

The Richlands Town Council held a “Public Hearing” on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 4:45pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Town Manager: Ron Holt
Town Attorney: Michael Thomas
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Project Manager: Absent
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler
Council Members: Seth White, Gary Jackson, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

The Invocation and Pledge was led by Mayor Cury.

Mayor Cury advised the Public Hearing is for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the sale of property located at 217 Railroad Avenue, Richlands, Virginia 24641, Tax Map Number: 105A51105 0021-0026

Mayor Cury inquired if there had been any written comments to the Town regarding the sale of property located at 217 Railroad Avenue, Mr. Holt advised there had not.

Mayor Cury advised the meeting was open to take public comment.

Ernest Edgill, 206 Terry Drive, Richlands, VA- Mr. Edgill made the following statements-

- Inquired about the Town’s plan for the money if the property is sold. Mrs. Mollo advised she could answer this during the Regular Scheduled Meeting.
- Inquired about the money that has been donated to Teen Venture over the years. Mrs. Mollo advised this could also be answered during the Regular Scheduled Meeting.
- Stated that his granddaughter enjoys attending Teen Venture and advised that they offer good programs.

John Knowles, 994 Thru Drive, Pounding Mill, VA- Mr. Knowles made the following statements-

- Gave a brief description of how the Teen Center began and read their Mission Statement.
- Stated that he did not know the Council members personally, so he researched comments online that they had made prior to and after the election regarding where they stand on growth in the Richlands area.
- Advised that when Teen Venture was established in 2001, it received around \$1.3 million dollars in donations and volunteers have spent thousands of hours helping Teen Venture become what it is today.
- Asked that the Council remember the goal of Teen Venture and to do the right thing by allowing Teen Venture to keep the building and continue its mission.

Glenn Harrison, 146 Cressview Dr., Abingdon, VA- Mr. Harrison made the following statements:

- Stated that Teen Venture was a community-built project that has been successfully operating for fifteen years now, through the recession and covid.
- Advised that Teen Venture operates on funding from grants, and foundation grants want to build brick and mortars.
- Spoke about Teen Venture and the Town previously agreed on a sale price of fifty thousand dollars in January 2025 but could not agree on the terms such as where they get their money from and where it goes.
- Advised he had received requests in the last six months from Bluefield, VA and Bristol, VA who want to replicate the center.
- Advised he would like to make a deal with the Council and come up with an agreement.

John Willis, 351 Lincoln Street, Pounding Mill, VA- Mr. Willis made the following statements-

- Advised he had invested his life in this Town and its time to find a solution and not fight.
- Stated a lot of people are dedicated to this Town that don't live and vote here.
- Stated the Council members are politicians whether they like it or not and the legacy that they will leave behind is important.

Ginger Branton, 109 East Hillcrest Dr., Cedar Bluff, VA- Mrs. Branton gave the following statements-

- Advised that she and Doug have volunteered alongside many of the volunteers in attendance today for months assisting to provide a safe haven for our young people.
- Stated that the Chamber and C.A.R.T both have invested financial opportunities for future productive citizens to embrace the arts and community citizenship by understanding the valuable necessity that contributes to the quality of their lives.
- Advised the Council they should be grateful for the leadership that is entrusted in them to make the right decisions with wisdom, faith, and love for our future leaders.
- Stated the Council needs to take responsibility to enrich the lives of our young people and focus on the big picture for the future of Richlands, because they are the future leadership of Richlands and to also understand the impact this decision will have and spend some time visiting the Teen Center and use this to inspire their direction.

Sarah Rameo, 612 Indian Path Rd, Pounding Mill, VA- Mrs. Rameo gave the following statements-

- Advised that Teen Venture provided her two children with the opportunity to engage in their early childhood passion, rollerblading.
- Stated that she was grateful for the facility and its programs to allow her children and all the children in the community to explore and grow.
- Advised that over the past few years, her and her husband Jonathan have worked to establish the Junior Appalachian Musicians, also known as JAM, program at Teen Venture. They have raised over \$15k to support its development. The program allows children to play stringed instruments that are not offered in school bands. Students learn to play Bluegrass, Country, and Old Time Mountain Music that is a part of the region's cultural heritage.

Don Elmes, 7902 Pea Patch Rd., Jewell Ridge, VA-

- Spoke briefly about the murals that have been painted at Teen Venture.
- Stated that other Towns are seeing Teen Venture as a model and are trying to replicate it in their own localities.
- Advised they had a remarkable building and can't understand why the Council wants to eliminate it.

Randy Bolling, 124 Great View Road, Cedar Bluff, VA-

- Advised he had not been involved with Teen Venture activities in many years but stated that he was one of the original directors when it was established.
- Stated that he was involved a few years ago when a group of 20-25 people from Richmond came down to tour the building and they asked why they didn't have a building like this for their teens in Richmond.
- Stated he couldn't understand why the Town would want to abandon it after all these years and advised the support is for keeping Teen Venture.

Jerney Carnam, 218 Tazewell Avenue, Richlands, VA-

- Advised that he and his wife moved to Town nearly 3 years ago and has been volunteering at Teen Venture for the past 6 months.
- Stated that he has been struck by the immense pride that residents take in the Town and Teen Venture building and the improvements that have been made is something to be extremely proud of.

- Stated that he hasn't met anyone yet that has walked through the doors of Teen Venture and not been inspired and encouraged anyone who has never been to stop by and visit it.
- Advised Teen Venture is more than just a building, it is a safe place where the kids get to make friends, get fed, learn new skills, and also get help with their homework.

Peter Mulkey, 686 Grace Street, Pounding Mill, VA-

- Advised the goal and mission statement of their organization, Clinch Valley Medical Center, is to make communities healthier.
- Stated it was common sense how they make communities healthier from a medical standpoint but advised they also try to make communities healthier by having activities and functions outside of the hospital out in the community.
- Advised they were approached about being a sponsor of Town events this past year and stated they were happy to become a platinum sponsor.
- Advised they were approached in 2001 about supporting Teen Venture, and they saw it as an investment to the future, the kids of this community are the future. Advised they still donate to Teen Venture on a yearly basis.
- Stated Teen Venture could find another building to be its home, but it fits where it is.
- Advised that in 2001, it was more of a partnership entered into between Teen Venture, the Town, and many others including Clinch Valley Health and it's been successful because they have worked together to improve the quality of life in the youth.
- Advised the Town is a significant part of the partnership and would like it to continue, so that Teen Venture can continue to thrive.

Rosetta Hale, 3768 Dawl Road, Cedar Bluff, VA-

- Gave handouts to the Council of the programs that are being offered at Teen Venture this school year.
- Thanked the Council and shared Teen Ventures current events with them and a brief summary of daily schedules.
- Invited Council to come by and volunteer at Teen Venture.

Draden Sharp, 6338 Pounding Mill Branch Road, Pounding Mill, VA-

- Thanked the Council for letting him speak.
- Advised he was normally a semi-quiet and antisocial teenager who attends Richlands High School and doesn't have many friends.
- Stated that ever since he became a member at Teen Venture, it has got him out of his shell, and he has become more outgoing.
- Advised that Teen Venture is a place where kids can be themselves and make new acquaintances.
- Stated he has been a member for a year and it has become like a second home to him.

Victoria Crabs, 307 Cove Street, Bluefield, VA-

- Advised that she is the Chairman of Teen Venture and thanked everyone for coming out to speak on behalf of the center.
- Thanked the Town Council for supporting Teen Venture over the years.

Mayor Cury closed the Public Hearing.


Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk


Rod D. Cury, Mayor

