

## MINUTES

### **Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting March 12, 2012; Ponce de Leon Library**

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The following board members were present: Peggy Berg, Lola Carlisle, Frazier Dworet, Genny Ferrero, Nicole Foerschler-Horn, Lauren Wilkes Fralick, Rob Glancy, Brian Gross, Jack White, and David Wolfson. John Wolfinger and Pamela Papner were absent with notice.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

The attached agenda ("Addendum 1") was approved without objection.

Minutes for the Board meeting of January 9, 2012 were circulated. Ms. Carlisle made and Mr. White seconded a motion to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **POLICE AND FIRE**

Captain Hobbs of the APD was present. He advised that Major Meadows is the newly appointed zone 6 commander, and that he is the newly appointed assistant zone commander. Captain Hobbs noted that we led the city in crime reduction last week. The biggest issue remains car break-ins; Captain Hobbs encouraged people to remove items from their car.

#### **CITY AND ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Representative Pat Gardner was present. She discussed various issues pending before the state legislature, including the upcoming metro Atlanta vote on a 1 percent cent sales tax to be applied to transportation issues, the MARTA corridor proposed for Emory corridor, and the additional debates surrounding the approval of charter schools at the state level. She noted that anyone can sign up to receive her weekly updates at patgardner.org.

#### **GUEST REPORTS**

- A. *Streets Alive*. Rebecca Cerna presented the "Streets Alive" proposal. The event is scheduled for Sunday, May 20, between 2-6 pm. There will be free classes for participants, such as yoga, martial arts, a kid's zone, etc. A plan for clean-up is in place, with 75-100 volunteers. Only local businesses will sell food and beverages. The proposed route extends through Inman Park and Poncey- Highland and contemplates the closure of North Highland Avenue from approximately Elizabeth Street to Virginia Avenue. Ponce de Leon, Freedom Parkway, and probably North Avenue will remain open and controlled by their usual signals. The organizers provided leaflets to VHCA that Ms. Berg and Mr. White distributed to residents along North Highland; Streets Alive is responsible for informing the impacted businesses, but has not yet done so.

After general discussion in which various members expressed support for the concept, Mr. White moved that we defer this item for one month until the notification of commercial businesses is completed. Ms. Carlisle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- B. *Red Bull Soap Box Race*. The proposal was presented by Michael King, from StriKing Marketing. The event is scheduled for June 9, 2012. Mr. King stated that the estimated attendance for this event is in excess of 49,000, and that infrastructure would be in place would be for 100,000. 10<sup>th</sup>

Street will be closed from Charles Allen to Monroe from approximately 9 AM on June 8 to 8 PM on Sunday, June 10th. When questioned by Ms. Berg as to whether clean-up efforts will extend beyond the event, Mr. King agreed to cover a three-block radius within Virginia-Highland north along Monroe Drive and over to Virginia Avenue. Mr. King agreed to a request by Ms. Berg and Mr. White that the same impacted residents be notified by leaflet of the upcoming street closures; VHCA will provide a list of the exact streets.

## **VHCA COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. PLANNING**

Variance Application V-12-018: 1117 Virginia Avenue. Chris Hamilton, owner of Dovetail Craftsmen, presented on behalf of the property owners. The variance requests a reduction in the required side-yard setback from 7 feet to 3 feet, 4 inches for a 2-story room and covered deck addition in the rear of an existing single-family home. The home is under the required 50% permeable surface calculation. The homeowners are in the process of obtaining all necessary approvals from neighboring property owners and are willing to consider some rainwater retention on property. They are currently missing signatures from the house next door and one of the corner neighbors in the back.

Ms. Carlisle reported that the Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval.

Ms. Carlisle moved to approve the variance application upon the following conditions: that the Board receives a stamped site plan (as updated 2/16/2012) prior to the March 19 NPU meeting; and that the applicant provides proof that notice has been properly supplied to all adjacent owners. Mr. White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B. COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Gross reported that the new website went live on February 24. Thus far, he has received limited but favorable feedback. To date, there have been 1442 visitors to the website, a number equal to almost 20% of the neighborhood. Interest in Summerfest appears to be 80% of the traffic.

Mr. Gross further noted that he is looking for a Board member to donate an article for the next Voice publication, and that there is currently an initiative underway to expand email recipients for the Voice. He further expressed interest in posting an immediate summary of the actions taken at each board meeting.

Ms. Carlisle gave details of the presentation made by Aaron Fortner at the last Planning Committee meeting on the Neighborhood-Commercial codes applying to Virginia-Highland; his presentation will be available on the website

### **C. EDUCATION**

Nicole Forschler-Horn discussed the latest recommendations made by Superintendent Davis regarding the APS redistricting measures and noted that the VHCA Board will be hosting a meeting on March 13 at the Virginia Highland Church to discuss school issues. She further noted that Superintendent Davis will hold a meeting on March 21 to receive feedback from the current SRT-3 regarding the plan.

### **D. NEW HIGHLAND PARK UPDATE**

Mr. White reported on behalf of Ms. Papner that construction permits are not moving as quickly as hoped, but that she hopes to commence construction soon.

#### E. SAFETY

Ms. Berg reported that there are various street improvement issues that the city is currently working through. The City previously expressed a commitment to deliver the corrections in 30 days, but we are now 33 days into the process. She noted that despite the delay, the City is working diligently to resolve the issues.

Ms. Berg further noted that street captains have been in touch with local neighbors to reach out to owners who may have issues with sidewalks.

The March 12<sup>th</sup> closures of the parking lanes on both sides of North Highland immediately north of Virginia Avenue due to a movie being filmed at George's were reported

#### F. PARKS

Ms. Wilkes-Fralick discussed the plans surrounding the beautification of the Triangle, for which she has received positive feedback. She moved to formally adopt Nonie Daniel's plan, so that the committee can move forward with new plantings on March 18. Ms. Carlisle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Wilkes-Fralick also discussed John Howell Park. Mr. White discussed obvious long-term challenges at the park, including erosion and runoff from the Barnett end, the eroded gully between the upper and lower levels of the park, the spillage and migration of sand onto Arcadia Street, and the lack of communication with the volleyball community. The Parks Committee has contacted and begun a dialogue with the volleyball community, has done a series of walk-throughs with citizens, potential contractors, and landscape architects (including the park's original designer), and has begun building a formal group of citizens to support the park, emulating the model successfully utilized at Orme Park over the last decade. Feedback from citizens has included the absence of pedestrian access provided in the original plan, which was a conscious decision at the time. If formal access is to be provided in the future, it will require thoughtful re-design and may be expensive.

Mr. White moved to allocate \$3750 for maintenance and improvement of the park, including pruning, mulching, removal of bamboo, and various gardening items. The Committee will do some tasks with volunteers, but the volume of work is beyond the scope of volunteers. Mr. Dworet seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor, except for one abstention (Mr. Glancy).

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Carlisle reported that the Board is currently seeking volunteers for the next Tour of Homes. Anyone wishing to volunteer may email: [Tour@VaHi.org](mailto:Tour@VaHi.org).

Ms. Foerschler-Horn reminded board members that an executive session devoted to the school redistricting would follow the regular meeting and asked them to remain for it.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM.