



Town of Vienna

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

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Conference Session

Monday, June 12, 2023

8:30 PM

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

Immediately following Town Council meeting

1. Regular Business

Council Present: Council Member Chuck Anderson; Council Member Ray Brill Jr.; Council Member Nisha Patel; Council Member Steve Potter; Council Member Ed Somers; Council Member Howard J. Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert.

Staff: Mercury Peyton, Town Manager; Steve Briglia, Town Attorney; David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning; Kelly O'Brien, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning; Andrea West, Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning; Christine Horner, Acting Director, Public Works; Jeremy Edwards, Superintendent, Parks and Recreation.

Mayor Colbert opened the Conference Session at 8:25 PM.

A. [23-3844](#)

Overview and discussion of the Town's solid waste program equipment/operations, updated leaf collection program analysis, and handheld gas and electric-powered leaf blowers.

Mayor Colbert called on Christine Horner, Interim Director, Public Works, to present the Item for consideration by Council. Ms. Horner introduced Adam Lehman, Interim Deputy Director, Public Works.

At the request of the Town Council, the Department of Public Works (DPW) prepared a summary of the Town's solid waste program equipment/operations that included a comparison of the current MSW (Municipal Solid Waste – Trash) pickup to the ASL (Automated Side Loader) pickup for potential future consideration.

Comments from Council are summarized as follows:

- *Parts for the current trash trucks require a 2.5-year lead time;*
- *Cost differential between MSW and ASL is approximately \$100,000;*
- *Majority of Vienna streets are not compatible with passenger side load/unload requirement for ASL; Not a practical option given the resulting repeat trips required for each street;*
- *With MSW, trash receptacles that are too heavy to lift are hung with a notice; Currently a small percentage of the trash receptacles are too heavy for lifting;*
- *Vienna has increasingly diverse types of housing resulting in greater diversity of trash disposal and pickup.*

Recycling

- *Outreach is ongoing; Student intern created magnets and stickers with recycling information; Consider placing these at the visitor's entrance to City Hall;*

- Continue to push information regarding non recyclables such as plastic bags;
- Recycling containers could potentially be purchased by the Town for resale to residents;
- Consider including green recycling sticker and other deliverables with water bills;
- Consider partnering with the local schools; This age group is often invested in environmental efforts;
- Currently the majority of Vienna's trash does not go to the land fill, rather it is sent to COVANTA, located in Lorton, VA where it is used to generate electricity.

Updated Leaf Collection Program Analysis

On July 11, 2022, the Town Council passed a motion directing the Town Manager to implement a leaf collection program for the fiscal year 2023 leaf collection season that eliminates leaf grinding and uses the most efficient and cost effective combination of Town and rental trucks. Results of the pilot program indicated that of the five options considered the most cost effective was the short haul operation.

Council comments are summarized as follows:

- Truck capacity in long haul scenario is 35% less than in short haul (due to lack of access to top of truck with long haul);
- The Beulah Rd. site will continue to be used sans grinding; Noise will be controlled through the application of a white noise conversion kit (\$110/kit) to each truck; All trucks will be converted by the end of the year.

Overview of the Town's handheld gas and electric-powered leaf blowers

Leaf blowers are utilized by both the departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation throughout the year. With two electric-powered leaf blowers currently in inventory, and given the continued resident interest in this type of equipment, Ms. Horner proposed a pilot program that would include the purchase of three backpack style electric leaf blowers with the goal to determine their ability to withstand the rigors of Town use.

Council comments are summarized as follows:

- Biggest issue with electric leaf blowers is the ability to configure battery life with type of use/size of job;
- Wet leaves and large quantities of leaves can cause issues due to a lower cubic foot per minute movement with electric; Will need to assess capability of back pack style leaf blowers before eliminating gas powered blowers;
- Electric leaf blowers in Town inventory have a current battery life, at full power charge, of twelve minutes; Proposed back pack style leaf blowers would have a four-hour battery life; Will require appropriate assessment of number of batteries required to complete each job;
- Technology relative to battery life improves each year; Must commit to assessing these improvements on a regular basis in order to improve efficiency;
- Funding is available for this pilot project.

B. [23-3848](#)

Urban Tree Management Discussion

Mayor Colbert recognized Christina Caplan, Chair, Conservation and Sustainability Commission (CSC) and Jeremy Edwards, Superintendent, Parks Maintenance, to present the Item for consideration. The discussion was a continuation of the

Conference Session of May 8, 2023 where the Urban Tree Management Report was presented. Additionally, the Urban Tree Canopy Report presented a list of prioritized recommendations for improving the current loss of tree canopy in the Town. Among these recommendation was the establishment of a tree ordinance with three components; 1. Establish a Tree Commission 2. Track the Town's Annual Tree Planting 3. Update Vienna's Tree Ordinance by Adopting the Tree Conservation Ordinance

Council comments are summarized as follows:

- *Time to put the draft ordinance forward for further discussion and possible action;*
- *Consider setting a tree coverage ratio to allow for assessment of rate of change in baseline coverage over time;*
- *Preservation of trees in public areas should be priority; Would like twelve-month progress report resulting from recent increase in funding; Do not favor formal legislation that would negatively affect personal property rights;*
- *Proposed ordinance is modeled after Fairfax County (in place over twenty years); Nothing in proposed ordinance that is not allowed by Commonwealth of Virginia, a pro property rights state;*
- *Planting of new trees must be accompanied by tree preservation in order to positively affect tree canopy;*
- *Clear cutting results in a loss of ecological and economic benefits; Must balance private property rights with greater good;*
- *Preservation first urges consideration of what can be saved before making decision to clear cut; Changes mind set;*
- *Suggest, rather than a Tree Commission, creating an entity that would mirror the structure of the Bicycle Safety Committee where efforts filter up through to the existing primary Commission; Allows for inclusion of outside professionals as Committee members; Provides for stability and institutional knowledge from the CSC;*
- *In contrast, a Commission would be free to focus solely on trees; Allows for time to seek funding through grants; Sends positive message to residents.*

Mayor Colbert recommended a future Conference Session with the goal of assessing the proposed ordinance content. Town Manager Payton will find appropriate time on the calendar. It was suggested that each Council Member submit a marked up draft to the Town Manager prior to the determined Conference Session date. The Town Attorney reminded Council that nothing can be added to the ordinance.

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert concluded the Conference Session at 10:45 PM.

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