



# CITY OF CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA



## COUNCIL MEMBER – WARD 20

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Ordinance and Rules Committee, Chair  
Parks and Recreation Committee  
Finance Committee  
Parking Facilities Committee

A meeting of the Council Committee on Ordinance & Rules will be held on Monday, December 1, 2025 at 6:30 PM. **To be held in person**  
**AV ROOM #308, CITY HALL**

### Agenda

#### APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

1. 5-19-2025

#### BILLS

1. Bill No. 8061 - A BILL to amend the Municipal Code relating to prohibiting the use of fireworks in any City park or on City-owned property without approval.

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**\*Meetings may be recorded and broadcast via internet <https://charlestonwv.civicclerk.com>**

# MINUTES

## ORDINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE MEETING

5:30 P. M., MAY 19, 2025

THE MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON IN THE AV ROOM #308 IN CITY HALL.

Chad Robinson, Chairperson, called the meeting of the Charleston City Council Committee on Ordinance and Rules to order at 5:30 p.m., May 19, 2025.

### **Committee Members Present:**

Chad Robinson, Chair  
Patrick Salango, Vice Chair  
Frank Annie  
Becky Ceperley  
Joseph Jenkins (arrived at 6:21, after all votes)  
Sam Minardi  
Harper Gardner

### **Absent:**

### **Other Councilmembers Present:**

Joe Solomon  
Mary Beth Hoover  
Beth Kerns

#### 1. Approval of Previous Minutes –

Councilmember Pepper motioned to approve the previous minutes from 11-18-2024. Councilmember Annie seconded the motion. With those being present having voted unanimously in the affirmative, the Chair declared the minutes as approved as amended.

2. Bill No. 8053 Committee Substitute - A BILL to adjust PARKING PROHIBITED times on several streets, in order to accommodate street sweeping at a later time of day; and amending the Traffic Control Map and Traffic Control File

City Attorney Kevin Baker explained the committee substitute and bill changes the time when parking will be prohibited during street sweeping on the southerly side of certain streets on the East End. It will change the time from 9am to noon to noon to 2pm, which will match the times of the northly side of the streets.

Councilmember Pepper, as the sponsor, added that he appreciated cooperation of the Planning, Streets and Traffic Committee.

Councilmember Ceperley confirmed with Baker that the effective date will be April 1, 2026.

From the audience, Councilmember Hoover, as Chair of the Planning, Streets and Traffic Committee, that this has been in the works for several months. They had several meetings and went door to door in the neighborhood.

Councilmember Robinson confirmed with Baker that the State employees should not be affected other than the time change.

Mayor Goodwin added that the City is aware that there will need to be an increase in communication for those that park along those streets as April 1<sup>st</sup> get closer.

Councilmember Annie motioned to approve Bill No. 8053 Committee Substitute. Councilmember Gardner seconded the motion. With those being present having voted unanimously in the affirmative, Chair Robinson declared Bill No. 8053 Committee Substitute as approved.

3. Bill No. 8055 - A BILL to amend the Municipal Code relating to updating regulations regarding Private Outdoor Designated Areas.

Baker stated that WV Legislature passed a bill that updated PODAS. The proposed bill conforms City code to match that. A new permit has been created, S4N, a special permit for non-profits. The bill also adds language that gives the City Manager the authority to temporarily reduce, expand or modify the hours of a PODA for special events/circumstances. The bill also changes the hours of the PODAS so that holidays have the same hours as Saturdays and Sundays.

Councilmember Annie motioned to approve Bill No. 8055. Councilmember Gardner seconded the motion. With those being present having voted unanimously in the affirmative, Chair Robinson declared Bill No. 8055.

#### 4. Discussion - Discussion on dilapidated housing.

Councilmember Robinson stated that he wanted to start the discussion about the dilapidated housing process. They should start by discussing the current process.

Building Commission Director Billy Smith added that they follow State Code and the Property Maintenance Code. The process involves: contacting the owner, a certified violation letter with documented pictures, a certified demo letter if deemed uninhabitable, a search warrant to determine if the inside of the structure can be rehabbed with an accompanying letter, a Class II legal ad, a title search (if a new owner is discovered at this point, the process has to start over from the beginning), an asbestos survey and abatement if necessary, and then full demolition. This process can take up to several years. Smith added that the new Enforcement Supervisor Ashley Carr has been very helpful. He added that the biggest hurdles are the legal ones – probate, etc.

Councilmember Ceperley asked if the property search could be done sooner in the process. Smith replied that they have tried to do title searches earlier in the process.

Planning Director Dan Vriendt added that the administrative search warrant is a new process they have implemented and has helped to streamline the process. He added that the City rarely recovers its money after tearing down a house. They try very hard to have the property owner pay for it.

Councilmember Robinson confirmed with Vriendt and Smith that approximately 10% of homeowners end up paying for the demolition. Councilmember Robinson asked if the current fines were similar to other cities. Vriendt replied that he didn't think a lot of cities were doing what Charleston is doing as he did not think the fees were a motivator. For every 500 letters sent out, they typically hear back from 20.

Vriendt added that the Vacant Structure Registry is used as an indicator. If properties are on that list, it does not necessarily mean they are on the demolition list. He added that property owners are supposed to self-register although hardly anyone does.

Councilmember Pepper asked if the demolition list is frequently updated. Smith replied that it is frequently reviewed and prioritized as needed. They try to have at least 30 houses ready to be demolished. Smith confirmed that they average approximately 100 demolitions per year.

Councilmember Annie added that he thought the public had a lot of misinformation about this process. He asked if there was anything that the Committee could change or streamline. Vriendt replied that they are currently in a good place, adding that 100 structures a year is close to the limit that they can process with the current staff and resources.

From the audience, Councilmember Kerns added that local LLCs used these properties for various purposes. There should be a way that the City could make these owners do something with their properties in that type of situation.

Councilmember Jenkins added that the City is missing out on millions of dollars in fines, and suggested more follow-up using the vacant registry.

Councilmember Annie motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

**Bill No. 8061**

**Introduced in Council:**

**August 4, 2025**

**Introduced by:**

**Caitlin Cook and Joseph Jenkins**

**Adopted by Council:**

**Referred to:**

**Ordinance & Rules**

1 **Bill No. 8061** - A BILL to amend and reenact Section 54-191 of the Municipal Code of  
2 the City of Charleston, as amended, relating to prohibiting the use of fireworks in any  
3 City park or on City-owned property without approval.  
4

5 **Now, therefore, be it ordained by the Council of the City of Charleston:**

6  
7 That Section 54-191 of the Municipal Code of the City of Charleston, as amended, be  
8 amended and reenacted to read as follows:  
9

10 **Sec. 54-191. - Consumer fireworks; regulations, prohibited actions, and**  
11 **exceptions.**  
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13 (a) Any person igniting, discharging, detonating or otherwise using (hereinafter,  
14 collectively "use" or "using") consumer fireworks within the city and, consistent with W.  
15 Va. State Code § 8-12-19, within one mile beyond the corporate limits of the city, but not  
16 including areas within the corporate limits of another municipality, shall:

17 (1) Not be under the influence of intoxicating liquor, non-intoxicating beer, any  
18 controlled substance, or any combination thereof; and

19 (2) Be 18 years of age or older or shall be under the direct supervision of his or  
20 her parent, guardian, or other adult person responsible for the care and custody of the  
21 minor; and

22 (3) Be responsible for the prompt removal of all debris resulting from the use of  
23 fireworks and such completed removal shall not exceed 24 hours after use; and

24 (4) Be financially responsible for cleanup costs and/or damages resulting from  
25 the use of fireworks; and

26 (5) Be responsible for all costs associated with fire suppression efforts related to  
27 the use of fireworks; and

28 (6) Not use fireworks within 100 feet of any building or structure unless  
29 permission of the owner of the building or structure has been obtained or in any City  
30 park or on City-owned property without the advanced written approval of the City of  
31 Charleston; and

32 (7) Not use fireworks from any motor vehicle or boat; and

33 (8) Store fireworks in a safe, secure and responsible manner, and separate from  
34 any possible ignition source; and

35 (9) Not use fireworks in a manner that fireworks travel through, come in contact

36 with, discharge, or explode on any public street, highway, or sidewalk, or in or on any  
37 building, or near any person, or within 500 feet of any location posing a special fire  
38 danger, such as a gas station, chemical storage area or other similar location; and

39 (10) Not use fireworks during periods of very high or extreme fire danger as  
40 determined by the Charleston Fire Department or the West Virginia Division of Forestry,  
41 or while wind conditions are such that proper fireworks control cannot be exercised; and

42 (11) Not be permitted to use fireworks, except between the hours of 11:00 a.m.  
43 and 11:00 p.m., on Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day, or between 11:00  
44 am on December 31 and 1:00 am on January 1; provided, however, that a person may  
45 request permission from the chief of police to use fireworks for a special event or  
46 occasion at other days or times not regularly permitted herein, and the chief of police  
47 shall have reasonable discretion, on a case by case basis and after consultation with  
48 the chief of the fire department, to approve such a request.

49 (b) This section, and the prohibitions contained herein related to the use of  
50 consumer fireworks, is not intended to prohibit use of display fireworks within the city at  
51 any day or time so long as the use is sponsored or approved by the city.  
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