

City of Petersburg
Planning Commission Special Meeting Minutes
January 15th, 2026

Members Present:

Fenton Bland
Alvin Cannon, Vice-Chair
Thomas Hairston
Dianne Harley
Kirsten Katzenbach
Tony McDaniel
James Norman
Aku Reinhardt

Members Absent:

Marshall Ford, Chair

Others Present: Jared Crews, City Planning Staff

1. Call to Order:

The City of Petersburg Planning Commission Special meeting held on Thursday, January 15th, 2026, was called to order by Vice-Chair Cannon at 6:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call:

A quorum was established by Mr. Crews

3. Adoption of the Agenda:

Vice-Chair Cannon called for any changes to the agenda. Commissioner Bland moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Bland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Old Business:

- a. **2025-REZ-06:** Consideration of a resolution recommending approval of a request by Alexander Graham, Jr., on behalf of the Warrenton Group, to rezone property at 2088 Defense Road, 1918 Townes Road, and 1926 Bogese Drive, Parcel IDs 070080002, 069070001, 077010801, from the A Agricultural and R-1A

Single-Family Residence Districts to the M-1 Light Industrial District with proffers and to amend the existing proffers for property at 2233 Halifax Road, Parcel ID 076030800, in the M-1 Light Industrial District:

Mr. Crews gave an overview of the request and reminded the Commission the request had been tabled following the December 4, 2025 public hearing with the Planning Commission requesting the applicant to hold a meeting with the community to address questions and concerns. Mr. Crews stated the applicant had responded by attending the Ward 7 meeting on January 13 and presenting additional information and holding a question-and-answer period. Mr. Crews stated about twenty individuals spoke about the request at the Ward 7 meeting and voiced concerns about the proposed development.

Mr. Crews stated that issues raised at the public hearing and the Ward 7 meeting include noise, light, traffic impacts to surrounding community, environmental impacts, incompatibility with surrounding residential developments, insufficient buffers, lack of community engagement, site access, and street capacity for construction traffic. Mr. Crews stated there were several additional written comments provided prior to the meeting which had been printed and brought for the Commission, including a petition opposing the request. Mr. Crews noted the applicant had also provided written responses to concerns that have been identified.

Bandle McQueen, was present on behalf of Warrenton Group. Mr. McQueen stated the Warrenton Group has worked with city staff to provide proffers that would create a sufficient buffer between the data center development and to ensure safe access to the property with minimum impact to the surrounding community. The Commission asked the developer to clarify the access into the development during construction and operation. Mr. McQueen stated construction traffic would enter the site either by Defense Road or Halifax Road depending on the time of day and size of vehicles and the Townes Road access to the site would only be used in cases of emergency.

Commissioner Katzenbach stated it had come to her attention that the option agreement between the city and the applicant on the purchase of the property had expired January 7, 2025 and asked whether the applicant had an updated agreement. Warren Williams of the Warrenton Group stated an amendment to the agreement was currently being considered by the city. Commissioner Katzenbach stated she had asked that the City Attorney attend the meeting to provide guidance on whether the Planning Commission had standing to make a recommendation on the request.

Mr. Crews stated he had spoken with the City Attorney prior to the meeting and believed that the Planning Commission was able to move forward with a recommendation. Commissioners Katzenbach and Bland mentioned they had spoken with a City Council member and believed they were not able to make a recommendation. Mr. Crews stated he had asked the Attorney specifically whether the Planning Commission could make a recommendation and was told yes, noting the negotiation of the option agreement between the City and Warrenton Group was a City Council matter outside the Planning Commission purview.

Vice-Chair Cannon stated he would allow for a 15-minute public comment period on the request.

Randy Rush, 1961 Dodson Road, stated he was concerned that not enough people in the community were aware of the request and that residential property would be rezoned to industrial. Mr. Rush stated the Planning Commission did not have time to review the petition they received.

Cyndi Perkins, 1918 Dodson Road, asked why traffic construction would be allowed to enter the site from Halifax Road but Halifax Road could not be used after the project was approved. Ms. Perkins stated the applicant had written that Norfolk Southern was in support of the project and asked why the rezoning was necessary. Ms. Perkins asked why the additional properties needed to be rezoned if no structures were proposed on them.

Grant Northrup, 2034 Bannister Road, stated the proposed gatehouse shown on the plans is well inside property boundaries and asked how the developer could control access from Townes Road without having a gate at the end of the road. Mr. Northrup stated he feels the proposed proffer language about structures on the newly-acquired parcels read as voluntary and that language could not be enforced on future owners.

Greg Kitchen, 1983 Dodson Road, stated he didn't understand why the additional properties were needed for the development. Mr. Kitchen asked whether Townes Road and Bannister Roads would be upgraded to commercial streets.

Merrilee Cohen, 1983 Dodson Road, stated construction traffic would be using a residential neighborhood and stated she had used Artificial Intelligence to look up the dangers of data centers and the proposed data center campus is larger than any data center she has heard of. Ms. Cohen stated data centers strain electric and water resources and create environmental impacts.

James Beck, 1977 Vesonder Road, stated his property is closest to the proposed data center development. Mr. Beck stated he understands Townes Road is existing right-of-way but doesn't understand why the properties adjoining the proposed access along Townes Road needed to be rezoned to the M-1 District. Mr. Beck stated the rezoning will decrease the property values in the area. Mr. Beck asked why the city could not just build Townes Road without the rezoning.

Arnold Westbrook, 1737 Ramblewood Road, stated he was speaking as a resident and not a member of City Council. Mr. Westbrook stated change is hard but the City has missed development opportunities in the past. Mr. Westbrook noted school systems and city resources have suffered as people have left the city due to lack of opportunity. Mr. Westbrook stated the Warrenton Group is seeking to be a good neighbor to the city and provide proffers that will avoid negative impacts to the community. Mr. Westbrook noted construction traffic is already traveling through Ramblewood due to the ongoing residential development and noted the traffic for the data center project would be routed outside Ramblewood.

With no further comments, Vice-Chair Cannon closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Katzenbach asked whether the Warrenton Group would be the owner and operator of the proposed data center. Mr. McQueen stated whether or not Warrenton Group remained owner of the property or sold it would depend on the user of the facilities, noting some users prefer to lease data center spaces while others prefer to purchase the property.

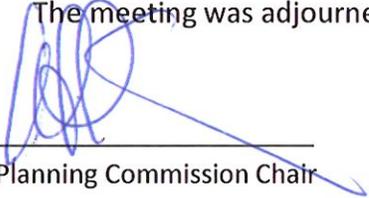
Commissioner Hariston stated he had opposed the city allowing data centers, but the decision had been made to allow them and he did not feel it was appropriate to for city officials to oppose them where deals were already in place.

Commissioner Norman made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning request with the proffers as presented. Commissioner Aku seconded the motion, which passed in a 5-1 vote with Commissioner Katzenbach dissenting.

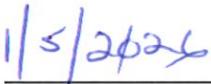
Commissioners Hairston and McDaniel abstained from the vote.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.



Planning Commission Chair



Date