



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Monday, April 21, 2025

7:00 PM

Vienna Police Department Community Room,
215 Center St. South

1. Regular Business

Roll Call

Council Present: Council Member Chuck Anderson; Council Member Sandra Allen; Council Member Roy Baldwin; Council Member Ray Brill; Council Member Jessica Ramakis; Council Member Howard Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert.

Staff Present: Mercury Payton, Town Manager; Steven Barlow, Deputy Director of Finance; David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning; Kelly O'Brien, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning; Chief Jim Morris, TOV Police Department

Mayor Colbert opened the Work Session at 7:00 PM.

A. [25-5025](#)

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Outdoor Lighting Regulations - Joint Work Session of Town Council and Planning Commission: Presentation and Discussion

Mayor Colbert called on David Levy to introduce Staff from Clanton and Associates, Lighting and Design Engineers; Dan Sanders, CEO and Kate McBride Project Manager.

In 2024, Town Council directed Staff to bring in outside expertise to assist with development of Town outdoor lighting regulations. The ensuing project was designed around two goals:

- 1) Develop Town Code regulations for outdoor lighting (not including right-of-way lighting) that would be protective of residents, emphasize safety, encourage environmental approaches, and support a vibrant business environment. Clanton will also develop, as part of the project, a user-friendly form that applicants will be able to use to provide the information that will be relevant for staff's review.*
- 2) Develop guidelines that the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) can for review of proposed exterior modifications in areas of their authority (portions of the Town not zoned for single-unit detached residential).*

In November 2024, Clanton Staff visited Vienna, conducted nighttime site visits to assess existing conditions, hosted two information sessions, and held a session with the BAR. Since then, Clanton has been developing both draft code language and guidelines for the BAR and interacting with staff. Included in the scope of the project are Privately Owned Lighting City Owned/Non-ROW Lighting Façade Lighting.

Comments from Town Council included the following:

- Studies show that the absence of light can actually reduce property crime although data is mixed on this issue;*
- An ordinance controls lighting from private property; Right of Way lighting not*

under Town control;

- Ordinance will include a grandfather clause exempting properties prior to enactment;
- Ordinance should include amortization period to allow for gradual transition;
- Must regulate where light stops with respect to property lines;
- Must address how this concept can be understood by residents and managed going forward;
- No Code language until recent Code adoption; No standards to back up current language;
- Complaints often related to shielding and direction; Complaint resolution includes courtesy notice followed by observation;
- Light intrusion is easily measured on commercial property; Residential property could use photometrics; Should focus on how much light can cross a property line;
- Issue also includes businesses; Town should consider incentivizing certain types of lighting;
- Might consider stricter standards than what is acceptable at this point in time;
- Athletic field lighting must also be addressed;
- Light pollution is now recognized for its effect on human health; Challenged to develop standards that control lighting excess;
- Focus on how to be in compliance and why it matters;
- Including quantitative measurements (lumen numbers, coloration, etc.) in ordinance language helps residents as they put this into practical use;
- Must address problems that currently exist as ordinance will grandfather these properties.

Mayor Colbert thanked the representatives and reiterated that the project will focus on the effect of outdoor lighting on neighbors. A draft will be available by late spring.

Council moved into recess at 8:35 PM. Council reconvened at 8:40 PM.

B. [25-5051](#)

8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Discuss the noise ordinance as it applies to the number of gas leaf blowers being operated at one time.

RECORDING BEGAN MID PRESENTATION

Mayor Colbert called on Chief Jim Morris, Vienna Police Department, to present the Item. Chief Morris noted specifically that Town Code Section 10-20.1 Noise (c-4) lists the hours and days of the week that lawn care and landscaping equipment can be used in the Town. The Code does not restrict the number of any of the devices being used. Other jurisdictions are similar in their Code.

Discussion by Council included the following:

- Guidance from Attorney General for use of noise ordinance to regulate hours of operation;
- Request change in hours of operation for simultaneous use of leaf blowers due to aggregated noise;
- Request banning use of commercial equipment on holidays;
- Reducing equipment numbers may result in longer usage time and greater costs passed to consumers;
- Caution against treating commercial use different from residential use; Concern that Sunday ban may run counter to blue laws;
- Noise issues also continue to include commercial loading and unloading;
- Town Code regarding loading/unloading is tailored to Vienna's current

commercial environment.

Staff will draft language to modify existing ordinance which could change hours of operation for commercial lawn equipment on holidays and potentially restrict hours of operation of gas powered leaf blowers. Council approved the action through a show of hands. Town Attorney Briglia stated that no public hearing is required, and a draft will be available by summer break. Council expressed concern that given the impact on businesses, it would be advisable to hold a public hearing.

Clarification was requested regarding the Work Session process. Town Code Section 2-19 indicated that there shall be no limitation of matters to be discussed [at a Work Session]. The issue related to noise for loading/unloading was brought forth for Council discussion. With no support for further discussion at this time, the item was not added to the agenda.

C. [25-4942](#) 9:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Town of Vienna Flag

Mayor Colbert called on Karen Thayer, Director, Public Information to present the Item for consideration and discussion.

While several members of Council expressed appreciation for the information, it was determined that pursuit of a Town flag would not be the best use of Council time.

D. [25-5055](#) 9:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Halloween Parade Barricade and Composting Follow Up Discussion for Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget

Mayor Colbert recognized Brad Baer, Director, Public Works, to present the Item.

Multiple Town Council Members have expressed interest in further discussion of the Halloween Parade barricades currently included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget.

Comments and concerns from Council included the following:

- Barricades will alter the feel of the hometown parade;
- Consider spot fencing;
- Consider use of theater type roping;
- Half measures will open Town to liability in the event of accident;
- Consider moral liability should an injury occur;
- Secret to crowd control is control of parade gaps;
- Police have implemented stricter safety controls over several years; Fencing would be logical next step.

Town Council Members also have expressed interest in discussing the composting project, which was approved in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget as a pilot program and is not included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget. Director Baer reviewed the proposed process for a permanent composting site.

Discussion of the item included funding for site preparation prior to budget approval on July 1, 2025. With Council support for adding composting to the 2025-26 proposed budget (show of hands), site preparation can begin later this spring.

With no additional discussion on Agenda Items, Mayor Colbert reminded Council of the Volunteer Awards Reception, April 22, 2025 and Taste of Vienna, April 26, 2025.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert concluded the Work Session at 10:30 PM.