

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON AUGUST 20, 2025, AT 6:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Kim Bowman; Johana Hicks; Tanya Hockett; Vice-Mayor Tim Wilson. ABSENT: Samuel M. Bishop; Casey Jenkins.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Public Relations Director Christina Bolt; Planning Director Retta Jackson; Director of Parks and Recreation Brad Epperley

WORK SESSION

I. Call To Order

Mayor Barber called the meeting to order.

II. Adjustment of the Agenda

None.

III. Discussion and Action by Mayor and Council

A. Farmers Market

Director of Parks and Recreation Brad Epperley stated that currently the Farmers Market was being held at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. He explained that previously it was located in the front lot of the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Center but eventually moved to the back of the Recreation building. Mr. Epperley expressed that vendors for the market have consistently reported higher sales along with increased foot traffic at the park. He added that since moving to the park in late June, weekly attendance has remained strong with more than 250 patrons. He referenced positive comments made by

Farmers Market vendors that preferred the park over the Parks and Recreation Center location.

Planning Director Retta Jackson addressed Council and spoke regarding the ARC Grant Award that was received from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, VDHCD. She explained the grant was awarded to the Town in the amount of \$275,000 for a Downtown Christiansburg Community Gathering Space. Mrs. Jackson explained she had met with a DHCD agent and asked specific questions pertaining to the grant. She explained that if the Town cancels the contract with DHCD then the Town would lose \$275,000. She added that if the Town keeps the Downtown Hickok Street venue but alternates locations for the market, it will not meet the Performance Measures in the contract. Mrs. Jackson added that if the venue is moved then there would need to be a new environmental review plus the Town would have to provide unique matching funds. She concluded that if the Town decides to cancel the contract, then the Town would be required to repay the grant for work already performed. She explained the 2025 YTD design expenditures totaled \$15,301.

Mayor Barber expressed that when the Farmers Market was first established it was well attended, but then numbers started declining. He added there were more people that lived near the park that could access the Farmers Market easier than the downtown location. Mayor Barber also noted that parking downtown was difficult for patrons but more efficient at the park.

Councilwoman Hicks commented that the market was started to bring people downtown but expressed that brick-and-mortar businesses in downtown pay considerably more to start their businesses than vendors at the Farmers Market. She expressed concern for business owners and the competition of a market, noting that vendors were not required to get a business license, obtain insurance, or pay a vendor deposit to sell their product. Mrs. Hicks expressed that everything has been done to make the Farmers Market a success but felt that sometimes you need to let go of things when they're not working.

Mayor Barber explained that several people in the community enjoy fresh product and were willing to pay more. He felt that closing the market would underserve a group of citizens that enjoy the market. He explained it was more cost effective to have the Farmers Market at the Park and the Town employees that work the market are regular employees that have other responsibilities, not just the market.

Mrs. Jackson offered more information concerning the Placemaking Plan the Town used to apply for the ARC grant for the Farmers Market. She shared feedback from the community concerning a market downtown. Several wanted to see a permanent structure downtown for a market, stating that the "Farmers Market needs to be prioritized and could become a catalyst for Downtown". Mrs. Jackson shared more feedback from a 2025 Farmers Market survey, which was held prior to the location change to Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. She showed that most patrons wanted the Farmers Market location downtown.

Public Relations Director Christina Bolt explained the recent community survey was posted to social media and the Town's website. She noted that she could perform another

survey that asked local businesses their thoughts on a downtown Farmers Market. She added that she could reach out to other localities as well to see if they require deposits or business licenses for vendors.

Councilman Wilson and Councilwoman Bowman both agreed the park was an appropriate location for now. Mrs. Bowman did express that she prefers the downtown area but does not want to spend the money to build a structure.

Councilwoman Hockett expressed that prior to the work session she felt the market should be held downtown but after hearing from the vendors she felt it should remain at the park for now.

Council agreed to proceed with another survey for local businesses and that information will be used to make a final decision at the September 9th Town Council meeting.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Tracy Heimline
Tracy Heimline, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor