



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft Town Council Work Session

Monday, June 1, 2026

8:00 PM

Charles Robinson Jr. Town Hall, 127
Center St. South

Immediately following Town Council Meeting

1. Regular Business

*The Town Council Work Session was called to order , immediately following the Town Council meeting.
All Council Members were present.*

A. [26-5632](#)

The Director of Communications Karen Thayer presented the draft custom questions for the upcoming town-wide resident survey, referencing the 2023 National Community Survey (NCS) report as background. The Council reviewed results from a prior internal poll on proposed survey topics and deliberated on which questions to include, revise, or remove.

On town priorities related to infrastructure and quality of life, the Council reviewed a list of potential survey topics and retained those receiving four or more internal votes: continuing the construction of sidewalks and public rights-of-way to make Vienna more walkable (7 votes); retaining, increasing, or improving public green spaces, parks, and athletic fields (6 votes); increasing housing diversity beyond single-family homes, such as apartments and multi-family dwelling units (6 votes); planting more trees along streets and on other public property (5 votes); and providing public parking opportunities in commercial districts, which was initially excluded but reinstated by Council consensus at 4 votes.

Topics receiving fewer than four votes were removed. The Council agreed to remove a question about employing economic development strategies to enhance downtown retail and commercial areas, noting that the Town already has a dedicated Economic Development Director and department actively pursuing this work and that survey feedback was not needed to justify continuing it. Questions about repaving and milling deteriorating town streets, investing in stormwater improvements, and improving town policies and procedures to create more business-friendly services were also removed, with Council noting that these are ongoing operational priorities.

On lawn and landscape maintenance standards, Council Member Baldwin introduced a proposal to gauge resident sentiment on relaxing certain lawn maintenance standards, citing communications from the Community Services Committee and requirements stemming from recent state law changes regarding maximum grass height. Planning and Zoning Director Levy clarified that the Town does not currently permit residents to leave dead branches on their property for wildlife habitat purposes, while other practices such as mulching of leaves and maintaining native plant gardens are generally allowed within existing code. Council Members discussed framing any question broadly, with illustrative examples, so that

a respondent who objects to one item would not automatically reject the entire concept. Council Member Springsteen expressed skepticism that a majority of residents would support looser standards but agreed the survey was an appropriate vehicle to gauge sentiment, and Council Member Ramakis noted the importance of limiting the question to things the Town does not currently allow so that responses are actionable. The Director of Communications was directed to work with the Town's survey consultant to draft a focused question centered on maximum grass height, the primary area where a code change would be required.

On town-owned property and the Annex, open-ended responses from the internal poll referenced the Annex property, the Beulah Road property, and the Robinson property as areas of community interest. Several Council Members questioned whether a question on the future use of these properties would yield actionable information given the complexity of the available options. Council Member Nash expressed interest in a question about near-term or temporary uses for the Annex, such as programming, a relocated Farmers' Market, or public restroom facilities, but the majority concluded that such near-term decisions fall within the Council's authority and do not require a survey mandate. Council Member Anderson noted that the Town had not fully investigated all alternative options for the Annex and cautioned against implying finality on any direction through the survey. No survey question on any of these properties will be included at this time, and Council agreed to address near-term use of the Annex through a future work session.

On cell tower heights, Council Member Baldwin suggested adding a question to gauge resident tolerance for taller cell towers on public property, noting that the Council has been actively working on wireless telecommunications licensing and that the topic was last surveyed approximately 20 to 25 years ago. Council Members agreed the topic would produce useful directional information and clarified that the question should be framed around public property, town-owned parcels and potentially Fairfax County school property subject to zoning, rather than towers located adjacent to private homes. Several Council Members noted the importance of including context, for example explaining that taller towers may be necessary to achieve meaningfully improved cell reception, so that respondents understand the trade-off. The Director of Communications will develop a question on cell tower heights on public property for inclusion in the survey, to be refined with the consultant.

On the Maple Avenue commercial corridor, the Council reviewed a series of proposed statements to which respondents would indicate their level of agreement on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Council agreed to retain a statement that Maple Avenue should maintain or increase its level of retail stores and restaurants, noting that this relates to the Town's ongoing ability to preserve commercial zoning and support landlords through the Economic Development office. Statements about burying power lines underground, adding dedicated bike lanes, special pavement markings at major intersections to prevent drivers from blocking the box, and planting more trees along the corridor were removed, with Council noting physical constraints, insufficient support, operational specificity, or recently completed streetscape work as applicable.

The Council engaged in an extended discussion about whether to include a question on increasing the maximum building height along Maple Avenue, noting that prospective developers have cited the current height limit as a barrier to investment and that increased height could facilitate both new commercial uses and diverse housing options. Council Member Francis and the Director of Communications cautioned that overly complex or nuanced questions risk producing misleading

results or causing respondents to disengage. Council Member Ramakis suggested framing any question in terms of a trade-off, asking whether residents would support a higher height limit if it meant encouraging new development or more diverse housing options. Council reached consensus that the question should be kept simple and focused, centering on whether respondents would accept four-story buildings, and that the Director of Communications should work with the consultant to develop language that briefly explains the connection between height limits and development potential. A revised draft survey will be circulated to Council Members for written feedback before finalization.

B. [26-5620](#)

Continued Discussion of Planning Commission Recommended Draft 2026 Comprehensive Plan

The Town Manager and Planning and Zoning Director noted the lateness of the hour and recommended deferring the Comprehensive Plan discussion to the next scheduled work session. The Council agreed, and the item was deferred to the July 6, 2026 work session, which was already on the calendar. Council Members agreed to begin the July 6 session at 6:30 p.m., with board and commission reappointment interviews beginning at 6:00 p.m. and the regular Council meeting to follow. The Town Clerk confirmed that three reappointment interviews are scheduled for that date, and Council agreed to provide dinner for the July 6 work session.

Two agenda items are currently planned for July 6: telecommunications and cell coverage, and the Comprehensive Plan. Tree-related legislative items were discussed briefly; it was noted that enabling legislation timing is the key constraint and that tree items may need to be scheduled for August if they cannot be accommodated on July 6. Staff noted that the August 24 meeting already carries a public hearing, three regular agenda items, and a planned work session on green hedges and modification requirements. Staff offered to send Council Members a simplified version of the Comprehensive Plan discussion table so that members can indicate their positions in advance, potentially allowing some items to be resolved without requiring full group discussion at the July 6 session.

2. Meeting Adjournment

With no further business, the Work Session was adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.