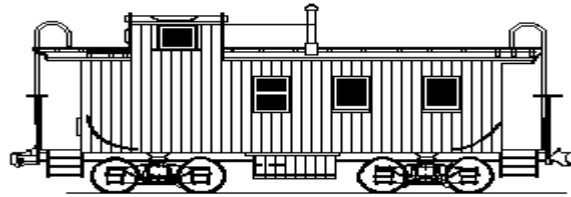


Wayne H. Nickum Town Hall  
12641 Chapel Road  
Clifton, VA 20124

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 309  
Clifton, VA 20124



**CLIFTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026, 7:00 PM  
WAYNE H. NICKUM COMMUNITY MEETING HALL  
12641 CHAPEL ROAD  
CLIFTON, VIRGINIA 20124**

**Present:** Mayor Lynn Screen; Vice Mayor Jay Davis; Councilmember JP Hess;  
Councilmember Darrell Poe; Councilmember Amanda Hencken; Councilmember  
Steve Effros

**Staff:** Laura Jane Cohen, Town Administrator; Kerrie Gogoel, Town Clerk; Suzy  
Murphy, Town Treasurer

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**Meeting was called to order by Mayor Screen at 7:00PM**

1. Grounding in Vision for the Town We Desire
  - a. Mayor Screen asked all people present if they could think of a moment that shows to them what the Town means to them, and to consider what they believe is most important to protect and carry forward.
    - i. CM Hencken reported valuing the sense of community and raising her children here and what values that this instills in them: the ability to be involved in your local community, having safe and green spaces to play in, and a community where people know one another.
    - ii. The Town Clerk echoed valuing the feeling of being and raising her children “where everybody knows your name”, and noted that her husband grew up here and valued that small community feel such that they moved back to raise their family here.
    - iii. VM Davis agreed with the Clerk and CM Hencken, and added that while we are a small Town, people outside of Town are aware of it. He noted that there is a presence in Clifton that people even outside of Town want to be a part of and wants to preserve that character, as well as set the example of how a small community should operate.
    - iv. The Treasurer noted that having lived outside of Town but watched it for many years, it is apparent how passionate everyone in Town is.
    - v. CM Effros reaffirmed the sense of community is important and noted that he tries to focus on the residents. He stated that he values the interactions that we have in Town routinely and having that community support, and we all watch out for one another.

- vi. Citizen Kevin Hutto noted that he lives just outside of Town and highlighted that it is not just the Town itself, but the larger CBA community and that partnership is unique.
  - vii. Citizen Mary Hess reported that she loves living in a small Town and highlighted that while change in a small town can be frightening, it can still happen.
  - viii. CM Hess agreed with the previous comments.
  - ix. The Administrator highlighted that when she first opened the Belle Jar, the whole community came together and donated their time and items and came together to be helpful and meet them. She noted that it was overwhelmingly wonderful to be a part of the community even though they didn't live in Town.
  - x. Citizen Donna Netschert reported that you feel safe here and highlighted that people don't often leave, and that it is a great place to both raise a family and retire.
  - xi. Mayor Screen highlighted when a local citizen came home after a long stint in hospital, how Town citizens lined the streets as he returned to Town and welcomed him, and what a special thing that was.
2. Overview of Clifton Town Plan
- a. VM Davis reported that a very rough first draft of the Town Plan has been completed and has been reviewed by the Planning Commission. They are working with the consulting firm to finalize it from a data perspective, and then there will be two public hearings: one hosted by Planning, after which they will revise any changes that need to be made, and then another hearing with the Town Council. He noted that if one of the projects in the next discussion aligns with more goals stated in the Town Plan, that inherently increases its priority.
3. Identifying Future Projects
- Each project had benefits to three groups of people highlighted: residents, businesses, and visitors.
- a. Pink House:
    - i. CM Effros reported that he believes it provides benefits to all three categories, and that the financial burden of this has been addressed through a potential grant. He noted that the Town will have to assume obligations to maintain the property, but the Town gets offices, meeting space, and parking space on it.
    - ii. Citizen Mary Hess inquired after the requirement on the grant as to whether it is limited to no business use for a certain amount of time, and where that limitation came from. It was confirmed that it cannot be used for profit for 20 years, and the limitation came from the funding grantors.
    - iii. CM Hencken reported that they went to the first Environmental Committee meeting in the Town Offices (building behind the Pink House) and reported it was very nice to have that space. She reported that we could think of using that space to capture the history of the Town and suggested opening it up on Clifton Day, for photographs, and for the Homes Tour.

- iv. VM Davis reported that this aligns with the Town Plan goal to preserve historic homes, and there are other goals for a museum, so this property is a step in that direction. Use as a ‘showcase’ is an additional benefit for the visitors and businesses in Town. Need to further outline to the businesses how this is a benefit to them.
- v. Citizen Donna Netschert reported that there are residents who have lived here a long time and may have items that could be put into a museum, and suggested putting out a request to collect items.
- b. Railroad parking expansion:
  - i. There is an opportunity to expand the parking lot behind Villagio farther down the tracks to take over more of that space and increase parking. This needs to be sorted through with the railroad company and understand the project. It seems that CBA may be exploring this already so the Town could perhaps partner on this.
  - ii. CM Effros reported that the challenge with this is there is an area that would need to be rebuilt to flatten it out and also water runoff in that area would need to be addressed. He also suggested perhaps working with the landowners to put in a walkway between this area and the Clifton House parking.
  - iii. Citizen Mary Hess noted that the biggest challenge is identifying key players and identifying various ownership and jurisdictional boundaries.
  - iv. It was noted that this does align with fixing parking issues to support businesses and increasing parking in the Town Plan goals.
  - v. CM Hencken inquired whether if we increase parking, if that allows the Town to have better handicap accessibility and it was reported that it could. Citizen Mary Hess noted that if the parking is gravel then you cannot have handicap spaces, but if we were to make changes to the Villagio lot, then we would need to denote handicap spaces. CM Poe noted that there are likely specific rules surrounding labelling something as an official handicap space, but you could potentially label it differently (i.e. veteran parking, expectant mother parking, etc.).
- c. Playground replacement
  - i. Mayor Screen noted that they have obtained one quote just to get an estimate for what it would cost to take out the old features and expand the boundaries of the playground to meet measurement specs to allow for proper spacing.
  - ii. Citizen Donna Netschert highlighted that the park has been redone once before. She also noted that in the past there was a desire to keep the green space and so they fought against making the playground area larger. She expressed that she did not feel that the playground should be built to attract folks from across the county, but to serve the people in Town and to keep it smaller. Mayor Screen noted that since the Town’s primary income is from the meals tax which is typically paid by folks outside of Town so bringing in people from outside of Town is not a bad thing. VM Davis noted that the current discussion of expanding the boundaries was

limited to only a couple of feet to meet safety requirements. The Town Clerk clarified that there are only a handful of children that live within Town boundaries, so we do want to ensure we support the entire CBA area.

- iii. CM Poe inquired whether the playground revitalization included any work on the picnic tables or gazebo, and VM Davis noted that it does not at this time but the scope could be expanded or as Mayor Screen noted, some of that work can be accomplished by committees.
  - iv. CM Effros inquired after the materials proposed for the playground and to consider that if it needs to be renewed every year, it should be kept in mind for future budgets.
- d. 8 acre park tree remediation
- i. It was noted that this is more of an ongoing remediation project.
  - ii. CM Poe highlighted that there is currently a group working on invasive species remediation in the floodplain, so perhaps that group could help here. CM Hencken noted that the Town is very fortunate to have these green spaces and parks, and that we have a responsibility to own it. She noted that by treating these invasive species, these spaces can be maintained and made more enjoyable.
  - iii. CM Effros suggested that the efforts be split up between safety issues in the park and improving it with ongoing trail maintenance.
  - iv. Citizen Kevin Hutto noted that the Boy Scout Troop associated with the Presbyterian Church has done maintenance in the park over the past 20 years and suggested reaching out to them.
  - v. Mayor Screen noted that because the physical spaces in Town are so small, it provides an opportunity to accomplish some incredible environmental milestones with respect to eradicating invasive species. We could truly make a historic milestone by making these commitments.
  - vi. These efforts align with the Town Plan goal of developing a tree ordinance which allows the dictation of a preservation of native species and enforcing tree cover.
  - vii. The Administrator noted that the state is going to be implementing a tree cover bill and she may have groups that she could connect with the Town to work on that plan.
- e. Better walkways
- i. Chapel road (from the vets office to the post office), CES parking lot down to Town, the Floodplain to the railroad (including over the tracks), a safer path coming down from Clifton Heights and connecting to Dell Ave., and as detailed above, a walkway between the Villagio parking lot and Clifton house parking.
  - ii. Citizen Mary Hess highlighted the need also for speed safety within Town and suggested speed humps on School and Water Streets.
    1. CM Effros agreed and noted that we need to look at how this can be addressed as he believes that VDOT has requirements on speed humps that we may not qualify for due to length of road.

2. The Town Administrator suggested having VDOT come to a Town Council meeting and have them perform a traffic calming study throughout Town.
    - f. Note: The Streetscape project was acknowledged but was not a part of the prioritization discussion except with regard to its impact on funding and timeline.
    - g.
  4. Follow-up Discussion
    - a. N/A
  5. Project Prioritization
    - a. Mayor Screen led attendees through an exercise of placing color coded stickers on each project and aligning themselves with either 'resident', 'business', or 'community'. This allowed for a quick visual of the priorities of the attendees. It resulted in rough prioritization of the playground, as well as better walkways.
    - b. Next Steps: The Town Council will take the input from this conversation to inform long term planning and FY27 Budget. All Budget meetings will take place in March/April and are open to the public.
  6. Closed Session
- **Mayor Screen moved that the Clifton Town Council recess its open meeting and convene a closed session for discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved where is made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, as authorized by Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended Section 2.2-3711(A)(6)". The motion was seconded by CM Poe and approved by roll call:**
    - CM Hess: Aye**
    - CM Poe: Aye**
    - CM Hencken: Aye**
    - VM Davis: Aye**
    - Mayor Screen: Aye**
    - CM Effros: Aye**
  - **Mayor Screen moved that the Clifton Town Council reconvene its open meeting and adjourn its closed session. The motion was seconded by CM Poe and approved by roll call:**
    - CM Hess: Aye**
    - CM Poe: Aye**
    - CM Hencken: Aye**
    - VM Davis: Aye**
    - Mayor Screen: Aye**
    - CM Effros: Aye**

- **Mayor Screen further moved that the Clifton Town Council certify that while in closed session, only the matters that were identified in the motion to convene the closed session were discussed, and that no action was taken during the closed session. The motion was seconded by CM Effros and approved by roll call:**

**CM Hess: Aye**

**CM Poe: Aye**

**CM Hencken: Aye**

**VM Davis: Aye**

**Mayor Screen: Aye**

**CM Effros: Aye**

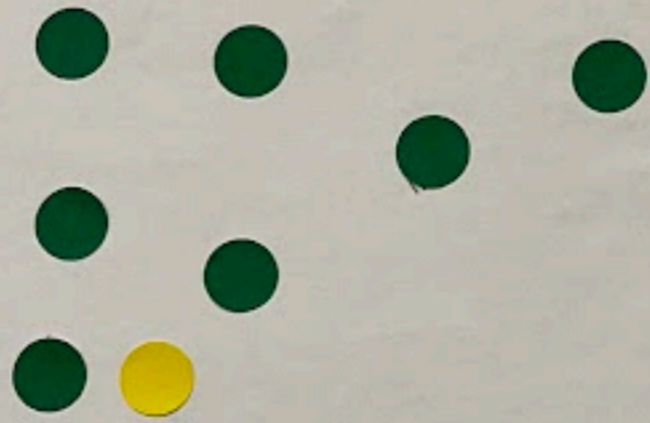
7. Adjournment.

- a. The open meeting was adjourned by general acclamation

# Pink House Renovation

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Town



Business

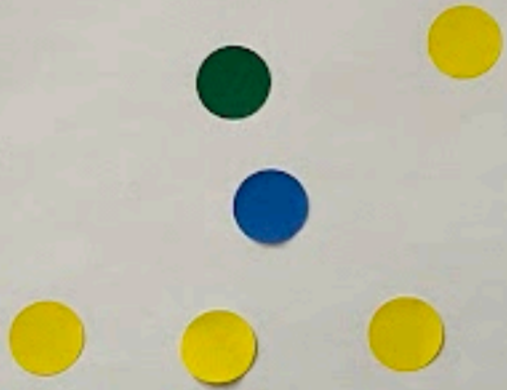
Community



# Parking Along Tracks

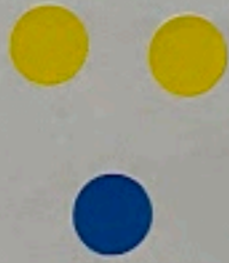
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Town



Business

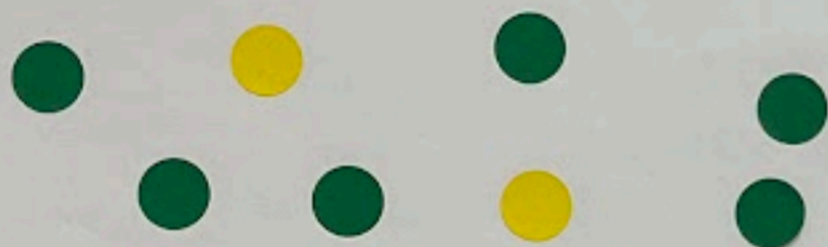
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# Playground Renovation

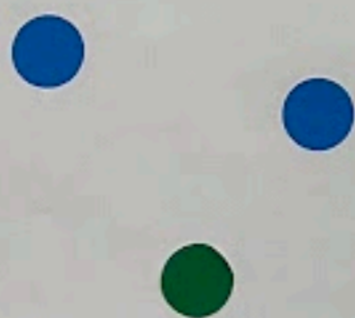
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Town



Business

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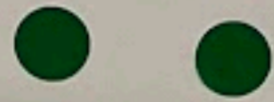


# 8-acre Trees Etc.

Town



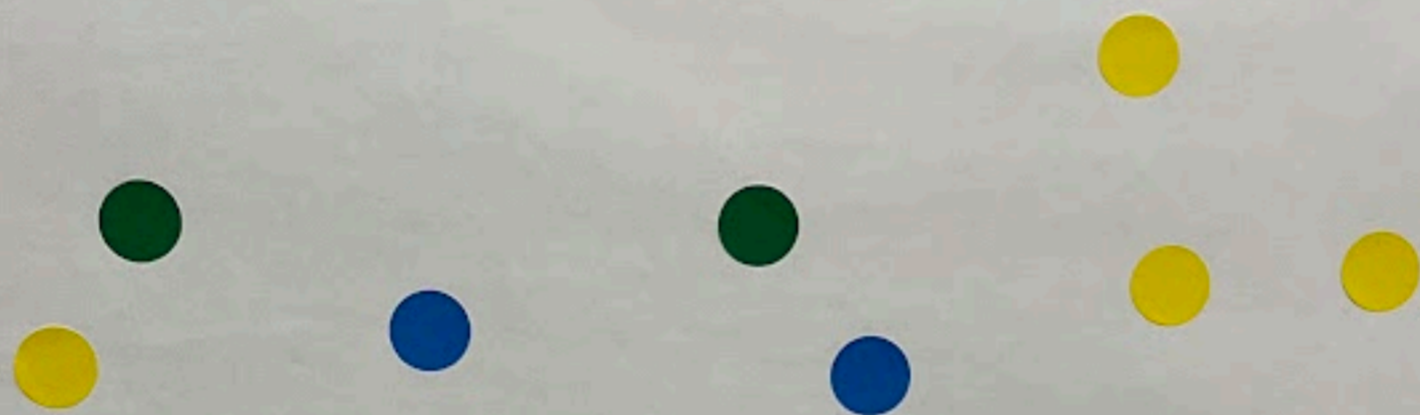
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Community

# CES Walkway

Town



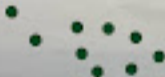
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Community



# Walkway Floodplain to Tracks

Town



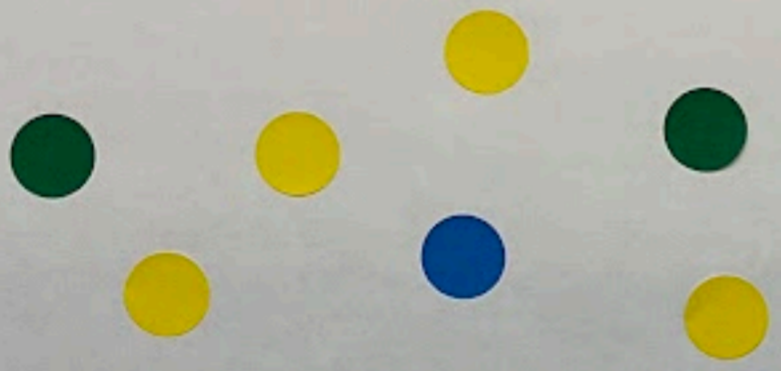
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# Walkway Clifton Heights to Town

Town



Business



Community