

City of Petersburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2026

Members Present:

Marshall Ford, Chair
Alvin Cannon, Vice-Chair
Fenton Bland
Dianne Harley
Kirsten Katzenbach
James Norman
Aku Reinhardt

Members Absent:

Thomas Hairston
Tony McDaniel

Others Present: Jared Crews, City Planning Staff

1. Call to Order:

The City of Petersburg Planning Commission meeting held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, was called to order by Chair Ford at 6:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call:

A quorum was established by Mr. Crews.

3. Adoption of the Agenda:

Chair Ford called for any changes to the agenda.

Mr. Crews stated City Council had asked the Planning Commission to make a recommendation for possible proactive rezonings along the corridors in the vicinity of the casino property. Mr. Crews requested a discussion item be added to the agenda under New Business to give an overview of Council's request.

Commissioner Bland moved to adopt the agenda with the addition of the discussion item. Commissioner Norman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Norman motioned to approve the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the January 8, 2026 regular meeting and the January 15, 2026 special meeting, as presented. Commissioner Harley seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

5. Public Comment:

Chair Ford opened the floor for public comments.

Wendy Austin, 544 High Street, stated she was a new resident of the city, but had worked in the city for a number of years as Executive Director of Friends of the Lower Appomattox (FOLAR). Ms. Austin stated she wanted to make sure the City took advantage of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite to make sure regulations on data centers are appropriate. Ms. Austin stated she had shared some information and questions with Mr. Crews to be shared with Berkley Group for consideration. Ms. Austin stated her biggest concern was adequate buffers between data center equipment and residential development.

With no further comments, the public comment period was closed.

6. Public Hearings:

- a. **2026-SUP-01:** Consideration of a resolution recommending approval of a request by Ibrahim Al Tamimy, on behalf of 601 E Wyth St LLC, for a special use permit to operate a stand-alone vehicle repair shop at 601 East Wythe Street, Parcel ID 012270012, in the B-2, General Commercial Zoning District

Mr. Crews gave an overview of the request, explaining the applicant was seeking to operate a stand-alone vehicle repair shop in the existing approximately 1,500 square-foot building at 601 East Wythe Street. Mr. Crews stated the application was accompanied by plans showing proposed improvements to the property, including repaving and restriping the parking lot, planting shrubs along the Wythe Street frontage and providing lighting, benches, and trash receptacles on the site. Mr. Crews stated the plans also included use and operation limitations stating no vehicles would be stored on the site and only vehicle servicing would take place, not vehicle repair.

Mr. Crews stated the property was designated as a Community Mixed-Use Area of the Future Land Use map of the Comprehensive Plan and located near a defined gateway and along a major corridor. Mr. Crews stated vehicle servicing and repair is not listed as a principle use for Community Mixed-Use areas and improving and revitalizing the major corridors in the city is identified as a major planning goal in the plans. Mr. Crews also

noted that while the plans stated only vehicle servicing would occur on the site, the applicant had repeatedly mentioned to staff that he wanted to use the site as an extension of his existing vehicle sales and service lot. Mr. Crews presented nine conditions of approval drafted for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Crews stated staff recommended denial of the request based on the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and concerns over the potential impact on the Wythe Street corridor.

The applicant, Ibrahim Al Tamimy, stated he was committed to improving the Wythe Street corridor, noting he owned the business on the other side of the block at 610 East Washington Street. Mr. Tamimy stated he has worked with the Richmond Civic Association in the past and understood the need for a good project. Mr. Tamimy stated his original goal was to extend his existing business across the block to include the Royal Inn Hotel and the subject property. Mr. Tamimy stated he had met with Planning and Zoning staff, the Deputy City Manager, and a member of City Council to review the proposed project. Mr. Tamimy said he was told the use of the property for a service center would be appropriate. Mr. Tamimy said the vacant building does not contribute to the neighborhood, but his proposed shop would improve the corridor, making it safer and bringing tax revenue into the city.

Chair Ford opened the public hearing.

Michelle Murrills, 131 South Market Street, stated she supported the request. Ms. Murrills stated she spends lots of time in the area of the subject property and it is a very rough area that is not likely to have nice shops. Ms. Murrills stated the subject property can be cleaned up and the area will improve over time. Ms. Murrills stated the property could be kept vacant or the Planning Commission could allow someone the opportunity to use it.

With no further public comments, Chair Ford closed the public hearing.

The Commission discussed the proposal and raised concerns that it did not align with the goals for the area outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Katzenbach stated there are many similar uses on the corridor already and noted the gateways to the city need intentional zoning. Commissioner Norman stated it was unlikely the property could be used as a service center without storing vehicles on the property. Commissioner Norman stated the vehicle service shop would be more appropriately located elsewhere in the city and Chair Ford stated he agreed.

Commissioners Katzenbach, Norman, Bland and Chair Ford all noted the application and plans were well-put together, but vehicle service use did not match the long-term plans for improving the Wythe Street Corridor.

Commissioner Bland motioned to recommend denial of the request based on the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and due to the concerns over the impact of the use on the corridor. Vice-Chair Cannon seconded the motion, which passed 6-0 with Commissioner Aku abstaining.

Mr. Crews informed the applicant the request would likely go to City Council for public hearing at the regular March meeting.

7. Old Business:

There was no old business for discussion.

8. New Business:

a. Discussion on Potential Proactive Rezoning:

Mr. Crews explained the City Council had asked the Planning Commission to review properties near the Live! Casino and on the surrounding corridors to determine if it would be appropriate for the City to initiate the rezoning of any properties. Mr. Crews stated the Planning Commission would need to determine whether any rezonings were appropriate and, if so, which zoning districts would be appropriate. Mr. Crews stated the Future Land Use Map and existing conditions would both be important for consideration.

Mr. Crews gave an overview of several properties staff had identified for consideration, including properties along Medical Park Boulevard, Cavalier Drive, Seyler Drive, and South Crater Road. Mr. Crews stated several properties had existing uses or approved plans for development, but noted City Council had asked for recommendations based on redevelopment opportunity to identify the proper zoning designation for the highest and best use of the properties.

Mr. Crews stated some of the parcels, particularly along Medical Park Boulevard and Cavalier Drive were undeveloped and it appeared rezoning would be appropriate, but other parcels may have limited development potential based on environmental conditions or other challenges such as access. Mr. Crews stated there are also several properties along South Crater Road and Medical Park Boulevard where there are existing nonconforming uses that don't match the zoning designation. Mr. Crews stated the owners of several of the properties identified had already reached out to the city about possibly rezoning.

Mr. Crews stated City Council had asked for a report with recommendations from the Planning Commission by the March 24 Council meeting. Mr. Crews stated he would plan to bring additional information and recommendations from staff to the March Planning Commission meeting for review. Commissioner Katzenbach asked whether the Planning Commission could arrange for a bus to do site visits to the properties identified by staff. Mr. Crews stated this was a good idea and he would find out and let the Commissioners know.

9. Secretary/City Staff Reports:

Mr. Crews stated staff did not have any additional reports.

10. Announcements/Commissioner Reports:

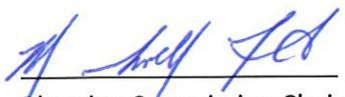
Commissioner Katzenbach stated she was concerned the applicant for 2026-SUP-01 had said he met with city staff and a member of City Council and was told his application would be supported. Commissioner Katzenbach said staff should have identified this in the staff report. Mr. Crews stated he had met with the applicant and noted this in the report, but did not feel comfortable speaking on conversations the applicant had with members of City Council or City Administration because he did not know what was said.

Commissioner Katzenbach stated she felt frustrated by the February 3 joint work session with City Council and that it was a waste of time because the City Attorney said he had not reviewed the full draft ordinance prior to the meeting. The Commissioners discussed holding a meeting with City Council to voice their concerns. Mr. Crews noted this may best be handled by coordinating with the Clerk of Council.

Commissioner Katzenbach asked whether a discussion item could be put on the agenda for the March meeting to review the Planning Commission attendance policy and potentially address issues with absences. Chair Ford asked staff to add this to the agenda and Mr. Crews stated he would bring attendance records and the bylaws for review.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Planning Commission Chair



Date