

## 2024 Treasurer's Report

August 30, 2024

### Overview

Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) raises funds primarily through Virginia-Highland Summerfest and Tour of Homes. To de-risk and diversify funding sources in 2024, VHCA formed a fundraising committee in 2024 spearheaded by Karri Hobson-Pape and Leah Matthews, who lead efforts to establish Friends of VAHI, a VAHI Merch store, and a formalized process for securing income from companies filming in the community. Additionally, Karen-Jane Wright secured sponsors for The Voice, bringing back that valuable community tradition to help local businesses build their brand recognition in the community.

With now-diversified funding streams, VHCA was able to maintain and improve VAHI parks, issue grants to local schools and community organizations, host neighborhood events, engage planning consultants to advocate for the community, implement transportation improvements, and spearhead John Howell Park renovation efforts. VHCA began 2024 with \$159,254.54, including \$59,107.72 in checking and \$100,146.82 in savings.

### Administrative

Every nonprofit can be evaluated by its ratio of administration against its programming. For VHCA, that value for 2024 to date is 6% of expenses are administrative.

As a fully-volunteer board, there are no staffing costs for VHCA. Administrative costs come primarily from \$9,823 for insurance and \$3,436 for tax filing and accounting. For 2024, we also voted as a board to pursue rebranding efforts. The investment in a cohesive brand voice, event identity, color palette, word mark and logo, as well as voice, were all part of the significant rebranding effort. This investment was covered in administrative costs with the perspective that all events and VHCA efforts would benefit. Additionally, the board agreed that the ability of the organization to articulate its value to the community would be easier with a consistent and fresh look and feel.

Insurance coverage includes North Highland Park and for VHCA events. VHCA 1099 is available on [vahi.org](http://vahi.org) and filed every year for compliance and visibility.

To be able to pay for expenses prior to the payout from Virginia-Highland Summerfest, a total of \$10,000 was moved from savings. Treasurer returned the \$10,000 in August, restoring the savings account balance to \$50,154.37. This savings is in addition to the

\$50,000 Certificate of Deposit (CD) secured in July. The CD terms are for 4 months at APY 4.75%, fixed rate and it matures in November.

## Communications

With The Voice reinvigorated by the efforts of Karen-Jane Wright, the publication was able to secure sponsorships totaling \$1,383 in communication income. Megan Graddy offered countless volunteer hours in graphics and communications. This revenue offsets the cost of Mailchimp and our dedicated webmaster, Ida Centner. The expenses of printing banners or A frame boards is categorized in the associated event, and not within communications.

## Events

Neighborhood events in 2024 have included two Town Halls, the VAHI Gala, an Easter Egg Hunt, and a Concert for JHP in March. The financials on each event is as follows:

- **Town Halls** and the **Easter Egg Hunt** use low-cost promotion tactics, including existing A Frames and social media. Insurance coverage is required but minimal.
- **Concert Series (Sept 2023)**: \$8,100 income and \$7,476 cost resulted in \$624 earned
- **Concert Series (Nov 2023)**: \$5,300 income and \$7,554 cost resulted in \$2,254 loss
- **Concert Series (March 2024)**: \$2,614 income and \$3,204 cost resulted in \$589 loss
- **VAHI Gala**: \$4,132 income and \$12,150 cost resulted in \$8,017 loss

The costs to host VHCA's Concert Series were covered by VHCA. Since the March concert operated at a loss, VHCA did not pass on costs to VHCL.

## Fundraising

In this treasurer's report, fundraising has been divided into Events, which largely are for an intangible, priceless community value. Fundraising efforts to diversify income outside of events include the efforts to raise membership in the Friends of VAHI, launching the merch store, and in maintaining, formalizing and growing income from film companies.

Friends of VAHI kicked off in fall of 2023 as a primary focus for the board to develop a funding stream independent of the volatility of events. Calendar year to date, \$7,149 for general admin is funds primarily raised through Friends of VAHI.

Lastly, a merch store was set up this year, with [Shirts Atlanta](#). The site includes customizable apparel and hats with VHCA's new logo. Funds raised through the store will be distributed to VHCA general income.

Film income comes to the community by way of coordination with the NPU-F leadership, Debbie Skopczynski and her sharing of information with VHCA to coordinate between the filming companies and the community. We appreciate receiving \$4,500 this year to date in film income being secured in 2024 through a process initially paved by Mike Lewis and this year streamlined and executed by Karri Hobson-Pape.

## **Grants**

In the August 2024 board meeting, VHCA voted to award \$10,000 in grants to the schools that serve our community: \$2,500 each to the parent-teacher organizations, foundations and athletic boosters of Springdale Park Elementary, Virginia-Highland Elementary, DT Howard Middle School, and Midtown High School. More may be issued later in the year depending on the performance of the Tour of Homes. This year's grants were distributed and organized by Melissa Clark, who spearheads the grants committee.

This brings VHCA's total amount donated to the community since 2004 up to \$412,617.

## **Historic Preservation**

Virginia-Highland's rich history engages a broad level of interest, especially for those seeking to understand how this neighborhood came to be the VAHI we all know and love. This year, the Historic Preservation committee hosted three major events, detailed below.

- **History Tour:** \$3,378 income and \$2,680 cost provided \$698 in funds raised
- **Todd Memorial Dedication:** no cost to VHCA
- **Fire Station #19 100th Anniversary:** scheduled for October

## **Parks**

Park expenses in 2024 include \$7,025 for North Highland Park maintenance. It also includes \$5,530 in maintenance for John Howell Park and \$665 for The Triangle at the corner of Virginia and N.Highland Ave. VHCA's Parks committee supplements City of Atlanta parks management with ongoing maintenance. Income of \$629 was generated through activation in the park, namely the InterAtlanta FC soccer practice kids coordinated by Amy Harward. All events open to the public can be held for free.

For John Howell Park renovation efforts, expenses associated with the design, engineering, and construction drawings are paid by VHCA's subsidiary, Virginia-Highland Conservation League (VHCL). VHCL costs are not reflected in VHCA's accounting since that is a separate organization. VHCL information can be found on vahi.org under About. Year to date, VHCA has contributed \$5,739.34 to VHCL's funding for the John Howell Park renovations, raised by the Virginia-Highland Summerfest Friday Night event proceeds.

## **Planning**

VHCA draws on the expertise of planning consultants to realize the vision of the community captured in the [Virginia-Highland Comprehensive Plan](#). We rely on their expertise to inform the neighborhood's position on rezoning and translate that vision into the detailed parlance of zoning. This was especially true in 2024 for large-scale undertaking proposed by Portman at Amsterdam Walk. VHCA's expenses to date are \$2,850 for this expertise.

## Summerfest

Virginia-Highland Summerfest historically has been VHCA's main source of income. The event has a considerable up-front and overall cost, as well as volunteer effort to plan and execute. Additionally, it has an unknown revenue which is largely weather-dependent. In total, this year's Summerfest two-day model cost \$214,434 and brought in \$249,008 in revenue, raising \$34,573 overall. Comparing year over year, 2024 brought in \$27,723 more revenue, but expenses were \$35,959 more than 2023. The net impact is that 2024 revenue was \$8,236 lower than 2023.

Summerfest's Friday night event spearheaded by Debra Thibodeaux raised \$5,239.34 for the John Howell Park renovation. The 5k spearheaded by Karen-Jane Wright raised \$2,110 more in 2024 than in 2023. Kidsfest as envisioned and executed by Debra also financially performed above previous years, bringing in \$1,156 with the new, expanded location at Virginia-Highland Elementary's field.

A full accounting of Summerfest costs and income is available in the latest Budget and Actuals on vahi.org. Below are the highlights:

- Artist Market: \$68,230 income and \$1,922 cost resulted in \$66,308 earned
- 5k: \$37,605 income and \$14,285 cost resulted in \$23,319 earned
- Friday Night Dinner: \$6,982 income and \$1,743 cost resulted in \$5,239.34 earned
- Kidfest: \$1,340 income and \$184 cost resulted in \$1,156 earned

## Tour of Homes

Tour of Homes in 2023 set up VHCA for success going into 2024. Under the leadership of Kim Gnatt and Lisl Huber, the event brought in \$31,905. The Tour of Homes group of dedicated volunteers who do the work of advance planning, promotion and day of hosting are essential to the success of this iconic event, and we appreciate the many hands it takes to pull off this cornerstone event for the community. Together, these volunteers add value that cannot be captured in any report.

## Treasurer's Notes

On Summerfest, the amount of volunteer effort for the event is significant and only with the dedication of many volunteers, we are able to pull it off yet again. Jacki Brown gathers and directs a group of volunteers that provide incredible value to the event. Her efforts

significantly improve the overall community value, neighbor engagement and profitability of the event. Additionally, Betty Baumann leads Artist Market with grace and experienced, calm guidance. Alex B Jones identified entertainment and music talent to bring into the event, as well as leading the effort to design the music poster. Karen-Jane Wright deftly grew the 5k attendance over the past two years at the same time as amplifying its level of fun and engagement. This is in addition to her chairing Communications committee and amplifying the event in The Voice. Debra Thibodeaux's expansion of Kidsfest and revamp of Friday night were both a delight to experience. These unique focus points were in addition to Debra's tireless, decisive, and dedicated co-chairing of Summerfest overall along with Alex Saucedo. Together, these volunteers add value that cannot be captured in any report.

In 2024, the Summerfest co-chairs committed to paying all vendors, including artists and others, rather than have the event manager, Premier Events, pay all parties. This put the burden on the volunteer Treasurer and left VHCA without cash on hand. Future Treasurers should reference this lesson learned, which has been included in the Summerfest Playbook. This choice did not result in a lower fee for Operations.

On North Highland Park - An expense of \$2,830 was incurred on the private property adjacent to North Highland Park along the north boundary across from the abandoned alley. An understanding of the boundaries, adjacent 15' alley, and unique splay of the property line would be valuable for future boards to understand in order to avoid such enrichment of private property at the expense of VHCA. To that end, a survey is included below to clarify, with the removed mulberries marked as "x" near the 5' wood fence, and property boundaries outlined in red. A purple line has also been included to show the center of the alley. Each half of the alley is to be maintained by the adjacent property owner. A donation was made by the private property owner to VHCL. Those funds were not used to pay for the removal of the mulberry, as it would be inappropriate for a nonprofit to use a donor's funds to improve that donor's property.

