projects, there are going to be some traffic calming measures that are going to be taken along several different streets in Manassas as test projects.

[00:28:04] And they're going to be focusing in on Main Street, but it's not going to happen necessarily just like that because you've got that development going on, first of all. All right. And anything that might happen for, obviously, with construction, as you know, what construction does along the way.

[00:28:23] Lastly, I just wanted to share with you, and it took me a little while, I would have brought this up, Alex. Forgive me, I'm not going to attempt to mangle your last name there, but I just found it. So back in January of 2021 is when we discussed, meaning city council discussed domestic chickens in the city here.

[00:28:47] And among the things that were suggested as a working sort of regulations here, just so you're aware, this is not where to debate, obviously, but so you are aware how seriously some of the things were discussed here, that domestic chickens are subject to the following setbacks for structured and fenced outdoor areas.

[00:29:10] Well, first of all, it will only be at single-family homes, no duplexes, townhomes, apartments. So it will be located at least 10 feet from any property line, not located in any front or side yard. It will be located at least 50 feet from any stream or storm drain inlet.

[00:29:28] shall be located at least 25 feet from any pen, kenneled, or confined animal other than the chickens to begin with here. There were a few other things along the way in this regard, as I said. Okay, you saw those things.

[00:29:45] Okay, again, since we're going back and forth in the spirit of communication, because just as in this case, not knowing that there had been a meeting last fall with the appropriate city staff to start looking at traffic on Main Street as an example underway, those kinds of things.

[00:30:12] And this is not meant as a criticism because I can tell you, I don't know everything going on in the city here, and I'm on city council along the way. But if we share our collective knowledge in a way that

helps all of us understand what's been going on or, you know, what's transpired and what might be coming along the way, those are all helpful and help us, you know, make some, you know, better, better opinions as to what's going on along the way in that regard.

[00:30:44] I don't want to speak out of turn, but Mr. Burke, perhaps Mr. Arcieri would be a good contact on some of these as well for the traffic calming and stuff, in your opinion. But I'll leave that up to you. Mr. Burke is our city manager here, and he decides who's best to talk about these things.

[00:31:05] So, Mayor, thank you very much. Ms. Vasquez. If I may, I'll be quick. Thank you for the two emails. You know, they were very informative. I believe you sent them. The two emails about the chickens. Yeah, half an hour ago. I just used his handouts because I didn't send anything.

[00:31:22] You don't have papers. I know, but because you said your name, so I noticed it was you. But no, it's an eye-opening. I know in this discussion, I have heard from both sides. And, you know, at the end of the day, you know, we have to have all the information and see what's best for the city.

[00:31:40] But I appreciate it. You know, everybody that has reached out, whether in email, in person, or continues, you know, to bring it up about, you know, having, you know, whether one or two or just, you know, or just having. So it is, you know, something that is important, but I just want to make sure you know I have received the information.

[00:32:01] When it comes to the traffic coming, I mean, we have different reports. You know, one of the biggest concerns is Liberia, at any point of Liberia. I will say, you know, being in the transportation committees, you know, we are yet to see what's going to happen with funding and maybe some of the stuff that we want to use for, I believe there was two sites that we wanted to do a comment.

[00:32:32] I don't know if that funding, you know, will be there from the federal side. So when we have transportation or things like that, it's different funding. So I just want to make sure that we continue, whether it fits for this or for other things, to have issues with where we're going to be at in the near future.

[00:32:50] And we might have to make a decision in the budget without having that certainty when it comes to the federal funding. So I just wanted to make sure that I brought it up. Sure. Kids are first, so budget is after that. We don't want something to happen on that street, and I don't want to see it sitting on my porch.

[00:33:10] And I sit every morning there, and I try to cross, and nobody stops. Because these are ridiculous people behind the walls. I understand. My daughter is a junior. She drives there, so I drive there, too, a lot. So I totally understand, and, you know, the feedback is always, you know, taken into consideration.

[00:33:35] And, you know, it's part of what we have. But all I'm saying is that I hope we have funding to do different things. Even before I ever thought of running for council, I was advocating for, you know, like you said, you know, to me it was easy to bump, you know, slow down the speed with bumping in Liberia.

[00:33:53] And, you know, other things that, you know, to me it was easier. But once, you know, I got an answer, it wasn't something that was possible. So I understand, you know, I just want you to know that, you know, it takes time and you might don't see the results right away. But the staff is working on doing what they can, you know, as soon as possible.

[00:34:14] Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. I wanted to find out the ivy. So I trained as a master gardener a long time ago. I know that we have done a good job of trying to educate people on planting native plants.

[00:34:37] Ivy is invasive. We actually have quite a few invasive plants in our city. The threat of ivy is really a big threat. I think I need to talk to Matt about this. I actually was in Oregon where we saw thousands of acres decimated by ivy.

[00:34:56] It really, if we do not have some type of control over it, we can lose an entire park. I'm starting to see the ivy in more of the neighborhoods. And it's kind of interesting. You know, I'm like, I know even my yard, I never planted ivy.

[00:35:12] And it's on one of my trees. know, it's like, how did this get here? Well, they just can go, you know. I know that we said we were working with the arborists. I'm assuming that's when the ivy is one of those issues. Is that right, Matt? What are we doing for the ivy? Can you give me an update? Okay. Can you get an update?

[00:35:34] I think we have to do more awareness. I know the Master Gardeners, Prince William Mary and Master Gardeners, are doing a lot to try to get that message out to get rid of the ivy and how to get rid of the ivy, but I do think it's a bigger threat to our parks than people realize. If you see it, you got to get rid of it. And go ahead, Zach. I find it troubling. We started, I'm sorry, so you made the comment that you didn't know about the English ivy. I've stood here before you, in front of you before, and talked about the English ivy. I talked about the spider laner

[00:36:13] flies. I told you that we created a community garden subcommittee to take care of this because you guys wouldn't fund dan dan has told us like your departments have told us they don't have the funding to take care of behind our house so we did it ourselves and for you to say that you don't know about it and you haven't heard about it i know you've heard about it mr smith like how come tom ashley you guys have heard about it why doesn't everybody know we're doing this for you guys and you laugh off our hard work that's where i'm coming from like i i want i don't want to be here

[00:36:47] and it seemed like I don't even feel like I have, I should be like this. You guys should be saying this to us. It shouldn't be coming the other way. We started a whole garden. We started a subcommittee to take care of the stuff that you guys wouldn't pay for because you're spending it on buildings all around the city. Like, what are we supposed to do? And then you don't know about it. The first I've heard of it, I stood here and looked you in the eyes and told you, sorry, we're cutting it.

[00:37:16] We're cutting it. We're cutting it at the base, three feet, all around all the trees. As soon as we see what's growing behind the museum what we have native and what's not we're going to start pulling the ivy out of there once we're done behind the museum we're going to go to the farmer's market because there's spotted lanternflies all underneath that ivy and that's where people walk for our farmer's market and then once we're done there we're going to go to winter set park we're going to go all over the city because we want to do it for our community you guys buy we have to do it's just the way it's working out right now and i'm sorry for getting loud again And I don't mean to, but I stood here and told you guys what we were doing.

[00:37:53] We have people sweating every weekend cleaning up this city. And you don't know about it? Sorry. Thank you, Madam Mayor. What I will say, I mean, just last Saturday we had a group cleaning, I think Stonewall Park.

[00:38:12] Maybe that could also be a part of, you know, those groups that want to volunteer. Earth Day is coming on April 22nd. And if we knew the spots that maybe had not been brought up, you know, I'm sure there would be groups willing to support. And, you know, I thank you for that.

[00:38:30] And I don't know if, you know, in the future something will come up, if, you know, this is something that we need to fund. But I would like to, you know, I would like to have an assessment of where that. I mean, Ivy is beautiful, but we are talking about English Ivy.

[00:38:46] We are talking about specifics. I know, you know, people plant Ivy for different reasons. and they have to maintain it, but I would like to know how we can resolve it. But I do know there's many groups that might be willing to do this, too, as they do clean the parks and other things.

[00:39:04] Thank you. Madam Mayor, if I could, specifically to the Main Street and the concerns about speed, we did send out notices to everyone on Main Street for that meeting, and we are working towards improvements.

[00:39:19] The initial improvements will be in the spring when it gets warmer so we can put some striping in. But as Councilman Alcina indicated, there is a phased approach due to the construction and some of the other improvements that we're going to be doing out there. Specific to the question about speed bumps, they are not permitted on town roads per VDOT.

[00:39:40] It's just not a method of speed control that is permitted. Speed humps can be installed and they can be considered. However, the fire department and rescue squad would prefer if we limit the use of those speed tables throughout the community because they delay their response and they also result in issues with transport of injured individuals.

[00:40:10] So we are looking at every option that we can as far as putting in some traffic calming. And Main Street is going to be our test case. And then once we've put them in, we've evaluated them, we will start looking at other locations throughout the community where there are complaints about speed so that we can try and mitigate some of the speeding issues that we have.

[00:40:34] Thanks. Move on. The next name I have on the list is Betty Robinson. Betty Robinson.

[00:40:53] I live on Taney Road. I'm sorry, ma'am. Can you lift up the microphone? I'm Betty Robinson. I live on Taney Road and have since 1981. I'm here to discuss the intersection of Taney and Grand Avenue. The proposal was you were going to make both ends of Grand Avenue comparable.

[00:41:11] It didn't happen. I got the speed bump of death. I got the circle of death and the intersection of doom. You were going to let cars park on Grand Avenue. That's fine. But if an SUV parks on Grand Avenue, I can't see.

[00:41:30] It puts Taney Road in a total blind spot. I cannot see how to get out. Now I know you all like to call us the low income area. I prefer affordable housing area because actually you don't know what my income was when I moved there in 1981, nor what my assets are now.

[00:41:55] So I would like to know if you have a plan for correcting that dangerous intersection. Number two, I asked someone about the railroad tracks near Dean. I was told that it was North-South's responsibility.

[00:42:11] since you're doing all the construction there and you have a relationship now with North-South, perhaps someone could ask them to repair that track for your citizens. That's it. Thank you. Ms.

Robinson, thank you so much.

[00:42:29] In particular, with regard to the railroad track, I am Councilwoman Viscous Luna and I serve on the VRE board and that we have made that request to them that the VRE now that it owns the track instead of Norfolk Southern.

[00:42:47] We've asked for those repairs to take place. The city itself can't. We don't have. I understand that you couldn't, but you could have requested that North South fix it. Right. We did. Those requests were there. But again, I just wanted to assure you that we are continuing to request that they get that, particularly that one that you're talking about.

[00:43:08] That's been like that for years. It has. And I think we've all suffered through it and not minimizing your concern at all. I just wanted to reassure you that it's not going away, our interest, just because they've changed ownership. But there's some impression that the city now owns it.

[00:43:28] It will be city responsibility. That's not the case. However, the city will insist that VRE ensure that proper attention is given to the track and repairs in that particular intersection specifically.

[00:43:46] Okay. Thank you. I thank you for coming tonight. Thank you, Madam Mayor. And, yes, thank you for bringing it up. I believe whether it's Amtrak or Norfolk Southern, you know, yeah, they are no, I will say, I don't want to call it the best partners, but, you know, they are very difficult.

[00:44:08] And I don't want to, you know, sound negative, but it's hard to, you know, not only make them, but, you know, to make this happen. But now I do believe, it's still, I'm sorry that it will take time still because there's no, you know, we are petitioning.

[00:44:27] And I understand that there's other things too that we have tried to make change to make Manassas better. But it is, from the response to do, you know, a few small things, it has been difficult. And BRE has continued to be the place that we will go to get support.

[00:44:46] But yes, that is one of the priorities, but it is not something that we can make them do. We just have to continue to advocate for that to happen and be fixed. Thank you. Thank you. Anyone else? I think there's some more signatures. I think some more people had signed up.

[00:45:05] I don't know if you can. Sorry, I'll make you do that. That's for sure. I'll go grab them, but real quick, specific to the chief's talking about that, we will look at the site distance at the intersection. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't notice your light wasn't on.

[00:45:21] We will look at the site distance at Taney and Grant to see if we do need to restrict parking if there is, if it does affect folks coming off of Taney. We want to be able to hear you.

[00:45:41] We want everyone to hear what you have to say or to make you come back down. Maybe put a mirror there. I don't think you can restrict people from having SUVs when they said they could park on that street. That doesn't seem fair now to them.

[00:45:57] Well, what we'll do is if the space closest to Taney is a site impediment, we can restrict parking in that one spot. We can also look at other options such as a mirror, but our primary issue would be to look and see if we need to restrict in the closest spot to Taney.

[00:46:17] Well, whatever you have to do to make it safe. I don't want to be injured leaving my neighborhood. Understood. Thank you. The other, I'm sure, I don't know what the chief discussed with

you, but part of the efforts by the city to improve the rail crossings, we've been talking with Norfolk and Southern for years, as you're probably aware.

[00:46:45] So we do believe we will make headway with them. We're hoping that within a year or two, hopefully within a year, but I'll hedge my bet and say two, we've gotten some commitment that they will be improving the crossing.

[00:47:04] So we are trying to make headway with them. Yes, ma'am. Okay. You're aware of it. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Robinson. Next, I have Mark Boston signed up.

[00:47:23] Good evening, sir. Yes, good afternoon, Mayor and City Council. Yes, again, my name is Mark Boston. I've been a resident of Manassas City since 1989, and I want to speak regarding the proposed tax rate.

[00:47:42] For comparison purposes, Prince William County tax rate, which I believe to be 104, is higher than Stafford, Loudoun County, Fairfax. Manassas City is at 126. That's a 22% higher rate than the highest county in the surrounding area.

[00:48:07] And Manassas City is already blessed to have multiple large high-tech companies such as Lockheed Martin, where I retired from, BAE, Micron, and others, which significantly enhances the commercial tax base for the city.

[00:48:30] It's absurd that we have, and I believe Manassas City has the second highest tax rate in the state of Virginia with respect to the rural state. With that kind of small of a footprint as Manassas City has, and to have that kind of high-tech commercial base, we should not be the second highest tax rate in the state of Virginia.

[00:48:56] And definitely the highest, I think, only behind Manassas Park. So clearly the issue is spending too much. And Prince William County, I know last year, naturally, based on inflation and the national real estate prices going up, in addition to Northern Virginia's real estate going up, Prince William County last year lowered their tax rate.

[00:49:28] Manassas City didn't. And this year, it definitely needs to lower that rate. So that's what I'm asking. The problem we have is not that we're not paying enough. Residents, the problem is not we're not paying enough. The problem is y'all are spending way too much. City governments should be taking care of schools, roads, basic functions. It should not be in the real estate investment business. So thank you.

[00:50:00] Thank you, sir. We are still having our work sessions on the budget, and the public hearing, I had to look for the budget, is April the 28th, so if you'd like to come out then and express that again, that'd be great, too.

[00:50:16] A few months back, I pretty much said my piece on this. I want to reiterate it tonight. Keep doing it. Because I know a lot of times when you have the formal public forum, you all pretty much got your minds made up at that point. Thank you, sir. Next on the list, Lynn Forkel-Green.

[00:50:41] Hello, everyone. Lynn Forkel-Green, Manassas City resident. So I think I'm a little disappointed in tonight's town hall.

[00:50:58] You know, over the past several years of me being involved, I've watched the council be playful and mindful about scheduling these meetings. Part of the draw to the community of having three town halls a year is the interaction.

[00:51:15] And at the beginning of this meeting, Alex was speaking and was not being able to really get the ebb and flow of like a conversation and answers to his questions. And residents really are paying you to remember the meetings you've had.

[00:51:31] Thank you, Tom, for looking it up because I was going to tell you what the screenshots say. You guys have had many meetings. Most of you have been on this board for a while. And December 2020 is when the staff brought chickens up again. You already know what it says. In January 2021 is when many people came to speak against it and not many people were for it.

[00:51:53] And in fact, I did not plan to speak for nor against chickens then. But I believe someone who I didn't know in the audience said something that made me want to speak on the chickens. And that was, if we do not have a policy of enforcement and the enforcement is falling under something like buildings, that's a problem.

[00:52:13] So if we're dealing with live animals, that probably shouldn't have an ordinance that treats a chicken like a shed. However, that doesn't mean I'm against chickens. I'm actually for chickens. I'm 100% for the freedom of a homeowner. If you're going to continue to spend like drunken sellers and own more than 27% of the property available in our city, then you need to figure out our taxes.

[00:52:39] because you're spending our money on anything that a hard decision is for you to tell us that you get to spend our money because you want to. But you're not doing anything really for us. And let me tell you what I mean by that. When we talk about what's truly best for our city, is giving elected officials raises the best decision? When the hard choices you're willing to make seem only involved spending taxpayer money, where does that leave us? Where are the efforts to keep taxes low, protect our freedoms and ensure our safety. Instead, we see decisions that eliminate vital resources, parkland and youth sports for the sake of big money, while we're left

[00:53:18] to figure out how to convince you to serve the best interests of the community. We deserve better than this, and we do. We deserve better than you laughing at us in private meetings. I was at the retreat where similar things happened. It's on video. It's on video. You get comfortable with each other. I understand that. There's friendships. I understand that. This is a hard job. I understand that. But you should have a memory of the promises you've made up here. In January 2021, you said staff would work on a policy that you'd bring back to the community. I wasn't aware that there

[00:53:55] was a meeting this year about that or in the fall. I did not know that staff talked about it. I didn't know that. There wasn't a community conversation about it again. And there's a lot of news articles about the residents of Manassas City wanting these things, wanting chickens.

[00:54:12] You already know what surrounding area has done because journalists have done that for you, too. You can just do a quick Google search and find it, okay? So, Tom, thank you for looking it up, but you already have the policy. What needs to happen is we need to fix the policy, make sure that people know what properties qualify, what the rules are, that there's no meat chickens, and just go ahead and pass it.

[00:54:36] Do what your people are asking you to do. I'm here also to say I'm really disappointed that we're at another conversation where I'm hearing that GMBL fields are going to be sold. You know how I feel about this. It's a great resource for our youth and for our city.

[00:54:56] It was donated land. You own enough. You really do. There's nowhere else to put them. That was a promise most of you up there made on public record with news reporters in the background. You

promised them.

[00:55:13] They shouldn't have to keep coming back and keep coming back, put their kids and their families through these meetings to beg you when all you see are dollar signs. And at no point are my taxes going down. At no point are my utility bills going down.

[00:55:31] So really, what is the benefit of you spending like this or selling like this? I'm just asking you this budget season to really make hard decisions. Don't give yourselves a big raise. There shouldn't be an elected official in Manassas City making six figures when they have staff mainly doing the job.

[00:55:53] If they want to make that salary, cut the staff and do the job. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Green. Next is, it looks like, Ray Brady. Hi, good evening.

[00:56:18] I'm here to ask about a couple points that I have made at other town halls and or I've talked privately to the correct departments. And some things aren't, if they are being worked on, nobody has told me one way or another.

[00:56:35] It's going to get a little confusing. We are doing the third lane on Sudley from Grant to Pass Rowling to Godwin. I'm going to keep my opinion to myself on that. But at any rate, because we're making a third lane, only going one way, I don't know quite why that is.

[00:56:59] I live on Plantation Lane, and at least three to four times a day, if not more, an 18-wheeler truck, what, is longer than this, goes down, turns onto Plantation from either suddenly going north or suddenly coming from Godwin.

[00:57:24] Okay, depending on where they're going. It's the postal truck. Takes a right and or a left onto Plantation. It takes the first right onto Forestwood Lane that is almost not as long as the stinking truck is, okay, so that it can take a right onto Stonewall, which is, again, a small road of sorts.

[00:57:48] Then it takes a left into the back gate of the post office. My responses has been to me, well, they can't turn from Sudley because they're too long or something.

[00:58:04] Okay, supposedly, if they can turn onto Plantation and onto Forestwood and onto Stonewall, why the heck can't they turn off of Sudley? And then when we do make this third lane available, which I do have to question, how much longer is this going to be?

[00:58:26] I'm serious. I can't get from Plantation to Rolling Road in less than sometimes 10 to 15 minutes. And this construction has been going on a long time. Supposedly, the reason for doing this at all was because of the cut-through.

[00:58:44] That is not going to happen now. Okay, so anyway, I don't understand the logistics of why this truck has to do this four-plus times a day. Now, when it's reversed, the same thing.

[00:58:59] It comes out of the back lot, takes what is a rather small right-hand turn, Then a left-hand turn onto Forestwood, and then onto Plantation, but it then goes to the right, because it's probably going to Dulles, where the, I understand the whole thing goes.

[00:59:17] Okay, I don't understand the logic as to why it can't turn from Sudley, and when that third lane is finished, it's plenty wide now. I shouldn't be seeing an 18-wheeler coming down my street that was not built for that kind of weight.

[00:59:36] It's going to end up wrecking the roads, and I, as a taxpayer, am going to end up paying for that. I think it's unfair, and I have made this a point now for at least two to three years, and I've never gotten a response from anybody showing me, proving to me, logistically, why.

[00:59:57] The second thing is, someone just brought up speed tables, not speed humps. Okay, I've been told, again, this is in reference to Plantation Lane, I have been told that they can't do it on plantation because of what you were saying between the first responders and whatever else.

[01:00:19] And the plows, the snow plows, they're going to wreck, you know, a small thing. Yet, and I understand that, but the second point I have to make is plantation lane has been studied and studied.

[01:00:37] Someone from whatever department, traffic, whatever, I've even kind of spoken to Chief Keene about this before. Someone has done traffic studies as recently as about three or some months ago. Evidently, there is a huge amount of traffic that goes up and down plantation.

[01:00:57] My driveway, there are times when I can't get out or in my driveway. And part of the problem is there is a curve there for anybody who's ever been up and down it. if you're coming from Victoria Street, there is a curve. If I'm coming from the Victoria Street side and I try to make a left into my driveway, if there's even a van which is not past the limits, parked anywhere on that curve, I cannot safely see what is coming from Sudley down plantation.

[01:01:36] And as someone else had referenced, I'm going to end up having an accident and it's going to end up being my fault because it's a thoroughfare otherwise. Someone has called and talked to me about that. We've used the term mirrors. We've used the term, really what I would like to see is someone who could put a no parking just at that curve so that I could see. I invite anybody to come sit there for half an hour and just watch. We have a lot of traffic on plantation.

[01:02:12] It's cut through traffic, granted, okay? Manassas Park, first responders going from point A to point B, et cetera, et cetera. Speaking of that, speaking of that, when this possible new fire station gets built, I don't even want to think about it.

[01:02:34] And real quickly with that, on the renderings that people show about having that fire station where it is, Nowhere on those renderings does it show the Wawa there, giving the citizens a little bit of a false reality as to how cramped that space really is.

[01:02:56] It's already, I could throw a stone from Wawa and, you know, touch the building. And how can you put a one or two-story fireplace, I mean a fire station here, and not end up with traffic galore?

[01:03:13] So I appreciate it. The railroad crossing, don't even talk about that. That's true enough. Okay, thank you. Finally, finally, finally. I have to give complete and huge kudos to our police department.

[01:03:29] There has been more than one time when I've had to utilize them for one point or another. But other than that, we are up there, and I think everybody needs to know what they do. Thank you. Ma'am, if you might. Ma'am, ma'am.

[01:03:45] Ma'am, ma'am. Ms. Brady. You're not done. A couple of things. Number one, the renderings with regard to them, let me sort of work backwards. Renderings with regard to the fire station show the existing Marsteller school. Yes. Not all the school is going to be there when we're done. So part of the school gets demolished, and that's where the space comes from.

[01:04:05] I never understood that to be the case when they talked about the community center. It's the case. Okay, well then, I'm disappointed. Trust me on that. I'm disappointed that the citizens don't know that. With regard to the curve, and I'm familiar with the curve, I want to ask Mr. Burke and Mr. Urcieri if we can take a look at the park districts.

[01:04:28] I'm on there enough going to Stonewall Park sometimes and stuff that I'm familiar with what you're talking about. But the third thing I want to talk about with regard to the tractor trailers. And I'm going to go way, way, way, way back when I was much younger, and I drove very, very large buses.

[01:04:48] sort of not quite tractor-trailer size, but similar size. I will tell you, if I was in a large bus and was trying to make the turn at Stonewall into the post office and the little access road there with the traffic that often builds up there, that's a disaster waiting to happen on multiple levels between pedestrians, cars, and there would be accidents of glory.

[01:05:21] I understand what you're saying, and I'm not disagreeing with you, but I'm also looking at the other side, the equation from my personal experience. And going the other way, if they're coming, you know, going in front of the old bank on the access road to get from Plantation to Stonewall.

[01:05:41] But I'm talking directly from Sudley. From Sudley, yeah, right straight into the post office. Forgive the service road. Yeah, that is one of the most goofed up intersections in the universe. Well, and that is true. And I don't have a good answer. But why can't they turn off of Sudley over the service road, for lack of a better term, and right into the side gate, which is no wider or less wide, I don't think, than the other gate they're going in?

[01:06:10] The Postal Service, I don't have an answer for you. I'll swing by, I think Doug may have an answer. But it's on our streets, so we do have an answer. Doug's just like, yeah. I know, we've had this. Yeah. I know.

[01:06:29] we may not like the answer we have spoken with the postmaster their truck drivers cannot navigate from suddenly on the plantation onto the access road then back onto stonewall into the side gate so whether that makes them a good or a bad truck driver i don't know um but they go off of suddenly on the plantation then cut over to suddenly i mean over to stonewall and go into the side which is her complaint because it goes right by her house and her street but we've we tried to work with

[01:07:05] the postmaster um we're not they say they can't do it that's like dealing with no folks other I can answer that. I've worked at this. We have dogs for a group. Well, no. It's just what I see.

[01:07:21] Why can't they do this? You're one of these truck drivers. No, I'll deliver you around. No, they cannot. They have to go in that side entrance. That's the only entrance those trucks can get in. If they go in all of a sudden and go straight in along the building, they have no room to maneuver behind the building to get to the loading dock.

[01:07:41] The only way they can get to the loading dock is go in that side entrance. And some guys have a lot of trouble. They might have to take three or four tries to get to the loading dock. They've used the longest trucks that are possible, but that's the only way they can get in there.

[01:07:57] So I'm hearing it won't change. They have to use that side entrance. And you're just going to pay for the roads because of the heavy weight of the roads. We are. Yeah, thank you. I'm sorry. Thank you, ma'am. Anyone else? She was the last person that actually was on the list signed up.

[01:08:14] If there's anyone else that wishes to address council, now's the time. Come forward. Oh, Ms. Ellis has something. Mr. Plagniak, come on. So, how do you like the citizens coming here and just giving you everything they got?

[01:08:34] You know, well, I got a few things. I watched the meeting on the 12th, and it did sound like there was some disparaging words from someone in the room about our disabled veterans. They deserve all the respect that anyone can give them.

[01:08:53] So that should be off the table. And the other thing is the elderly. I feel that this was brought up too, the threshold for their discounts. Are you considering, have you considered a yearly increase to go with the cost of living to keep them with that or something that would, maybe yearly every other year or something to keep the people.

[01:09:21] 'Cause what I heard was, it's a million dollars of a discount from the city, but to those elderly, it's everything. You know, you don't want them to drop off. So I'm just suggesting a yearly thing, implement something for them.

[01:09:38] The other thing is capital improvement projects for the utilities. I know there's a lot of wish lists out there, and I think the way I understand it, we're not going to be realizing the full financial benefits of the data centers for three or four years.

[01:10:00] Is that correct? Why don't we be a little frugal and save some of those capital improvements for when we're getting that? We've got a whole field full of new homes coming. We're going to have more taxes from them. I know we're going to have more people.

[01:10:17] We're going to have to service more people, but we're going to have more income from real estate for them. And then in a few years, we'll have more income from the data centers.

[01:10:34] I just feel these capital improvements need to wait. I think you've got to really think about that. And you're hearing it from other people. You know, you're spending too much money. Maybe we need to wait on some of the capital improvement projects.

[01:10:50] I don't know. You know, you're talking about some of this-- because what I noticed was the electric-- OK, there's my question. Have we-- the reserves-- they also want to rebuild the reserves. Have we used reserves every year?

[01:11:07] Have we used all our reserves? So why do we have to build it up in two years? Can't we spread that out? Can we possibly spread instead of 8.5%, can we raise it at a lower rate instead of building our reserves in two years, give it three or four years?

[01:11:27] Can we consider that? I mean, we're not using all the reserves, right? I don't know. You might know. I'm asking a question. Are we using the reserves every year? Are we using all the reserves every year? Yeah, if you don't mind.

[01:11:47] We have used reserves. What you talked about, frankly, was a topic of discussion, frankly, between a couple of us this afternoon. So that's a part of the process. It's obviously important that we have reserves. I understand that. We have them at a, you know, set policy level.

[01:12:06] But whether it's -- and that's just part of the budget process, and we will go through that. The capital improvements in utilities are not paid from tax dollars. so they don't tie into the data centers or anything any way like that they are paid from by the revenues generated from the utility rates okay so so

there's you know and again so there's there's sort of a massaging effect of you know what's the urgency yes and and what's the availability of funds and capacity you know manpower everything else to work through that and that's and staff helps guide us on that but that's that's a serious part of the conversation

[01:12:46] uh council did increase uh decided at the last meeting to increase the threshold for uh the aged uh set aside so i think we took it from 56 to 60 years and that's the start this first time we've changed it in many many many years okay and i will tell you and this gets back to the earlier conversation i've tried to stay away because this is a little personal for me um no one up here in any way, shapes, or form, denigrates or thinks anything less than the world of our veterans.

[01:13:23] And if you think that, you disagree with that, or you think that of me, I will meet you one-on-one anywhere. I take it that damn serious. What has happened is not the fault of the veterans.

[01:13:39] It's the fault of the geniuses in the General Assembly. Because they have placed in the law, I think it's actually a constitutional amendment now, An uncapped, unfunded mandate on local government with regard to the 100% disabled veterans.

[01:13:59] And no, it's not going to go there. Are they deserving of everything we can give them? Yes. But it comes at a cost that is borne by everyone else. Because whether you say, Mr. Boston, you and I will have a discussion, we spend too much money.

[01:14:20] We spend to have the level of services the citizens have told us they want. That costs X. If we are taking a certain amount of money away from that, that extra cost increases the cost to everyone else. The city has set for many years a policy that we would set aside 2% of our general revenue for the disabled and elderly.

[01:14:49] If you look at other municipalities in Northern Virginia, that is a very generous amount. That's a higher percentage than most other jurisdictions do. The challenge we have is that while we can control and massage the numbers on low-income and aged, the veteran number is just an absolute.

[01:15:11] If you apply, you get. Am I right, Mr. Commissioner? If you're 100% disabled, you apply, you get. Period. Regardless of the cost. That's a challenge. And it's a challenge for us. And all we talked about the other day is, you know, if you lived in Stafford or Norfolk or somewhere where you have an even larger veteran population it's an even bigger bigger bigger challenge and i don't know there is a good answer there frankly isn't going to be an answer because the general assembly is not going to change it's not politically viable so it's just one of those

[01:15:45] things it is localities suck it up yeah uh we got to figure out how to suck it up and with that you know with within this balancing act of trying to do what you know the level of services the citizens want and paying for that and you know paying for teachers and policemen and everything else that we do um and and that's that's the challenge and that's the discussion the council rustles with right i'm not again we are not to mark up until mid-may so all these discussions are preliminary

[01:16:22] preliminary right they're they're setting the stage yeah but i appreciate the conversation And so the utilities, the capital improvements for utilities, and it's paid by the raising the utility rates. Don't raise them as much.

[01:16:37] You don't have to raise them as much. That's what I'm saying. Whether it's my taxes or it's my utilities, these capital improvements, maybe you have to look at them a little closer. Maybe we don't need

them right now. Some I understand we do. I know changing the underground cables on a regular basis, that's important.

[01:16:55] I understand that. But some of the other things on the wish list should maybe be set aside. I've been waiting. Thank you.

[01:17:11] Well, I appreciate all the comments, and I want to go back. And, you know, I'm very familiar with the post office, so I figured it was that, too, because, you know, on top of, you know, the road being small, you know, being convenient, too. And I don't know how to drive those, but I can only imagine how difficult it is.

[01:17:30] But I appreciate the insight. When it comes to the elderly increase, we were not able to do it because it has already advertised. The commissioner of the revenue, when it comes to the yearly thing, he brings it up all the time.

[01:17:47] He reminds us. And, you know, it is up to us to take action. I believe this is the first time that we're contemplating. And we did have four head nods to increase it. And it was \$4,000. We don't know what that is going to do. But we hope that, you know, once we see, you know, how much that expands or that, you know, that goes up, you know, that we have a better idea on how much money is going to be committed and that we can continue to do a yearly change.

[01:18:17] But, you know, I just want to make sure that you knew that, you know, the commissioners, And one has always been bringing this up. Then with the veterans, you know, I cannot change the perception that happened, but I will tell you, you know, some of the benefits, you know, even my kids are going to get when they go to college.

[01:18:41] So I, you know, I do understand and, you know, I, you know, great respect and, you know, I'm sorry that it felt like that. The reserves on the, I believe it was, you were talking about the utilities, the reserve on the utilities.

[01:18:56] Yeah, it's from the 12th, the meeting from the 12th. Yes, we discussed that. One of the things that, you know, that concerned me, and I don't know if you watched that part when I was asking, you know, why it's like this and, you know, how it came about. So it was a few years. So, you know, we have, it's not set in stone.

[01:19:14] We still have many sessions that we have to discuss and we have worked through. And, you know, to me, until, you know, we get to the day, you know, that we have to approve it, it's still, you know, I want to hear from everybody and have the input.

[01:19:31] Some things that might not be, I don't want to say no important, but some things that might not come to mind that we have, it's like something like in the water, the ammonia that goes in the water. We do have different requirements from Cog and from different places that we do.

[01:19:50] And other things that we do, like when we change the Lucasville pounds, all the improvements, they also count toward those things that we have to do. So sometimes, you know, not everything is just there, and that's why I wanted to bring it up.

[01:20:06] But I definitely, you know, will take into consideration everything that you said, And if there is something that we can do, that we can delay, that we are not required in a few years to meet, you know, that will be, you know, something, you know, that we can do. So I will be mindful of that.

[01:20:22] Yeah, like what you were saying, something about they were complaining about moving their boat out to the lake. If they got to move their boat across to a difficult, you know, if they don't have an easy place to get it right away, maybe they're going to have to continue doing it.

[01:20:37] You know, maybe something like that has to be, you know, think about that. I mean, everybody's here telling you that, you know, we're all being stretched. So, you know, we're asking you to look at everything. I have one more thing. The citizen survey that was done last year, and when we, I was here when that was presented, and they said there was 407 responses to that citizen survey.

[01:21:09] Does anyone know how many were sent out? Is there any way to find out? We were trying to get that answer, and we couldn't get it. I believe the total number was 3,000 that were mailed out to, and the consultant, I don't know what it is on, the consultant did specify certain areas where they identified where they wanted to pick residents.

[01:21:39] Right, it was, I saw it was spread out pretty well throughout the city, and we talked about that. And so 407 interrupted. On the website, it says we have 43,000 people in the city. So a little quick math. It's less than 1% of our population.

[01:21:59] Are you satisfied knowing that you're only getting responses from 1%? You're really not getting a cross-section of this city. Do you not want to hear what the city has to say? We used to have three of these meetings a year. Now we got two of this year. do you not want to hear what people have to say well you're you're doing the opposite you're you're only having two of these meetings you should have more you should you should have four or five so people can come here and look at you and get responses from you i mean you can send emails that's fine they're not always answered on a timely manner but here i can get some feedback

[01:22:35] but do you does anyone do you all feel satisfied knowing that it's it's less than one percent of The population is answering your survey, and you're basing your budget on less than 1% of the population. You're not getting a good cross-section.

[01:22:52] You know, and in this, you have these consultants coming in here, and they're saying, and you said that's normal, that 400. The city hires a consultant that does surveying throughout the nation, and they never send out to the same individuals.

[01:23:11] And so what they're doing is, and what the city has been doing of all the years so we've been doing the survey, is we track trends based on the different folks that respond. And you're correct that no matter how many we send out, the response from folks, unless they have a particular issue that they want to talk about, they won't usually give a survey the time of day.

[01:23:39] So the folks that are interested typically have a concern. And leg stretching, or did you want to say something? I'll defer. I don't have the history with the surveys that you do.

[01:23:56] We also have to make sure we're comparing the right number. He's talking about residents. The survey is talking about households. Two different things. Number of residents may be 43,000, but they go by the number of households, not the number of residents.

[01:24:12] They do this nationwide. The number of return they're looking for nationwide is somewhere between 12 and 15 percent. Our return ratio is roughly 13 and a half percent. So when they do their

surveys and their trends, they believe that is a good cross-reference of nationally and the number of households of what you would see on a national trend.

[01:24:35] So make sure we use the right numbers, not residents, households, because that makes a big difference in the survey as well. All right, so how many households do we have in the city? Matt, do you recall? Give me a call. 22. 18, 20,000? Oh, it's 20,000. All right, send out 20,000 surveys.

[01:24:51] No, it's 11. 13,000. 13,000. send out a survey to every household and it's meant for a rant you could do that but now you're starting getting into the technique of how you do surveys just like you do a poll survey you don't pull everybody that's coming out it's a random survey there's a number of different ways to do it you are correct on that you could send it to every household and then get see what your return rate is yeah but i was just trying to clarify what our survey did and what we were doing all right All right. Thank you. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Mr. Padme. Anyone else?

[01:25:32] And in the meantime, 12,917 properties. 12,917. Including commercial, single home, townhomes, condominiums, and commercial industrial properties. Okay. Thank you. I'll be quick. I just think my original message might have been lost. I don't want to take up any more people's time.

[01:25:52] I probably will never come back here. Disabled vets. In the state of Virginia, it's 100%. Service-connected disabilities. Other states are far less. So to say that, yeah, it's a tough thing. It is a tough thing. I wasn't pro-military before I joined the military, until I lost friends, until I went through the things that people up here have experienced.

[01:26:13] We don't get to blame that tough thing on it's too hard. We know it's too hard. It's too hard every year. It's been too hard for 276 years.

[01:26:22] It doesn't get to be too hard this year. We know it's coming every single year. It's not new to us. Mr. Smith, your raise or your addition in funds is not because of the veterans. It's because of the wasteful spending. We cannot lose that message. We've bought buildings. We found \$50 million in tax breaks for Micron, but we're going to complain about 100% disabled vets. That's the message that cannot be lost.

[01:26:54] You guys are responsible for our money. You guys are responsible for taking care of our community. Disabled veterans are a part of that community. We cannot get around it. They are one of the best parts of our community. I apologize for being loud and for being disrespectful, but those comments were disrespectful.

[01:27:11] And I'm not even 100%. We do not. The state of Virginia does not do enough for its veterans. We could do a lot more. Please do not write it off for being too hard. That's disrespectful to a lot of people. Thank you very much.

[01:27:27] So we are, and I will continue, I think we are, and we'll continue the conversation continues to be that what can we do for the elderly? That is, there was, there was a bill that didn't pass where, it has nothing to do with that.

[01:27:43] You guys are wasting our money all over the place, and you're going to talk veterans, and you're going to get veterans and seniors together because they're two minority groups? I will talk about all the unfunded liabilities. We have unfunded liabilities at the schools. Why is Micron getting \$50 million in tax breaks?

[01:28:02] And we're going to complain about that. How are they getting \$50 million in tax breaks? Where does that number come from? From you. You said it's found money. It's \$10 million a year. Or am I? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Yeah, you extended the tax breaks.

[01:28:18] We extended the deal that we have with it, which we made of Micron. It's not necessarily a tax break. It's a leveling of their taxes because of the way they're up and down. of the depreciation of their equipment I don't know if you don't want to listen to the truth then I'm sorry that's fine I'll take my crown off the table old town in Marsteller none of that stuff needed to be bought we don't get to complain about veteran a hundred percent total and disabled like those are people that are messed up for life for defending your freedoms and you're gonna

[01:28:52] but again it's not about the veterans it's about the Virginia put in a mandate that we are covered and we'll continue to cover it. It doesn't matter how many years it is. What we are trying to do is increase and make a change for the elderly because the elderly also need support.

[01:29:11] So I'm not addressing what you were saying because I understand, but once Richmond make a decision and they are no part of it and they have bills, they have refused to pass when they could be contributing to that too.

[01:29:27] - I was just saying, I don't want my life of money. We don't get veterans for that. Mr. Smith didn't get his raise because of the veterans. It's because of the building. He said four names and looked right at you at that meeting and said, that's where it started.

[01:29:47] After he started talking about whatever increases for y'all, he started talking about the veterans and how much money they lost. It's not just you, Mr. Smith. I'm saying it's for the L. But none of us is getting an increase. I'm not understanding what you're talking about. What raise are you talking about? It doesn't matter. Raising the threshold.

[01:30:03] He's talking about raising the threshold for discounts. No, but he's talking, he said, Mr. Smith, you're raised, you're benefits. They brought your name up. Someone brought your name up. That's what he's referencing. If you go back and watch that, and just put yourself in the shoes of a man.

[01:30:22] Okay. And listen to that interaction. Mr. Demeria. It was disrespectful. And it doesn't get to be excused away with, you spend too much. Mr. Demeria. Don't stop. May I? Please don't, you indicated not coming back.

[01:30:39] Please continue because in addition to the surveys, we take notes and our decisions are made on what come from the comments. So, Phil, I've said this to you before. Please don't hesitate to come in and speak your mind because we factor in your ideas.

[01:30:56] I just was unclear as to what money you thought I was getting because some reference was made before that we were getting something from somewhere. And six figures, something about six figures. Mr. Smith, you finished? I'm sorry, I'm not cutting you off. Mr. DeMario.

[01:31:13] I apologize that I made what you perceive as disrespectful to our veterans. It was not meant that way. I am the chairman of the Veterans Committee for the Association for the Commissioners of the State. We work tirelessly to make sure that our veterans get what they've got coming to them.

[01:31:32] What my purpose of going to the meeting was that, as Mr. Wolf said, they have a policy of not going over 2% for relief and exemptions. With the way the veterans are going, they continue in, I think it

was 2015, \$200,000.

[01:31:56] This year, sniffing a million dollars. If they want to stay below that 2%, we have to be cognizant of that. But my purpose with going to council was to try and ask them if we can raise the highest number so that our elderly can continue to get relief.

[01:32:18] I don't have any problem with our veterans. I am a pro-veteran guy. I do have a problem with the way the state set it up to where, like you just said, other states don't give anywhere near what we give. No, they give a lot more. There's other states that don't give anywhere near what we give, and our veterans, you, didn't go to war or to service for manassas.

[01:32:44] You went for the United States of America. My problem is that the way it is put on the localities is wrong, because there's some localities, Stafford, 9% of their real estate revenue goes to exemption for veterans.

[01:33:07] I don't think that's fair to Stafford. That's crazy. Why is that not spread out amongst the whole state or spread out amongst the whole nation? That's my problem with our relief, our exemption for the veterans. But I believe in it. I absolutely believe in it.

[01:33:25] But we also have to be cognizant of the fact that they've got a 2% limit. I don't think it's a hard and fast rule, but that's what Mr. Pate put in place. And we're getting to that point. We're above that right now, 2.01%. and they needed to know that so I need to let them know and that next year the veterans are going to be even higher because they've gone up every single year and they need to be aware of that I was making them aware I was not telling them not to give it to the veterans because we don't have that choice to begin with I am 100% behind the veterans I work diligently

[01:34:01] there's no because early question observed that 100% I was going to be silent on this That came out of your mouth. Yes, it did.

[01:34:17] Because there are no limits on it. Hopefully, we're going to go to \$60,000 household income for our elderly. There is no limit on net worth, income, or anything else on our disabled veterans.

[01:34:38] And it is making it very difficult to give relief to our elderly. And that was my concern. but that they had to be aware that it's going to continue to go up because people would, and that Lamborghini is in Powhatan County, I think, but it doesn't matter.

[01:34:55] It does matter. You said it about here. You said it about our neighbors. You said it about our vets. And now you're explaining it away. You're excusing it away like it didn't say it, like it's not that big of an issue. I apologize for giving that. You shouldn't have bought Old Town Inn. You shouldn't have bought R-Stellar. You shouldn't have bought all the other stuff.

[01:35:15] That's out of my hands. You turned it into the seniors versus veterans thing. I watched it. We all can go back and watch it. It's all because of the 2%. And they needed to be aware of where we are on what we're giving the veterans. They need to be aware of that.

[01:35:31] Thank you for the opportunity. Maybe we have to go to the state and ask the state to help us support the veterans. What Ms. Vasquez Luna was trying to say is that there was a bill that if you're at a certain percentage, the state will pick up half of it. It didn't go anywhere.

[01:35:49] It should come from the state or it should come from the Fed. It shouldn't come from the locals. It's not fair. Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Oklahoma all offer what the state of Virginia

offers plus more for 70% disabled debts.

[01:36:09] By the locality or by the state? The locality or the state does it? The point is, I don't know. But you said Virginia does all this stuff for their veterans. There's other states that do more. Why aren't we reaching out to them?

[01:36:25] Why aren't we seeing what other people are doing? I'm all with you. The state. But don't put it on the locality because our veterans are not spread out evenly amongst the localities. There's some localities, plenty of localities now, that have gotten rid of their elderly and disabled relief because they can't afford it.

[01:36:42] I am not arguing any of the money for it. We paid you to figure that out, and I thank you. I appreciate and respect you for that. Your comments about veterans, and I'll go back to the very first thing I said, were disrespectful. I apologize that they came across that way, and I am not disrespectful to my veterans.

[01:37:00] Thank you for that. Not at all. I don't think anybody up here took them as disrespectful. And when I brought, I might have been the one that brought up Mr. Smith, maybe because our age. Appreciate it. And we're getting to that age to where we're going to be eligible for that, except for the fact that there's a \$60,000 limit.

[01:37:19] I feel young. Well, Mr. DeMerry, if you and Mr. Murphy would like to set up a meeting to talk, yes. So, I mean, I definitely want you to be heard and, you know, talk offline. Well, I just want to make sure that I did not mean any disrespect. Right, I understand that.

[01:37:34] And I think everybody up here knows that I didn't mean any disrespect. We know that, yeah. So, is there, okay, we're going to move on. Is there anyone else who wishes to, oh, I'm sorry, okay. Good evening, sir.

[01:37:53] Yes, my name is Gary Froh. I live down on Jackson Avenue since 1971. And I come just to get some information, okay? And the question I have is, I understand that we're going to buy MIFCO for \$3.5 million.

[01:38:09] Is that right? Yes, \$3. Okay. I think the citizens here, and I'm kind of with this guy. Let's not buy that and give it to the veterans, okay? That's what I think people are trying to say here.

[01:38:25] You know, I'm a veteran. I was in the Vietnam War. I wasn't in the war, but I was in at that time. and i know that i've seen the veterans coming back okay very disrespected when they came back from that war but i just like to make make a decision buy myth go for three and a half million or give it to the elderly and the veterans thank you thank you sir anyone else come on down alan good evening madam mayor members of council i'm alan muchnick i live in the city on park street um i wasn't

[01:39:04] necessarily going to uh speak today but i do want to thank uh the council and the senior staff in the city for investing in our future and I think it's really important. These people are criticizing the investments in Marsteller Park and in the Old Town Inn, the Manassas Shopping Center, but these are investments in the future and the MIFCO property.

[01:39:27] These are really key investments in the future of our city that will pay big dividends in the long term and thanks for the city staff, the Economic Development Authority and the Council for realizing that

we do need to invest in our city and think long-term. There's recently been some discussion about the cancellation of the Route 28 bypass and all the additional traffic that will be coming into the city.

[01:39:53] Of course, there will be more traffic if there was a bypass, actually. But I just want to point out that we really have three bypasses of Route 28 through downtown Manassas already. We have Route 28, the Route 230 board bypass, the Prince William Parkway, the original Manassas bypass that goes to I-66, and from there you go north on 28.

[01:40:16] We have Liberia Avenue, which connects both Liberia Avenue extended up to, from 234 south and the Prince William Parkway up to around, you know, downtown Manassas to connect the center of the road. And then you also have Godwin Drive going to Sudley Road and I-66.

[01:40:33] So we already have three bypasses, and at least one of them. I know on southbound Sudley, there's a sign when you approach Godwin Drive that tells you to go if you're going south on Route 28 to turn right there. That perhaps what the city can do is to promote the use of these alternatives, work with our regional partners, work with VDOT, work with the GPS wayfinding apps to encourage commuters to use those routes, and, you know, especially if it should be saving people time, and maybe even long-term, think about making Route 28 through Manassas, Route 28 business, and somehow

[01:41:11] designate a bypass route around Manassas as a way. But you know, traffic through the city, community traffic isn't particularly good, but traffic through the city is good for business and brings people here, so wanted to just point that out. Lastly, I've mentioned, as far as the budget goes, and I'm not really sure of the legal status of this, but Northern Virginia has the authority, and Northern Virginia, and I believe cities do as well, to assess a commercial and industrial transportation tax on commercial industrial properties of up to 12.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

[01:41:47] It's dedicated for transportation. Many localities do that. If we were to do that, I know Prince William County is now finally considering doing that. Fairfax, Arlington, I think Alexandria have that tax. That was implemented many years ago when NVTA was funded.

[01:42:05] But that could be used for a lot of things that we're doing now, like funding VRE and OmniRide, for instance, and take some of the burden out of the general fund for capital improvements. Thank you for having this opportunity to speak. Thank you so much.

[01:42:23] If I may, thank you. You brought up many things. And, you know, since we have weather online or here, you know, for everybody, I mean, our tax money from the gas is not sufficient, so we have to make up some of the money that it comes for the funding.

[01:42:44] So that, you know, this is just a reminder. If you can put tax in our city, that tax, it goes to the locality, and that it's important that we work on that and that we build on that. It might not be you, it might be somebody from your household, but when you put gas, it does matter if you put it on 234 in the county line or if you put it right here in our city.

[01:43:06] So I hope you are mindful of that. When it comes to the commute, there is something that it's, I just found out today. So in the future, we're going to, you know, maybe we're going to be able to share it, but it's called commuter cash, and you can go to your app store, and in the app store you can do the commuter cash, and it gives you a rewarding system for your commute.

[01:43:30] It gives you basically money if you take a different route, if you take it in a different time, if you take different ways to go, whether you bike or your band pool or if you take the train.

[01:43:52] So this is cash that you can use. Once you go up on your points, you can get your money back as a check or you can get your money to use the tow road or something else. So there is different things that you can get for taking a different route.

[01:44:11] But definitely, you know, I will say, you know, part of the conversation that the future board will have with the county and also Manassas Park, it has to be, you know, addressing that, you know, we can know, you know, we have to regionally work together.

[01:44:32] We do with BDOT, we do in TPB, we do in other instances. And, you know, this cannot be, you know, off the table because it is affecting us. So I appreciate that, and then I thank you for the feedback to me.

[01:44:49] I believe Vice Mayor Mark Wolf has said it before. You know, if you think about these investments, it's no different than when the lake was acquired.

[01:45:05] And it's about the vision. It's about the betterment of the city. And, you know, at the end, you know, everybody is, you know, have a say, you know, what is their reason. But I appreciate the feedback. And going back, you know, whether you send us an email, you call, you know, see us and you talk to us, or you come here.

[01:45:28] I mean, we still are working on the budget, so we still have a way to go on many more sessions. Thank you, Madam Mayor. Thank you. Anyone else that wishes to speak? Ms. Lane. So just one thing.

[01:45:46] my name is Diane Lane. I'm a city resident since 1998. I agree with Mr. Muchnick in terms of the investment strategy for the purchases that the city's made. I've lived here since, as I said, 1998, when the crowbar was downtown, when there was no Harris Pavilion, when it was a joke and not a destination. I do not want to go back to those days. So I appreciate those investments for my children and for your children and for our grandchildren. What I struggle with is status

[01:46:24] and transparency and updates. As well connected as we have become with Facebook pages and blue sky and websites, the absence of a daily newspaper delivered to our front door with regular updates by journalists with data and facts is something the community, I think, struggles with. And as someone who was here back in October or November when we were told about the Old Town Inn and the forthcoming announcement to be happening in January, my calendar says it's

[01:47:02] March 17th and here we are with no updaters status. So I would be mindful and ask the council as well as the new COBS director to be mindful of when we talk about dates, when we talk about when we're going to be publishing updates, be serious and use those dates because without a newspaper, without a regular means of communication, we need to be able to count on you to follow through with those dates and those time frames.

[01:47:31] Thank you. Thank you. I anticipated this. Thank you. With regard to Old Town Inn specifically, staff has been negotiating with at least two entities.

[01:47:47] The hang-up, very honestly, is – some people are not going to like this – the hang-up is the election and the changes in the financial markets and people's ability to get financing. So we have two very interested parties that are, frankly, with the changes in the financial markets and the unease in the

financial markets are working to get, you know, \$40, \$50 million worth of financing in place to be able to execute a deal.

[01:48:16] So when they do that, and unfortunately, we thought we had an understanding and, you know, thought it would be in January, and life sometimes didn't work out that way. So as soon as that happens, I'm pretty confident staff will come to us with a deal and be able to execute and move forward on that.

[01:48:34] And, Mr. Vice Mayor, I certainly understand the election cycle and the finances, as does my 401k. So, but the update status, at least during council member time, at any one of the council member meetings would have been a good. Point will take.

[01:48:50] Okay, thank you. And if I may, I have to say, I mean, it has been a long time coming before that it was parking. So, you know, that, you know, it's no lack of interest and we can, no, no, and, you know, I, and, and then it goes to, like, how much can we share if we are trying to negotiate for the, for the And then the law already allow us to do the closed sessions because we want to make sure that we do that.

[01:49:19] So it has never been a lack of interest by, you know, someone trying to purchase. But, you know, there are different things that have taken the time for that to be in place. And then, you know, there have been new, you know, challenges now. But I just want to make sure that, you know, what he said is, you know, I'm sorry, what Vice Mayor said is right on.

[01:49:41] But there was, even before that, interest without being able to say anything. Oh, absolutely. And, you know, Potomac Local has been very good in providing updates, as they are, as Prince William Times and Manassas Journal. But they are time-lacked.

[01:49:58] And they are typically not as timely. They're more filler pieces than they are news pieces. So being more of a news approach. And as I said, you guys each get council member time. Even it's to say we can't say anything right now, but we have not forgotten would be a good idea. Thank you Thank you anyone else Thanks, Miss Lane, you know economic economic development. They also do an updated. Are you on that? Okay That's something they could add to their newsletter that they send out about the upcoming projects and what we have going

[01:50:39] Well, let's hope that this moves along for our hotel. I know they're building one out of two silos So, you know, let's hope that we get our hotel soon. I'm feeling optimistic, actually. So I do want to address a couple things. As a council, you know, I think we have to remember some of the things that we say up here, you know, about updates and promises that we make to the community and make sure that we fulfill them the best that we can.

[01:51:05] This is tough times for many people. I always advocate for, you know, a lower tax bill. And we do have about \$0.07 if we can shave off that tax rate, which was about \$5.5 million, that would give more of a flat tax bill.

[01:51:26] And so we have a lot of work in front of us at the council to see what we can do to keep our promises and be aware of some of the struggles that people are having right now. Thank you so much for coming. I know we have more people speaking, but go ahead. Ms. Plovniak. Good evening.

[01:51:44] I'm Janet Plovniak. I have a couple of things, too. One of them was the comment on the veterans. I listened to that. I have a sister buried at Arlington. It's very close to my heart. The comment did come across very rude. And I had to replay it. You got somebody that's 100% disabled, but they've got live

in a million dollar home and have a Lamborghini in their driveway. They still get the benefit. They still gave their life for this country. They're 100% disabled. My sister's dead.

[01:52:15] so I get that the comment came across very rude I agree with everybody else that made that comment I don't I think that was Zach's point it's just you have to remember we may be sitting home listening and we heard that um town hall meetings Tim's already said something about it we used to have four last year we had three now we've got two that tells me I want to hear less and less and less from the public where we can interact with each other. The ivy that has taken over. Years ago,

[01:52:53] there was an issue with bamboo taking over. So there are things that need to be taken care of. We've got citizens volunteering and doing this on their own. There's not money for that, but there's money for other things. There needs to be money for it, or there needs to be respect for the citizens that are volunteering their time and doing it um the chickens i'm the chicken lady okay nice to meet you i was against the chickens and this is why we are a sanctuary city i know

[01:53:32] that's a big no-no to say we are i live on weems road i live in a huge community that has out buildings in the backyard, people living in there. We can't get code enforcement to come. If we can't get them to come and stop people from living like that, how are we going to make sure that the chickens are taken care of and not taken over? Bird flu is the big thing now. Do we want to bring bird flu to Manassas? If anybody wants to believe in the bird flu, that could be a problem. So my

[01:54:08] point is being against the chickens is because that's exactly right, like Lynn said. Where is it going to be? Who is going to follow up on it? We can't get them to follow up on 10 people living out in a shed in the backyard. So it's a problem. And it needs to be talked about. It needs to be addressed. It is real. We are a sanctuary city. We've been one since 2007. There's lots of people that are like, what? I didn't know that. So it's a big problem here. So we're going to lose funding for that there's a way not to lose the funding don't we need to follow the rules that are set

[01:54:48] in place to not be a sanctuary city then we can have backyards where chickens can live instead of people living unsafe speed humps on main street they can't you can't do that because they've got the fire trucks have to go down main street because they can't get down grant avenue and i'm sure the the lady that was complaining about coming out of there at the circle that fire that was over on Waterford Drive, the fire truck could not get down Grant Avenue and had to go around to get to it.

[01:55:22] It had to go up Prince William Street and around because it's one lane. Beautiful little grass in the middle, but it's one lane and a fire truck couldn't get through. That's a problem. Working with the county. I was at the meeting last week when the people from Pennington, from the county came to talk about Pennington. I was embarrassed at how they were talked to and especially by the mayor telling them they were spending too much money on expanding their school for 20 students

[01:55:56] and we spend money like crazy so it they were not prepared I will admit they did not have the answer to your questions but they were not treated like I would have treated a guest here they have to come to you for that but that was payback for not getting the 28 bypass that's what it looks like to me sitting here sitting here we've been coming for a year there's no cohesiveness here and it is very very obvious i don't know if you all know that we notice it but we do and and how

[01:56:31] can you work together for all of us if you all can't work together uh the data centers two three four years down the road we were oh yeah we're going to get our taxes taxes are going to be lower and all

that things have changed so i agree with my husband maybe we ought to put some things on hold until because we don't know what's going to change we don't know what's going to happen next year we don't know what's going to happen in two three four years we need to take care of things now um the mifco i agree with the gentleman that property underneath there has problems there

[01:57:09] is stuff underneath there most of the city knows it we don't have a newspaper but people talk and like i said i work in a salon people talk there's a lot that goes on a lot that people know most many people are very very unhappy um where does the money go for our parking permits we never used to have that now we have parking permits that we pay in certain areas to park on the street that's extra revenue for the city what is that used for does anybody know it's general fund you know what

[01:57:47] i i get it general non-enterprise okay well it's a lot of money it started out at ten dollars per car per year now it's 25 per car per year to park on the city public street because we're a sanctuary city we have extra cars i had a client she had code enforcement stop at her house during that first storm in january because her car was parked up on the grass not really on the grass it was on the snow and they wrote her a warning for it during the snowstorm where are they when we call

[01:58:25] them want yards checked because they have buildings back there. Oh, nope, we don't have anybody for that. But they can go in and harass a neighbor. Why is your car parked up on there? And it wasn't even on the grass. It was off the street and it wasn't in her downhill driveway. So she parked it on her grass. So there's just things that get taken that are important. And then other things aren't important. And there's a lot of people in the city that are very unhappy. My husband and I going to move we've been here since 1983 i'm not going anywhere so where else would i have a voice

[01:59:00] i have a voice here i'm going to stay here and we should all work together for the city for everyone for the people the people are first not the buildings not the beautification the people matter and um so that's all i have thank you anyone else if not then we are adjourned thank you



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