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Manassas City Council Meeting, Monday, September 21, 2026

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Place Manassas City Council, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (Wistia / RegionalWebTV): <https://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/wtyv43d8ra>

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[00:00:06] Council Member Ellis. Council Member Smith. Here. Council Member Alcina. Here. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Council Member Hudson. Here. Council Member Ellis. Here. Orangeburg.

[00:00:21] Thank you very much. If everyone would humor me and rise for the, um, uh, plunge allegiance, sorry. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:00:44] All right, item 1.1 is George Eary. Thank you, Vice Mayor. I'm just going to lead into Chloe talking real quick just to get it out front because it's at the end of the presentation.

[00:01:01] It's very unusual to ask to add a CIP project right after we've adopted the budget. So the background on this one is our typical planning process as we go through public outreach, identify funding, then bring it to you at the start of your budget cycle over the summer vdot changed the rules on some of the funding cycles so we need to add this project into the cip now in order to accept some of that funding and that's the uh my pitch and i'll let phloey take it to the project some background information about the sanaville sidewalk a 0.2 mile sidewalk on the south side of sanaville road between real place and green lanes

[00:01:38] They will construct two new sidewalks and bike lanes on Carriage Lane and Revyang Drive and evaluate the pedestrian activated hot crossing on the Samuel Road. It's the key transportation project

number seven in the 1935 conference plan.

[00:01:55] In terms of public engagement, the project webpage was created a couple years ago and has all the project information. An open house at two locations along the project quarter was conducted in September 4, 2025, last fall. The project was also presented at the 2025 and 2026 annual backpack meeting, and a public survey was conducted. We received 19 comments, which was included in the packet. In terms of schedule, the draft concept was developed in

[00:02:32] May 2025, and then public involvement was done in the fall, and funding was awarded this summer, 2026, and we anticipate to start design this fall if this project is added to the CIP. In terms of funding, the city was awarded \$2.5 million in transportation alternative program funds, which is federal funding, and \$3.2 million in revenue sharing funds, which is state funding.

[00:03:01] And this is shown on the draft CIP page here, which was also included in the packet. and as matt mentioned moving forward we'll make sure to adjust the funding process to avoid any new project outside of regular project process so i'm happy to answer any questions you may have third process to move forward and add this in the cip next next meet yes all right questions you want to tell mr osina uh yes uh so first of all um are there existing sidewalks on

[00:03:33] centerville road from basically suddenly all the way down to where liberia comes in they are on one side correct yes correct so but on the the other side where you're proposing to do this stretch there are sidewalks or there are some yes so it's connected to existing sidewalk and what's shown in red is the gap missing to connect all the way from liberia to suddenly so that explains why you've chosen that particular link because there is no existing sidewalk essentially okay um and

[00:04:06] then the proposed location for the hawk crossing doesn't look like it and mind you i'm just looking at what's provided here that it is actually where there is a cross street am i correct in that you You're correct. It's a mid-block crossing right in front of the entrance to the MHP, where the MHP sign is there.

[00:04:31] Yes. Yeah. Okay. All right. And why was it determined that that would be the location for the Hawk crossing as to other locations? Yeah, the study showed that location. I mean, again, it's a proposed location, but the study issued that location because that's where the most logical connection with the entire community coming from the south side there to cross to the Mattis Avenue services.

[00:04:59] So it's been seen. We've seen people crossing there, but also the study warrants at that location. And then I think lastly, on Carriage Lane and Rebrianc, there are existing sidewalks.

[00:05:17] no there are not so that's why we're proposing a sidewalk on one side of the street on the west side and then you're putting in bike lanes on those those two side streets correct and reason for just putting bike lanes on those on carriage and reb yank yes what's the reason yes why it's so it's the opportunity to add the bicycle connection since we're adding the sidewalk we're hoping to have enough payments to also add bike lanes to eventually connect us to the bigger network.

[00:05:56] At this point, there is no bike lane or bike facilities on Route 28 or on Mathis, but the plan is to have in the future, so we don't want to have to come back. Since we're doing a project there, we just want to add the bike lane. That's it. And the thinking is that as you do other side streets, that you would add bike lanes as well?

[00:06:15] Correct. In that area? All right, we'll connect with your back network, which would include Mathis and other areas. Does the Mathis Avenue streetscape include a bike lane? Not the streetscape. The streetscape does not include a bike lane, but as part of the redevelopment opportunity, we will have a cycle track there.

[00:06:40] It's a bike lane, a two-way bike lane. Okay, is planned in that regard. And how wide are the sidewalks going to be? A five-foot sidewalk with two-foot buffer, which match the existing sidewalk in that location.

[00:06:58] So when I hear that, I'm seeing street, buffer, sidewalk. Is that correct? Correct. Two-foot buffer, five-foot sidewalk. But you don't anticipate to plant any trees or shrubbery or anything like that. Is that correct? That's correct.

[00:07:15] that two feet is not enough for trees and the intent is to minimize right away impacts the businesses along this okay very good i appreciate you answering all my questions and again congratulations anyone else miss miss ellis thank you um is this a hawk beacon crosswalk that they're putting in there the crossing so the hot crossing that's what's being evaluated as part of this okay do we have an image of that at all i don't have an image does that look like

[00:07:49] what's that our crosswalk right here at the corner this is like a big yes it's a big uh signal the crossover this overhead the street yes okay um and where's the funding coming for that that's vdot okay i mean there's state funding and federal funding but all channels through vdot and any local funding there'll be some local funding for the match we match it what is that amount so it's

[00:08:17] It's a 20% match for the TAP, and it's a 50% match for the state funding, and that's the total here shown, 3.8 million match, NVTAF funds. 3.8 million that this city is putting into the project for the Park Peak and Crosswalk.

[00:08:37] But to be clear, when we talk about local funding, we're talking about dedicated transportation funding, not general fund or other local dollars. It's money set aside only for transportation improvements we have to spend it on. So it's the MBTA money that was awarded to the city annually.

[00:08:58] How many of these HAWK Beacon Crosswalks are in the city now? We don't have any currently. How many are targeted? There's one that's been proposed as part of the study sidewalk at WIMS and Yule, and this one that's currently being studied.

[00:09:16] What is the reason the number of pedestrians crossing the busy roads? The reason is the type of roadway mainly. It's four lanes, undivided, and an RFP, which we have on Church Street, that we're referring to, wouldn't be enough to stop traffic.

[00:09:39] That wouldn't be safe for such roadways. It's going through a VDOT study looking at the criteria, speed, volume, and that's how it's warranted. So how do they warrant, like, by the number of pedestrians crossing daily?

[00:09:55] Like, what kind of figures are they talking about? Do they feel like this is necessary? For those two locations, the counts were not done because all the criteria were met. So if the criteria were met, there's no need for counts because it meets all the safety criteria for a VDOT requirement.

[00:10:13] Okay, so it's based on safety criteria, not really the number of people crossing the street. Not sending people across an uncontrolled intersection without a signal. So the VDOT one should really look

at how far pedestrian crossings are, how many vehicles are on the street, and if the road is, how many lanes across it is before you get up to the more intense pedestrian signal.

[00:10:35] Is it only meant for like 35 mile per hour streets? It could be faster. Yeah, I can't say. And the section's 25, but it's really the four lanes. Well, it's really five lanes here, so yes. Curious why they picked those locations.

[00:10:55] Like, did VDOT tell us that's where they need to be, or did the city set up to side? The criteria is set by Federal Highway and then down to VDOT standards. So basically, as the road gets wider, they look at traffic speeds and distances. And we provided a memo to council on the Sudley one, so it's kind of a criteria used by the state, which treatment you need to go to.

[00:11:16] We'll have some more discussion about these. Again, as Chloe mentioned, it's under evaluation. It's not a done deal that we can do this because there's other issues you need to look at on a corridor like Route 28, but we know the need is there, so this would be your opportunity to at least evaluate it. Yeah, and as we talked about, the Sully Road, that's, well, I know it's a busy road, but it is more of a residential as compared to Sully Road, so it seems like it's a little necessary over there.

[00:11:44] That's just my opinion. Well, this is the connection to the mobile home park, so there's a significant amount of residences on that side of the street that we're trying to connect. But it's mostly a commercial avenue there, residential, like Sudley.

[00:12:00] There's a few commercial places there on Sudley, but not that many, mostly business, you know, office. So, yeah, okay. That's not on the table for this, but I just wanted to give my opinion on that. Mr. Smith, anything?

[00:12:16] Ms. Hudson? Yeah, just a quick note. I think this sidewalk is great and very needed. I know this past winter when we had the snow crete that there was people that unfortunately were walking on 28 because there's just not a sidewalk connection there. So I think this will be good. I know it was a proud day at the TPB when Councilwoman Vasquez Luna and I supported the TAP funding to come in for this project. So thank you for applying for that and look forward to it.

[00:12:41] Very good. For myself, I do have occasion to walk down that strip. I'm going down to get my car fixed on Commerce Court, and it's a miserable walk. So this would be a huge improvement for the community. So looking forward to this. Anything else, Mr. Arceri? You're good to go?

[00:12:57] I think we'll see this on October 26th. On the consent agenda or the regular agenda? I don't see anyone okay? I'm all right. On consent. Very good. Ladies and gentlemen, given the people that showed up late and the crush, we are going to have a five-minute recess, and we will relocate into Council Chambers for the next discussion item.

[00:13:21] All right. Council, please grab your... We only have one set. discussion with regard to First Friday. And I want to start that off actually by calling on Chief Keene, if he can give us an update, because obviously this does tie into the unfortunate

[00:13:54] death on the 4th. There we go. I assume you mean the murder investigation? Yes. What you can share with us in the community? Well, needless to say, it is still an ongoing investigation. So there's very little that I can share publicly outside of probably what I've already spoken about at the

[00:14:27] press releases. You know, first and foremost, our thoughts go out to the family. I had a meeting with them today. They are still suffering great grief as they try to try their best to grasp this and deal with the situation outside of that the investigation as you were aware we arrested three subjects that night or by the weekend one person that night two within the next 48 hours after that investigation is ongoing we're still looking at other people involved as I have stated before

[00:15:05] I think for me and on the police side separating the incidents this incident from our initial investigation would have occurred wherever these three subjects met up at whether that was at a car wash a parking lot unrelated to first friday i've had discussions with community members about the younger people that were there again unrelated to this event this was separated out not tied to first friday unfortunately that's where it occurred at and that is the connection that we have so far are there any questions for the chief okay thank you sir yes sir

[00:15:45] appreciate it. Mr. Olson, for those who may not be aware, I forget how many years it is we've had First Friday now, as a part of the process, there have been ongoing conversations with various stakeholders, including the businesses, the city, and with regard to First Friday for essentially after every First Friday event, there's a after action follow-up, and we have continued to adapt

[00:16:19] and evolve the city's response and how we manage First Fridays as First Fridays have continued to evolve. So, Mr. Olson, I know there have been a lot of conversations in the community, in the business community. Can you, as the chairman or president of HMI, could you fill us in, please?

[00:16:38] On behalf of Historic Manassas, we continue to mourn the tragic loss of life and the violence that occurred in our community on September 4th. Our thoughts, hearts, prayers remain with the victims, their loved ones, and everyone in our community that was affected by this tragedy.

[00:16:55] So we've been meeting with business leaders, city members, city officials, and we think going forward on November 6th with a shortened 5 to 9 p.m. first Friday is for consideration for you all.

[00:17:15] We would like to enlarge the kid zone in the family activity area. We encourage the restaurants to step outside of their doors and serve food in the street. This will not be a DORA event, so there'll be no outside alcohol sales.

[00:17:32] We're going to limit it to three bans in the footprint. So that's what we're proposing. Okay, and can you elaborate as to the discussions you've had with the various business owners and operators in the Old Town area?

[00:17:49] We've been involved with every restaurant in the historic downtown. the merchants that have the retail establishments. And we met the other day with the city manager, the police chief, Mr. Perez, and Mr. with Blaine and Stacey.

[00:18:08] Members have questions for Mr. Teresa? There was a survey that went out. Is that correct by HMI? We did. We put a survey out. Are you still accepting responses, or do you have like a conclusion you can share with us? No, we're still accepting.

[00:18:25] Okay. And that is more so for what we want to do in 2027. Okay. Where are the bans going to be?

[00:18:42] Do you know? Ma'am? The bans, where are they going to be? It's still up for discussion. It'll probably be one on Main Street, one on Battle Street, and one on West Street. Okay. What's the consensus

from the survey that you have out and everyone that you've spoken to, So this proposal that you're bringing to us, is that the majority?

[00:19:09] Yes, ma'am. It's the majority. And I want to clarify one thing. When I said there's no outside alcohol sales, there is also no outside alcohol consumption. You have to be in the restaurant or on their patio to partake, and you can't carry it out into the footprint.

[00:19:25] So three bands, are there going to be any DJs? We just want three points of music. Okay. So if it's a band or DJ, that's to be determined. But there will only be three points of music. That's all I have so far.

[00:19:41] Ms. Hudson? Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. You said the, and thank you for coming to speak with us, Mr. Olson. You said you're going to expand the family area footprint. Can you tell me what it was and what you're planning to make it?

[00:19:59] What it was, it was underneath the Harris Pavilion. And we had, it varied from First Friday to First Friday. coloring moon bounces that type stuff um we want to just double the size of the the footprint so maybe we're going to try to get a rock climbing wall and a moon bounce and um more hands-on coloring hula hoop type things that we've been doing okay um that you know more family activities is one of the recommendations that i received from community members um but what i haven't heard i

[00:20:33] guess is enhanced security in any way is there any plans part of this to add not at this time to change the security plan well the changing of a security plan has a lot of different meanings so for the november that he is talking about no real change in the security plan still anywhere from eight to ten officers in the downtown area for the first friday since there is

[00:21:09] no outside alcohol. We believe that is going to be enough for this one, and I think the bigger discussion that you are relating to is going to be for the 2027 proposals that they may come forward with of what that looks like coming up in the next year. I think that's, for me, that's the appropriate time to change what that is going to look like. Okay, thank you. If I may add to that to also you have to remember that the time change is prior to that first friday so it'll be darker

[00:21:46] an hour earlier that's why we want to go from five to nine and because what it was you want to go to five to nine now what what define what the time was prior it was six to ten six to ten okay was the alcohol sales stuff okay um i you know i i guess what i want to take a moment to add to the conversation some of the other points of interest that our community has shared over the past few weeks. And I know a lot of these things are really challenging to start to instill to, you know, create some spaces that maybe don't exist right now. But I just want to make sure that

[00:22:25] they're brought to the table considered for both HMI and police that are here. I'm just going to kind of list them off. We don't have to discuss each one in depth. But just if you will take a note that these are points to talk about in the coming weeks and months. Having a specific point of ingress or egress for this event. Um, and maybe including, including pre-registration, wristbands, um, check-in points, something to that effect to where if you want to be outside that you have to have done that. Um, and in, in doing that, if it was possible, it's kind of hard outdoors, but to, uh, incorporate metal detectors and a bag policy. Um, other ideas that came from

[00:23:04] the community are instilling a curfew or, um, and changing the timing, which as you've said, you are addressing, um, reassessing the footprint, which you have addressed as well. Um, there have been

recommendations from the community to do a Saturday or Sunday event instead of a Friday event as something else to consider in the future. Um, in terms of, of security overall, um, I received several comments about, uh, monitoring the enhanced monitoring of the parking garage. Um, so something for HMI to consider. Um, and I think really importantly that I think the city could benefit

[00:23:41] from not only in emergency situations, but also weather events and electric events is investing in an emergency alert system, some type of text message system that when something's going on, residents can be immediately notified. Not that HMI needs to be the ones that sponsor that, but I think a system, I agree with the residents who recommended a system like that be put in place. I think it will be helpful. And then finally, there have been discussions about amending our, um, I don't really even know how to call this, amending our code, uh, to reassess

[00:24:17] the, um, firearms ordinance. I know that's not at HMI level, that's more at this level. And I've already, um, brought this to both city manager Burke, the mayor, the police chief and our city attorney. Um, but you know, just something else to keep on the radar for HMI in the year to come.

[00:24:35] Yes, ma'am. If you could forward those recommendations over to HMI and And starting soon, there's going to be a working group to start planning in 2027, so we're not ignoring it. We're going to get right on it right now and hopefully come back to you in January with a plan.

[00:24:52] Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Vice Mayor. Mr. Smith. Yes, sir. Thank you. This continues to be an event that stays heavy on all of our hearts. As everyone knows and states, it hit differently, and it requires some deep thinking and consideration of potential changes.

[00:25:13] As you know, I was a little hesitant about having this kind of discussion at this point on the agenda when the town hall came after this, but I'm assuming that the comments that we may receive from the public will still be taken into consideration,

[00:25:30] At least what HMI has presented is an idea of a way to go, but I don't, I would not like the group, particularly those who can't stay or come back for the town hall or other discussions, to think that that's conclusive, that we are, I am committed to seeing that we hear from the public, and I know that each member sits up here is receptive to that.

[00:25:54] So I just don't want the impression to get out that decisions have been made. It's an interesting proposal. I very much commend HMI for continuing its work with the business and listening to the businesses. And I know that the businesses, by extension, will listen to their customers.

[00:26:13] So I just want to keep this an open process. Thank you for that, Mr. Smith. And I was just having a side conversation with the city manager, essentially to that point, that we appreciate the uh the feedback from hmi and and the business owners the chief um but a a final determination has not been made will not be made tonight uh and we'll continue to noodle through this um we don't have to do anything today tomorrow so we appreciate the start anyone else i'm sorry i'm sorry tom go ahead i didn't see well i appreciate all of that and i i understand

[00:26:51] i appreciate all of that but i i do not think that anybody comes to this meeting thinking especially since we we this is a work session and anybody who's watched city council um have work sessions they know they are exactly that we sit generally facing each other and are able to talk and discuss things, share thoughts and share ideas. And even when there's a town hall meeting after it, we still do a work session where we have, I hope, candid conversations along the way.

[00:27:29] And I don't see this meeting in any way, shape or form different along the way. To my knowledge, over my six years being on council, I haven't seen that what we talk about at a work session has ever precluded our businesses or our residents from sharing their thoughts at a town hall meeting, and I count, I think this will be no different here. But since we are having a work session, we are not having a council meeting and we're not having a town hall meeting yet, a work session, I would like to avail myself of that opportunity to actually roll up sleeves

[00:28:06] and have some discussion along the way here. So first of all, Chief, if I could ask one or two questions here about what has been put forward about the November first Friday. With the reduced hours five to nine, what would happen after nine o'clock? Is it the plan to open streets at some point? How's this going to work? Yeah, as always, our priority is opening up Center Street first, so

[00:28:38] the bands stop playing at nine they are on the side streets we remove or try to get the crowd off of center street to open that and then we succinctly start working on the side streets while the bands are packing their stuff up to get them open up as well and to both you chief and and you mr olsen as you pointed out the time changes will have already taken taken effect correct? That's what you indicated, right? So it'll even be darker here. Is there any thought

[00:29:14] about bringing in outside lighting, for instance, to help, you know, number one, with these family activities? I know it's under the Harris Pavilion, but the streets definitely are much darker in comparison along the way here. So go ahead. Yes. So we are already working with Public quirks of getting portable lighting available to us. We're doing a light assessment. Prior to November, if there's areas that are darker that we think may present some kind of problem for us,

[00:29:48] we're also going to get portable lights in that area as well. And to you, this would not change the ending time for the restaurants, is that correct? They would still be able to stay open until uh 2 p.m uh 2 a.m excuse me correct that is they can if they want to or there are i'm going to say discussions with some of them uh that they may voluntarily close early okay so very good here all right thank you chief appreciate it so mr olson uh just like miss uh councilwoman uh hudson

[00:30:27] i'm happy to share this with you as as well here so uh some thoughts that have been shared with me and thoughts that I have, because I do want to make sure that they get in the mix along with what we hear at this town hall meeting, what you hear in the survey, and what you probably have heard people either calling you or taking you aside and sharing thoughts along the way here. And the reason is, is simply because city council has the ultimate responsibility and ownership of this event here. And so it's always helpful to hear what's going on from the businesses, because they're the ones that make it happen. And I certainly want to be as supportive as I can

[00:31:05] in that regard along the way here. So here are some, again, I'm not going to claim ownership of every one of them here, but shared with me as well here. First of all, moving forward and looking ahead to 27, that First Friday becomes more uniquely Manassas, where while you do have themes such as, you know, the dog days of, you know, summer and things of this sort along the way.

[00:31:34] Themes could include where we have local music showcases, you can have cultural nights, youth performances, military and veterans recognition, a technology and innovation night tied to the innovation district, Nexus 234, small business spotlights, things that kind of broaden the approach along the way here. Next, and this is one that kind of I've noticed here because I did attend the August, as you know, the August first Friday and I stayed, came late and I stayed late

[00:32:11] so I could see essentially what happened once 10 o'clock came and Dora ended and then what was going on. And one of the things that I noticed with is that we do put a lot of people in a small, small area so to speak it's basically center street not even all of center street along the way and so i i do think that moving forward that we might want to consider uh expanding uh the the the festival area not the dora area but the festival area so there is room uh to to move around because uh putting everyone along uh center street or the the sort of side streets battle west

[00:32:51] Maine along the way, even east, though that doesn't get much, are pretty narrow along the way. To what's been mentioned earlier, and I'm glad to see it already being addressed with lighting from public works, but clearly well-lit streets, open storefronts, visible activity, they all encourage people to move, And especially when outside alcohol is not being served, and I'm speaking specifically after the DORA event closes in that regard.

[00:33:22] But lighting, I think, helps, and bright lighting is a good way to assist in that sort of thing here. Now, addressing the late-night crowd. When I was there in the summertime in August there, there were a lot of young people.

[00:33:39] And, again, in small areas I discussed, not particularly well lit along the way here. But I do think that if that does continue where we do attract young people here, that we do need to start reaching out, whether it's the city, the police department, HMI, school counselors, as for instance, to talk with some of these young people who regularly attend.

[00:34:07] and ask them exactly what would you do after 10 p.m. if something was available. I mean, I think it's presumptuous of me at my age to be determining what they could be doing along the way. And I do make the observation many times in some of our Facebook pages, particularly about old manassas, we hear about how young people used to gather in the parking lot of Mathis Avenue Shopping Center.

[00:34:38] and drive around the strip and they hung and they had loud music and this is where you wanted to be young people today are no different are they i would argue but i do think that we ought to be careful when we start trying to address uh any any uh decisions that uh about young people gathering here, college-age students along the way, teenagers, to see if we can find out, you know, exactly what it is. They may have no particular answer for us, but they might. And so not reaching

[00:35:18] out, I think, is not the right thing to do along the way in that regard. Talked about expanding the footprint of First Friday. It's also been suggested by Councilwoman Hudson. There is an ordinance that we have not adopted, and I believe you let the city attorney know about it, correct, that specifically covers streets and public areas. If we adopted it by prohibiting firearms during the hours of First Friday. It provides a measurable safety benefit. But I think the

[00:35:57] question is what additional security measures are necessary to make it helpful and whether the police determine that that is a tool that they would want in their toolbox along the way here. I think that we have a safety plan, you know, clearly in place here, but it wouldn't hurt to have an independent review of our safety plan. This could be done by another police department with experience in large crowds such as Charlottesville or Harrisonburg since they have regular football crowds here along the way. I looked this up earlier today. Virginia Beach has a special events unit. Maybe they have some guidance, some help along the way. It never

[00:36:37] helps, excuse me, it never hurts to have the assistance. We often for city programs are always asking consultants to come in, give us advice, take a look at it independently, and I don't think that that would hurt us in this particular case moving forward. And then just lastly, to again, what you're doing here, but putting it out on the table, we need to be sure we have the right stakeholders at the table. That's HMI, our old town businesses, adjacent residents, police,

[00:37:12] fire EMS, city council, and city staff should jointly be involved in developing this. And I would hope that while we have city staff there, I would also like to see that someone from council be involved along the way for that access. And one last thing I left out, which was suggested to me, is there evidently is a crowd management certification. Now, right now, it is put out by the National Association of State Fire Marshals that they use for public assemblies, but I don't know if there's some adaptation that of that that might be helpful for us along the way

[00:37:51] have crowd managers again these are ideas but I bet that anything I said is going to be uh shown to be not as good as what our residents are going to be saying later on so thank you mayor vice mayor could you please forward that over also of course thank you sir yes anything else Teresa well to add a little bit to what was already said um good job Ashley and Tom I think laying out a nice plan um some of the things that i want to kind of work backwards on is that night um i

[00:38:28] want to make sure and maybe this is more for the chief i don't recall i i talked a lot not only to the business but the people that live in old town manassas um and you know what happened that night when it comes to the security and getting people out of there like i don't recall a text alert going out and i know we have emergency text alerts did they go out or was there some type of uh who does that like i don't recall i usually get them and nothing came through and i didn't really hear

[00:39:03] many people say they did receive anything so there was not a text alert that went out we do have an emergency management system that's done normally through emergency management when you're more for us it's been more weather related events pre-planned that you know that are coming in so as several of you have identified these are things that we are speaking to the city manager with of what is going to be our processes going forward I believe we did put out something on social media that might

[00:39:41] fairly quickly which you know maybe that's an oversight of something we have transitioned to because that's what we've heard before put it on social media not the text alert so you know it's an ever-evolving system of trying to meet everyone at every space that they desire in the method it's not easy to do but we're willing to do and look at any method that is expands that notification um because i think one of the i mean it was a tragic night but there was also a lot of chaos

[00:40:18] something that, you know, of course, no one really anticipated that would happen. Although when you do talk to people that do attend after a certain hour, they were expecting something to happen one day. You know, that's what I heard.

[00:40:34] It was like a lot of things just came together and it did not go well. So that's one thing, like how to get people to have notice that they need to vacate something this reminds me of covid during when we had covid and there was all kinds of information that we had to get out and how you know we did an emergency situation almost every day on how to handle that um but i think that we also the like having an

[00:41:07] ambulance and an ems somewhere nearby if possible and some type of a focal point of where people go a welcome tent or an information center i don't know if we have that unless the visitor center is

supposed to be that because no one knew where to go and what was going on what did we have for that there's probably going to be several answers did you want to go first if you don't mind so on the night of september 4th there was an established chain of the restaurant owners historic manassas

[00:41:44] and police as soon as the incident happened within moments we contacted our partners we had the outside bars the bands shut down within five minutes of that we decided we needed to shut down all the restaurants so we relied on our restaurant partners to communicate the message that you need to leave the historic downtown and if you look at our numbers we were at six thousand and we were down to eight hundred you know by eleven o'clock so okay i'm probably going to give you more information than you're asking for. I'll take it. Well you haven't got the answer yet so

[00:42:23] to be determined. So this came in as an active shooter. So you've heard us me talk to you about active shooters before. We've provided this training to our businesses. When we respond to an active shooter we are going to go by everybody. We are looking for the threat. We are not stopping to provide first aid. We're not doing anything. School shooting would not matter. We are moving to go for the threat. That's what this call came in for. So our initial response was looking for

[00:43:01] the active shooter. However, less than three minutes, we had officers providing first aid, both to Ashley and the other person that was shot. And shortly thereafter, rescue was on the as well so first aid was immediately in our world immediately provided and and I do believe me I hear what you're saying I hear what our residents are saying but if you look at any of these events whether they're on the news or videos the way people are going to move out happen the same

[00:43:39] way in Manassas people are going to scatter no matter what your plan is and second with the comments of, oh, we knew this was going to happen. Are we probably going to get myself in trouble with my boss? What are we going to do for Fourth of July? Because we have 40,000 people on Fourth of July. I've heard the same thing for Fourth of July. It is very important for us to keep this conversation. It doesn't matter what ordinance. The people that did this were felons carrying

[00:44:15] illegal guns not related to first friday they happen to do it at the first friday so i i hear you we want to have the conversations i want to have the conversations how do we keep our community safe uh and we're open to all of these ideas we'll go back we will assess them but it's also important to keep the facts straight and not go down some of these rabbit holes as i will call it as well. We want to be a very vibrant city. Events is kind of what we hang our hat on.

[00:44:52] When we first started, remember, I've been here a long time. So when we first started this conversation, we were hoping to get 2,500 people here. Now we're talking 15,000. So we are the victims of our own success. You've heard me say that before. So there's lots of things to look at.

[00:45:11] I believe several of you in the past have said and noted that there's other communities across the Commonwealth that were reaching out to us. How do you do these events? How do you manage these events? So we have been working with other jurisdictions.

[00:45:29] We've provided, you know, our successes and our failures and to be careful what you ask for who may grow bigger than you're expecting. So we were aware, we weren't blinded to all of these things.

[00:45:45] And if you recall, I stood before you in the past, we were making little changes at a time so we would know what would work for First Fridays. And we did realize June, July, and August were our most troublesome months because of the number of young people that are home and come to it.

[00:46:07] Well, I think we can also, that's a really good point right there. Our young people that have, that come down to have a good time and get away from their phones and laptops and actually communicate with people, they need to have something there for them to do if possible.

[00:46:27] And I don't know, maybe they do, Mark, I don't know. But a place for our teens, and maybe it's not First Friday, maybe it's a dance night Saturday in the pavilion, whatever. You know, that was the one thing that I think we are, you know, it was catered more towards the drinking crowd.

[00:46:45] The teens came in, and then they were taking cups out of the trash and using it to drink. I mean, so you wonder, is that the problem? Let's really get to the root. Fourth of July is not open carrying of your drinks. You know, they don't walk around drinking that day, not openly.

[00:47:04] I mean, it's not a Dora event, right? There's a lot of solo cups. Well, it's not a Dora event, though. It's more of a family event, 40,000 people, mostly families. That might go on, but it's not the same as First Friday when I see. I'm not saying I want to take away Dora, but you kind of see where there's some type of an issue there.

[00:47:27] And I would like to see, like, the work group that you're having, Mark. When you're looking at the demographics that come in and the time, when does it shift? Some people say after 9, 9 o'clock. That's when it kind of gets a little rowdy. So is that when all of our restaurants are making more money than ever, you know, or is it early?

[00:47:48] Like, where is the money flow? This is not all about money, but we don't want to have a ghost town in Old Town Manassas again like we had years ago. We have to see what the balance is. The work group, how are you doing that? How are you putting that together?

[00:48:04] Like, is it just the board of HMI or? No, ma'am. As I stated earlier, it's community partners, businesses, residents, restaurant owners, city staff. And if you want to designate a liaison, you'll be on the meeting list.

[00:48:20] I think that's a good idea. So to answer your question, all the things you just talked about are some of the analytics that we're going back and breaking down both internally and with our restaurants. Where's their price? Where's that line in the sand that they need to consider where the crowd changed, but their point of sales reduced?

[00:48:42] We're looking at all of that. I would my last input would be if you notice, if you approve first Friday for November, there is no on street alcohol. So enforcement wise, if you're in the street with an open container, it's pretty easy for us.

[00:49:01] Come November, you're in violation of the law. I think if you've had good conversations with the manager in the businesses, I think with the plan that we are discussing for 2027, I actually believe and am hopeful we'll be able to meet both of the things, giving those over 21 will be able to come and those that are under 21 will also be able to attend in a different defined area so that we can have better

[00:49:38] enforcement you've also heard me talk about it at press release as well this we've been asking for our young people to get out of the basement put the phones down get out of the house and if you listen to the interviews and talk to some of them which i have 98 of them were not breaking any laws We just want to be here with our friends and listen to music and socialize because we don't have any other place.

So I think we're going to find a good balance that we'll be able to come back and present to you for 2027. And I know First Friday has themes. Dog Days of Summer,

[00:50:18] that's always a hit. You know, the Super Bowl, that's a First Friday, I believe. When you have themes that are more interactive than just, you know, dress, you know, like a retro or whatever, I think that that's important to get back to that, really focus on the themes that will bring people out if possible.

[00:50:42] And I know you try. Not everyone's going to do it, you know. But more of a focus on that than, you know, just come and drink. So, because every, you know, every, this happens all over the world, First Fridays. And as we get to the work session and further, it is a good study to see what works in some places and where it doesn't.

[00:51:01] We have grown and become a victim of our own success. But, you know, that night was such a tragic night, and we really have to focus, number one, on safety. Thank you. Anyone else?

[00:51:18] Gentlemen, thank you. As I've said, this is an ongoing conversation, and we will appreciate your continued feedback and input. We will take this forward. Item 1.3, legislative priorities. Mr. Burke.

[00:51:33] Yes, sir. Hoping to be brief since we only have half an hour for these two items. Basically, what we're looking to do is to update our 2027 legislative agenda. In your packet, we have a copy of the current 2026. There's a few items that the General Assembly has addressed, so we'll be removing those.

[00:51:55] The mid-year items, we will plan to incorporate into that. And then as part of the agenda, we identified a few other items, specifically additional funding for the health department, restaurant inspections, continued funding for the Washington Manassas Airport improvements, removing the bank data center computer tax exemption, additional funding for Virginia disabled children facilities and the regional greenhouse gas initiative fund for municipal electric providers. Unfortunately, there was a quick effort

[00:52:35] in Richmond to address the regional greenhouse gas initiative funds, and they were specifically identified to go back to a number of electric customers in the Commonwealth. However, Municipal customers were omitted from that, and so we're hoping that General Assembly will make a correction so that municipal customers will see some benefit to that in the future.

[00:53:04] If there's items that council has either now that you want to provide or email them to me directly, we will be bringing this back to you all for additional input. Anything? Mr. Osina. Yes, thank you.

[00:53:21] So one is, I do think after the General Assembly this past year proposed, but it was vetoed by the governor about collective bargaining of public employees, we do need to have an item in there about our stance regarding that.

[00:53:44] I do think that we want to make sure that we have an item that specifically talks about We don't want to see the cost for utility infrastructure shifted to our residents for data centers and large utility users.

[00:54:02] I think we want to be sure that we continue to advocate for continued state support for the Washington Manassas Airport infrastructure in that regard. I'd like to see local authority over our data center development in that regard.

[00:54:22] And I would suggest, as to counsel, you've seen how we do these. And, you know, our primary goal is not only to stay for our residents, but also, more importantly, for members of the General

Assembly, as well as our specific state senator, which is here tonight, and our delegate, which we will be voting and filling at the November election along the way.

[00:54:52] Out of all those that we list, and we like to think that they're all important, that we put them in some kind of priority order, as a, for instance, under each of the categories of educational success, advancing mobility, community vitality, sustaining excellence, and economic prosperity, like the first two that are most important in each category, and highlighting those in particular.

[00:55:15] Because that's a lot for our representatives to see, and I think it's helpful whenever we can make it easier for them to see what's most important to us as we move ahead. And then some of these we've had in for years and years and years, and I would ask that somebody wordsmith them so they're a little bit more lively than they are.

[00:55:42] That's not to say they're not important here, but nonetheless to just, you know, give them some clarity along the way here. Because sometimes when we repeat them over and over and over again, they kind of just become mind-numbing along the way.

[00:56:00] And I'm happy to work with whoever on reducing the mind-numbing if that's something. But I know staff is good about doing those sorts of things. My suggestions. Mr. Smith. Thank you.

[00:56:14] Along with the data center item, it may not fit in the fly that you have, but I would like to see some initiatives where we are seeking help from our delegation in Richmond with regard to decision-making about data centers, particularly along with zoning.

[00:56:40] And I guess what I'm getting at is the commonly known by-right development and so forth. I'd like to see us come to agreement as a council in a certain way on that and basically outlaw it.

[00:56:56] But I know we'd have to seek some help in Richmond, and I'd like to see us join that effort. Also, I guess it comes in a broader heading of data centers. But it's really, I think, a general conclusion about the impact on our utilities.

[00:57:16] And I would like to see us support in the efforts by our delegation, hopefully, with regard to who should be covering those increases significantly.

[00:57:31] For instance, the utility companies, I mean, the data centers themselves, contribute to a large portion of those areas. And then there's a couple of supplemental areas that go along with that that would directly impact on our residents already.

[00:57:48] And as we learn more, fool me once, fool me twice, and so forth, but as we learn more about data centers, their impact, and their broader impact on our quality of our lives, I'd like to see us stay on top of that. Thank you.

[00:58:06] What else? Very good. Senator Rome, I'm sure, has got all that, and we'll make sure it happens. Please. Good evening, Vice Mayor. Good evening, Councilor Dana Caron, representing the 30th District Senate of Virginia, which includes City of Manassas, City of Manassas, Park, Western Prince William County.

[00:58:26] So first request, as mentioned earlier in the summer, anything that you want to send me that says, send this one as a bill, click check. Next one, send this as a budget amendment, check. And then this is a bill and a budget amendment that we need both.

[00:58:42] So basically what I'm asking is break it down between if you need a change in the Code of Virginia, such as the Reggie issue, that's one we can fix via Reggie. Number two, the buy right part, ending buy right development for data centers, you're going to have a lot of friends this year, which is very new for the General Assembly, considering that some of us have been jumping jacks about that for years, and we finally broke through. You're going to have some support for that. I was actually on the phone earlier today with the vice mayor. We got a draft that has come back regarding the bank tenant issue that we have for data centers, making sure that you can actually collect the cnp tax that you expected to collect when you approve that in the

[00:59:20] first place that one has taken a lot of finagling and changing to get to two lines since last year since last session but we've got something that we're actually working with that we think um should be able to pass muster this time around but i'm happy to take any legislative related questions on that thank you appreciate that excellent all right mr burke on to budget

[00:59:45] Yes, sir. Councilman Ocina requested an opportunity for Council to provide staff with some preliminary budget items as we start getting into the budget later in the year to try and advance if possible.

[01:00:03] Pave the streets in gold and lower our taxes. Wow. Wow. All right. Mr. Ocina. All right. Well, yes. Fire away. And I did share that with you at our last work session, and we thought that was a good idea. So I don't know if anyone else, I don't have a specifically specific list of things.

[01:00:25] They're more like things I hope I want to be sure we hear about. And part of it is also some of it is getting updates prior to our retreat whenever that is scheduled for early part of next year here.

[01:00:40] And one is a process question. So clearly, data center construction, and more importantly, when coming online, is going to be a key part of our revenue projections here. It would be helpful to know this fall how that looks to get an update, maybe at our November work session along the way.

[01:01:03] And then so as we start the new year and have our retreat, we have some idea. I will say that if there are going to be recommendations to hire any new employees, that there be a serious justification for doing so because, you know, once we hire somebody, we have to make sure we continue to pay them at this particular point.

[01:01:35] And so I would hope that as we look at these things or recommendations are made, that the case can be made for that. I believe that our Assistant City Manager for Finance, Ms. Bergeron, is she still with us? There she is.

[01:01:51] We'll be able to make her kind of first quarter report in November. Is that correct? You know, when you send out to us what things look like for the first quarter of the year so far and a wrap-up of what it looks like we ended the previous fiscal year.

[01:02:12] So, that will be helpful in November in that regard. I think prior to our retreat, to me, it's important to hear where we are in terms of the following CIP projects.

[01:02:33] One is the wastewater plant expansion, right? There is an expansion of that, right? Of the wastewater plant? Yes, water plant. Okay. Which one? Are we doing both? No, we don't have waste water. Okay, sorry.

[01:02:48] That's right. That's you, Osa. So the water, you know, just update because, you know, how that's coming along and where we are in terms of the fire station, in terms of how that planning is coming along.

We've heard about the plans for commercial air service in the final quarter of 2027.

[01:03:16] So I'd like certainly to know what's going on with the terminal and what's happening there. And I think our residents would as well. I haven't been out there recently, so I don't know if there's been any groundbreaking at that point.

[01:03:33] And lastly, I said a process one. And this goes to, you know, every year we are asked as council to give some direction to the school board as to what percentage increase we think would be they should plan on as they put their budget together because they start their budget planning while at the same time they need to get completed before we finalize ours because we do need to have their numbers.

[01:04:02] I would ask that at our October work session, we ask the superintendent, the finance director of the school board and the school board chair to come and brief us on what their needs are at this particular point so I have a better idea.

[01:04:18] And hopefully the council would agree. So we're not just grabbing and saying 3% should be the increase or 4% should be or 2%. we actually have some idea what what's going on uh with school needs so we can be better stewards of our residents money uh and plan appropriately thank you anyone else um is it miss hudson thanks um just a couple notes first councilman osina thank you for that that was a lot of really great requests really thoughtful future thinking stuff um i just wanted to add what i've kind of

[01:04:54] added in the past is as we're looking at Mathis development in 2030, that we continue to make walkable paths from there to the community center, to Old Town, to Liberia House, you know, kind of both ways, just making sure we're enhancing walkability. Just from, you know, things that have happened in the past, you know, year and thinking about ways that we can improve.

[01:05:18] The community center has been amazing coming online, a lot of awesome programming that a lot of people are really enjoying um parking at the community center is not something people enjoy so thinking about that um in the long term of how to uh have a successful easter egg hunt and um beyond that um our parks i think are also better than they've ever been but maybe doing an assessment of which playgrounds are not in the shade because i've heard from friends who have young children that sometimes the playgrounds get too hot to enjoy and they can't touch the kids

[01:05:54] can't touch them so i think that'll be one of my budget priorities thanks vice mayor you need anything else mr burke uh simply to let council know that um simply um mr asena at our october 26th meeting we are bringing in the executive director of appports to provide you an update so you'll have information about commercial service which will include the term

[01:06:28] yes sir i believe he will be making an announcement and an invitation well ask him that even if he wasn't ready to make an announcement that we at least get a status of something along the way and that the status is that they truly are going to be starting to start super wonderful mr burke anything else no sir all right any other council members All right. With that, we will adjourn the work session. We will resume with a town hall meeting in 19 minutes. Thank you very much.



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