

Dan Hoffman ([00:06](#)):

Hello, and welcome to another edition of the Rouse Review. I am City Manager, Dan Hoffman, and with me is Communications Director, Amy Simmons. Hello, Amy.

Amy Simmons ([00:13](#)):

Hello, Dan.

New Speaker ([00:14](#)):

Today, we are going to go on a walk, a little walk about.

Amy Simmons ([00:17](#)):

I'm so excited.

Dan Hoffman ([00:18](#)):

I know.

Amy Simmons ([00:18](#)):

I want to get outside.

Dan Hoffman ([00:20](#)):

It's nice out. So we're going to walk around the walking wall here in Old Town Winchester. Joining us will be Alex from our, she works for, I know she works over in Development Services technically, but what is her position?

Amy Simmons ([00:37](#)):

She's Community Arts and Vitality, I believe, Coordinator or Manager.

Dan Hoffman ([00:42](#)):

Mouthful.

Amy Simmons ([00:42](#)):

Yes.

Dan Hoffman ([00:43](#)):

I always forget.

Amy Simmons ([00:43](#)):

Arts and vitality, basically.

Dan Hoffman ([00:46](#)):

Boiling it down, she basically does all things Old Town. She makes sure our businesses are happy. Uh, and any other needs are brought to the appropriate people's attention. So, she's an important component of the downtown.

Amy Simmons ([00:59](#)):

I think also she is looking to, if she's not now, at some point branching out of Old Town and bringing arts and vitality to the rest of the community. So, it's not always just about Old Town.

Dan Hoffman ([01:11](#)):

Absolutely. But before we get to that, we're going to walk through a few bits of housekeeping. Namely tomorrow's Council agenda. Should be a relatively light regular meeting. We'll probably actually have a longer Work Session than we do a regular meeting. At the regular meeting, we've got a couple of second readings that we've talked about before here on the podcast. Then, one thing that we do have later in the meeting is a resolution of sorrow for our past Treasurer, Mr. Knee. I think he went by a different name though. He went by Skeeter.

Amy Simmons ([01:43](#)):

Skeeter. Yes.

Dan Hoffman ([01:44](#)):

Skeeter. So, we have a resolution of sorrow to observe his passing. Then onto the Work Session where I think the big agenda item that a lot of people will be interested in will be a presentation of the school's budget. It goes to the school board for approval, I believe tonight and then tomorrow, the Council will hear it during their Work Session.

Amy Simmons ([02:08](#)):

Right.

Dan Hoffman ([02:09](#)):

Obviously, a lot of you might know, we are in the midst of developing our budget. We've already begun bringing pieces of our draft budget to the various committees. Now, it's the school's turn. And then later in that meeting, we will be talking about some, I would say housecleaning, but for Council agendas. We noticed that there were some old and outdated pieces of our code that describe how meetings should be conducted. Like the order of items, when items should occur. A lot of that does not reflect the new committee structure. So we're just doing a little bit of housekeeping to get our City Code cleaned up.

Amy Simmons ([02:51](#)):

Sounds good.

Dan Hoffman ([02:52](#)):

Alrighty. Well let's not delay, let's get outside.

Amy Simmons ([02:55](#)):

Let's go outside and get some sunshine.

Dan Hoffman ([02:57](#)):

All right. When you hear us again, we will be outside with Alex.

Dan Hoffman ([03:02](#)):

All right. Now we've got Alex from, well, it's kind of hard to describe what Alex does cause she's kind of the den mother. And occasionally, we're walking down the street, currently we're on Cameron and Piccadilly, so you might hear the occasional rumble of cars in the background. Alex, tell us what you do for Old Town.

Alex Flanigan ([03:26](#)):

Good morning. I like to believe that I do many things for Old Town, but my official title is the Community Arts and Vitality Manager. So in addition to sort of being responsible for a lot of the programming that you see in a lot of the messaging that comes out of Old Town Winchester, I'm also down here to make sure that, you know, everybody's being checked in on. That everything's going smoothly. That all of the business owners have the information and the resources they need, and really to just sort of be a point person for communication between the City and the businesses, and to make sure that everybody loves it down here as much as I do.

Dan Hoffman ([03:54](#)):

That's awesome. All right. So we're going to be walking from Cameron and Piccadilly. We're going to be heading that's west, right? That's west. We're going to be heading west towards Loudou, making a left and going down and walking mall. So, right now, some familiar faces. Of course, you've got the tobacconist here, Piccadilly Grill, but we also have a new business: Town Kitchen and Bath. Folks who might be doing a little remodeling. That's new. I think that just opened in the last...

Alex Flanigan ([04:21](#)):

It's very new. Just in the last couple of months and it's a gorgeous storefront. They've done some really, really beautiful remodeling over there.

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

Yeah, of course, a local favorite: Steamy's. He's still hanging around. Steamy's has been around for awhile.

Alex Flanigan ([04:35](#)):

Steamy's is a long-standing institution on the walking mall, a fan favorite for sure.

Dan Hoffman ([04:40](#)):

Now unfortunately, we did lose Moe's Donuts a while back, but it has been replaced by another donut place: Glazed and Confused just opened...

Alex Flanigan ([04:54](#)):

February 14th was their grand opening. So, Valentine's Day. A little love letter to the downtown with plenty of sugar and sprinkles on top.

Dan Hoffman ([05:01](#)):

And they are Tuesday, Friday, 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM. So if you're going to...

Alex Flanigan (05:05):

They're open Saturday, Sundays too.

Dan Hoffman (05:07):

Yep. Eight to three, so if you want donuts, get in there before 3:00 PM.

Alex Flanigan (05:11):

They've got gluten-free donuts too, which is an amazing thing.

Dan Hoffman (05:13):

I don't know how that work.

Alex Flanigan (05:15):

They're fake donuts kind of.

Dan Hoffman (05:17):

My wife is gluten-free, so I will have to get some for her.

Alex Flanigan (05:23):

They're pretty delicious. You should give it a shot.

Dan Hoffman (05:25):

They are? Alright. I will try. Coming up now on the entrance to the walking mall. Same businesses here. You got your Greenfield and Craun. You got your Clarke County community bank. Now, unfortunately, folks, the Wells Fargo has announced that they are leaving this particular spot. I think the building's been sold recently is what I've been told. But, I'm not sure if they're going to keep that ATM there. I know I'm bummed about it, but you got plenty of other options around here. All right. Making our left onto the walking mall. Another institution, Violino's, Still here in kickin'. We've got a renovation. I think you guys might have noticed that, I think it's an old bank, right?

Alex Flanigan (06:13):

Yeah. So this was an old bank building. It is currently in the works to become upstairs some luxury apartments, but the majority of this building is going to be a really, really cool event and arts venue called The Monument.

Dan Hoffman (06:25):

Very cool. It's a very cool building. I love it when old buildings like this get repurposed into something cool.

Alex Flanigan (06:31):

Yeah. If you go to their Instagram, I think it's The Monument VA, but you can see some really, really cool internal shots of the work going on in there. It's really cool to watch.

Dan Hoffman (06:37):

That is awesome. And that's right across from Violino's. We're on the north end of the walking mall now heading, heading south. The building that's got the old The Floor Shop, or was the old Floor Shop, I guess that's moved. I'm still hoping something moves in there pretty soon. Coming up on another institution, still got Brewbaker's here with some outdoor seating. Also, Murphy Beverage, Co. directly across from it. Espresso Bar and Cafe. Now we're coming up on a new addition to the mall. It's pretty interesting. I think it speaks to the vitality of the walking mall that we actually have new restaurants, new places that have opened up during the pandemic.

Alex Flanigan ([07:28](#)):

A number of new businesses. I think about a half dozen.

Dan Hoffman ([07:30](#)):

Really?

Alex Flanigan ([07:30](#)):

Yeah.

Dan Hoffman ([07:31](#)):

That's awesome. All right. Gringo Gordo Empanadas. Um, I've eaten there a lot already.

Alex Flanigan ([07:37](#)):

[Laughs].

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

You've been in there?

Alex Flanigan ([07:37](#)):

I have been there several times. They're fantastic.

Dan Hoffman ([07:40](#)):

I recommend the brisket one. That's my favorite. Kaylin mushroom also fantastic.

Alex Flanigan ([07:47](#)):

It's a really fantastic thing, especially during the seasonal transition. Cause if you want to a food that you can walk around with, you know, outside that keeps your hand warm and your heart warm. It's perfect.

Dan Hoffman ([07:55](#)):

Yes. The hand and the heart. I think it's run by the same guys that do Union Jack. Is that correct?

Alex Flanigan ([08:01](#)):

Yes. That is correct.

Dan Hoffman ([08:02](#)):

Now, Red Fox Creamery, just a couple doors down from Gringo Gordo's. I know it's called Red Fox Creamery, but it's not just ice cream, correct? Right? Soups and sandwiches. So even though it's still might be a little chilly, don't forget. You can get other things that warm the heart.

Alex Flanigan ([08:23](#)):

There's never a time that Red Fox is out of season.

Dan Hoffman ([08:26](#)):

Exactly. Well said. Now the old, I think this was the old Dollar General.

Alex Flanigan ([08:32](#)):

Yeah. This used to be the Dollar General. It was for quite some time.

Dan Hoffman ([08:35](#)):

It is now for lease. Somebody purchased it and they're in the midst of renovating it. I'm very optimistic that something cool is going to be moved in there as well. Runners Retreat still here, alive and kicking. Still got a Post Office if you still actually mail snail mail, but hey, everyone needs the post office from time to time. Moving along. A few gift shops. One, a relatively new one: Sage and Company. That's new ish, I should say.

Alex Flanigan ([09:05](#)):

It is. Yeah. It's very new.

Dan Hoffman ([09:06](#)):

Just before Christmas, right?

Alex Flanigan ([09:07](#)):

It opened just around the holidays.

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

Gotcha. Gifts and home decor. It is sandwiched between Tin Top and Flashback. Just next to a place that is always a temptation for me, Bell's and also an institution. How long's Bell's been here?

Alex Flanigan ([09:24](#)):

I'm not even sure if I know the number off hand. I believe that Bell's is older than I am.

Dan Hoffman ([09:28](#)):

[Laughs] I'm sure Bell's is older than you are. No, I feel like they've been around for a very long time, but they, man, they've got some nice stuff.

Alex Flanigan ([09:37](#)):

Yeah. Phenomenal business. The Bells do a lot for downtown as well, even beyond maintaining their finery and the windows and making a constantly drool-worthy display.

Dan Hoffman ([09:45](#)):

All right. Now over to our right. We're not quite at the mid-point of the walking mall yet, but Taylor Pavilion still open. We're going to start doing some programming there when it gets warm?

Alex Flanigan ([09:56](#)):

Absolutely, yes.

Dan Hoffman ([09:57](#)):

Gotcha. About what time, when should folks start keeping an eye out for that?

Alex Flanigan ([10:01](#)):

Well, we don't have an exact schedule nailed down yet. You know, we're still trying to see how the next couple of months pan out in terms of vaccine rollout and making sure that it's safe to hold gatherings again, but people are able to rent the Taylor Pavilion privately for their own events at any point in time. There's no restriction on that. All they have to do is reach out to me. But in terms of events that we're going to start putting on there, I would say probably look in May for things to start really kicking off, to start having some theater and music and outdoor performances that are free to the community.

Dan Hoffman ([10:26](#)):

That's awesome. It's a cool little space tucked away back in there.

Alex Flanigan ([10:29](#)):

It's really gorgeous. And then you also have the Wine Room at Taylor Pavilion back there in the corner, which is an absolutely gorgeous venue.

Dan Hoffman ([10:37](#)):

And Farmer's Market, I'm told.

Alex Flanigan ([10:39](#)):

Farmer's Market is not happening this year, unfortunately.

Dan Hoffman ([10:41](#)):

Oh, no Farmer's Market.

Alex Flanigan ([10:43](#)):

No, but the Freight Station Farmer's Market is really, really fantastic. That's just up by Boscawen in the lot at the Winchester Little Theater. And I believe they're open on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Fantastic operation.

Dan Hoffman ([10:54](#)):

I pop in there every Saturday. They've got a knife sharpening guy, every so often. The knife sharpening guy is great. I think we get most of our eggs there and the mushroom lady. I can't remember her name, man, they got some good Lion's Mane. These other mushrooms I've never had before, but they're very, very tasty. All right, Mountain Trails still here. Another dangerous spot for me to go into, especially in

the clearance area. Then directly across from it is the Masonic Temple, obviously not new, but what's the record it holds. Is it like the most narrow Masonic Lodge or something like that?

Alex Flanigan ([11:34](#)):

I don't know. I'm not sure that I have access to all of the Masonic records, but, um, I'm sure that there is at least one or two remarkable things about this building that you could find.

Dan Hoffman ([11:43](#)):

Blue Peacock Antiques wraps around Masonic Temple.

Alex Flanigan ([11:47](#)):

It does. It's a really cool piece of architecture.

Dan Hoffman ([11:49](#)):

It's really cool. All right, Amy make a note, we've got to figure out what the deal is with Masonic Temple. It'd be neat to get in and take a look at it, but I'm not sure what the rules are.

Alex Flanigan ([11:59](#)):

That's for another podcast for another time.

Dan Hoffman ([12:02](#)):

Alrighty, moving right along. Incredible Flying Objects. Good. You know, I know Christmas has passed, but it's a good spot for stocking stuffers. When the holidays are around, of course, one of the cornerstones of the down of the walking mall, Village Square. All these folks have outdoor seating, it's starting to get warm. Some still have their heaters out, but some are starting to bring their heaters in. The City provided heaters to a lot of these businesses when it was cold and we wanted to give people extra seating for COVID. Alright, so now we're pretty much at the mid-point. We're not quite at Boscawen yet. We're here by the old courthouse, the Civil War Museum. Civil War Museum's still open.

Alex Flanigan ([12:51](#)):

Not sure if we're trying to catch everything, but we did miss Union Jack, as well as Nibblins, and InnoVault, if you're trying to maintain a comprehensive. I'm not sure what the plan is.

Dan Hoffman ([13:00](#)):

I'm poppin' ever so often, so feel free to stop me and point out stuff that I miss. InnoVault, for folks that don't know what that is. A co-working space. What exactly is a co-work?

Alex Flanigan ([13:12](#)):

A co-working space has a really, really neat model or basically this building is extant and they have resources, internet desks, you know, both private spaces and public spaces where you can sort of lounge and spread out on couches or tables or desks. But you are able to rent it either by the day or to have sort of a reserved, a little private office to yourself. And it's a way to essentially give yourself an office away from home. If you're someone who does freelancing work or maybe works in like sort of a satellite location, it's a really, really great way to sort of give yourself a physical location to be in. You know,

everybody's working from home right now. So a lot of people are tired of working from home, but there are some people who have been using this sort of flexible office space solution for quite a while. But the other really neat thing about InnoVault is that it sort of provides a home to other pop-up events. There is a new business in there called the Flat Nine Jazz Club, which uses this main hall to hold jazz performances. So it's a designated jazz venue.

Dan Hoffman ([14:07](#)):

Do they do jazz dance?

Alex Flanigan ([14:07](#)):

I don't know that they do. I think it's primarily small group stuff, you know, with a lot of enforced social distancing at the moment. But if you want to swing dance, I know some guys.

Dan Hoffman ([14:15](#)):

So you mentioned, I should point out, we're not mentioning every single business. We'll do another pass here at a future podcasts. But in the interest of time, do want to point out that we're walking by Nibblins, walking by Union Jack. Got some art places or a lot of little things that you got to come down here and discover for yourself. Roma's. I got to say Roma's always a great lunch special. I have yet to have a bad lunch special there. Now we're up on Bright Box. Now I've seen some stuff in the paper. I know Bright Box has been hit hard because of the pandemic. There's some stuff that you can do to help them out, I believe. Is that still going?

Alex Flanigan ([14:59](#)):

I believe so. They had an ongoing fundraising campaign, which you can track down and donate to really, really excellent people, really, really wonderful location and heartbeat of the downtown. They also, right now though, are having a merch designing contest. So if you're a local enterprising artist you can enter to be the designer behind the next piece of wonderful Bright Box apparel.

Dan Hoffman ([15:19](#)):

And right next door, the Escape Room still open during COVID. I went and did it with my family. It was fun. You know what, if your kids are like, 'I don't want to do it. I don't know what it is', make them do it. Don't let them off the hook. It's actually fun. The Winchester Book Gallery, which I should point out, you might walk in the front of the Winchester Book Gallery and think, 'Oh, this is a cute little bookstore.' The thing goes all the way back. It's way bigger. It's got a huge selection. So don't sleep on that. All right, now we are at Boscawen, here at the main crossing of the walking mall. Got El Centro, which you can probably hear in the background. Very popular place to sit outside on a warm day. Water Street Kitchen, owned by the same folks that own Village Square. And now one of the cooler, I think just because it's such a throwback, is the Wilkins Shoe Center. I mean, it's a very personal touch kind of place. Like they fit you for your shoes. It's old school. It's the kind of shoe store I remember, like I remember growing up.

Alex Flanigan ([16:31](#)):

The first time I ever came down to the Old Town walking mall, I had just started as a student at Shenandoah [University] and my mother who grew up in the Eastern panhandle of West Virginia, saw this shoe store and stopped and had sort of like a Ratatouille moment. She told me that this is where she used to buy her ballet slippers when she was a really little girl. They would come into Winchester to

go to Old Town, to go to the Wilkin's Shoe Center, to get her ballet slippers. And that was such a fun little story. I think about that every time I pass by this building,

Dan Hoffman ([16:56](#)):

It is definitely an institution. Mr. Wilkins' obviously done a huge amount for this community. All right, now we're on a cluster of new stuff. First off, we've got WinMart. So one of the things that I think every little downtown walking mall, town square needs is basically a convenience store that sells food, sundries. It could be a bottle of water. It could be an ice cream, soda or a bag of chips, because we actually have people that live down here in the walking mall.

Alex Flanigan ([17:31](#)):

We do.

Dan Hoffman ([17:31](#)):

Many, many of the places above these businesses are apartments, condos. So WinMart opened just recently, I want to say six, seven months ago.

Alex Flanigan ([17:42](#)):

I believe that's right, about six months.

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

Yeah. And super nice guy, also. Pop in, say hello, get a bottle of water, get an ice cream. And he's really got anything you need and it's super convenient for the folks who actually live down here in the walking mall. I don't think Plume and Java Cava are new, new ish maybe?

Alex Flanigan ([18:07](#)):

No, they've been around for a while. I believe that Java Cava was here for about a year as of last March. So they had a little bit of a footprint before everything happened, but a couple of years. Not to say that you shouldn't stop in. You absolutely should. They have some amazing teas and some really, really fantastic sort of mixed coffee drinks.

Dan Hoffman ([18:26](#)):

Fret Shop is a guitar store. Are they still closed during COVID? Are they doing lessons?

Alex Flanigan ([18:36](#)):

I believe they are open by appointment.

Dan Hoffman ([18:38](#)):

Got it. Right next to them is a tiny place. It's easy to overlook. But I love little tiny places. That's one of the things that the walking mall has, a lot of is these little kind of nooks and crannies with cool stuff wedged in it. So, Win City Nutrition opened really just a few weeks ago.

Alex Flanigan ([18:56](#)):

Very, very recent. Yeah. And they are probably, I think they're the newest business on the walking mall.

Dan Hoffman ([19:00](#)):

Smoothies. They sell smoothies and they're good.

Alex Flanigan ([19:05](#)):

Smoothies, protein shakes, teas.

Dan Hoffman ([19:06](#)):

I had one just the other day. Another institution, the Thai Winchester. I think half of City Hall eats here for lunch every day. We know these folks, very nice folks. Entering the stretch of the walking mall where it's a little quieter, but it's a great place to on a nice day to kind of hang out, have a seat, sip your tea. Places like the Fellowship of the Sip. Buy some furniture at Patton's. We're also coming up on the church and the splash pad too. The splash pad, obviously, it's been closed because of COVID. I don't know, off the top of my head when we plan to start it back up.

Alex Flanigan ([19:54](#)):

I do not have the answer to that. I get to tell people when it's open, but I don't get to make that decision.

Dan Hoffman ([20:01](#)):

Oh, do I make that decision? [Amy talking off mic] Oh yes. That's true. The Governor probably. I think it'll be pretty soon. The way things are looking, things are really looking up. So I think it'll be pretty soon. Interesting collection of stores in this part right around the splash pad. You got Once Upon a Find, a dance studio, a toy store. Interesting little collection. Stuff that you might not otherwise think. I think sometimes people overlook the south end of the walking wall. And you don't want to sleep on the south end of the walking mall.

Alex Flanigan ([20:39](#)):

No, you certainly don't. It's a great place to come down, especially if you have a little bit more time on your hands cause a lot of these places you will want to wander around. I could easily spend an hour in Once Upon a Find. When I go to the Back to the Media, there is no shortage of like Sega Genesis games to take me back to my childhood.

Dan Hoffman ([20:54](#)):

Yep. Time Travelers same deal.

Alex Flanigan ([20:57](#)):

Very much so.

Dan Hoffman ([20:58](#)):

And another place, I think this is the only place you can get sushi on the walking mall is Awabi, am I right? Or am I wrong?

Alex Flanigan ([21:05](#)):

I'm trying to figure. I don't remember off the top of my head if anywhere else has a sushi roll as sort of a side item or not. But I think Awabi is definitely the one people think of.

Dan Hoffman ([21:15](#)):

Exactly. Open, outdoor seating. Get yourself a bento box. Got a big old historic church, First Presbyterian. Now, although it doesn't generate a lot of daytime activity, it certainly is pretty.

Alex Flanigan ([21:31](#)):

Another thing that the south end of the walking wall has that I think a lot of people may not necessarily be aware of is that there are a lot of service providers down here. There are a lot of professionals and specialists who are maybe operating in the upper floors of buildings or not people with beautiful retail fronts, but we have Bridgeforth Photography down here. You can see up here, if you look sort of up a little bit on some of these signs, you'll start to notice the hair salons. We have a new chiropractor down here.

Dan Hoffman ([21:55](#)):

Interesting. Yeah, I never even looked at that. Got your accountants, your financial advisors.

Alex Flanigan ([22:02](#)):

And that's true. All along the walking mall, there are a number of businesses tucked in the upper spaces there, or between nooks and crannies, like you said. Nobody's better at making the best use of a space that's tucked away somewhere than those business owners on the walking mall.

Dan Hoffman ([22:14](#)):

We're coming to the end of the walking mall and there is one building that I'm keeping a close eye on. It's 137. It's the one that burned, oh, a year ago? A little over a year ago?

New Speaker ([22:28](#)):

Two years. It's been a while.

New Speaker ([22:29](#)):

Yeah. So I'm very eager to see something happen to it. For those of you are curious, I know permits have been pulled to do something with it. I am very optimistic and hopeful because it's a really cool space. It's sad to see it in this condition for as long as it has been, but hopefully with the pandemic lifting, something will come of it. And then now we're at the very far south end, the end of the walking mall. We're coming towards the end of our walk and we have coffee house, the Hideaway Cafe. Nice folks, nice place. And Cork Street Tavern around the corner. Don't forget about that one. That one's been around forever.

Alex Flanigan ([23:17](#)):

Probably forever. If you check the dates on it, I think it would just say at the beginning of time.

Dan Hoffman ([23:22](#)):

Excellent spinach salad. That grilled chicken spinach salad, very tasty. That's my go-to for lunch there. I have eaten at every place on the walking mall and that includes Snow White Grill. That includes new places like Gringo Gordo and the walking mall is probably responsible for any weight gain I've experienced since I moved here six months ago. But it has tons of options. So as we wrap up, I just want to remind folks it's getting warm. It's going to be an awesome time on the walking mall on a beautiful afternoon or even chilly days like today. Come on down. Ample parking.

Alex Flanigan ([24:07](#)):

Ample parking. No shortage of parking.

Dan Hoffman ([24:08](#)):

Parking, which I know is important to a lot of folks.

Alex Flanigan ([24:14](#)):

You know, what, if you are someone who is higher risk or someone who is still being really, really cautious, then there's still plenty of takeout options. There are still so many ways to buy gift cards or support the businesses online. There's a lot of online retail that sprung up during this period of time. So, the business owners have really been incredible about adapting and the community's been so, so responsive and supportive.

Dan Hoffman ([24:34](#)):

Absolutely. Tons of places. A lot of them we didn't get to mention today just cause there's so many of them. And you know, they're all eager to have folks back here downtown. Alex, anything more before we wrap up.

Alex Flanigan ([24:48](#)):

I think I just want to say that I am again so grateful to the community for the way that everyone has really sprung up to be champions of the downtown and to support their local businesses. You know, when you spend your money down here, when you choose to make a purchase here instead of somewhere else, then you're putting money directly back into the pockets of your neighbors, your friends, the people that you take rec yoga classes with. These are the people who make your community vibrant, not just because of what they provide down here, but because of the people they are outside of their work hours in the community. And that's just a really, really wonderful thing. So very grateful to everyone for doing that. And I'm really, really excited to see what the next stage of evolution for Old Town is.

Dan Hoffman ([25:23](#)):

Yeah. You might've noticed on this walk, we didn't mention one chain. We didn't say, 'Hey, look, the local Arby's is open'. Even the convenience store, it's not a CVS.

Alex Flanigan ([25:36](#)):

It's one of a kind.

Dan Hoffman ([25:39](#)):

It's a local guy. All this stuff is unique. So, come on down and experience something unique. Thank you very much for taking us on this walk, Alex. Amy and I are going to get back inside.

Alex Flanigan ([25:51](#)):

Thank you so much for having me.

Dan Hoffman ([25:56](#)):

All right. We were back inside. That was a very nice walk.

Amy Simmons ([25:59](#)):

I'm so glad we did that.

Dan Hoffman ([26:00](#)):

Absolutely. A few things that came to mind afterwards. I know we talked a lot about the different parts of the walking mall, and we just happened to walk down the Cameron to Loudoun portion of Piccadilly, one block, basically. There are a lot of little side streets coming off the walking mall that have interesting businesses that people should check out. Obviously, the walking mall is the heart of it, but don't forget to go off the beaten path or some other restaurants, some other shops that are kind of little hidden gems here and there. And for some of those side streets, particularly that stretch that we walked on Piccadilly, we be doing some revitalization, some facade grants, some other things to improve the streetscape. Even areas that might seem like they need a little bit of a TLC, they're gonna get it.

Amy Simmons ([26:55](#)):

I can't wait to see what happens.

Dan Hoffman ([26:57](#)):

Absolutely.

Amy Simmons ([26:57](#)):

When is that going to come forward?

Dan Hoffman ([26:59](#)):

No, we're waiting on some grants to come through and we're putting some things in this year's budget, so, it'll be this year when we really get started on it. Alrighty. So now, let's talk about what's coming up this week.

Amy Simmons ([27:13](#)):

Well, I when I was getting ready for this, I realized there's a lot of stuff going on. So, you can tell it's springtime, you know, things are starting to come back into the schedule. You mentioned earlier the work session being light most weeks and that's because of the committees. So I thought I'd go through the schedule for those committees so people are aware.

Dan Hoffman ([27:35](#)):

Yes, please do. A lot of these committees, they're going to be talking about budgets for the next few weeks and committees are in person. So you can come down to City Hall. There's still some mask requirements and social distancing requirements, but come participate, give your two cents on the budget.

Amy Simmons ([27:52](#)):

Yeah. And if you can't participate in person, we still have the online videos that are live and on demand. And you can send in your comments through email, of course. Uh, but the Finance Committee that meets the first Tuesday at 1:30 PM, the Boards and Commissions Committee meets the third Monday at one o'clock and the Planning and Economic Development Committee meets the last Thursday of the month at two, and Public Safety Committee. That one meets the third Wednesday at five. Now, last week's was canceled due to a lack of quorum.

Dan Hoffman ([28:21](#)):

Yes, yes. We had a little snafu was some traffic and we didn't have quorum, so we had to move it to this week.

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

And since there's only three people on the committee, we need at least two there. So, and I think Mr. Veach was absent for something else. So we had to cancel that, but that has been rescheduled for March 24th, at five o'clock.

Dan Hoffman ([28:43](#)):

This Wednesday.

Amy Simmons ([28:44](#)):

Yep. So Virginia Department of Health recently announced that some health districts have begun to transition to phase 1c. I'm really excited about that. We're in 1c, correct?

Dan Hoffman ([28:54](#)):

Yes, we are. So we're in the midst of working with Valley Health to make sure that all of the 1c qualified City folks, City employees are going to vaccinated.

Amy Simmons ([29:05](#)):

Yes. I'm looking forward to that. There'll be clinics across Virginia that will be offering that in the next several weeks. Phase 1c includes additional central workers, energy, construction, food services, media communications, and other fields. So, if you've already pre-registered at vaccinate.virginia.gov, go back and update your information cause they added some more qualifications in there. And if you haven't done that yet, please do so because that's where they're pulling the information and they're going to contact those people who have pre-registered to get them set up for their vaccination. So, let's see, City dog licenses go on sale April 1st. It must be purchased by April 30th. All dogs four months and older that are located in the city are required to wear a dog tag and that's just to help us get them back to you if they get loose and are picked up by animal control or someone else.

Dan Hoffman ([29:58](#)):

I'm gonna have to get Murdock a dog tag.

Amy Simmons ([29:59](#)):

Yes, you are. Is he older than four months?

Dan Hoffman ([30:02](#)):

He is. He is he's five or six now.

Amy Simmons ([30:05](#)):

Yeah. So you live in the city, so you gotta get him a dog tag. What if he gets lost?

Dan Hoffman ([30:09](#)):

Oh, that'd be very sad.

Amy Simmons ([30:11](#)):

[Laughs] Preschool registration is going on now at Winchester elementary schools. There's the regular preschool experience for eligible children. And then there's a tuition-based Spanish Immersion Preschool program. I wish this was around when my kids were little.

Dan Hoffman ([30:26](#)):

Yeah, really. That's one of my bigger regrets that I did not fully learn a language. The rural South Carolina public school system that I went through did not emphasize languages.

Amy Simmons ([30:40](#)):

Yeah, mine was South Georgia, not going to happen. Long, long time ago.

Dan Hoffman ([30:44](#)):

Long time ago.

Amy Simmons ([30:45](#)):

But that is a really cool program. Caitlin and I looked at it a long time ago just to make a video and we got to go into the classroom and see the kids. The entire day they learned in both languages and most of the day was in Spanish. And so these kids were just phenomenal. They could read, write, talk Spanish, and they were only four years old. And then they would just switch to English. Like it was nothing.

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

My Spanish teacher, Dr. Holland. I had the best time in his class. I took two, three years of Spanish. Yeah, I can, I *Dónde está biblioteca* and that's about it. Yeah.

Amy Simmons ([31:24](#)):

Yeah, um, okay. That's probably more than I can do. I can count to 10 in Spanish thanks to Dora the Explorer.

Dan Hoffman ([31:29](#)):

I don't know if I can even do that at this point. I know that I like, queso and ham.

New Speaker ([31:35](#)):

Tacos.

New Speaker ([31:35](#)):

And I go to the Biblioteca, but I really regret it cause it's such a valuable skill. I'm really trying to impress upon my kids that you have to learn another language. If English is your only language, you will definitely be behind the curve not only for the potential financial benefits of being more employable and having more opportunities. But really when you travel to some of these other places and you learn about the culture and you learn about other people, I think it makes you more open to diversity of experiences and people from other cultures, because we're a big melting pot, so it's good to know more than just what you grew up with.

Amy Simmons ([32:22](#)):

Always. And it's really good for those developing brains too. If they can learn those two languages and how that processes and they can really build those muscles there. So also Winchester Parks and Recreation has created an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt and Jim Barnett Park. So you can walk around, travel around Jim Barnett Park and find, I believe there's like 20, don't quote me on that, 16 eggs. Little cardboard eggs painted real pretty with numbers on them all over the park.

Dan Hoffman ([32:50](#)):

Oh, they're not like eggs.

Amy Simmons ([32:52](#)):

Not actual eggs.

Dan Hoffman ([32:54](#)):

Not actual eggs and not like little plastic ones. Yeah, that would be a big mess. I was about to question my parks department as to why they thought that was a good idea.

Amy Simmons ([33:02](#)):

No, this is a beautiful display of large eggs on fences and in different places. So you just ride around, find a market on your scavenger hunt card, and when you find them all or most of them, you can go to the Rec Center and get a prize. The eggs will be out until April 3rd. So the deadline's coming up. And if you need a clue because you can't find them all, some of them may be hidden and great little nooks and crannies of the park, you can not give the Rec Center call and they'll give you a clue.

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

Don't cheat, come on.

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

Sometimes you need a clue.

Dan Hoffman ([33:36](#)):

You can do it. You can do it. Walk around the park, put in the work.

Amy Simmons ([33:39](#)):

That's right. Get some steps in on a nice, pretty day in spring.

Dan Hoffman ([33:43](#)):

Don't be a lazy little Easter hunter.

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

[Laughs] You can do it. We know we can. All right, last but not least demolition has started at the Douglas School.

Dan Hoffman ([33:49](#)):

Oh yeah. I saw.

Amy Simmons ([33:51](#)):

The back portion, the newer portion of the school is gone now and hopefully construction will start soon. So I'm excited about that historic renovation and getting underway.

Dan Hoffman ([34:00](#)):

Absolutely. Alrighty. Well, I think that's all we have for this week. I will see you back in two weeks, we'll probably have a few updates on the budget. It's getting warmer. We'll probably talk a little more about activities going around in the city. Maybe have an Apple Blossom [Festival] update for everybody. So look forward to talking to you in a couple of weeks. See ya around City Hall,