

**MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING WITH COVINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 02, 2025**

The Council for the City of Covington held a joint public hearing with the Covington Planning Commission on **Tuesday, December 02, 2025**, at **6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 West Locust Street, Covington, Virginia. Following the public hearing Council held a regular session at 6:30 PM and immediately went into a closed session after meeting closure.

A Public Hearing was held for The rezoning request of Newco Inc. for property located on East Cherry Street, Covington, Virginia. The request seeks to rezone Lots 5 and 6 of Block 43, and Lots 27, 28, and 29 of Block 44, from C-3 (General Business) to M1 (Light Industrial). The purpose of the request is to allow the property to be used as contractor laydown yards and for employee parking.

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:00PM by Mayor Fred F. Forbes III. Mayor Forbes asked City Clerk, Amber Berberette to show all Council Members in attendance with the exception of Vice Mayor Raymond C Hunter. Mayor Forbes then handed the Public Hearing over to the Covington Planning Commission.

Covington Planning Commission Chairman Jerry Morgan opened their portion of the Public Hearing with requesting their secretary Samantha Herald, to take attendance. The Planning Commission members who were in attendance were; John “Jay” Crowder, Gene Mundy, Wayne Lamb, and Chairman Jerry Morgan. With the exception of Vice Chairman Charles “CW” Smith. Also, in attendance were Eric Tyree, Building and Zoning Administrator.

Chairman Morgan called up Mr. Tyree, to give information on the background of the area. Mr. Tyree advised that this area is currently under a mixture of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. The comprehensive plan for the area indicates that for the future of this area to transition into a transitional mix use area. Mr. Tyree read the definition of “Transitional Mix Use Area” from the comprehensive plan which says “There are numerous areas that contain a mix of residential, commercial, and small industrial uses. This mix of uses creates a unique dynamic that warrants its own classification. The intended use of this designation is to identify the areas that should be allowed to transition to higher intensity uses overtime. Specifically, the city should seek to encourage residential uses to transition to a compatible service, retail, low intensity and low impact industrial uses.” Mr. Tyree concluded his report.

Chairman Morgan and Mayor Forbes officially called the public hearing open at 6:05PM.

Chairman Morgan called up the applicant Newco Inc. to address the assembly. Mr. Tom White representative for Newco Inc. informed the assembly that Newco Inc. recently acquired the Cherry Street lots and plan to used the lots to store laydown materials and employee parking. They are willing to restrict parking if needed and erect privacy screening.

Chairman Morgan opened the public comments portion of the public hearing. There are two speakers signed up to address the assembly. Chairman Morgan called up the first citizen speaker, Mr. Augustine Penn who resides at 325 E Cherry St. He isn’t for or against the rezoning request, he has multiple questions and concerns. Mr. Penn resides beside one of the lots. He advised that he is concerned that when they park in the grass that there will be a mess of mud and issues caused to the sidewalks. He is also concerned about an increase in noise.

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Second citizen Charles Anderson, 423 West Locust St. addressed the public hearing. He advised that he doesn't live in the area and he still has concerns about the rezoning request. Mr. Anderson advised that he is concerned about storage of hazardous materials. Mr. Anderson stated that he is against this and doesn't think this belongs in the City. Mr. Anderson asked if they are currently using the area. Mr. White informed Mr. Anderson that Newco has currently be in operation on other lots. These are new lots that they are seeking rezoning requests for. They are currently not using the lots outside of what it is currently zoned for. Mr. Anderson concluded his statement portion. Chairman Morgan closed the public comment section.

Chairman Morgan invited Mr. White back to the podium to answer questions from the Covington Planning Commission and Covington City Council.

Mr. Mundy asked, Does Newco plan to do any Worksite prep on these lots? Examples given by Mr. Mundy; assemble, cut, build out on the lay down yard? Mr. White advised that this will not be done on the lot.

Mr. Mundy said that should keep the noise down.

Mr. Mundy asked if there will be hazardous materials stored on these lots. Mr. White advised no.

Mr. Mundy asked roughly how many employees will be parking on these lots. Mr. White advised the whole company has 50 to 60 employees. The area has already been used for parking. They do not need the whole lot as parking because they already have other areas used for parking. They want to use this as overflow parking.

Mr. Crowder asked if Newco Inc. will be making a plan to lay asphalt. Mr. White advised they will put gravel down in the lots. Mr. Crowder asked what about sidewalks and curbs. Will there be vehicle traffic over sidewalks? Mr. White advised they would fix any damage and would be willing to consider a curb cut in those areas that may be used for traffic.

Chairman Morgan asked how much of the parking lot does Newco Inc. plan to fence. Mr. White said that Newco Inc's intention is to install screening between lot 6 and the adjacent lots to lot 6. They also have plans to install screening between lot 27 and the adjacent lots to lot 27.

Chairman Morgan asked if they plan to install any security lighting. Mr. White advised that at this time Newco does not plan to install any lighting but can if it is required. Chairman Morgan advised that he would prefer to keep it without adding additional lighting to the area to reduce light pollution to the residents in the area.

Chairman Morgan informed Newco that Planning Commission's concern is that if this rezoning request is granted would they work outside of the zoning? Newco advised they would not. That they would submit another application in the future if needs of use changes.

Mayor Forbes asked if there will be issues with mud and sidewalks damaged. Mr. White advised there will be gravel laid down to reduce the mud messes.

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Mayor Forbes asked about an increase in noise from the area. Mr. White advised these are just to lay down materials and for parking. Noises outside of this should not increase.

Mayor Forbes asked if there are late night deliveries that could disturb the neighborhood. Mr. White advised no and that they do have employees who work overnight but there wouldn't be any deliveries or anything major done outside of normal business hours.

Councilwoman Wolfe asked if the materials will be seen by the public when they drive by. Mr. White advised that they will be on the lots that set back off of Monroe. Mr. Tyree advised that within 500 feet of a residence, that it is required by city ordinance to install a screen around the materials.

Councilwoman Crowder asked for clarification, if the original parking lots are already zoned for parking, why is Newco seeking for the lots to be zoned for parking? Mr. White advised that they are not seeking to rezone the original lots. They are already zoned appropriately. That they are just requesting to rezone the two new lots that are adjacent to Cherry.

Mr. Crowder asked if they anticipate an increase in vehicle traffic. Mr. White advised no, that there isn't a plan to have the need for an increase in traffic. These areas will strictly be used to for storage.

Mayor Forbes asked if they do have any spills that they would clean it up. Mr. White advised they would clean up any spills and log them appropriately.

With no other questions coming from Covington Planning Commission and Covington City Council, Chairman Morgan closed the public hearing at 6:25PM.

Covington Planning Commission voted for the rezoning request with the following roll call votes: Mr. Lamb made the motion to approve the rezoning request of Newco inc. The request seeks to rezone Lots 5 and 6 of Block 43, and Lots 27, 28, and 29 of Block 44, from C-3 (General Business) to M1 (Light Industrial) with the following contingencies, no change in use outside of current zoning without prior approval, light pollution is reduced if any new lighting is installed, and screening will need to be installed to reduce visibility. Mr. Crowder seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows. Mr. Crowder; For, Mr. Mundy; For, Mr. Lamb; Abstained and Chairman Morgan; For.

Chairman Morgan turned the meeting over to the Covington City Council. Mayor Forbes advised that this rezoning request is under Vice Mayor Hunter's district. With Mr. Hunter absent Mayor Forbes motioned to table Covington City Council's vote until the regular Covington City Council meeting that is scheduled for Tuesday December 09, 2025. To include Mr. Hunter on the vote. Councilwoman Crowder seconded the vote to be tabled until the next meeting. Followed by a roll call vote. Councilwoman Crowder; For, Councilman Goff; For, Councilwoman Wolfe; For. Covington City Council will make a vote on the Newco Inc's rezoning request on December 09, 2025.

At 6:28PM Mayor Forbes made the motion to adjourn the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wolfe.

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At 6:30PM the City of Covington Council opened their regular session meeting with Mayor Fred F. Forbes III calling the meeting to order. Mayor Forbes asked City Clerk, Amber Berberette to show all council members in attendance with the exception of Vice Mayor, Raymond C. Hunter.

Council members in attendance were Mayor Fred F. Forbes III, Councilwoman Susan S. Crowder, Councilman David Goff, and Councilwoman Susan S. Wolfe. Also in attendance was City Manager Allen Dressler, Director of Finance David Bryant, and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

The council unanimously approved the agenda for tonight's meeting, with Mayor Forbes requesting a motion. Councilman Goff made the motion with Councilwoman Wolfe seconding the motion. With an all in favor "aye" votes from the council.

Citizen speaker Charles Anderson, 423 West Locust Street, to speak on the camper near Kristi Mann's house (compass house) Lexington street. Mr. Anderson advised that someone told Ms. Mann that the camper is a hazard. Mr. Anderson also informed Council that across the street from his house there is an unregistered dilapidated pop-up camper and he would like someone to look into it. He also addressed the building said that it is falling in. He is also concerned with the corner of Locust and Court where there is a hole in the road that doesn't stay filled. Mr. Dressler advised Mr. Anderson that this issue has been fixed. The city found that it was a terracotta pipe that had separated. Mr. Anderson was also asking about the traffic lights at the intersection of Maple and Main. He said it's hard to see and that people are still speeding through. He stated he has also seen police officers speeding and they are not stopping at intersections while responding to calls. Mr. Anderson finished his comment portions.

The following ordinances and resolutions were approved for the 12-09-2025 regular session agenda. Councilwoman making the motion to add to agenda and seconded by Mayor Forbes, with an all in favor "aye" votes.

1. There were no Ordinances to consider.
2. To consider and vote on Resolution R-25-37: Appropriation - Community Based Policing - Tractor Supply \$250.00.
3. To consider and vote on Resolution R-25-38: Resolution of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional commission adopting the Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025 update.
4. To consider and vote on Resolution R-25-39: Appropriation - Lewis Gale Alleghany Hospital's Volunteer Auxiliary- Police Department DARE contributions.
5. To consider and vote on Resolution R-25-40: Appropriation – National Opioid Settlement Recoveries in the amount of \$14,480.66 (No City Match).

There was only one appointment for council consideration. Council to consider and reappoint Mrs. Kathy G. Carson to the Alleghany Department of Social Services Board: Mrs. Carson's term expires on December 31, 2025. Councilwoman Crowder made the motion to add Mrs. Carson's appointment to the regular session agenda for December 09, 2025. Mayor Forbes second the motion and an all in favor vote of "aye" from council.

Mayor Forbes read the list of minutes from the November 2025 meetings for approval to be added to the regular session meeting on December 09, 2025. Councilwoman Crowder made the motion

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to add the meeting minutes to the 12-09-2025 regular session agenda. With Mayor Forbes seconding the motion and an all in favor “aye” votes from council.

1. November 2025 Combined Work & Regular Session

November 04, 2025

Mr. Dressler delivered his City Manager’s Report to Council.

- Proud of how the City of Covington looks like for the Holiday season. Makes everyone get in the holiday spirit.
- First annual Christmas Market was held on November 23, 2025 at the Jackson River Sports Complex. There were 30 to 35 vendors, music, activities, and a horse and buggy ride around the Jackson River Sports Complex.
- Tree Lighting was lit by 2nd grade Sharon Elementary School student Ella. This opportunity is determined by rotating throughout the different elementary school
- Santa arrived for pictures, milk and cookies with the citizens of Covington.
- This upcoming Saturday is a big day planned. Covington Downtown will be busy. There will be vendors, arts and crafts, and then the Christmas Parade. The Virginian Review will be covering the parade and event.
- The City of Covington is 1 out of 9 of the most beautiful cities in Virginia by WorldAtlas.
- The City of Covington is was recognized as 1 out of 7 of the best winter getaways in Virginia.
- That there is a song that was written by a Charlie Waddell called Covington Still Runs Deep. The song used AI advancement to create the musical arrangement and AI provided the vocals.
- Delegate Austin meet with local leaders to discuss area needs and what has been going on in the area.
- There is a called meeting to go over the Financial Audit report is set for 11am on December 19, 2025.
- Following the called meeting the City of Covington Christmas meal at 12pm.
- Mr. Dressler took questions from Council.
 - Councilwoman Crowder mentioned the new signs up throughout the area. Mr. Dressler advised that these signs completed the project that provided the signs from Alleghany Highlands Chamber Commerce.

With no further questions, Mr. Dressler concluded his City Manager’s Report.

There was no old business to discuss.

There was no new business to discuss.

There were no citizen speakers before adjournment.

There were no council comments before adjournment.

With no further business to come before Council, Mayor Forbes requested to move into closed session. Councilwoman Crowder made the motion. Motion was seconded by Mayor Forbes. Covington city council will enter into a closed session pursuant to section 2.2-3711(a)(7) of the code of Virginia for the limited purpose of: Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual

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litigation where such consultation in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigation posture of the public body.



FRED F. FORBES III., MAYOR



ATTEST:
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:
AMBER N. BERBERETTE, CITY CLERK