

Dan Hoffman ([00:00](#)):

Hello, and welcome to another edition of the Rouss Review. I'm your City Manager Dan Hoffman. With me is Amy Simmons, Communications Director. Hello, Amy.

Amy Simmons ([00:06](#)):

Hello Dan.

Dan Hoffman ([00:07](#)):

It was a beautiful weekend.

Amy Simmons ([00:09](#)):

Did you do anything special?

Dan Hoffman ([00:11](#)):

Worked in the backyard, went to Oktoberfest.

Amy Simmons ([00:14](#)):

Yes, it's.

Dan Hoffman ([00:14](#)):

It's back. Tons of funds. Hope everybody enjoyed the weekend. Maybe spent some time on the walking mall. I'm looking forward to fall, starting to feel a little more brisk outside.

Amy Simmons ([00:26](#)):

Yeah. Been not too hot this week or last week.

Dan Hoffman ([00:28](#)):

I'm looking forward to it. Okay. We've got a pretty meaty conversation ahead of us regarding housing and affordable housing with Shawn Hershberger, our Development Services Director. So let's get right into the show here. Tomorrow night, for those of you coming down to the Council meeting it's going to be public hearing mania.

Amy Simmons ([00:55](#)):

[Laughs] Lots of second readings.

Dan Hoffman ([00:56](#)):

All public hearings. We've got conditional use permits for short-term rentals. We've got a nursing home. We've got our new regs on short-term rentals.

Amy Simmons ([01:10](#)):

Exciting. Been talking about that forever.

Dan Hoffman ([01:12](#)):

That one's going to be one that gets discussed. A lot of times at second reading, remember, like we said before on the show, by the time it gets to second reading, it's pretty well baked. You can still show up, be heard things can still get voted down, but at this point they've been thoroughly discussed. So some of these won't have a lot of discussion to them, but I do anticipate that our new short-term rental regulations will generate some discussion.

Amy Simmons ([01:39](#)):

And at this level they could still be tabled, correct?

Dan Hoffman ([01:41](#)):

Oh yeah. It still can get tabled, rejected, sent back. There's a lot of stuff that could happen. So just because there's a lot of discussion doesn't mean that it's likely to get tabled. A lot of times people are for one final time voicing their opinion that they do, or don't like something before it gets passed or rejected. We've got a few things around derelict property and tax abatements. Some stuff related to bonds that we're issuing to the tune of \$14 million.

Amy Simmons ([02:18](#)):

Yikes.

Dan Hoffman ([02:18](#)):

All this was approved in the...Not yikes. These are all good things that we're buying.

Amy Simmons ([02:23](#)):

[Laughs] I just mean that's a lot of money.

Dan Hoffman ([02:23](#)):

It's a lot of money. Yeah. I've never seen that much money. So for this, this was approved in the budget. If you think this is a new thing. No. When this was all approved as part of the budget we're just now kind of getting to the point where we are issuing the bonds. Let's see, we also have the other thing that's going to generate a fair amount of discussion tomorrow night, and that is the proposed development on South Pleasant Valley. A couple of things to remind folks about if you think that the roundabout is attached to this development, inextricably linked to this development, that is not actually the case. The roundabout is a concept that's in the comp plan. The development can go forward without it. The development that we're talking about is a townhouse development. We're talking 24 units on four acres. Currently by right, they could build, I believe it's up to a four-story office building. They could also do residential on the site. So this rezoning and we are just at the rezoning stage. If someone's curious where the benches will be and where the reserved parking spaces will be and where the visitor parking spaces will be, that is not the level of detail where at this stage. This is just a rezoning to allow for the townhouse development. They could by right, currently, just build office buildings, which to be fair, generate way more traffic than townhouses. I'm sure it'll be a good substantive meaty conversation. We've heard a lot of got a lot of public comments on that one. I anticipate that some folks are going to show up.

Amy Simmons ([04:21](#)):

That roundabout idea was a result of a VDOT study, I believe, that we did on Pleasant Valley not too long ago.

Dan Hoffman ([04:28](#)):

Yeah. And the Comp Plan is just an aspirational document. If you look at our Comp Plan, you'll see, for example, I think Ward Plaza shows this redeveloped little mixed-use center with apartments and all that kind of stuff. That never happened. Ten years ago, we were hoping that something would occur there. Ten years later, we're still looking at it. It's purely an aspirational document. It doesn't dictate to to any level of detail what will happen on a property. Let's see. So what else we got? We've got, let's see, short-term rentals we've already talked about. Oh, we're buying our Department of Social Services building. That's on the agenda. Very excited to get that under City ownership so we can stop renting. And a few other things that are kind of more procedural in nature. Then of course, in the consent agenda, we will finally be adopting the strategic plan.

Amy Simmons ([05:35](#)):

[Laughs] Take a deep breath.

Dan Hoffman ([05:36](#)):

It took a while to get that one to the, to the finish line and I'm very happy that it is finally done. That took us a little longer than we liked, but it is now done. So, if you want to take a look at it check out the agenda, there's a link in the agenda. And then finally, there's something that might look a little cryptic on here. It's boards and commissions review of effectiveness presented by me. We have a bit of an issue with our boards and commissions, and that is that they're not really representative of the community. Really.

Amy Simmons ([06:12](#)):

That's a problem.

Dan Hoffman ([06:12](#)):

That's a problem. If you look at our Planning Commission or Parks and Rec Advisory Board, or Board of Architectural Review, in some cases, all of the members are from one ward. In some cases, all but one. If you look at, for example, those three I mentioned, there is not one person from ward three on any one of those boards. So, we got to fix that.

Amy Simmons ([06:40](#)):

Yeah. Absolutely.

Dan Hoffman ([06:40](#)):

We're going to start a process to look at what we can do to make sure there's equitable geographic distribution on our boards and commissions to make sure that the entire community is reflected and not just one particular small part of the community. That's something we're going to start undertaking and that's what that agenda items about.

Amy Simmons ([07:00](#)):

Love that.

Dan Hoffman ([07:01](#)):

Alrighty. Okay. Let's get right into housing and invite Shawn in. Hello, Shawn. Shawn Hershberger, Development Services Director here with us now. Shawn, you've been with the City for five years?

Shawn Hershberger ([07:14](#)):

Four and a half. It's been four and a half years.

Dan Hoffman ([07:16](#)):

Four and a half years. And for folks that don't know, what is the Development Services Department?

Shawn Hershberger ([07:23](#)):

Development Services is a team approach to planning, zoning inspections, economic development, main street program, and tourism. The idea is essentially to get the regulatory side and the marketing side and development side, all working together to make sure that we are the most business friendly community we can be.

Dan Hoffman ([07:43](#)):

How's that working out for us?

Shawn Hershberger ([07:45](#)):

I would say there are bumps in the road for any community and you're not a true locality, unless you're getting some complaints about the development process. But for the most part, what we hear consistently is how quick and easy and really customer forward friendly we are.

Dan Hoffman ([08:09](#)):

Yeah. I agree. The the staff in particular, I've seen them really work hand in glove with folks trying to get permits, folks trying to build or develop in a fair and balanced way. Obviously, we try to make the process as easy and efficient and customer friendly as possible. Don't blame us when it goes to the Planning Commission or the Council, because that's the point where the hard decisions get made. Sometimes when people say 'the City does this, or the City does that', sometimes it's the Planning Commission. Sometimes, it's the Council exercising what their authority is.

Shawn Hershberger ([08:58](#)):

Well, what we say internally is try to start every conversation with a 'yes'. If somebody wants to invest in Winchester, we want to start every conversation with a yes and see if we can stay there. And sometimes, it's just not possible. Nobody likes to hear 'no' and we understand that.

Dan Hoffman ([09:20](#)):

Anybody that's looking to build something here, put money into the city, into our 9.2 square miles...

Amy Simmons ([09:27](#)):

Welcome. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([09:27](#)):

We welcome it. Exactly. So we just are wrapping up a housing study.

Shawn Hershberger ([09:35](#)):

Yes we are.

Dan Hoffman ([09:36](#)):

And it's gonna tell us some things that I think we suspected but there's probably gonna be a few tidbits in there that hopefully we didn't expect, so we learn something out of it. What are some of the key takeaways?

Shawn Hershberger ([09:52](#)):

Some of the key takeaways, pretty similar to what you just said, it's a lot of what we expected to see. There is a high demand in our market and a high need in our market for housing supply really on all levels. If you look at starting at 30% of the area median income and going up to over 120% of their area median income, there's a demand at every level.

Dan Hoffman ([10:23](#)):

Translate that into stuff for dummdums like me. If the 30% of AMI mean, that's basically, if you're in that category, you need something affordable.

Shawn Hershberger ([10:39](#)):

Yes.

Dan Hoffman ([10:39](#)):

That is affordable housing realm.

Shawn Hershberger ([10:41](#)):

30% of AMI for a two-person household is \$19,550. 120% AMI for a two-person household is \$78,240. Typically the way programs are structured, you look at the baseline of a four-person household. So, a hundred percent AMI is 81 for \$81,400. That same household to be above 120%, it's \$97,680 annually. Four-person baseline extremely low, 30% and below income level, \$26,500.

Dan Hoffman ([11:25](#)):

So, from folks with limited means on that kind of the lower end of the scale, there's a demand there. Then, there's a demand for people of means who want to buy a house as well. Across the board, everyone wants a house. , Winchester is a desirable place. How severe is the need in those different levels?

Shawn Hershberger ([11:47](#)):

It's kind of an interesting stat. This is where, you mentioned, things that we didn't anticipate or things that maybe we did internally, but I don't think the community as a whole would anticipate: the gap analysis on what is available and what is in demand. The biggest gap is for that above 120%.

Dan Hoffman ([12:13](#)):

Really?

Shawn Hershberger ([12:14](#)):

That is by far our biggest gap in supply versus demand. The second biggest gap is below 30. But that is the demand for units above 120% AMI, it surpasses the demand for units under 30% by four times.

Dan Hoffman ([12:41](#)):

Oh, goodness.

Shawn Hershberger ([12:41](#)):

It's a huge gap. Essentially what is happening in our housing market right now is when the people that are at that rate above 120, they're still coming here, but what they're doing, because there is not the product on the market to satisfy their desires, they're buying down. They're buying down into the 100 to 120% AMI range, and that's forcing people in the 100-120% AMI to buy down to 80 to a hundred. The gap, though, is so significant on the above 120 that they're buying down, not just one to 120, but all the way down to 80 to 100 and sometimes 50 to 80. So all of the people that are in that 50 to 80, 80 to a hundred, a hundred-120, they're all buying down to 30-50 and 30-50 is buying down. So it's a downward pressure.

Amy Simmons ([13:46](#)):

[Laughs] That's a lot of numbers.

Dan Hoffman ([13:46](#)):

It's a lot of number soup.

Shawn Hershberger ([13:47](#)):

Sorry. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([13:47](#)):

Basically, there's a cascade effect. There's not houses for people with a lot of money. In other words, they're buying houses that are more modest than they can afford and that just kind of trickles all the way down.

Shawn Hershberger ([14:03](#)):

Yes.

Dan Hoffman ([14:03](#)):

And we're forcing folks who need affordable housing into really substandard.

Shawn Hershberger ([14:11](#)):

Extremely, or in a lot of cases into the hotel situations. The long extended stay hotel situations, and really the gap, [laughs] to not jump back into numbers, but essentially, that cascading effect downward, who it is hurting, the lack of housing availability for people over 120%, the people that are most

impacted negatively by that are the people that are under 30% AMI. The most vulnerable in the community are ultimately the ones that are, in this scenario always going to get the worst side of it.

Dan Hoffman ([14:56](#)):

Got it. So when looking at ages, workforce, seniors, what are we seeing in those categories? I know a lot of times we talk about affordable senior housing, workforce housing. What does it say in those areas?

Shawn Hershberger ([15:14](#)):

I know we're going to talk about things that are on their way to being developed, but as that product gets brought to market, the data suggests there is a sufficient amount. Once we create some equilibrium in our housing market, there is a sufficient amount of that middle income housing. But right now, we're just not generating enough product in the market, not just in Winchester, cause it's not a Winchester problem, but in the entire region. We're not creating enough product to satisfy that. So to your point, because we are in a larger market, we're just Winchester. We're 9.2 square miles, those people in that middle group, they are being left out. And we do have some of our highest demand is from people in the 45 to 64 age range. But we also have a large percentage of people in the over 65 that are owners currently, and as they start to age in place or age into wanting to downsize, getting into a more appropriate age in place location, that gap of senior housing does get amplified. And it's going to be amplified over the next five years.

Dan Hoffman ([17:00](#)):

Okay. What kind of magnitude are we talking about? Could we build 200, 300, 500, a thousand affordable senior units?

Shawn Hershberger ([17:09](#)):

We don't yet have the data on exactly how many we could absorb. But the indication is right now, there is 36% of households in the community owner-occupied housing is in the hands of people over 65. So that's about 1600 close to 1700 units.

Dan Hoffman ([17:41](#)):

Okay. So let's say there's, we'll build in some assumptions here. So 1700 units. Let's assume some folks are gonna leave the area or just stay in their home until their time comes. Let's strike about three, 400 off of it for those factors. We're still looking at about 12 to 1300. Let's say of those folks that would need something affordable, probably would be about what percent? About half of them?

Shawn Hershberger ([18:20](#)):

Yeah, around half of them.

Dan Hoffman ([18:22](#)):

Around 50%.

Shawn Hershberger ([18:24](#)):

But then on top of that, you do have to take into account, we have a static picture of where we are right now. We're also consistently, year in and year out, rated as one of the top places in the country to retire.

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Dan Hoffman ([18:39](#)):

Cause we're awesome.

Shawn Hershberger ([18:41](#)):

We are. We're awesome for all age ranges, but retirees love Winchester and the Winchester market.

Dan Hoffman ([18:47](#)):

It's very walkable.

Shawn Hershberger ([18:48](#)):

It is very walkable. It's very friendly. It's a moderate climate.

Amy Simmons ([18:52](#)):

You reach everything quickly.

Shawn Hershberger ([18:57](#)):

You can get anywhere from here.

Dan Hoffman ([18:59](#)):

It's beautiful.

Shawn Hershberger ([18:59](#)):

So you have an influx. It's great. We are wonderful.

Dan Hoffman ([19:03](#)):

I hope to die here one day no time soon.

Shawn Hershberger ([19:07](#)):

So, we have an influx of people so we can look static.

Dan Hoffman ([19:09](#)):

Let's assume we'll go from 1700 to 600 total, and that's probably a low estimate.

Shawn Hershberger ([19:17](#)):

Yes.

Dan Hoffman ([19:19](#)):

Let's say we've got 600 folks that would be looking for some type of affordable senior unit in Winchester. More than what we currently have. In Winchester House, for those of you not aware, Winchester House, it's a seven story, senior, age-restricted, affordable senior living facility right here on the downtown walking mall. Do you know how many units that has off the top of your head?

Shawn Hershberger ([19:45](#)):

I believe it is 85, I believe.

Dan Hoffman ([19:49](#)):

85 units So, we could build eight, nine or 10 more Winchester Houses and still probably not meet the need. That's how severe our need for affordable senior housing is.

Amy Simmons ([20:05](#)):

And that doesn't mention all the rest of the housing that we need.

Dan Hoffman ([20:07](#)):

Oh yeah. And we haven't even touched the workforce. So the grandparent raising their grandchild that needs something a little different, the single parents, all of that is part of that bigger picture. And we want people to be in Winchester. Whenever I hear that somebody drives 45 minutes in from West Virginia to their work here, I mean, that makes me sad.

Amy Simmons ([20:35](#)):

We also are consistently voted or recognized as a great place for families.

Shawn Hershberger ([20:41](#)):

And a great place to start small businesses.

Dan Hoffman ([20:42](#)):

Yeah. I mean, have you seen our schools? They're gorgeous.

Amy Simmons ([20:45](#)):

Great education.

Dan Hoffman ([20:45](#)):

For anybody listening to these podcast from outside of town...

Amy Simmons ([20:51](#)):

Come on in.

Dan Hoffman ([20:51](#)):

Come on. We might not have a house for you right away, but soon. So let's talk about development. The process that I think a lot of folks, when they think about housing developments, they think about their own house. Well, you get a realtor, you go look at them. There you go. I want that one. You buy it. A lot of people don't think about, at some point, a developer built that house. At some point, a developer built all of our houses with the exception of like maybe some of the super old ones, which were built by hand, but the vast majority of our houses were built by developers. They're part of all of this. And, the job of the City and the Planning Commission and the Council is to make sure that there's good, balanced, realistic development that meets our needs and provides us a good healthy tax base. So, we have a few projects coming down the pipe that, God willing, knock on wood, will lend to more housing. Name a few. Tell us about some of them.

Shawn Hershberger ([22:13](#)):

Just thinking about things that have already gained approval, you know, gone through the process of going through Planning Commission and then going to Council and getting approval to do the concept that they want to do. There is a phase two of Meadow Branch Apartments. Meadow Branch Apartments construction on phase one was finished, I believe, in 2018?

Amy Simmons ([22:41](#)):

Sounds about right.

Shawn Hershberger ([22:41](#)):

And that one by all accounts was basically pre-leased before it was even finished. Similar situation with the Jubal Lofts, a large pre-lease percentage. So phase two of Meadow Branch, that is slated to hopefully begin construction, if not before the end of this year early 2022. The ILocal, a 200-unit apartment building with structured parking attached, that is located on Spring Street. Orienting people to where Spring Street is, if you know where the Planet Fitness and Dick's Sporting Goods are, it's in the vacant lot, right next to that. That is primarily going to be marketed towards Shenandoah University students, which, I'm sure we could do an entire podcast on just student housing needs and the impact that student housing has when it grows out into the neighborhoods.

Amy Simmons ([23:48](#)):

But it's not just for them.

Shawn Hershberger ([23:49](#)):

It's not just for them, correct.

Dan Hoffman ([23:51](#)):

But it's not owned by the University.

Shawn Hershberger ([23:53](#)):

It's not. It's privately owned.

Dan Hoffman ([23:55](#)):

They pay us taxes. So I'm cool with that.

Shawn Hershberger ([23:56](#)):

Yes, they will be. Probably a lot of taxes and generate a lot of usage taxes once it's filled up. In addition to that, there is the old hospital in downtown off of Cork Street that has approval for a pretty significant expansion and around 300 residential units. That's a Class A facility targeting retirees, active adults with some memory care units inside of it. Same group that did that has also got approval for about 360 units where the old Frederick County Middle School is. That is about 180 of those units are active adult. No nursing facility involved.

Dan Hoffman ([24:46](#)):

Now, when you say active adult.

Amy Simmons ([24:47](#)):

It's the new buzz word.

Shawn Hershberger ([24:50](#)):

Yes, it is. It's over 55 and over 65. They are those empty-nesters. A lot of what we're seeing right now is people leaving Northern Virginia. People leaving other large urban centers.

Dan Hoffman ([25:06](#)):

Not quite senior housing.

Shawn Hershberger ([25:06](#)):

Correct.

Dan Hoffman ([25:07](#)):

But it is age-restricted.

Shawn Hershberger ([25:08](#)):

Yes. It's almost like, people have raised their kids, a lot of them are still active in the workforce, but they are able, they have the flexibility and this is a great place to come when you have that flexibility.

Amy Simmons ([25:23](#)):

Give up all that maintenance.

Dan Hoffman ([25:24](#)):

Yes. And then the other half of that development that's been approved is townhomes and two-over-two townhomes. These will be for sale. The ideal market for those units are people that are working at the hospital. It's young professionals that have entered really any career, but just the proximity of the hospital it's a natural flow over there.

Amy Simmons ([25:50](#)):

What about the ones behind Quarles Elementary? Are those finished? Those townhouses?

Shawn Hershberger ([25:53](#)):

A lot of those are finished. I'm not sure if they've had complete build-out, but they're at least in like the 60 to 80% complete build out. And those are all owner occupieds. They have been pretty successful. And if you go up there, it is a...

Amy Simmons ([26:12](#)):

It's adorable.

Shawn Hershberger ([26:12](#)):

It is. It's a really cute development.

Amy Simmons ([26:15](#)):

It's small townhouses. Yeah.

Shawn Hershberger ([26:17](#)):

Then in addition to that, there are some small one-offs like 30-, 40-, 50-unit developments that are there. One was approved off of Jubal Early Drive for 30 units. It's in close proximity to the Lofts project that was there. And then back on Tevis Street, in the Tevis/Hope Drive area there is, I believe, a 40 townhouse unit project that's going up right now. Then, just here in the downtown, this made news this week, we've inched ever so close to a final sale of the Winchester Towers lot for a 174-unit development that would span from Piccadilly Street to Baker Street. That still has some approvals to go through, but we're pretty excited about that. A block away is the Piccadilly Corners project...

Dan Hoffman ([27:17](#)):

The Cameron Square project, the one you were just talking about, that's 20% affordable?

Shawn Hershberger ([27:22](#)):

It would be. That's going to be mixed income. So, thank you for bringing that up because the Local I mentioned, it's 200 plus units with the structured parking on Spring Street, that also will have that 20% of their units will be carved out for people at or below 80% area median income.

Dan Hoffman ([27:41](#)):

There you go.

Shawn Hershberger ([27:43](#)):

It's serving the need both for the 100 to 120, 120 and above, but also that middle ground as well.

Dan Hoffman ([27:51](#)):

Exactly. And then the townhouses over by the Police Department.

Shawn Hershberger ([27:56](#)):

Yes. Thank you. To finish that one, that's about 16 units. The site plan is being drawn up right now. We're hopeful to see that under construction around March of next year.

Dan Hoffman ([28:08](#)):

Okay, great.

Amy Simmons ([28:10](#)):

That's a lot.

Shawn Hershberger ([28:10](#)):

That's a lot of building.

Dan Hoffman ([28:13](#)):

That is a lot of building, which is great. We need it. So, long story short, we need housing in all segments. We have some in the pipeline, we could use more. One of the more severe areas of need is affordable senior housing and folks that are of that 30% AMI range. But we can't forget that there are also people with means who want to buy bigger houses and having a few more of those...

Shawn Hershberger ([28:45](#)):

Luxury apartments, condos.

Dan Hoffman ([28:46](#)):

Having some of those is not a bad thing because, hey, that's more property tax for the City and better services.

Dan Hoffman ([28:52](#)):

We need it. We need a mix and we need all of the above.

Amy Simmons ([28:58](#)):

Makes a healthy community.

Dan Hoffman ([28:58](#)):

Exactly.

Shawn Hershberger ([28:59](#)):

You know, the conclusion of the study could just be build all the housing.

Amy Simmons ([29:06](#)):

[Laughs] As much as you can get.

Shawn Hershberger ([29:06](#)):

The demand is so intense right now. And sorry, I'll try not to dive down too much of a rabbit hole on this, but people talk about ownership and there's a strong desire to see more ownership in the market. However, without adequate rental properties being created, what we're seeing in real time and the data backs us up, is the lack of three-bedroom rentals is causing the environment where people are coming in and buying single family dwellings that used to be owner-occupied, putting a little work into them, and then renting them. And we're already in a position where 56% of our housing stock is rental. And, whenever we see large projects come up for approval that are all rentals. There's 200 more rental units. And I know that causes some anxiety, but if we don't provide what the market's demanding, what we're going to see is our existing neighborhoods more having pressure to go in the rental direction.

Dan Hoffman ([30:25](#)):

Exactly.

Shawn Hershberger ([30:25](#)):

It's a complicated issue and every action has consequences.

Dan Hoffman ([30:32](#)):

Yeah. One last thing, because we get this question all the time. People will point out an empty lot and say, why can't you just put it there, as opposed to my neighborhood or build it over there on that. The City actually owns relatively little property and we can't make people build what we want in certain places. They still have private property rights. We can control the zoning and that determines, in general, what's going to be built. But if by right, they can build apartments, we can't say...

Amy Simmons ([31:09](#)):

'We didn't want that there.'

Dan Hoffman ([31:10](#)):

'Oh, you you can't build apartments. You have to build a grocery store.' We can't make the private sector build just what we want them to build just because of it.

Amy Simmons ([31:23](#)):

You said the G word.

Dan Hoffman ([31:28](#)):

Grocery store. Yeah.

Shawn Hershberger ([31:28](#)):

We're talking about housing.

Amy Simmons ([31:30](#)):

Rabbit hole, rabbit hole.

Dan Hoffman ([31:31](#)):

It's all of those things.

Shawn Hershberger ([31:33](#)):

But to your point, one thing I like to mention to people when they talk about, 'well, why don't you all do something.' A common one is Ward Plaza.

Dan Hoffman ([31:47](#)):

Oh. Federal Mogul.

Shawn Hershberger ([31:48](#)):

You hit it perfectly when you mentioned personal property rights. And the response: 'well, would you approve of us coming and telling you what you should do with your property?' And the reality is the people that own those properties they have...

Dan Hoffman ([32:05](#)):

The same rights that any homeowner does.

Shawn Hershberger ([32:11](#)):

And they have obligations to the community and if they're not fulfilling those obligations, we let them know. But as long as they are fulfilling those obligations, it's their property and they have the right to do with it, what they want.

Amy Simmons ([32:30](#)):

But it's not like you haven't suggested.

Shawn Hershberger ([32:31](#)):

Oh yes. We suggest a lot.

Dan Hoffman ([32:33](#)):

Strongly.

Amy Simmons ([32:33](#)):

Multiple times.

Shawn Hershberger ([32:33](#)):

Also to your point, dollars and cents play a big part in all of the conversations. If what you want is affordable housing saying, 'well, why don't you do it there?' There's a whole value, dollars and cents calculation, goes into every development project and sometimes the cost of acquisition just eliminates the ability for affordability.

Dan Hoffman ([33:02](#)):

So, when someone says, 'put that affordable housing project on that property,' we can't just make that occur.

Shawn Hershberger ([33:11](#)):

That is correct.

Dan Hoffman ([33:12](#)):

We can put some things in place.

Amy Simmons ([33:14](#)):

We also can't make it work there as Shawn was saying.

Dan Hoffman ([33:16](#)):

We can put things in place to say that, any development over a certain number of units has to be affordable. We can put some minimums in. However, if we said, 'well, you know what, 50% of all new developments over a certain size have to be affordable', nothing will get built. It would just not happen.

Shawn Hershberger ([33:40](#)):

[Laughs] There would be zero development.

Dan Hoffman ([33:40](#)):

Zero development because the property owners and the builders themselves would look at it and say, 'well, I can't make money doing that.' We don't begrudge anybody making a buck, but it has to be realistic. We have to, in essence, nurture the private sector to build the housing stock we need because the City does not build housing.

Shawn Hershberger ([34:03](#)):

I hope we don't. [Laughs].

Dan Hoffman ([34:05](#)):

Definitely not. Okay. Well, this has been interesting. I hope it's been interesting for everybody that listened to us talk about housing. And this week, as we talked about earlier, we've got some significant things in front of Council. If somebody wants to get involved and wants to pay attention to what's going on with development in the city, I encourage you to check out the City's website and look at when the Planning Commission meetings are, when the City Council meetings are, when our Planning and Economic Development Committee of the Council is held.

Amy Simmons ([34:43](#)):

And the EDA.

Dan Hoffman ([34:44](#)):

All of those things and more really help guide the process. So, get involved. If you've got, a big empty parcel of land in your backyard, and you just think that it's a free private park, it might be owned by someone that wants to build on it one day. Look it up, figure it out, get involved.

Amy Simmons ([35:06](#)):

And you also have to check these things, these resources you talked about, often because if it's anything like public services, you start talking about it years ago, and it may take five years or more before something happens.

Dan Hoffman ([35:21](#)):

It's it's always kind of an entertaining cycle to go through when something big comes about and you hear, 'this is happening so fast!' Like, no it's actually been happening for months.

Amy Simmons ([35:33](#)):

Maybe years in some cases.

Dan Hoffman ([35:35](#)):

Yeah. Closing Tevis, that's five years in the making?

Amy Simmons ([35:39](#)):

Five years, yes.

Dan Hoffman ([35:40](#)):

But you know, the best thing you as residents can do is just be involved, be informed, check out the City website. It's not always the most exciting stuff, but it's a good way to keep from being surprised. All right. Thank you very much, Shawn.

Shawn Hershberger ([35:58](#)):

Thank you.

Dan Hoffman ([35:59](#)):

Alright. That was Shawn Hershberger.

Amy Simmons ([36:01](#)):

It sure was.

Dan Hoffman ([36:02](#)):

Shawn oversees a lot of stuff here in the City. He mentioned planning, also includes zoning, code enforcement., the economic development piece. That's a pretty big job.

Amy Simmons ([36:22](#)):

Just by itself, yeah.

Dan Hoffman ([36:22](#)):

Just by itself. If you look at our strategic plan, I think half the items in there are tagged to that department.

Amy Simmons ([36:29](#)):

Always.

Dan Hoffman ([36:29](#)):

It's a big job, a lot of stuff going on, a lot of stuff to do.

Amy Simmons ([36:36](#)):

He's very knowledgeable about it all.

Dan Hoffman ([36:38](#)):

Yeah. So if you're a resident and you're kind of wondering what is the Development Services Department, I definitely encourage you to go to the website and learn a little bit more. All right, Amy, what else we got going on?

Amy Simmons ([36:51](#)):

Okay. Well, it's fall, which means there's a lot of things going on now.

Dan Hoffman ([36:55](#)):

Is it technically fall?

Amy Simmons ([36:56](#)):

Well, I don't know if it's...

Dan Hoffman ([36:57](#)):

When does the solstice that marks the beginning of fall happen?

Amy Simmons ([37:02](#)):

You're asking the wrong person. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([37:03](#)):

Isn't there is solstice involved at some point that makes it fall.

Amy Simmons ([37:07](#)):

Sure.

Dan Hoffman ([37:07](#)):

An Equinox or something.

Amy Simmons ([37:09](#)):

I don't know. I just know that it's not so hot and that means falls coming.

Dan Hoffman ([37:15](#)):

You'd be a very bad weather person.

Amy Simmons ([37:16](#)):

Very bad meteorologist. Yes. [Laughs] But speaking of natural things that we can't really control...The bloom, and I don't mean Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([37:27](#)):

We can't control that either.

Amy Simmons ([37:28](#)):

We can't control that either.

Dan Hoffman ([37:30](#)):

[Laughs] We love Brad Veach, but we cannot control the Apple Blossom Festival.

Amy Simmons ([37:33](#)):

No, but it's also called The Bloom, but I am talking about the algae bloom that was in the north fork. It WAS.

Dan Hoffman ([37:41](#)):

What a non-event.

Amy Simmons ([37:41](#)):

Yeah. It was in the north fork of the Shenandoah River. It has now dissipated and we are out of the...

Dan Hoffman ([37:48](#)):

Our water's fine. Long story short. Don't worry about it.

Amy Simmons ([37:50](#)):

Yeah. Even when it wasn't at its peak, we didn't have any toxins in our water.

Dan Hoffman ([37:53](#)):

Yeah, we did not have any toxins.

Amy Simmons ([37:55](#)):

Were able to manage that just fine.

Dan Hoffman ([37:57](#)):

We took all the right precautions. No sweat.

Amy Simmons ([37:58](#)):

But if you want more information about what that is, we have it on our website under latest news. The roll-off carts, another big news. They are almost all delivered.

Dan Hoffman ([38:10](#)):

Yes. I got mine.

Amy Simmons ([38:10](#)):

Yay. Very exciting. Just a little tiny portion of the city has not gotten their's yet, but it's coming very soon. They will be starting the size swaps for those who...

Dan Hoffman ([38:20](#)):

For those of you who thought 95 gallons...

Amy Simmons ([38:24](#)):

That's too much. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([38:25](#)):

That's exactly what I need. I'm a single person living at my house. Um, maybe the 35 gallon. One of the frequent issues of concern that I hear from people is it's way too big. 'I can't lift this thing.' Well, first off it's on wheels. Secondly, the 35-gallon one, which is pretty much the same.

Amy Simmons ([38:50](#)):

It's so tiny.

Dan Hoffman ([38:50](#)):

I wouldn't say it's so tiny. It's the average size of a trashcan. If you go to Lowe's or Home Depot and buy a trashcan, you're probably going to get the 30-35 gallon can, may be a 65.

Amy Simmons ([39:03](#)):

Sitting next to the 95, though, it looks like a little tiny baby one.

Dan Hoffman ([39:04](#)):

Yes. It looks like a baby one, but that is the one that I think most people should probably go with.

Amy Simmons ([39:13](#)):

If not a family, yeah.

Dan Hoffman ([39:13](#)):

Exactly. Me, family of 4, 65-gallons and even that's probably a little more than we need. So, happy to have the cans out, put your trash in the trash can. I know a lot of folks, they've gotten used to just taking their bag out and dumping it on the side of the road.

Amy Simmons ([39:38](#)):

This is much more friendly.

Dan Hoffman ([39:38](#)):

Well, this is...

Amy Simmons ([39:39](#)):

Safer.

Dan Hoffman ([39:39](#)):

Safer for our employees. It reduces litter, animals tearing them open. Put your trash in the can. It's better for everybody. And it looks so much better. So I'm very excited to get these out there.

Amy Simmons ([39:54](#)):

Yes. Well, they're almost done, but for those who have nicer cans that they had maybe purchased or taken care of along the way, and you don't want to just throw that away, you can reuse it for the yard waste or recycling collection. Turn into a rain barrel or composting bin, possibly. I talked to our engineer, she thinks it's possible. But anyway on October 5th, mark that on your calendar, the crews will be collecting unwanted cans in still good condition. They're going to take them to City Yards and have them there for anybody to come pick up. If there's somebody out there who wants a can for a different purpose.

Dan Hoffman ([40:31](#)):

It's like leave a can take a can.

Amy Simmons ([40:33](#)):

Right! There you go. Same thing. If you don't have an extra can, but you want it for something else, we're going to have those at City Yards right after the fifth. But if you have a can you want to donate, set it out on your curb and we will pick it up.

Dan Hoffman ([40:46](#)):

I use one for yard waste and the other one is now kind of my utility area can.

Amy Simmons ([40:52](#)):

Like a wheelbarrow.

Dan Hoffman ([40:52](#)):

Yeah. I'm thrilled to have the the new ones in place.

Amy Simmons ([40:57](#)):

Okay. So if you need that extra cart, starting October 6th between 7:30 AM-3:30 PM, you can stop by City Yards and pick up the one you need. But if you have one that's damaged and it's just not worth donating, you can set that out by the curb, empty please, with your trash roll-off cart and we will pick it up and throw it away. But just tell us that's what you want to do with it.

Dan Hoffman ([41:22](#)):

Put a note on it, put a sticker on it. Just saying, 'please take'.

Amy Simmons ([41:26](#)):

Yes. Okay. Parks and Rec. They want to know public feedback on the dog park. They want to know if people are using it and if not, why? Or there's a couple of just tiny little questions on there. Should take totally two minutes. But they just want to know how it is how people are using it so they will know what to do in the future. If they're trying to determine if it needs to stay free or if it needs to return to a membership type of use. And I just want to gauge some community feedback on that. Please submit your feedback by October 7th. And the link to that survey is on the dog park web page. Let's see, our little annual photo contest is going on now for our annual calendar, our very popular calendar that we send out. Most every year but last year we have accepted photos from the community and use those.

Dan Hoffman ([42:20](#)):

Why don't we do it last year?

Amy Simmons ([42:22](#)):

COVID and with the budget cuts, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to do it. So I didn't do the contest and have to say, 'okay, sorry, we're not doing it'.

Dan Hoffman ([42:30](#)):

Yeah. That would have been a bummer.

Amy Simmons ([42:31](#)):

So I just use ones we had.

Dan Hoffman ([42:33](#)):

Thankfully, you know, Mary Blowe, who's a huge supporter of the calendar, found the money in the budget to make it happen. She's a rabid advocate for that calendar.

Amy Simmons ([42:43](#)):

I couldn't imagine all the phone calls I would've received if we hadn't done that because it is very popular.

Dan Hoffman ([42:47](#)):

Absolutely! Probably most of them from Mary.

Amy Simmons ([42:50](#)):

[Laughs] You're silly. Okay. So anyway, the deadline for the photo contest is November 1st, on my communications webpage, there's more details for that.

Dan Hoffman ([43:01](#)):

Can staff enter? Can I take a go take pictures and send them?

Amy Simmons ([43:04](#)):

Sure.

Dan Hoffman ([43:04](#)):

Okay.

Amy Simmons ([43:05](#)):

You live in a city. Well, you don't have to live in the city to participate.

Dan Hoffman ([43:08](#)):

You should. Oh, wait a minute. We would accept pictures from outside of the community. I think if you want your picture in our calendar, you need to be a city resident.

Amy Simmons ([43:18](#)):

Um. It's never been that way. But it has to be taken inside the city limits, though. I'm not putting Frederick County pictures in there.

Dan Hoffman ([43:24](#)):

Of course.

Amy Simmons ([43:24](#)):

Anybody could come into the city and take a picture and submit it.

Dan Hoffman ([43:29](#)):

[Groans].

Amy Simmons ([43:29](#)):

It's okay.

Dan Hoffman ([43:29](#)):

I don't know how I feel about it.

Amy Simmons ([43:30](#)):

It'll be okay. The Mayor is now accepting nominations for his excellence award. So he's looking for nominations to recognize individuals, groups, organizations, or businesses that have gone above and beyond to benefit the community or do something nice for others. October 31st is the nomination deadline for that. And that's on his webpage. And last but not least, it may be a little early to be talking about Halloween. However, we get a lot of calls and we are already getting them. The City of Winchester does not dictate when trick-or-treating happens.

Dan Hoffman ([44:09](#)):

Look in at your calendar. There's a date in October. It's October 31st, right?

Amy Simmons ([44:16](#)):

It says Halloween, yes.

Dan Hoffman ([44:17](#)):

It says Halloween. We don't make that up. That is not something that we set. At the beginning of the year, the Council and I don't sit down and say, 'you know what? Let's make Halloween in September this year.' No, it's on October 31st every year.

Amy Simmons ([44:33](#)):

Even if it's on a Sunday. Yes. Trick-or-treating can happen that day.

Dan Hoffman ([44:36](#)):

Which I think it is this year, right?

Amy Simmons ([44:39](#)):

Is it? I don't know.

Dan Hoffman ([44:39](#)):

Yeah. I think October 31st is a Sunday.

Amy Simmons ([44:41](#)):

But it's not up to us to decide when trick or treating happens. We leave that to the individual neighborhoods to decide.

Dan Hoffman ([44:46](#)):

Exactly. Now, if there was a significant storm event or something, and that might happen, even then, we might, at most, put out something telling folks to be careful.

Amy Simmons ([45:04](#)):

Recommend. Maybe pick another day

Dan Hoffman ([45:06](#)):

Recommend, Hey, pick another day.

Amy Simmons ([45:12](#)):

For safety reasons.

Dan Hoffman ([45:13](#)):

The police aren't rolling around rounding up rogue trick-or-treaters because you went at a certain time. Trick or treat whenever you want. Just be respectful. Don't egg people's houses.

Amy Simmons ([45:29](#)):

[Laughs] What are you talking about?

Dan Hoffman ([45:29](#)):

Well, we shouldn't. That's the trick part of trick or treat.

Amy Simmons ([45:33](#)):

Is it? Oh, okay. I never did that...of course not. [Laughs]

Dan Hoffman ([45:35](#)):

Of course not because you've never done anything bad in your entire life.

Amy Simmons ([45:37](#)):

Funny.

Dan Hoffman ([45:37](#)):

But no, we we don't determine. Just like Thanksgiving. It's not like suddenly, Thanksgiving is gonna be on Friday this year. Halloween is a set date.

Amy Simmons ([45:48](#)):

And that's usually when people trick-or-treat.

Dan Hoffman ([45:49](#)):

Yep.

Dan Hoffman ([45:49](#)):

A few years ago there was a major storm coming through on Halloween and several people vocalized that they were upset that the City did not cancel trick-or-treating.

Dan Hoffman ([46:02](#)):

[Laughs].

Amy Simmons ([46:02](#)):

Well, for one, we didn't set trick or treating, so we're not going to cancel it. But anyway...

Dan Hoffman ([46:07](#)):

It is a private activity that you do. We love it. If you want to do it, do it. If you don't don't do it.

Amy Simmons ([46:15](#)):

Well, I think we made a mistake a few years ago. We get so many phone calls about it that the Police Department said, 'you know what, we'll just recommend a safe time that the community could possibly do it if they wanted to'. So, the Police Department recommended you do it on this date during this timeframe to get the kids home safely.

Dan Hoffman ([46:32](#)):

Be a good parent. Don't have your kids out at 2:00 AM hustling for candy. That seems like common sense to me.

Amy Simmons ([46:39](#)):

We stopped doing that. Maybe we set some kind of strange precedence, but anyway, we're not going to set a time for trick-or-treating. So just remember that. That's it.

Dan Hoffman ([46:47](#)):

There you go. All right. Well, I think that's everything. Done ranting about Halloween.

Amy Simmons ([46:53](#)):

[Laughs].

Dan Hoffman ([46:53](#)):

Thank you very much for listening everybody. This is always an enjoyable part of my week. Thank you, Amy. And thank you to Caitlin who always edits this to make Amy look good and me look bad.

Amy Simmons ([47:06](#)):

Yes! Thank you, Caitlin. She also made that beautiful strategic plan booklet.

Dan Hoffman ([47:08](#)):

Yes. And thanks for that strat plan. Thank you, Caitlin. All right. Take care of everybody. We'll see you around City Hall.