

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
September 7, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

The City of Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Meeting and Public Hearing on Thursday, September 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Melvin Henson
Tyson Cooper
Steve Webb

Vice-Mayor Cheryl Hickman
Stanley Coffey
Danny Staton

Members Absent: Mayor Bill Fitzgerald

ADG #1: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER

Councilman Cooper delivered the opening prayer.

ADG #2: BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Repeal of Chapter 20 – Human Relations of the Code of the City of Buena Vista, for the purpose of repealing a local fair housing ordinance which is superseded by State and Federal laws and regulations.

Mr. Tom Roberts stated that as he was reviewing some of our Codes and Ordinances, this one jumped out to him as something that we can clean up as part of our ongoing efforts to make sure that our local ordinances are serving us well and we have stuff that we do need and take out things that we don't need. Fair Housing legislation got started in the 1960s along with Civil Rights legislation at the federal level. Mr. Roberts read from the HUD website: "The Fair Housing Act protect people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities". Mr. Roberts noted that Fair Housing legislation is about preventing discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or various other categories when you are renting out or buying a property. At the Federal and State levels there are robust laws and agencies that deal with fair housing. Housing and Urban Development has a whole office dedicated to this at the federal level. At the state level there is the VA Fair Housing Office which has hotlines to call, handbooks that detail what is and is not allowed, and various other resources. There are also federal and state level criminal and civil penalties for violation of one of these. Mr. Roberts stated that it looks like in the 1980s, the City adopted a local fair housing ordinance as well which mimics these state and federal ones. The local ordinance allows for someone to file a complaint at the local level with the City Manager which could result in a Class 3 misdemeanor. City staff fully support the goals of fair housing legislation and are not in any way trying to undermine the goals of non-discrimination, but we believe that this is something that is much better handled at the state and federal level than at the local level. The reason for that is that if there were someone filing a complaint, they would be pursuing that at the state and maybe the federal level also. The City is just kind of duplicating that. Our ordinance is decades old and hasn't been updated for a very long time. City staff are not equipped to handle these complaints as we don't have the background and are not up to date on the latest fair housing legislation and judicial decisions and we don't have the resources to investigate complaints of violations. We recommend repealing this entirely. If there is no longer a local fair housing ordinance, issues or complaints will be directed to the state and federal fair housing offices. We already have flyers in City Hall and links on the website to direct people to

those offices for information and/or grievances. Repealing the local ordinance will eliminate any possibility that an actual complaint comes in and then we are stuck figuring out how we are going to investigate and prosecute it. We would also have to determine if our local ordinance as it is written now conflicts with state or federal laws or judicial decisions. Mr. Roberts also clarified that this has no impact on the zoning and building code regulations that we have in place or property maintenance codes that deal with occupancy or maintenance of dwellings.

Vice-Mayor Hickman asked to clarify if it would limit recourse for citizens at this point if it would just be referring them and giving them information for the state and federal offices. Mr. Roberts stated that that is correct and at this point he believes that any penalties at the local level aren't as serious as those at the state or federal level and he believes that the state and federal courts would be better equipped to handle that kind of issue.

Councilman Webb noted that this would allow another avenue for people to have a stiffer penalty with more experienced people to handle the situation.

Mr. Kearney stated that the state has lots of agencies that deal with this, and we don't have the manpower or the expertise. He also noted that the local ordinance doesn't add anything anymore. When it was done, it did, but state laws have changed, and they have the agencies to handle it.

Vice-Mayor Hickman opened the floor to the public; no one spoke. Vice-Mayor Hickman closed the public hearing.

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Coffey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilman Cooper, and carried by Council.

ADG #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 17, 2023, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Coffey, seconded by Councilman Cooper, and carried by Council.

ADG #5: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS

Citizens who desire to speak to council will be recognized at this time. Please limit your statement to three (3) minutes.

Bryson Adams, 2505 Laurel Avenue, delivered the RARO director's report. He stated they have had a lot of issues with registration. When registration is open and you sign up on time, that guarantees the child a spot to play. When you miss that period, the child is automatically put on a wait list. That wait list is designed to have kids listed in the order in which they signed up. The kids are then put on a team as other kids leave or as they are needed. RARO had 19 kids on the wait list, which is almost another football team, but they were spread throughout the county. The wait list has now been cleared and every kid is now on a team. Councilman Coffey asked if the registration was open while school is in session because that could be the reason kids are not signing up on time. Mr. Adams stated that he was unsure when the registration period was. He did note, however, that they had an additional 38 kids sign up for football this year, and they needed 33 more helmets to fit them out, and if they had waited until school began for this school year, they wouldn't have had enough time to get those helmets and they would have more like 50 kids on the wait list. He also noted that for football, they need to know well in advance how

many kids they are going to have. He also mentioned that basketball registration will be open from October 2nd through October 23rd.

Mr. Adams also reported that the Facilities Committee with the Board of Directors at RARO went through what facilities we have and what the scope of work is that it needs to get us up to par before the spring sports season starts. Laurel Park has some life safety issues: the fencing is rolled up and not attached at the bottom; the infield has had so much dirt added to it over the years that it drops off to the outfield, so we need to bring down the infield. RARO has the ability to say that the locality is responsible for fixing this or that and the locality will have to comply; there is a \$5,000 threshold on this. Mr. Adams recommends reaching out to find volunteers to help with any projects.

Mr. Adams also mentioned that the handicap accessible swing at the new playground is broken; he isn't sure if this was a manufacturer defect or vandalism, but it needs to be addressed and fixed as soon as possible.

Ronald Cash, 253 E. 32nd Street, stated that it has been nearly four months since Mr. [Dylan] Conner took it upon himself to sabotage our city's communication and water system. He said he has seen nothing in the newspapers and has heard nothing from Council about any advancements in trying to find out what happened. He noted that he realizes that it is probably still under investigation so there are things that are confidential in that regard, but he thinks that reveals how vulnerable the city is to "freaks" and people that are more deliberate in their intentions to hurt people. He questioned what, if anything, has been done at the City level to ensure the safety of our water supply and the continued reliable use of our communication system. He also noted that this was a big wake up call for some people on just how weak our infrastructure protection is. He stated that he doesn't expect an answer tonight unless they had one, but he certainly expects something by the next meeting on what has or what will be done in the near future to protect these and other facilities. He noted that he hasn't spoken with anyone at Dominion about our substations, but he intends to. He opined that it has been long enough now that we should have seen some improvement or some progress. He also noted that this is a very serious situation, and it doesn't take much to poison a water supply, particularly in a small town like this. He would appreciate knowing what the City is doing.

Vice-Mayor Hickman stated that they have been working behind the scenes and Council was just updated tonight, so they can't share that just yet. Mr. Cash said he is glad to hear that. Councilman Webb also noted that Mr. Conner was convicted in court today and the case will be going to the grand jury.

Chief of Police, Wayne Handley, stated that he wanted to include Council on one thing they are doing within the department. He recapped his statement from July 3rd, when he appeared before Council, that "I intended to dedicate myself to the advancement of the BVPD. The BVPD is a values-driven organization dedicated to an environment of life, health, safety, and security for all of BV. In keeping with the City Manager's vision for the City, I believe that our City is heading toward a renaissance where the full wealth of BV's businesses, citizens and government operations will be on full display, not just for our region, but for the Commonwealth as a whole". Chief Handley opined that this type of renaissance cannot occur without the diversity of thought and experience that we can translate into action. The BVPD is committed to such diversity of thought and experience, not for the sake of political expedience, but for genuine desire to improve our service delivery to our community and the diverse members of it. To that end, he has made

a conditional offer of employment to Ms. Jennifer Smith to fill one of the vacancies in the department. Ms. Smith is coming to us from the Hampton Roads area where she has served as a certified law enforcement officer for 12 years with extensive experience in narcotic violent crime and sexual assault investigations. Additionally, she has a master's degree in forensic psychology combined with extensive law enforcement training. As with every member of the BVPD who serves in multiple roles, his intent with Ms. Smith would be to utilize her training and experience to augment our patrol services as well as increase our responsiveness to cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, and other associated interpersonal violence. The BVPD currently has a good response with these cases in the community, however, he would argue that none of us would be satisfied with good, if we could have a great response. Additionally, Ms. Smith would act as a regular liaison between the BVPD and other community stakeholders through advocacy, education, and where needed, criminal investigations. Chief Handley's noted that his intent is to continuously improve our responsiveness wherever the community has a need, and this addition to the team could certainly move the department forward in that goal. Chief stated that he wanted to bring this to Council's attention to let them know that they are working hard to move this department in the direction that the City is also moving at the same time. He is trying to keep in step with what the City Manager is doing, and they are making every effort to increase their footprint here in the community.

Vice-Mayor Hickman thanked the Chief for his outreach to the community and noted that she has seen a big footprint and lots of interaction with the community and we need that.

Councilman Coffey stated that he was sitting on his front porch the other day, when the Chief happened to ride by and said, "how are you doing Mr. Coffey?" He appreciates that and that is the kind of communication and togetherness that we need in this town where the police and the citizens can get along together.

ADG #6: REPORTS

1. Mayor

None.

2. City Manager

Mr. Tyree wanted to thank Bryson Adams for volunteering his time to clean up and paint the teeter- totters at the Double Decker. Mr. Adams also cleared out some of the mulch from up there.

Mr. Tyree also thanked the Sheriff's Department and the community service workers for cleaning up the parade route. He noted that he got a lot of good comments from the candidates that participated in the Labor Day parade.

Mr. Tyree mentioned that he had a memo for Council regarding an update on the Dylan Conner case.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Representatives

Vice-Mayor Hickman thanked everyone for everything that they did on Labor Day with the parade and the activities at the park.

Councilman Coffey thanked Millie and Ed for the job they did at the park on Labor Day. He also thanked Lew Hamilton and JJs for the food at the park on Labor Day. He mentioned that the bands were great as well.

Councilman Webb thanked the Chief for attending the home football games. He stated that he doesn't recall ever seeing the ex-chief at a football game and he appreciates that. He also welcomed Ms. Smith to the BVPD.

Councilman Henson noted that there was a decent crowd for Labor Day, and he noticed that the Oyler Pavilion was being used and for the purpose it was originally dedicated for. He also noted that the pool had a decent crowd that day as well. He mentioned that with the sinkhole opening on 64 a couple weeks ago, some people are drawing attention to the one in front of City Hall and this is something that we need to go ahead and get done. He then addressed holiday trash pickup. He noted that it used to be on a holiday, the trash was picked up the next day. He stated that he is unsure of how it happened, but now the City has gone to picking up trash on all holidays. He said that there were a lot of people that were a day behind because of the past history and some people were irritated that there was no advertisement or publicity. Councilman Cooper noted that this was changed a few months ago and Public Works now picks up on everyday whether it is a holiday or not. Mr. Tyree stated except on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Councilman Henson suggested more advertising to let people know what is going on because a lot of people are upset. Mr. Tyree noted that he has also received a lot of phone calls about this, so he spoke with Corey Henson about it. Public Works started the holiday trash pickup before Memorial Day, so this is the fourth or fifth holiday now that it has been like that. There was a notice put on Facebook, but since there are a lot of people that don't get on Facebook, we will be putting a notice in the newspaper. Vice-Mayor Hickman also suggested that there be a notice on the water bills as well.

ADG #7: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARD, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

Planning Commission

Mr. Melvin Henson and Ms. Lucy Ferrebee's terms on the Planning Commission both expire on September 30, 2023. Mr. Henson is willing to serve again if reappointed. Ms. Ferrebee is no willing to serve again. Both appointments are four-year terms and the first time they have appeared on the agenda.

Councilman Cooper made a motion to reappoint Mr. Melvin Henson to the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Councilman Coffey and carried by Council.

The second opening will be carried over to the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

OB #1: SECOND READING OF A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT FOR THE INSTITUTIONAL ZONE TO UPDATE PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES, DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS, AND OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Councilman Cooper moved to read the amendment by title only, seconded by Councilman Henson.

Councilman Coffey stated that he still had some concerns with this. He asked for verification that Austin Rehl is the one that asked for this, and Mr. Roberts stated that he did. Councilman Coffey said that he understands the industrial stuff, but asked if SVU asked for the same thing and just because one is institutional, is it all-inclusive? Mr. Roberts stated that when Mr. Rehl talked to him about what he wanted to do on the property (months ago), he told Mr. Rehl that the best fit for that would be the institutional zone, so he applied to rezone his property to the institutional zone and then because he was doing that, Mr. Roberts took a look at the institutional zone text to verify that this text is still relevant today in 2023 given what Mr. Rehl is doing and what SVU is currently doing. We are just expanding the institutional zone to another location in the same way that we might take some land in another part of the city and expand the R2 residential zone, for example. Councilman Coffey then asked if these were the only two places that we have the institutional zoning, Mr. Roberts stated that it is. He then asked if it could be anywhere else, and Mr. Roberts stated that it potentially could be and gave the example that if SVU purchased some land in the city that was residential and they wanted to build an educational or athletic facility, they would come to use and apply to rezone that as institutional.

Mr. Kearney clarified that this is only cleaning up the language of the institutional zone text and any other items outside of that would still have to come before Council for approval. He also noted that the City is in charge of their own zoning, and they can always modify things as they control the entire zoning code for the city.

Councilman Webb asked if Mr. Rehl is planning on putting a campground on his land. Mr. Roberts stated that he hasn't spoken to Mr. Rehl about the idea of a campground for a few months. He did note that Mr. Rehl's desire was to have a relatively small number of spaces for RVs for people that might be visiting either as students or faculty for a short period of time. Mr. Roberts also recalled that Councilman Webb mentioned at the last meeting that we could direct those people to Glen Maury Park to have them stay in our campground which is reasonable, but as a conditional use we would be able to review any design of any campground whether it's two spaces or more. Councilman Webb noted that the way the ordinance is written now it states "two or more" and he opined that "or more" could be 30. Mr. Tyree stated that Mr. Rehl would still have to get a conditional use permit to do it. So, he would have to come in here and tell you how many he wants to install, and you all would have to either approve or deny it. Mr. Roberts furthered that by stating that campground or recreational vehicle parks are conditional use so any number of spots would need a conditional use permit whether that were two or 200. Councilman Cooper stated that you could have a campground of one site without permission. Councilman Webb opined that that one could park at Glen Maury, and we could make money off of it. Councilman Cooper noted that it's not a "campground" if you don't have more than one camp site, otherwise it's just a camp site. Mr. Tyree noted that you could do that at a house; he could bring his uncle's camper and park it in his backyard and his uncle could stay there for a weekend and it wouldn't be any different. Mr. Roberts noted that the difference in that is that in the residential zones, it specifically lists that travel trailers or RVs are an accessory use and are prohibited from

occupancy. He also stated that while we don't aggressively enforce the rule that stays for one weekend, technically it would be a violation. The ones we would enforce are those that are parked where people have been living for months. Mr. Roberts stated that he could adjust the language in the definition so that it would be just "one" to make it clear that any number of campers, not just two or more. Councilman Coffey asked if he would be charging for those campsites. Mr. Roberts stated that he doesn't know. Councilman Cooper stated that what he thinks he would want to do is to have visiting instructors staying there for only a short time, so he didn't get the impression that the idea is to make money but to provide a convenient way for visiting instructors to stay right next to where they are teaching. He opined that he doesn't think Mr. Rehl is trying to run a campground per say.

Council carried the motion to read by title. Councilman Cooper read the amendment by title.

Councilman Cooper asked the rest of Council if they wanted to ask for changes. He stated that he is content. If he wants to park one camper, he doesn't care. Councilman Webb asked for Councilman Henson's opinion. Councilman Henson stated that he agrees with Councilman Cooper. Mr. Roberts reiterated that a campground, or campsite, no matter how many, is not listed as permitted use. And an RV does not fall under any of the definitions for permitted use, so a single camper would not be permitted anyway unless there was a conditional use permit for a campground.

Councilman Cooper moved to adopt the ordinance amendment, seconded by Councilman Henson, and carried by Council.

Ms. Burch completed a roll call vote of Council as follows:

Member	Present	Absent	Yes	No	Abstain
Councilman Henson	X		X		
Councilman Cooper	X		X		
Councilman Webb	X		X		
Councilman Staton	X		X		
Councilman Coffey	X		X		
Vice-Mayor Hickman	X		X		
Mayor Fitzgerald		X			

The amendment was approved by a unanimous vote.

The adopted ordinance is as follows:

**Zoning Text Amendment
Ordinance Text
Section 302 and Section 617 – Institutional District**

AN ORDINANCE to amend Sections 302 and Section 617 of the Land Development Regulations of the Code of the City of Buena Vista, as amended, for the purpose of updating the Institutional Zone regulations.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that after a duly called public hearing, in accordance with the general welfare of the citizens of Buena Vista and in accordance with good zoning practices, Section 302 is amended in part to add the following definitions below:

302.03-XX Campground. A facility wherein two or more recreational vehicles, recreational park trailer, tent, or other camping unit sites are offered for use by the public or members of an organization for overnight stays.

302.09-1 Institution. A public or private establishment or facility whose primary purpose and audience is charitable, civic, educational, healthcare, or religious. Institutions need not be non-profit but generally do not have a commercial orientation.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that after a duly called public hearing, in accordance with the general welfare of the citizens of Buena Vista and in accordance with good zoning practices, Section 617 is amended in full as shown in the attached "Exhibit A".

This ordinance shall be effective 30 days following adoption by City Council.

William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date

NEW BUSINESS

NB #1: KRISTINA RAMSEY TO PRESENT THE FINAL RECREATION ECONOMY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (RERC) PLAN

Miss Ramsey presented each Council member with a copy of the RERC plan. She stated that instead of giving a PowerPoint presentation, she felt that it would be more valuable to present it by walking them through the pages of the plan. She recalled some prior updates she had given on this program and the workshop that took place at the fire department back in April, but she wanted to give a refresher. Buena Vista was selected in 2022 as one of 25 communities in the country to participate in the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities planning assistance program sponsored by the EPA, USDA Forest Service and Appalachian Regional Commission. This was year two of the program, which served only 10 communities last year. The program goal is to work with the community to develop an action plan focused on growing the outdoor recreation economy. Miss Ramsey noted that we decided to apply for the RERC program as we had just closed the chapter on the golf and were shifting more focus onto the much-needed improvements at Glen Maury Park and thought that this program may help expand on those efforts. She said that, fortunately, we were awarded and set out to develop an action plan and

identify funding to use Glen Maury Park to generate revenue, attract businesses and visitors to the City, and connect the park to downtown, the Appalachian Trail, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Miss Ramsey then began going through the presented plan. She noted that on the first couple of pages is contact information for the facilitation team that lead the group through this effort, followed by some information and history about Buena Vista.

Miss Ramsey said that the first step in the process was putting together a steering committee. These are the folks that are going to do a lot of the work, so they wanted to ensure that they had a great representation from key organizations with partners touching on outdoor recreation and economic development. The phases of the program were broken down to the “assess phase”, “planning phase”, and “implement phase”. She noted that the assess phase isn’t covered in a lot of detail in the plan, so she went into some detail about that as she feels it covers the community engagement portion, which was a vital and important part of her and the steering committee’s vision. The first task of the steering committee was to complete a comprehensive self-assessment to lay some of the groundwork for the facilitation team prior to the workshop. They recognized that many of the questions would be better answered by citizens than a group of community leaders. That is when they decided to put out a public survey, so they would have that feedback to go along with their own. They put the survey out on social media, sent it to our public school system, and talked to some people one on one that couldn’t be reached by those means. She noted that a lot of groundwork for this had already been laid because they had continuously used the phrase “outdoor recreation” in public meetings over the last few years, and several different planning efforts have had public engagement components such as the downtown revitalization plan and Town Square. Therefore, people weren’t surprised to receive a survey or outreach. She stated that while they didn’t receive a huge response, they heard from roughly 50 people that all answered fairly similarly. The responses reinforced the need for this planning process, based on community satisfaction with current outdoor recreation. The aspirations and challenges expressed aligned with the steering committee’s discussion and goals. She noted that the results from the survey and self-assessment are detailed in the plan.

Miss Ramsey then discussed the planning of the two-day workshop that was held in April. They wanted to be intentional with the invitations to the workshop to ensure they had representation from all areas of the community. After brainstorming the key stakeholders that they needed there, they sent individual email invitations that were then followed up with a phone call or in-person visit. They also sent out a general email to a wider net. They pushed the workshop on social media as well as put out press releases and advertised on the radio. She noted that included in the plan is a list of all of those who attended the workshop: those numbers were over 70 on day 1 and over 50 in attendance for day 2, which included state and federal partners.

In addition to the facilitation team, the feedback from the self-assessment and survey allowed the committee to develop four main goals that were used to guide the workshop. Those goals were as follows: enlivening downtown, improving infrastructure, marketing, branding, and promotion, and expanding outdoor recreation activities and education offerings.

The first goal of enlivening downtown is something the city has been prioritizing for the past six years, and moving forward, how can we further enhance this effort to promote outdoor recreation and economic growth?

For the goal of improving infrastructure, we have some great parks and trails now, but many are dated and need reimagining and we also lack key trail connections.

Marketing, branding, and promotion has faced challenges in defining and promoting the city's unique identity for decades. There is also a significant communication and information gap, where although we have numerous attractions, assets, businesses, history, and culture, visitors and residents remain unaware of their existence or how to access them.

The last goal of expanding outdoor recreation activities and educational offerings is focused on promoting programming and increasing participation in outdoor activities. Although we have the facilities, we need to attract more users to them. The public is interested in contributing to the care of nature, downtown, and the city in general, but requires guidance on how to get involved. Ms. Ramsey stated that these four goals served as the basis of the workshop, ensuring a comprehensive approach.

Miss Ramsey then discussed the workshop in more detail. On day one, to kick off the two-day workshop, the steering committee, facilitation team, and state and federal partners embarked on a community tour of key areas in the City. The tour provided valuable insights to inform the process, and they invited key partners to each location to share their perspective. Day one wrapped up with an engaging two-hour workshop session held at the fire department. This session focused on introducing the project and goals and initiating the visioning process. Activities included crafting headlines for what they want to see for Buena Vista in three to five years, word exercises, and more. She noted that the level of engagement was impressive as a lot of people usually attend to just sit and listen, but nearly everyone was actively engaged here.

Day two was a full day of activities. The itinerary planning, asset mapping, and visioning exercises were all hands-on and encouraged feedback from everyone present. She informed that the results and feedback of those exercises are detailed in the plan. The exercises resulted in a list of challenges and opportunities. The challenges included a lack of vision, access, capacity and infrastructure, promotion, and lack of education. Opportunities included an engaged community, trails, changing the narrative, and partnerships and nature. The second half of that day was devoted to the workshop goals and action planning. Everyone was handed sticky notes and were asked to work on their own to write down all of the projects they had in mind. These were then placed under their correlating goal. Following this, everyone was handed a sheet of 10 stickers and were told to place a sticker on the projects that are a top priority in their mind. The actions with the most stickers were higher ranked and were the projects taken back to breakout tables to break into more achievable actions.

Miss Ramsey then went through the actual action plan where each goal was given four primary action items:

- Goal 1 is enlivening downtown. Action 1 is to conduct a study and attract independent developers to develop lodging establishments in Buena Vista. Action 2 is to revise and market the existing incentive program (Tourism Zone) and develop new incentives to attract outdoor recreation businesses to fill downtown business gaps. Action 3 is to develop a volunteer system and a volunteer to serve as primary coordinator. Action 4 is to develop business support programs to ensure a vibrant economic community, with attractive storefronts that embrace outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Goal 2 is improving infrastructure. Action 1 is the completion of a master plan for Glen Maury Park including electric and water upgrades, trails, and kids programming. Action 2 is to connect the Chessie Trail with the River Walk. Action 3 is to inventory the parks within the City and conduct planning to improve and/or develop parks to enhance safe

neighborhood park access for all areas of the community. Action 4 is to develop needed resources to support Buena Vista as an Appalachian Trail Community and attract more hikers to the community.

- Goal 3 is marketing, branding, and promotion. Action 1 is to use and encourage local use of social media for marketing and promotions. Action 2 is to tell the historical and cultural story of Buena Vista. Action 3 is to empower organizations and small businesses to cross-promote and cross-market. Action 4 is to develop and foster a “Buena Vista” voice/brand.
- Goal 4 is to expand outdoor recreation activities and educational offerings. Action 1 is to expand offerings for gear rentals and attract outdoor outfitters. Action 2 is to connect the current educational offering with local providers. Action 3 is to create a service day with the local schools. And Action 4 is to expand RARO’s capacity and offerings, connecting them to regional partners.

Miss Ramsey noted that all of these goals and actions are further detailed in the plan to include initial next steps, measures of success, supporting cast, needs and resources, and so on. In addition, at the end of each goal, there is a list of all the actions proposed during the workshop that were not chosen during the workshop to detail in the action plan.

Overall, she stated that the steering committee, attendees, and staff are happy with the end result of the RERC process and feel like they have a lot to be proud of. Ms. Ramsey also noted that, for them, their success was defined by achieving a greater understanding of the community’s vision for Buena Vista; enhancing community awareness of Buena Vista’s assets and opportunities; and generating a more enthusiastic and engaged community.

She further noted that one win that they hadn’t accounted for was being able to bring state and federal partners together to showcase the community’s offerings. Being a small community, we rarely get the opportunity to have this many partners in Buena Vista and they are now thinking about Buena Vista and sending resources more regularly.

Miss Ramsey stated that the completed action plan was a bigger win than anticipated as it was genuinely community-driven and written almost entirely by the community. We often complete plans with a consultant and/or group of professionals, with focus groups and input opportunities for the community. Here, we have heard directly that being able to see and participate in the entire process, people are more excited and interested in being involved in carrying it out. In closing, Ms. Ramsey stated that they are hopeful that Council will support and adopt this plan as something the City wants to follow to advance our economy around outdoor recreation.

Councilman Henson thanked Kristina, Tom, Brooke, and Jason for putting in the time and working to get it all fulfilled.

NB #2: MS. BROOKE DALTON TO UPDATE COUNCIL ON MAIN STREET BUENA VISTA

Mrs. Dalton stated that the board agreed to have someone update their website. She noted that they now have a directory on there that has our dining and retail options, services, and the different outdoor activities.

In August, Main Street had a really successful Connect with BV event which invited new students, teachers, parents, and the public to visit downtown. There were over a dozen

businesses that stayed open late for this and even more that donated to the student orientation bags that were given out at SVU the following night. She said they learned and heard some feedback for what they can do next year to make it even better.

The vinyl window project is almost complete. We are printing QR codes to place on the windows that will direct people to the directory on the website.

So far in September, we have had the bike rack installed (this morning). They are hoping to schedule an unveiling for that soon. She stated that next week on Tuesday, September 18, Main Street America and Virginia Main Street are going to be hosting a transformation strategy workshop for Main Street Buena Vista. This will include three focus groups. They will be doing a tour, focusing on Main Street and our downtown. From 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. will be the businesses focus group; 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. will be key partners; 1:15 – 2 p.m. will be for residents and local organizations. On September 19, MSBV will be at the W&L community engagement fair to build volunteer base and make connections.

They are looking forward to Mountain Days. She mentioned that they will be hosting an “after hours” event from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. for the first time this year. This will include music, food, karaoke, and games. She opined that it will be kind of a small block party like we used to have. This should be a fun time to get the community out and socialize together. This will occur mainly from Magnolia to Sycamore on 21st Street, depending on the number of vendors.

NB #3: RESOLUTION RENEWING THE COMBINED VIRGINIA JUVENILE COMMUNITY CRIME CONTROL ACT (VJCCCA) PLAN

Mr. Tyree stated that this is something that we are already a part of, and this is just saying that Buena Vista will remain a part of this.

Councilman Cooper asked how often we renew this; Mr. Tyree said that it is every three years.

Vice-Mayor Hickman read the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION RENEWING THE VIRGINIA COMBINED JUVENILE
COMMUNITY CRIME CONTROL ACT (VJCCCA) PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Buena Vista will participate in the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act and accept funds appropriate for the purpose set forth in this Act until it notifies the Department of Juvenile Justice, in writing, that it no longer wishes to participate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Buena Vista will combine with the governing bodies of the Cities of Lexington and Covington; and the Counties of Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Alleghany to operate a Juvenile Community Crime Control Act program. The City of Lexington will act as fiscal agent for these localities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lexington City Manager is hereby authorized to execute a local plan on behalf of the City of Buena Vista.

Approved: This 7th day of September 2023.

William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilman Cooper made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Councilman Henson, and carried by Council.

NB #4: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE REPEALING A LOCAL FAIR HOUSING ORDINANCE WHICH IS SUPERSEDED BY STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Councilman Cooper read the following ordinance text amendment:

**City Code Amendment
Ordinance Text
Chapter 20**

AN ORDINANCE to repeal Chapter 20 of the Code of the City of Buena Vista, as amended, for the purpose of repealing unnecessary Fair Housing regulations.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that after a duly called public hearing, in accordance with the general welfare of the citizens of Buena Vista, Chapter 20 Human Relations of the Code of the City of Buena Vista is hereby repealed.

This ordinance shall be effective 30 days following adoption by City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor