

SUMMARY OF “EXTRA TIME”

August 8, 2026

Note: This document was AI-generated but reviewed, edited, and approved by Jay.

Overall picture

Citizens repeatedly expressed pride in Bridgewater and appreciation for its parks, appearance, public amenities, and town staff. Their concerns centered on preserving those strengths: keeping public spaces clean and safe, maintaining parks and waterways, managing traffic and noise, ensuring new development fits the town, retaining essential businesses, and setting appropriate limits on surveillance technology. Litten generally responded with practical constraints—funding rules, property rights, zoning, state and federal law, and the need to defer to technical expertise—while identifying incremental steps the town could take. The discussions produced several concrete follow-ups, but the Flock license-plate-reader issue remained a policy question for the Council and future police leadership.

Town appearance, trash, and property maintenance

Citizens said

- Fishing line, hooks, lures, and other litter at Oakdale Pond create both an eyesore and a hazard, especially for children.
- One citizen suggested inexpensive PVC fishing-line disposal tubes or ordinary trash cans.
- A citizen also objected to bulky items being placed curbside long before the monthly pickup, sometimes remaining for weeks. The citizen supported reasonable exceptions after storms or widespread damage, but wanted clearer notice and firmer treatment of routine violations.

Litten said

The town will begin by adding trash cans at Oakdale Pond and may supplement them with reminder signs about littering. Bulky-item pickup begins on the first Monday of the month, and items may be placed out beginning the preceding Friday afternoon. Litten proposed tagging items found out too early with a notice explaining that pickup will occur but future compliance is expected.

Parks, golf, river, and environmental stewardship

Citizens said

- Residents praised the park system, including Riverwalk and Whitelow Park, but raised several maintenance and use concerns.
- At the mini-golf course, several playing surfaces are torn around the cups, although most of the course remains sound.
- At the Par 3, large groups of college students play without paying, drinking, littering, creating safety risks, and discouraging resident use. A citizen also cited a rumor that JMU students had been told play was free.

- Along the river, citizens described the lagoon and portions of Wildwood Park as choked by aquatic growth and urged the town to prioritize restoration.
- A citizen also proposed restoring a riparian buffer along Wildwood's grassy upper loop to reduce erosion and improve bird habitat, while retaining some river views.
- Another questioned whether Riverwalk extensions were the best use of public money.

Litten said

Mini-golf repairs are already budgeted and materials are being considered. Citizens should report disruptive golf-course activity to the town immediately so staff or police can respond in real time.

Regarding milfoil in the lagoon and elsewhere, a previous cutting effort was costly and temporary; the next trial will use a diver and suction equipment to pull plants by the roots.

Litten agreed that the eroding riverbank needs roots and that long-term riparian planning should balance habitat, erosion control, and open views.

The path project is funded 80 percent by a federal grant; the longer-term concept is a river route toward Sandy Bottom, which would not be feasible without outside funding.

Streets, alleys, pedestrian safety, and transportation

Citizens said

- A resident asked the town to investigate an alley between Liberty and First Streets that is badly deteriorated, washed near a culvert, and reportedly paved three to four feet onto private property. They suggested tar-and-chip as a lower-cost option.
- At First Street and Dinkel Avenue, a parked truck or trailer creates a blind spot; extending the yellow curb was proposed.
- Near Dinkel and College View Drive, a citizen requested a painted crosswalk because pedestrians cross where downhill traffic transitions from 45 to 25 mph.
- Other requests included correcting the very short pedestrian signal interval near the Sipe Center, expanding golf-cart access to the grocery store and new park, and adding a safer crossing near the Mount Crawford signal. Citizens also complained about Jake-brake noise and asked about a northern bypass.

Litten said

The alley requires investigation; street-paving funds cannot be used for alleys.

Staff should evaluate the situation at First and Dinkel, the proposed crosswalk, and the pedestrian-signal timing.

Existing golf-cart limits were based on safety concerns around truck traffic, though Litten acknowledged the boundaries were drawn without much specialized data. The town is exploring private easements that might connect carts toward the TA area, Dillon Circle, and another crossing, but no solution is ready.

Virginia has not broadly authorized local Jake-brake regulation, and federal trucking-corridor rules further limit enforcement on Dinkel and North Main. The town therefore plans an advisory residential-area sign rather than a ticketing program. Litten continues to oppose bypassing Main Street because through traffic supports local businesses.

Development, historic character, and economic services

Citizens said

- Several citizens disliked the scale, placement, and appearance of the hotel or mixed-use building beside the Sipe Center, describing it as squeezed into the site and inconsistent with the historic setting.
- They questioned setbacks, balconies, parking, and whether stronger design or historic-district controls could have improved the result.
- Regarding the council's decision-making process, one citizen also urged the town to consider the appearance of conflicts of interest, not merely technical compliance with state law.
- One citizen asked for comment about the Town's long-running effort to bring a pharmacy to the community.
- They also welcomed investment in Old Town Hall (and one pleaded with us to provide some updated postcards to be sold there).

Litten said

The town owned the parcel at 104 North Main and sold it after a developer proposed an active use for an otherwise inactive lot; the Council's approval was not unanimous. The property is in the B-1 district, which has no setback requirement. Required parking may be provided within 500 feet, the main entrance is expected at the rear, and the front is intended for retail with lodging or residential uses above. Balconies are designed to stop at the property line. Litten explained that the Council appears to have valued productive use and added foot traffic, while acknowledging mixed public reaction.

On pharmacy service, conventional economics are difficult; the town has explored a remotely supervised pharmacist model and has a scheduled conversation next week with CVS about a small-footprint, pharmacy-focused location. Litten is cautiously optimistic but emphasized that repeated efforts have failed before.

The town intends to support the Historical Society with funding and materials and can provide fresh postcards for visitor-center sales.

Infrastructure, security, and neighborhood noise

Citizens said

- A citizen asked whether the water-treatment plant is adequately protected from cyberattack.
- Another citizen described a new, persistent nighttime roar and vibration from Purdue's industrial fans, sometimes forcing them to close windows or disrupting sleep. They suspected

a mechanical problem, such as a failing motor or bearing, rather than ordinary plant operations.

Litten said

The water plant has modern cybersecurity protections, avoids basic vulnerabilities such as default passwords, and runs its SCADA controls primarily on an internal network, with limited external connections to facilities such as tanks and pumps. The town manages the system with security advice, and the facility's physical security has also improved substantially.

On Purdue noise, Litten committed to taking decibel readings during quiet periods and opening a discussion with the company. Enforcement authority may be limited, but Purdue has historically been cooperative and may be willing to correct a mechanical source.

Flock license-plate readers: public safety, privacy, and governance

Citizens said

- Views were sharply divided.
- Supporters argued that license-plate readers are a useful investigative tool, have helped identify suspects quickly, and collect less personal information than mobile phones and other routine systems. They saw removal as an overreaction to hypothetical misuse.
- Opponents, greater in number, asked the town to remove the cameras and reject future mass-surveillance systems. Their concerns included centralized tracking of travel, third-party access, data-broker incentives, undefined uses of aggregated or training data, access by other jurisdictions or federal agencies, immigration enforcement, police misuse, faulty matches and wrongful arrests, constitutional and freedom-of-information issues, and gradual normalization of a police state. They emphasized that the cameras were installed without a direct Council vote or a meaningful opportunity for public input, disputed claims that the town exclusively controls the data, questioned how much crime reduction is actually attributable to the system, and proposed ordinary CCTV as a less centralized alternative. Opponents offered to provide legal authorities, contracts, articles, statistics, and examples of misuse to Litten and the Council.

Litten said

The former police chief and most of the department considered Flock valuable, including in a catalytic-converter investigation, where vehicle records helped narrow possible suspects. Litten's general approach is to defer to a police chief's reasonable and lawful judgment on specialized police tools, while recognizing that the Council can make the political policy decision and accepting the responsibility as his own.

Litten described the system as capturing rear-of-vehicle and plate images, not faces, and said identifiable readings belong to the town; Flock may retain only anonymized aggregate information, with Virginia law requiring deletion of unrequested data after 21 days. Plate-to-owner identification occurs through a separate law-enforcement database and requires a valid purpose. After learning

that audit assistance (a tool for detecting improper searches) was not active, the town enabled it. The Town also requires a criminal case number for searches.

Litten acknowledged that contractual controls cannot eliminate every possibility of abuse, invited opponents to provide specific legal and factual evidence, agreed to share such material with the Council, and remained open to alternatives.

Support for Flock will not be a formal litmus test in selecting a new police chief, although an extreme position could bear on the hiring judgment.

The issue remains unresolved: residents may seek Council action, and technical recommendations will also be revisited with new police leadership.

Consolidated follow-up items

- Add trash cans at Oakdale Pond; consider reminder signage and fishing-line disposal options if needed.
- Tag bulky items placed out too early and reinforce the first-Monday / preceding-Friday schedule.
- Complete the mini-golf repairs.
- Determine whether anything can or should be done regarding the alley from Liberty Street to First Street.
- Perform the DASH milfoil-removal trial.
- Evaluate the First/Dinkel sight-line and yellow issues. Evaluate a Dinkel/College View crosswalk, and the Main/College pedestrian-signal timing.
- Install advisory Jake-brake signage on Dinkel Ave and continue exploring safer golf-cart connections.
- Take quiet-period noise readings and engage Purdue about possible fan or motor problems.
- Continue pursuing the Midtown Connector concept after the unsuccessful grant application.
- Continue CVS discussions and exploration of a small-footprint or remotely supervised pharmacy model.
- Receive and share citizens' Flock evidence with Council; revisit policy with Council and future police leadership.
- Evaluate whether local conflict-of-interest policy should address appearance concerns beyond state minimums.
- Provide updated Bridgewater postcards to the Historical Society for visitor-center sales.