



# Town of Vienna

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Work Session

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

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Monday, December 4, 2017

7:30 PM

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

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#### Work Session

### 1. Regular Business

#### *Present:*

*Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco*  
*Council Member Tara L. Bloch*  
*Council Member Linda J. Colbert*  
*Council Member Pasha M. Majdi*  
*Council Member Carey J. Sienicki*  
*Council Member Howard J. Springsteen*

*Council Member Douglas E. Noble was absent*

#### *Staff present:*

*Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager*  
*Steven D. Briglia, Town Attorney*  
*Michael Gallagher, Public Works, Director*  
*John Jay Sergent, Public Works, Civil Engineer I*  
*Lynne DeWilde, Public Information – Communications & Marketing Manager*  
*Adam Kincaid, Public Information – Communications Specialist*  
*Carol S. Waters, Legislative, Deputy Town Clerk*

#### A. [17-661](#)

#### Dominion Power Discussion

*Mr. Payton opened the work session promptly at 7:30 p.m. in the main Council Chambers of Town Hall, as usual. Mr. Scott Reamy, External Affairs Manager for Dominion Energy Services, Inc. introduced himself and his team: Jerry Northedge, Manager of Outdoor Lighting, and Ludo Hintos, Manager of Design and Project Management.*

*Ms. Northedge stated that Dominion manages and maintains about 470,000 outdoor lights across North Carolina and Virginia. Feedback to Dominion indicates that their municipal customers are looking for more attractive rates, more standard offerings, more options, and also a flat rate conversion, so Ms. Northedge said they are working on those things. She mentioned Dominion's follow up presentation of standard LED options at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission meeting later in the month. Ms. Northedge spoke of Dominion's goal to have a standard LED offering to go with Vienna's acorn lights, and noted that the Town currently purchases and stores that lighting and the poles.*

*Mayor DiRocco shared her observation that most of the Northern Virginia region is interested in going forward with converting to LED lights and having different LED choices at a reasonable price. She said a lot of the towns want choices for more traditional streets, others want more modern choices, dimmable choices, and*

*adjustable lights based on time of day. Scott Reamy acknowledged that Dominion has heard all municipalities loud and clear and Dominion has been working hard to come up with those choices for everybody. Ms. Northedge said that Dominion plans to have more standard offerings before the July 1, 2018 VEPCO contract date and they are aware that many municipalities would like to see their options sooner than that. Ms. Northedge confirmed that Dominion is working to provide LED options to match up with the existing style lights.*

*Referring to costs, Ms. Northedge noted that factors include the monthly rates paid to Dominion to maintain those facilities, the fixtures, the energy, and the wires, poles, and everything else that it takes to carry that electricity to the fixture. She said there will be conversion fees. Whether to replace lights upon failure or to convert a lot of lights at once was talked over. Ms. Northedge said that LED lights look different enough from existing lights that it could be noticed.*

*The group spoke of a problem with outages on Church Street a couple years ago. Ms. Northedge quoted statistics since January 1, 2017 indicating a 94% restoration rate within less than a week. Council asked about the Public Works Department replacing lights when they can. Ms. Northedge stated that there are definitely some liabilities with having a third party work on Dominion's distribution system, and they reserve that for their Dominion approved contractors. Ms. Northedge said that reporting an outage is the right thing to do, and as of now, the only way Dominion knows if a light is out is if they hear about it from the public or the Town government.*

*Mayor DiRocco brought up the night sky issue (a.k.a. dark skies initiatives) as another consideration, noting the goal to keep light on the streets and sidewalks instead of going up into the sky. Ms. Northedge mentioned the popularity of the acorn style lights in Virginia. She reported that Dominion is looking at options for the acorns, such as decorative caps or some ability to get that full light cut off. However, she noted, because of the way the LEDs are placed the light will still shine up from the ground.*

*Ms. Northedge spoke of "Smart City" and that Dominion will source, stock, and provide LED fixtures that are all Smart City compatible. She explained that meant that they may not have all the components installed, but they will have the capacity to install those additional components for dimming, for providing security cameras, and for providing other services that the Town may be interested in. The lights themselves, once installed, will have multiple capabilities that could be considered in the future. Mr. Reamy commented that LED lights have come a long way in the ten years that they have been around and he thinks now is the right time, the stable time, to enter into the market.*

*Mike Gallagher mentioned that Vienna is part of a street light agreement with Fairfax County, Virginia and Dominion, so Vienna would need to work with the County to amend that agreement.*

*Regarding the topic of undergrounding power lines, Mr. Reamy stated that Dominion has been an overhead company for decades, but he thinks that is just now starting to change a little bit. He said it is easier to maintain an overhead system; i.e., as they see an outage, they can repair it; if a tree falls, they know exactly where the problem is. Underground, however, there is a lot more guess work to find where the outage is. Mr. Reamy acknowledged that underground utilities are desirable these days, especially for streetscapes like Maple Avenue, but there are challenges*

with an existing overhead facility that is electrically working properly. He reported that the cost of undergrounding an operational system would be 100% born by whoever decides to do it. When asked about cost, Mr. Reamy said that the per-foot dollar amount for undergrounding a system depends on what is on the pole, i.e. the more "stuff" you see on the sidewalk, the more it costs. Per Scott Reamy: There are devices that don't necessarily translate to going underground. Overhead you can just tap into a line, and branch off of it and extend, but underground there is not that capability. The connection points through a device must be found; those green boxes that you see around are limited in their connections inside the box. What is seen above-ground does not easily transition to below-ground because you may have three runs of cable to maintain interconnectivity between the system to just tap off and branch and go one direction. It's just how it works. There are some things within this that would need to be redesigned and I believe Dominion is working on parts of that. But to do an extensive study it takes years to do a really good job of planning. With a relocation of about a mile-long, the design itself could take the better part of a year or year and a half, and after that it would have to be checked by the construction division. With that, Dominion needs to maintain electricity to all customers, so it would be like building two systems in place and then switching it over in order to maintain reliable service.

Mr. Payton told Mr. Reamy that Council was interested in more detail about the reasons why it would be so costly to underground the electricity at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Nutley Street. Scott Reamy explained that the proposed re-development site has three properties with three different facilities on those lots. He stated that each time you go underground you have to build a transition pole to accommodate the transition from overhead to underground. Per Mr. Reamy: If you need to go underground and there is one pole that runs along the frontage of the property, to accommodate the line in that one pole you have to build two poles to go down and then back up. So really you are defeating what you are setting out to do if you are trying to eliminate poles. It would be more efficient to plan for this in larger stretches. In part of Dominion's terms and conditions, there is a section that states that municipalities can recoup some costs through a local utility tax. Different localities have different tax rates, but funds could be raised specifically for undergrounding within the town limits. Mr. Reamy reported that Dominion could collect that through a line item in the bill and then remit it back to the Town every month. Another option Mr. Reamy spoke of is to operate under a franchise agreement, which is an agreement between the municipality and Dominion that usually lasts long term, like 30 years. Mr. Reamy reported that in 1952, the Town had entered into this agreement and it expired in 1982, and since then it has been expired but it just carries over year to year until it is renegotiated. Dominion's records indicate that the Town didn't want to re-enter into that agreement. With the more modern day, longer term agreements, typically there are provisions for the municipality to underground a set number of linear feet of line. Terms of the agreement would be negotiated between Dominion and the Town Attorney. Mr. Reamy stated that if a new franchise agreement is created and the Town arranges for a certain amount of line footage per year to put underground, three or four years could be banked together as a project to underground. The Mayor commented that entering into a new franchise agreement would depend upon what the agreement entails, the costs, and how it would affect rate costs for Vienna's residents.

The Town Attorney confirmed that the Dominion franchise did expire in 1982. He further reported that Council had then engaged in negotiations over a number of issues. There were two primary issues which brought negotiations to a standstill in 1982. One issue was undergrounding, and the other was tree trimming along Maple

Avenue. Mr. Briglia said that a public hearing for franchise renewal had been advertised, but Council voted it down, so, it was not that they just let it expire.

Mr. Briglia said he thinks that undergrounding of power lines is going to continue to be an issue in franchise negotiations. He then asked about a pilot program for undergrounding utilities. Mr. Reamy went on to discuss Dominion's "strategic underground programming." He said it is a reliability driven program in which they look at the worst performing lines on the system, which are typically back lot, rear lot, or through the woods. Something on a main line that usually is cleared of trees doesn't experience as many outages. Dominion's strategic underground program is statistically driven, purely based on outages, and not driven by aesthetics, Mr. Reamy advised.

Director of Public Works, Mike Gallagher, asked Dominion representatives to explain the line that goes up and down Nutley Street and why it is so much more costly and/or complicated than other lines. As detailed by Scott Reamy, at Nutley and Maple there are two circuits that run perpendicular to each other. If you look at that corner, there is an "ugly pole" that sits there, that is what we call a buck pole, which has multiple directions changing on the pole. There are cross arms that change levels and directions. One circuit that flies through there goes down Nutley, and another one that flies through goes along Maple Avenue. Those different circuits are off of different breakers at a substation. That is how we maintain reliability through the grids. So, there are tie points on the ends of those circuits. If one circuit were to fail, then you can pick up energy from the other circuit and feed the rest of the circuit. So that is how we interconnect with our system. It is unfortunate that at that corner, this is where we have two of those circuits coming together. To underground that, you can't just take what you see and put it underground. You have to create tie points. And those tie points are in large switches, which are about 6 feet by 6 feet by about 4 feet tall. They are much bigger than your underground transformers, in some cases, your underground residential transformers are much bigger than that. In that situation, we would need two of those switches to maintain the interconnectivity between those two circuits at that tie point. At that location, the developer would then need to pay for all of the equipment to replace what is overhead to go underground, and those switches are not cheap. To piecemeal this together does cause some added costs and we need to install these transition poles that go underground as almost a temporary fix until everything goes underground.

Director of Planning and Zoning, Patrick Mulhern, remarked that having these three MAC projects coming up was an opportunity to look at the issue of undergrounding power lines. More discussion about costs and things followed. The Mayor said that she would like to know how much it would cost to update the undergrounding plan for Maple Avenue, and specifically how much it would cost to underground that section near the intersection of Maple Avenue and Nutley Street. She said she would also like to know about the different methods to finance.

**B. [17-663](#)**

**On Street Parking Options on Church Street NW and Dominion Road NE**

Attachments: [Church St](#)  
[Dominion](#)  
[Citizen Meeting Announcement Church](#)  
[Church Street NW Pull in Parking Mailing List](#)  
[Citizen Meeting Announcement Dominion](#)  
[Dominion Road NE Pull in Parking Mailing List](#)

*John Jay Sergent, Civil Engineer I in the Department of Public Works, reported on a citizens' meeting held November 29, 2017 for discussion of a proposal to change Dominion Road, N.E. into a one-way street between Church Street and Ayr Hill Avenue, NE. During the meeting, citizens had expressed concern about Dominion Road being one-way because of tractor-trailer drop-offs throughout the day in that industrial zone. People suggested that those drop-offs could take up to thirty minutes, which could be problematic on a one-way street.*

*Mr. Sergent had determined that there was enough road width to accomodate parallel parking on one side of Dominion Road, in front of the businesses, and still have the 24 feet necessary to back out of the W&OD parking area on Dominion Road. He said it would be a simple matter of painting stripes on the existing pavement to delineate the approximately eleven new parking spaces. A fire hydrant would have to be moved, but Mr. Sergent stated that it could be done "in-house." Mr. Sergent recommended having one more citizens' meeting so that everyone's voice could be heard, if Council decides to proceed with this idea.*

*Council Members pointed out that five years ago, businesses on Dominion Road had proposed this one-way street but the idea had been dropped. (Not all of the business owners from that time are still there.) Mr. Sergent reported that it was the Dominion Road businesses who led him to follow up on the one-way street idea. It was also reported that cars parallel park there illegally now. One Council Member told that Dominion Road businesses had come to the Transportation Safety Commission to discuss parking on that side of Dominion Road five years ago, but as she recalled, they had wanted that parking to be dedicated to the adjacent businesses.*

*Council brought up a concern that the W&OD Trail rents out parking on one side but not all the properties along Dominion Road have access to that rental. Mr. Sergent noted that W&OD re-striped that portion from 41 to 44 parking spaces, getting three extra spaces. Mr. Sergent continued to say that the Town is adding 11 parking spaces, for a grand total of 55. Creating the one-way street was going to end up with 56 total parking spaces, but he said that one of the problems was, there would be fewer spaces on the private W&OD area which they lease out. The Mayor suggested reaching-out again. Mr. Sergent said he would keep moving forward on making Dominion Road one-way, and he would schedule another citizen's meeting.*

*Council talked over the pros and cons of installing parking meters. Maintenance on the meters and someone to monitor parking and enforce ticketing would be required, but it could possibly generate some income.*

*The second topic of conversation regarded changing another portion of Church Street to a one-way street, specifically the frontage along the Vienna Post Office between Lawyers Road and Pleasant Street, NW. Mr. Sergent said that they are proposing to change it to one-way with a 16 foot travel lane, and add-in 28 forty-five-degree angle parking spaces (nine feet wide and thirteen feet long). They*

would make sure that the drop-off mail boxes remained accessible to citizens.

One Council Member opined that it was not a good idea, and that it was not completely thought out. He spoke of the traffic and trucks around the intersection of Lawyers and Church Street and suggested that a lot of traffic would be dumped over to Maple Avenue. He further stated that Town government needs to preserve their options in that area. Other Council Members indicated that a traffic study would be needed, they may want to install a traffic round-about in that area, and that once the former Marco Polo Restaurant site is redeveloped, that portion of Church Street will be wide enough for two-way traffic. The Mayor remarked that there are more details which need to be figured out with this. Mr. Sergent further noted that the Post Master had said they would have to determine how the new route would impact postal vehicles and their costs. Council Members continued to verbally explore various possibilities and concerns.

Another Council Member recalled the many citizen concerns and complaints about potential traffic impacts when the first Marco Polo site redevelopment application was considered and ultimately denied. Other Council Members and the Mayor agreed that it would be best to wait and see what happens with redevelopment of the Marco Polo Restaurant site, which encompasses most of the block between Maple Avenue, Pleasant Street, Church Street and Lawyers Road.

The Mayor thanked John Jay Sergent for all of his work on these preliminary evaluations.

*Recommendations:* The Department of Public Works will conduct another citizens' meeting and come back to Council with a detailed proposal to move forward with the changes to Dominion Road, NE as discussed. No changes to Church Street, NW will be pursued at this time.

#### C. [17-630](#)

#### Feedback from Businesses Received by the TBLC

Marketing and Communication Manager Lynne DeWilde praised the TBLC (Town Business Liaison Committee) and said that working with them had been a pleasure.

TBLC Chairperson Friderike Butler stated that their goal and the most important part of their new mission statement is to support the Town of Vienna in creating an engaging, vibrant, unique and community enhancing local business environment. She reported that they had welcomed 298 new businesses in 2017, almost tripling the previous year's total of 98. They also held 18 ribbon cutting ceremonies in 2017, each attended by some Town Council Members and Town Staff, and always attended by Mayor DiRocco. A new initiative this year was the TBLC's first ever digital Town newsletter. Ms. Butler said they put their own data base together and are sending the newsletter out to 1,300 Vienna Businesses, including some businesses outside of town limits who want to know what is going on. Ms. Butler also thanked Town Council for providing the funds for the printed "Vienna Voice" newsletter to be delivered to all the Vienna businesses, noting that businesses really appreciate it and it makes it a lot easier for them to plan for upcoming events.

In 2017, the TBLC organized their first Vienna Business Window Decorating Contest for the holiday season. Ms. Butler said it was a great success and they hope to do it every year. She had created an interactive map of all participating businesses. TBLC's budget for the event was zero, there were 15 participants, and other businesses expressed interest in participating next year. The first place winner this year was Karin's Florist, and their prize was for the Mayor to work there for a day,

for free. Ms. Butler also mentioned an idea to turn Vienna into an open Christmas Market over the Christmas season, so people from out-of-town would come to Vienna as a destination.

At the beginning of this year, the TBLC did a town business survey. Some survey feedback said that it was very expensive to have a business in the Town of Vienna. Ms. Butler noted that although there was nothing the Town could do about high rents, she wanted the Mayor and Council to be aware of it. Feedback also suggested that there was room for improvement in providing information; Town website information had been updated just recently, Ms. Butler commented, but she opined that it is still very complicated and confusing for businesses to find all the information necessary for things like signage, and for all the different steps and different departments to integrate with for business licenses and occupancy licenses. They asked that the Town website be kept updated and accurate. Another suggestion was to change paper applications to on-line.

Ms. Butler reported that the TBLC had recently heard from several businesses that there was a perception of arbitrary or subjective decision making by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR). Consequently, there is interest in establishing a standardized BAR process that is congruent with Town Code and Town policy. Other "non-positive" feedback that Ms. Butler brought to Council's attention regarded interaction with some businesses which have been in Town for a long time. Some businesses reported feeling disappointed with Town Staff when, instead of coming by or picking up the telephone and calling them about signage or parking issues, they simply sent a registered letter informing them that they were doing something wrong. Ms. Butler relayed that those businesses would have appreciated a personal call or personal contact to talk it over. Similarly, there were reports of new businesses opening whose exterior signage was disapproved, and they felt that someone should have offered some solution or support. Ms. Butler said that representatives from the town need to be part of the solution rather than just saying no.

The biggest request from the TBLC was to add a part-time or full-time Town staff person designated and dedicated to just represent businesses. As Ms. Butler proposed, it would be easier for businesses to work with just one person for everything business related. New businesses currently must apply to the Finance Department for a business license and to the Planning and Zoning Department for an occupancy permit. Ms. Butler talked about the Town of Herndon's procedures where businesses only have one application process. On a side note, a suggestion was made to raise the minimum business license fee up from \$30, and it was confirmed that license fees had not changed in a very long time.

Ms. Butler spoke of all the Town revenue generated by businesses and expressed hope that, going forward there could be consideration to really invest back into the business community by providing them services that they need to be more successful.

Council inquired about possibly reallocating or sharing a staff position to create a business liaison person, but noted that funding is tight.

The TBLC and the Vienna Business Association had reportedly discussed establishing a Restaurant Week. Creating a Vienna business map was also considered by TBLC. As a committee, Ms. Butler said they are not able to collect any funds, however, she said it just takes time to put the business data base into the internet, connect it all, and create categories for restaurants, doctors' offices, retail,

*etc. She suggested that it could be like a big outdoor shopping experience map where people can really find all of Vienna's unique businesses. Council Members asked about a previous publication called Shop Local, but Lynne DeWilde told them that it is gone because it did not get enough clicks per month to justify the expense of it.*

*Ms. Butler stated that it would be lovely to have bike share stations at the Vienna Metro Station and downtown. She said it would certainly enhance the business community when the Town has festivals and people ride the metro. She added that maybe several years down the line, the Town might also consider adding a town shuttle service as part of parking improvements. Working with the Vienna Public Arts Commission to promote public art was another suggestion made by the TBLC. Ms. Butler commented that there are many creative opportunities that do not cost any money for the Town and its businesses to work together to promote Town businesses. She mentioned how appreciative the businesses were when the Parks and Recreation Department invited the runner-ups in the Holiday Window Decorating Contest to have a table at one of the Chillin' on Church Street events.*

*The Mayor thanked Friderike Butler for all of the information, and for everything that the Town Business Liaison committee has done this year. Moving forward, the Mayor said that Town Staff could update the website and set up more on-line services versus paper. She also expressed interest in restaurant week and checking out how to structure a part-time staff person to work with businesses.*

## 2. Meeting Adjournment

*The Town Council Work Session of December 4, 2017 adjourned at 9:53 p.m.*

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*Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco*

*Signed / Dated:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Attest:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Deputy Town Clerk*

*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.*