



RESOLUTION #16-19

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CERTAIN LOCAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly will convene in early 2017 to consider important legislative matters of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the City Council to adopt a legislative program to present to its representatives in the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Council has carefully considered a legislative program, and believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Williamsburg.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Williamsburg, Virginia hereby endorses the attached 2017 Legislative Agenda and urges consideration and passage as appropriate.


Adopted: November 10, 2016




Paul T. Freiling, Mayor



D. Scott Foster, Vice Mayor



Douglas G. Pons, Council Member



Barbara L. Ramsey, Council Member



Benming Zhang, Council Member



2017

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

INTENT STATEMENT

Annually the City of Williamsburg adopts, via resolution, a legislative agenda. The purpose of the agenda is to serve as a quick reference for our state and federal legislators concerning the City's position on particular issues facing the nation and state that may impact our locality.

The proposed agenda is intended to be a short listing of specific positions held by the City of Williamsburg which will be the basis of advocacy during the 2017 legislative session. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of issues which the City considers important. During the session, items will be debated which are not included in this agenda and that will not preclude the city taking a position.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Short Term Rentals & Internet Based Services

- **Regulating Internet-Based Services:** The City strongly believes that the General Assembly should take action to regulate private enterprises employing a business model that emphasizes the use of the Internet to either provide retail or facilitate lodging or ride-sharing services. However, the City urges the General Assembly to:
 - Protect and grow the local revenue streams derived from local option taxes and fees such as the transient occupancy tax and business licenses, by ensuring the actual total amount charged to the consumer by an online service is taxable
 - Preserve the integrity of local zoning ordinances by protecting the locality's ability to regulate short term rental uses as a function of zoning compliance or general law
 - Guarantee equal and fair treatment of retailers by requiring equitable tax application across point of sale platforms
 - Protect Virginia's community character by allowing localities to require an application, public notice, and approval process for uses not currently allowed within an existing zoning district



Charter Amendment - Housing Authority Board Membership

- **Housing Authority Board Membership:** The City requests approval of a charter amendment revising Sections 22.6 and 27. These amendments will correct an outdated reference to Section 25 and allow for the expansion of the Housing Authority Board from five (5) members to seven (7). This change will allow the City Council to continue to serve as Housing Authority Board members and provide for the appointment of one (1) housing authority resident member and one (1) citizen. This is a change required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Group Home Placement

- **Permitting of Group Homes:** The City believes in the fair housing of all citizens. The City also believes in the protection of the health, safety and welfare of its residents. The City proposes the following statutory amendments to help achieve a stronger public process and improve the success of group homes in residential areas:
 - Amend the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, Section 37.2-408(B) to require the regulations of the Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to include that the Chief Administrative Officer of a locality in which a group home is proposed to be located receive a written notice that the proposed group home is being located in the locality at least ninety (90) days prior to the issuance of the license, and that said notice shall include contact information for the community liaison and a description of the services proposed to be provided by the group home and the population served.
 - Amend the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, Section 37.2-408(B) to require group home operators operating group homes within 2500 feet of a primary or secondary school to exclude individuals whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others (consistent with 42 U.S.C. Section 3604(f)(9) of the Fair Housing Act), including, as permitted by federal law, those individuals who have committed sex crimes against children or felony violent acts, whether or not they were convicted or found not guilty by reason of insanity.

Local Government Revenues

- **Financial Impact on City Government:** Williamsburg advises the General Assembly that the following areas of state spending are of greatest financial importance to the City of Williamsburg.
 - Education: Williamsburg/James City County Schools and for Williamsburg Regional Library, adequate and appropriate state K-12 funding that reflects the true costs of providing high quality public education.
 - Transportation: Annual street maintenance allocation
 - Public Safety: Police support through 599 funds, new funding sources for state-initiated services and programs like Line of Duty Disability benefits
 - Regional Jail: Support for correction officer compensation through the Compensation Board
 - Human Service: State Health Department and Behavioral Health programs, and Williamsburg Human Services Department
 - Mandated Officials: State support for mandated City and joint City/County Constitutional Officers
 - BPOL: Local government revenue neutral tax reform of the Business, Professional and Occupational License taxes (BPOL).
 - State Budget: Local government revenues should not be the source for state budget correction, adjustment, or balancing



OTHER ISSUES OF FOCUS

Good Governance

- **Redistricting Reform:** Williamsburg supports transparent and non-partisan redistricting reform in Virginia for state legislative and congressional districts to promote more competitive elections and a healthier democracy; and requests that action take place during this legislative session to ensure the constitutional process is complete by the next redistricting occurring in 2021. (See Resolution #14-11)
- **FOIA Exemptions:** Williamsburg opposes any changes in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which eliminates or limits existing exemptions for local government or provides any additional sanctions for violations, other than those currently provided by law.

Transportation Priorities

- **Interstate 64:** Williamsburg urges the General Assembly to continue to make the widening of I-64 from Newport News to Richmond a top priority. The widening should be done with aesthetic sensitivity and effective signage should be installed that indicates that Greater Williamsburg is open for business. Legislative leadership and influence is needed to convince the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) that the Williamsburg to Richmond segment should be chosen as a statewide priority using the Smart Scale prioritization process.
- **Passenger Rail on the Virginia Peninsula:** The City supports protecting the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund (IPROC) and funding source, and strongly encourages the advancement of the Tier II Federal Richmond to Hampton Roads Higher Speed Rail Study which focuses on service along the Peninsula and the Southside of Hampton Roads.

State and Local Partnerships

- **Greater Williamsburg Virginia Workforce Center:** The closure of the Williamsburg Virginia Employment Commission Office in October of 2015 has left job seekers in Greater Williamsburg at a disadvantage. The City recognizes that Hopewell and Hampton are often too far for the newly unemployed to travel for employment assistance. We also acknowledge that co-location of services is ideal. Williamsburg requests that the Commonwealth fund and locate a full time Virginia Workforce Center (one stop) in Williamsburg.
- **College of William and Mary:** Williamsburg supports and applauds the College's efforts to make higher education more affordable and accessible to Virginians through the William and Mary Promise. The City endorses initiatives to further reduce the expense of higher education for our citizens.
- **Thomas Nelson Community College:** The City supports Thomas Nelson Community College's capital requests to replace the Diggs, Harrison and Moore Halls on the Hampton Campus and to build the Advanced Integrated Manufacturing (AIM) Center on the Virginia Peninsula. Both capital projects will benefit students, business and industry, and the larger Virginia Peninsula community.



PARTNER AGENCY SUPPORT

The City of Williamsburg is a member of the Virginia Municipal League, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization. Each of these partner agencies adopt legislative agendas annually. Through the participation in board meetings, annual conferences and committees the City Council and executive management of the City of Williamsburg endorse and support the legislative priorities included in these respective legislative agendas for the 2017 session. Some examples of the issues raised this year include:

Items marked with partner logos indicate issue overlap and mutual support. Some items not covered above include:

- **Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI):** The HRPDC requests assistance from our state and federal partners to restore the Hampton Roads region's UASI designation.
- **Veterans Transition Employment Center:** The HRPDC supports the efforts of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and the region's workforce investment boards to receive state funding to support an employment transition center for our region's veterans.
- **Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) Groundwater Injection Project:** The HRPDC requests that the General Assembly consider funding for a land subsidence monitoring program in support of the HRSD groundwater injection project.
- **Summer Enrichment Program:** The HRPDC requests financial support through the General Assembly to fund a regional Summer Enrichment Program that provides employment opportunities to youth in the Hampton Roads region.
- **Price Floor for Regional Gas Tax:** VML supports an amendment to Virginia Code §58.1-2295 which would establish a protective floor price for the 2.1 percent regional gas tax, such as was done for the statewide fuels tax in §58.1-2217. Such a floor concept is essential to provide a more stable, dedicated revenue source needed for long-term financing of regional projects.
- **Access to Healthy Food:** VML supports approaches (including but not limited to the Virginia Grocery Investment Fund) to provide financial and technical support for businesses to expand and ensure greater access to healthy food for residents of the Commonwealth.