TOWN OF Herndon VIRGINIA

HERNDON TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

1. Call to Order

Mayor LeBlanc called the September 9, 2025, Town Council work session meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Mayor Keven LeBlanc; Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick; and Councilmembers Cesar del Aguila, Kelvin Garcia, Michael T. Lloyd (participating remotely), and Alex Reyes.

Councilmember Naila Alam was absent.

Staff present during the meeting: Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Interim Town Manager; Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney; Scott Robinson, Acting Deputy Town Manager; Brent Heavner, Chief Communications Officer; Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development; Tammy Chastain, Acting Director of Public Works, Operations; Nick Maletta, Arborist/Landscape Architect; and Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk.

Mayor LeBlanc explained to the public that, due to technical difficulties, the meeting room location had been moved from the Hoover Conference Room to the Council Chambers, both located in the Herndon Council Chambers Building. He thanked staff and the public for accommodating the change.

Mayor LeBlanc stated, for the record, under Section 2.2-3708.3, Subsection D, of the Code of Virginia, and in accordance with Section 2-4 of the Town Code, the Chair received a request from Councilmember Lloyd to participate through electronic communication means in tonight's work session from Nags Head, North Carolina, due to pre-planned out-of-state travel. He stated that there is a quorum of the public body physically assembled at the meeting location, with five Councilmembers physically present in the Herndon Council Chambers Building this evening.

With the concurrence of Council, Councilmember Lloyd joined the meeting by telephone to participate remotely that evening.

Determination of a Quorum

Mayor LeBlanc noted, for the record, there was a quorum, with five members physically present, and with Councilmember Lloyd participating remotely, in accordance with Herndon Town Code Section 2-4. Councilmember Alam was absent.

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Mayor Announcements

Mayor LeBlanc reminded the Council of the closed meeting scheduled for Saturday, September 13.

Mayor LeBlanc noted several upcoming community events, including: (1) Community Health and Wellness Resource Fair on Saturday, September 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Herndon Neighborhood Resource Center; (2) Cornerstones will sponsor a “Stuff the Bus” food drive on Saturday, September 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Giant on Centerville Road; and (3) annual Runnymede Park and Stream Cleanup on Saturday, September 13, from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

2. Discussion

a. Urban Forestry Briefing

Mayor LeBlanc recognized Nick Maletta, Arborist/Landscape Architect, who presented an update on the Town's arboriculture and urban forestry program. The tree inventory reported low species diversity, poor age and size distribution, and decent access to the benefits of tree canopies across the Town’s demographic groups.

The Town's current tree canopy, while within the average of towns the size of Herndon, has opportunities on both public and private property to increase the tree canopy, and the Town received grant funding to help support new tree planting and the development of the first Urban Forestry Management Plan. Staff intends to introduce a tree donation program that would allow residents to contribute funds toward planting trees on Town property.

Discussion among the Council and staff about the urban forestry update, included:

1. Tree equity score and canopy coverage, as well as ways to improve these numbers.
2. Replanting and removal targets for FY 2026.
3. Potential tax-deductibility of tree donations; staff asked to review.
4. Public concerns such as leaves, street visibility, and reducing surface parking space requirements.
5. Aligning the Urban Forestry Management Plan with the Comprehensive Plan.

Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Interim Town Manager, noted that any future changes to service levels should be considered during the annual budget process.

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b. NVTA Bus Rapid Transit Long-Range Plan Briefing

Mayor LeBlanc recognized Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development, who stated that Vice Mayor Hedrick, the Town's representative to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority-Planning, Coordinating, and Advisory Committee (NVTA- PCAC), requested an update on the bus rapid transit (BRT) plans under regional consideration.

Ms. Gilleran explained that the NVTA is the body for regional planning, coordination, and funding for transportation projects. She provided an overview of the NVTA's long-range planning proposal for BRT, which currently has no set timeline. Ms. Gilleran discussed the local BRT systems that NVTA has invested in and outlined the types and locations of routes being considered, which could include stops on Elden Street and Sterling Road. She emphasized that while no action is required at this time, BRT could support future grant applications, particularly along Sterling Road and Elden Street.

Discussion among Council and staff regarding the impact of potential BRT routes for Herndon, included:

1. How BRT planning could improve the region to meet the Town's needs.
2. Potential impacts of future capital improvement program projects on bus routes.
3. Ideas for potential bus stops in the Town
4. Infrastructure needs, such as signalization upgrades, indicate some costs may be offset by NVTA funding.

Mayor LeBlanc noted the importance of considering BRT as part of the Town’s long-range planning efforts, Vice Mayor Hedrick emphasized optimizing all available resources, and Ms. Gilleran stated that staff is preparing to bring forward a grant funding request for South Elden Street improvements in coordination with the NVTA.

c. Sidewalk Snow Removal Operations Briefing

Mayor LeBlanc recognized Tammy Chastain, Acting Director of Public Works, who presented an informational overview of current sidewalk snow removal operations. She explained that the process and staffing differ depending on the amount of snowfall, emphasizing that the top priority is clearing roadways.

Councilmember Lloyd questioned if sidewalks adjacent to HOA communities are responsible for clearing the sidewalks adjacent to HOA property.

Responding to Councilmember Lloyd and Mayor LeBlanc, Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney, confirmed that the Town Code does not require property owners to clear the sidewalks adjacent to their properties.

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Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Interim Town Manager, confirmed that property owners have to clear sidewalks within their properties.

Ms. Jovanovich advised that if the Council is interested in changing the snow removal policy, the matter would need to be discussed during the budget process to allocate additional resources. She noted that it is common in other localities to have code requirements that adjacent property owners must clear sidewalks adjacent to public roadways within a certain timeframe. She indicated that if the Council were interested in making any changes, staff could draft an ordinance for consideration, with significant communication and education efforts required if new standards are adopted.

Discussion also included:

1. Snow removal in high-traffic and commuter areas.
2. Resources needed to expand or remove service.
3. Other jurisdictions' policies snow removal on sidewalks, trails, and paths.
4. Potential equipment upgrades, with staff advising that they will notify Council if equipment is needed.
5. The feasibility of requiring property owners to clear sidewalks adjacent to public roadways, and communication efforts that will be needed to implement such a change.

Following discussion and with the consensus of Council, staff was asked to draft an ordinance amending the Town Code to require property and business owners to clear sidewalks adjacent to public roadways within a specified timeframe following a storm.

d. Herndon Youth Advisory Committee Structure Discussion (rescheduled from the August 6 and August 12, 2025, work sessions)

Mayor LeBlanc summarized the current considerations regarding Herndon Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC). He stated that the Council is evaluating whether to continue the HYAC in its current format or to shift toward a model through which staff engages with students for specific discussions several times a year at local middle and high schools. He stated the staff would bring topics to schools for feedback from student focus groups. He noted that the Town can also engage with and support the Fairfax County youth leadership program in Herndon by attending one or two meetings annually. Mayor LeBlanc highlighted several recent legal and insurance changes affecting youth engagement, including requirements on Town property access and staff interactions with youth.

Discussion among Council and staff about engagement with Herndon's youth included:

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1. Alternative formats that add community service, advisory roles, and student feedback.
2. Considering potential changes to objectives and guidelines.
3. Past engagement efforts, such as staff speaking to the youth during the Transit Related Growth (TRG) study.
4. Other localities' experiences; some larger jurisdictions have youth committees requiring school board involvement.
5. Suggestions on how to receive input from youth, and to include bilingual opportunities when possible.
6. Engaging a diverse group of students from different schools, grades, and backgrounds.
7. Opportunities for students to learn about local government, provide feedback on Town services, and make recommendations.
8. Challenges with recruiting members, maintaining a quorum, transportation, and compliance with legal and insurance requirements.

Following discussion and with the consensus of Council, staff was directed to research the following and bring back a draft policy that:

1. Maintains the existing objectives, the Town Council liaison, and includes students in grades 7 through 12.
2. Facilitates focus groups led by staff at Herndon Middle and Herndon High Schools, while allowing participation from private and alternative schools in Town
3. Emphasizes civic engagement and learning about local government.
4. Provides opportunities for students to give feedback on the Town's future, evaluate services, and make recommendations.

3. Roundtable

Councilmember Garcia: shared that he and Councilmember del Aguila held a backpack drive in August and indicated that next year's event would be bigger. He also planned to hold giveaways during the winter months.

Councilmember del Aguila: asked to include Brewbilee funding on the retreat agenda. The organizers alerted him that the event was being postponed, and he expressed concern about the optics. He asked the Council to consider revising the policy and, in the meantime, consider giving a donation to the organization to assist them in holding their event.

Responding to a question from Mayor LeBlanc, Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Interim Town Manager, stated that the organization advised that the event budget was $12,000. Per the donation policy adopted by the Town Council, the group would be eligible for $3,000, since this is the second year they are holding the event. The donation policy allows an organization to receive the lessor of either $7,500 or 25

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percent of the event budget as a second year event.

Council and staff discussed the funding request from Brewbilee under the adopted policy, including:

1. How the policy applies to the group as a second year event.
2. Addressing policy concerns regarding community donations.
3. Policy equity across all requests from organizations.
4. Any funding for scholarships to be provided by the organization through other mechanisms.

Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney, advised that the Council would need to direct staff to draft a resolution to allocate the funds. She indicated that the Council does not have a provision in its Rules and Procedures for voting during work session meetings.

Following input from the Town Attorney, Councilmember del Aguila requested to bring a resolution forward to be considered by the Town Council to provide $8,000 toward the organization at the September 23 Town Council meeting.

Mayor LeBlanc asked the Council to advise whether they wanted to add this item to the agenda on September 23, and the majority of Council did not support this proposal. Therefore, it was not advanced.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that staff is currently reviewing the Town's event donation policy and is going to propose any relevant revisions at an upcoming Town Council meeting.

Councilmember del Aguila thanked Councilmember Garcia for organizing the back-to-school event in August.

Councilmember Reyes: no comments.

Vice Mayor Hedrick: no comments.

Mayor LeBlanc: stated that he attended several back-to-school events. He appreciated the school system allowing him to attend the events and support the school system and the teachers.

Mayor LeBlanc shared that he and staff are meeting with downtown businesses to address any needs that they have related to their properties.

Comments from the Interim Town Manager
Ms. Jovanovich stated that an email from Arts Herndon was received today that will be forwarded to the Town Council. This will be included as a discussion item at the Council's next work session.

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4. Closed Meeting

a. A Closed Meeting pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for discussion of prospective candidates relative to appointments to boards and commissions

Mayor LeBlanc stated that the Council needed to go into a closed meeting and that the appropriate meeting notices were provided in accordance with state law. The closed meeting was held in the Hoover Conference Room in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia.

Councilmember del Aguila moved that the Council convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following as permitted by Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for discussion of prospective candidates relative to appointments to boards and commissions. Vice Mayor Hedrick seconded the motion, which carried by a 6-0 roll call vote. The vote was: Councilmembers del Aguila, Garcia, Lloyd (remotely, by phone), Reyes, Vice Mayor Hedrick, and Mayor LeBlanc voting “Aye.” Councilmember Alam was absent.

At 9:38 p.m. Mayor LeBlanc called a brief recess, and at 9:45 p.m. the closed meeting reconvened in the Hoover Conference Room, five members physically present, with Mayor LeBlanc presiding. Councilmember Lloyd participated remotely by telephone and Councilmember Alam was absent.

Vice Mayor Hedrick moved to come out of the closed meeting. Motion seconded by Councilmember Reyes and carried by a 6-0 roll call vote. The vote was: Councilmembers del Aguila, Garcia, Lloyd (remotely, by phone), Reyes, Vice Mayor Hedrick, and Mayor LeBlanc voting “Aye.” Councilmember Alam was absent.

The Council came out of closed meeting at 9:47 p.m. Vice Mayor Hedrick moved to certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge, in the closed meeting just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed meeting and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed meeting under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as cited in that motion. Motion seconded by Councilmember Garcia and carried by a 6-0 roll call vote. The vote was: Councilmembers del Aguila, Garcia, Lloyd (remotely, by phone), Reyes, Vice Mayor Hedrick, and Mayor LeBlanc voting “Aye.” Councilmember Alam was absent.

Aye: 6
Nay: 0
Absent: 1

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5. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor LeBlanc adjourned the September 9, 2025 Town Council work session at 9:48 p.m.

Amanda E.M. Kertz
Town Clerk

Minutes approved by Town Council : _____

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