

Virginia Highland Civic Association

Minutes, meeting June 13, 2011

I. City/State/Police officials

a. Police

- Officer Kormeau (sp?) reported that crime in general was down, but perhaps residents were not reporting all incidents. John Wolfinger agreed: many vehicle larcenies have been reported on VHList for which no 911 calls were made.
- Officer Kormeau reminded residents not to leave anything in parked vehicles.

b. Alex Wan, City Council

- Alex congratulated us on Summerfest and the Orme Park improvements.
- Garbage pickup: from 8/1 this will be Mondays for all of Northeast Atlanta. There will be a new system with Atlanta divided into four quadrants . All trash pickup in a particular quadrant will take place on one day of the week.
- Street sweeping: City will resume this service 8/1. Alex will check if this affects street parking rules (to make way for the sweeper vehicles)
- City budget negotiations and employee pension discussions in full swing. Alex hopes that a plan will be adopted which saves money, so that those savings can be added back into Mayor Reed's proposed budget which as is would cut 120 FTEs. Parks and public works are also on the chopping block.
- Question to Alex: can we get federal/state funds for traffic calming in VaHi like is being done in the Bolton Road area? A: Alex will check
- Question to Alex: why street cleaning in this budget environment? A: comes out of solid waste budget which is a special fund.

c. Joan Garner, Fulton County Commissioner

- Joan's office is open for concerns, [\(404\) 612-8226](tel:4046128226)
- The county apologizes for the goofups in the tax assessments.(\$120,000 mistake) Correct ones are in the mail now. You have 45 days to appeal if you wish to from date of receipt of the new assessment.
- County is trying to balance the budget while maintaining same millage rate even though

housing assessments are lower. Ways to give input:

- Her website or the commission's website
- Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday are Commission meetings open to your input, up to 2 minutes per person.
- Hearings before budget deliberations
- Financially the County is sound.
- Request from KKM to let us know what steps were taken to discipline those responsible for the \$120K error and the steps put in place to prevent another such incident from happening.

d. Bill Monroe, Ponce branch library

- Last year VHCA gave \$3K to the library. The library used it towards Kids services: Kids librarian Ms. McGillicuddy; kids' DVDs and board books; talking books incl. MP3 player books; teen programs and chairs for kids.

II. General and Committee updates

a. Summerfest

- Ann, Charlie and Pam did a great job. New storefront with recycled/repurposed goods made a splash. Thanks to all volunteers, many present in the audience and on the Board. Special thanks to Doris for a stupendous parade (250 participants). Traffic was solid but heat still reduced # of attendees. Looking for new volunteers to help organize next year's Summerfest.

b. Orme Park improvements – ribbon cutting 6/11/11

- Orme Park improvements were due to grants, thanks to the City and Anne Fauver. \$243K raised in two years. Great ribbon cutting with picnic and local bands on 6/11/11. Adding plantings in the Fall. Need volunteers to raise money for Phase II, which will follow the design of the 2007 "Visioning Plan".

c. Safety – John Wolfinger

- Lots of crimes (thieves "testing" parked cars to see if they're open and/or stealing from cars at night) reported on VHList but people are not calling 911. 911 is not just for emergencies, it's also to report anything. Please do report crimes or suspicions. Helps police establish patterns AND our police resources are assigned according to # of calls.
- City will be claiming insurance money for damaged property e.g. trashcans.
- Questions from audience about sidewalks:

- Sidewalk reimbursement program is still not operating
- We are still considering doing a block by block survey of hazardous/broken sidewalks.

d. Fraser – Summerfest financials

- Took in \$4300 from tshirts, \$1200 from Kidsfest, \$1000 from parking and \$297 from Tot Trot. (Gross receipts; final numbers not in yet.)
- Question from audience: 5K Race seems to be dropping behind other races in features. A: Please consolidate suggestions and bring to the Summerfest followup meeting.

e. Rob Glancy – Parks

- Upper lawn at John Howell Park eroded, talking to City about improving
- YWCA wants to be involved with neighborhood, offers upstairs meeting rooms accommodating up to “a couple hundred” people.
- If someone wants to volunteer we can bring back the John Howell Park buy a brick program.
- Pamela Papner reminds us of the grants applied for and received for parks.
- 6/22 is the last approval we need before permitting (UDC review of plans), then we can improve New Highland Park. With luck, ribbon cutting approximately in October 2011.
- Big round of applause for Pam for the hard work on the park grants!

f. Brian Gross- Web and Social Media

- [VHCA now has a Facebook page](#) as does [Summerfest](#). The Summerfest page will add a picture gallery 2008-2011 ‘Fest pictures. “Like” both the pages to get updates as part of your Facebook feed (homepage).

III. Zoning and Planning

a. Nick Bouquet – Evergreen Partners Housing

- Company is negotiating to buy Briarcliff Summit.
- Evergreen specializes in affordable housing.
- Has about 25 buildings so far including about half for elderly/disabled like Briarcliff Summit. Working with seller since 2009.
- Needs grants for low income housing tax credits from GA Dept of Community Affairs.
- Was runner up last year in the “set aside” category for upgrade of historic properties.
- Want to spend about \$57K per unit on renovation.
- New everything interior/exterior including historic components. (Building is on national

register).

- US gov't. (HUD) reimburses owners at market rate; but renters pay max. 30% of their income as rent. (Zero income = zero rent).
- Wants property to be Section 8 for 30 more years.
- Principals have 15 year history in renovation of section 8 housing.
- Operate from ME (Maine) to GA and out to CO; most properties in the NY/PA/MD area.
- Evergreen plans to make trash chute and dumpster area improvements
- If evergreen gets GA tax credits in December, they could close April 12, and spend 1 year for renovations.

IV. Variances

a. V-11-060 -- 920 Highland Terrace

- Applicant Maggie Copen, homeowner Keith Fleming. Applicant seeks a reduction in the front yard setback from 35' to 11'4" to allow for the construction of a front porch addition with new relocated entry steps. Proposed impervious surface: 42%. Plan will result in loss of one tree approx. 5' from foundation of house. Planning observes no stormwater issues. Planning notes that proposed porch generally conforms to setbacks of adjacent structures and that relocated steps will enhance survival chances of existing 44" hardwood tree stressed by current conditions and unanimously recommends approval conditioned on signatures of neighbors or proof of notification.
- Motion to approve as presented based on site plans submitted, plans dated 4/20/11
- Straw audience vote: 3 for, 0 against, 6 abstain
- Board vote 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstain

b. V-11-076 -- 871 Arlington Place

- Applicants & homeowners Ed & Kristina Thomas seek a reduction in the northern side yard setback from 7' to 5' to allow for an addition to the front porch, specifically an extended portico, new railings, and front steps rebuilt to code. No increase in impervious surface; Planning observes no tree or stormwater issues and unanimously recommends approval conditioned on provision of letter from neighbors or proof of notification.
- Motion to approve conditional on letters from (or appropriate notifications to) neighbors, plans dated 5/12/11
- Straw audience vote: 5 for, 0 against, 3 abstain
- Board vote 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstain

c. V-11-080, 747 Virginia Circle

- Applicant Chris Hamilton, homeowner Edward Donnelly. Applicant seeks a reduction in the eastern side yard setback from 7' to 2.5' and the rear yard setback from 15' to 7.5' to construct a single-story garage 16'4" in height on an existing concrete pad. No increase in impervious surface & no tree or runoff issues observed. Planning notes lower elevation of rear yard garage site and unanimously recommends approval based on submission of amended site plan specifying height of 16'4" and standard garage conditions: 60A electrical service and plumbing limited to hose bib only.
- Motion to approve as presented, conditional on letters from (or appropriate notifications to) neighbors , based on site plans submitted, plans dated 5/24/11 amended 6/13/11
- Straw audience vote: 3 for, 0 against, 5 abstain
- Board vote 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstain

V. Announcements

- Kathryn King-Metters is moving to College Station, TX 6/29/11 and submits her resignation from the Board.
- Motion to accept, approved 6 for, 0 against, 0 abstained.
- Wishing Kathryn good luck in Texas! She will be missed!