



Cannabis Advisory Task Force (CATF)

March 9, 2026; 3:00 – 4:00 PM
Department of Economic Development
4525 Main Street, Suite 700
Boardroom B

Minutes

Attendance

Members Present

Jason Blanchette, Brandon Hackney, Debbie Lou Hague, John Katsias, Michael Mauch, Michael McLeod, Cavelle Mollineaux, Tamara Netzel, Jairo Padilla, Mark Stevens, Ryan Suit, Letitia Tibbs, LaTonya Warren

Members Present Virtually

Stacey Smith

Members Absent

Travis Chick, Michael Clark, Adam Dobbins

City Staff Present

Natacia James, Andrew Damon, Hannah Sabo

City Staff Present Virtually

Donna Hernandez

Guests

Matthew Adolph, Brandon Jackson, Mike Hashemy, Isabelle Drayer, Erica Loftin

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- a. Chair LaTonya Warren called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

II. New Member Introduction

- a. New members Debbie Lou Hague and Council member Cal “Cash” Jackson were introduced and welcomed.

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. The February 9, 2026 CATF meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Taxes, Fees, Public Safety & Enforcement

1. A side-by-side comparison of the two bills, SB542 and HB642, was provided to members for review and discussion. Careful consideration should be given to the distinctions between these bills and the approach that leadership will take to address them. This process will significantly impact the timeline, tax policies, regulatory oversight, and market entry requirements for adult use cannabis in Virginia.

- a. Tamara Netzel mentioned that SB543 should be added to the table for comparison as well as it has many factors to be considered as well. Chair LaTonya Warren stated that the table will be updated to reflect that information as well and shared again.
- b. Chair LaTonya Warren briefly covered the CATF Next Steps document and restated that the purpose of this is to make sure that CATF meetings are aligned with the goals of the task force and give a direction/timeline for all points to be reviewed.
- c. Vice Chair Jason Blanchette went over the AU Bill Comparison, highlighting that it reflects the latest version under consideration by the General Assembly. Jason explained what happens after the General Assembly selects a bill for approval, including the possible actions the Governor may take—such as signing, choosing not to sign, or vetoing the bill. The main points of discussion at present focus on the budget and logistics associated with each bill.
- d. Michael Mauch inquired whether a decision had been made about how the limited licenses would be allocated among localities. The answer was no; Jason clarified that such decisions fall under regulatory matters and will be addressed after the legislation is enacted. Details including licensing and its structure will be determined by the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority (VCCA).
- e. Michael McLeod emphasized the need for a clearer distinction between what is enforceable and what is not regarding decriminalization and adult use. Debbie Lou inquired about the enforcement of dispensaries; Jason responded that the Senate version of the bill proposes utilizing the existing Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority for expanded regulation and oversight.
- f. Council member Michael Berlucchi noted that while using tax revenue for law enforcement sounds promising, understaffing is a bigger problem than funding. Addressing public safety will require more than just increasing financial support.
- g. Michael Mauch proposed that the group consider recommending alternative approaches to support public safety, such as utilizing emerging technologies to assist in identifying intoxicated drivers.
- h. Chair LaTonya Warren thanked everyone for their contributions and restated that it will all be helpful in drafting the presentation for sharing the group's recommendations to City Council. LaTonya also mentioned that April will focus on the next step of Community, Education and Youth Protection.

V. Committee Member Comments

- a. Clerk Natacia James presented the revised Attendance Policy and updated list of members. Council member Michael Berlucchi noted that the policy now eliminates the distinction between excused and unexcused absences, establishing a uniform 50% attendance threshold for all members. This change aims to reduce the likelihood of member removal due to meeting absences for various reasons. Clerk James, Council member Berlucchi, and Chair LaTonya Warren expressed their appreciation to members for consistently maintaining excellent attendance.
- b. There was a discussion about the shared zoning documents and whether there are plans to present them to the public. Currently, feedback and recommendations are still being collected internally by Planning and CATF, and any public outreach will depend on the results of the General Assembly process.

VI. Public Comment

- a. During conversations about Child Safety, Matthew Adolph, a local citizen, proposed several programs and resources that other states currently offer that could be considered for implementation in Virginia Beach.
 - i. Under the Influence of You – Washington
 - ii. More About Marijuana – Massachusetts
 - iii. The Tea on THC – Colorado
 - iv. State Marijuana Prevention Strategies – Illinois

VII. Announcements – Next Meeting Date

- a. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, 2026.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.