



General Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2024 - 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Grace Lutheran Church
1155 N Highland Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30306

Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89794061574>

VHCA Directors: John Craft (President), Jacki Brown (Vice President), Karri Hobson-Pape (Secretary), Kay Stephenson (Treasurer), Miguel Barrios, Johnson Bazzel, Melissa Clark, Kevin Cronin (virtual), Amy Harward, Alex Bevel Jones, Scott Nickels

Community Members In Attendance:

Leah Matthews (outgoing President)

Approximately 25 community members in attendance in person and 10 community members in attendance on zoom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Outgoing President Leah Matthews. A Quorum was established. Matthews introduced each new board member.

Officer Elections

Steve Messner, prior VHCA board member, facilitated elections.

Kay Stephenson nominated John Craft as President. Craft accepted.

Motion #1:

(Messner) Motion to elect John Craft as President.

Motion Passed 10 in favor/0 opposed.

John Craft nominated Jackie Brown as Vice President. Brown accepted

Motion #2:

(Messner) Motion to elect Jackie Brown as Vice President.

Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

Kay Stephenson nominated Alex Bevels Jones as Secretary. Amy Harward nominated Karri Hobson-Pape as Secretary. Jones declined. Hobson-Pape accepted.



Motion #3:

(Messner) Motion to elect Karri Hobson-Pape as Secretary.

Motion Passed 8 in favor/0 opposed.

John Craft nominated Kay Stephenson as Treasurer. Stephenson accepted

Motion #4:

(Messner) Motion to elect Kay Stephenson as Treasurer.

Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

Guests & Elected Officials

Atlanta Police Department Zone 6 Update - Sgt Savannah Berry - not in attendance

Elected Public Officials & Municipal Representatives -

- There were no elected or public officials present, nor any representative from APD Zone 6.
 - City Councilman District 6 - Alex Wan - not in attendance, council meeting ran long
 - State District 57 Representative - Stacey Evans - not in attendance
 - US House 5th District - Nikema Williams - not in attendance
 - District 4 Fulton County Commissioner - Natalie Hall - not in attendance

Other Community Leaders -

- Hutson Chilton, Community Forestry Coordinator for Trees Atlanta.
 - The first tree planting event is scheduled for November 8th at Orme Park (Plantlanta Program), followed by another on December 7th in the Highland Terrace area, and a third on December 14th along specific streets Ponce to North Virginia.
 - Participants interested in organizing tree plantings can email the speaker to connect with the volunteer services team, which will help match them with upcoming planting events.
 - A community member raised a concern about how to report dead trees located near sidewalks, to which the speaker responded that they can be reported directly to them or through the city.
 - Hudson mentioned a free front yard tree program where residents can receive up to three trees per season, depending on space availability.

Minutes of Prior Meeting

The Board considered the issue of the September 2024 Board meeting minutes. No motion was made, and the consensus was to defer their review until the November board meeting.

Review Agenda

Craft presented the meeting agenda.



Hobson-Pape requested that the agenda be changed to focus on and include voting for chairs of committees and then the November meeting agenda would include a vote on committee members.

Craft stated that some individual board members have discussed committees, committee chairs and committee members among themselves for several weeks. They proposed the idea of only three voting members of each committee and then other non-voting volunteers. Craft emphasized that it was his intention for the board to hold a vote on committees, committee chairs & voting members and community liaisons in this meeting.

Harward stated that she had not been involved in these discussions and requested additional discussion about committee structure, committee chairs and committee members.

Craft recommended moving topics of committee structure, committee chair and voting committee member discussions to Executive Session, in case specific “controversial” community member names came up. He did not define “controversial” but added that “non controversial” community members could be discussed during open meetings.

Hobson-Pape stated that the VHCA has working committees at the moment. Craft disagreed and stated that all committees immediately dissolved at the end of the board session. Hobson-Pape shared that the historic preservation committee was very active the prior day for the 100th Anniversary of Fire Station #19, which included brief talks by committee members, Councilmembers Wan and Westmoreland, and Atlanta Fire Rescue leadership..

Craft distributed a document outlining new Policy for Committees, Committee Chairs, Committee Voting Members and Community Liaisons. Community members in the audience also requested the document.

Motion #5:

(Craft/Stephenson) Motion to accept the agenda as presented for the meeting.

Motion Passed 10 in favor/0 opposed.

Vote to approve Committee Members and Liaisons

Craft presented three items for vote: (1) policy statement for committees (2) committee appointments (3) community liaisons. He asked the board if they prefer to vote on each individually or all together.

Craft shared that the bylaws mandate six committees that must be staffed with three voting members each, and there are additional committees created throughout the year for various events.

Craft stated that some individual board members have had broad discussions over the last several weeks, even starting before the elections were opened up, about this proposal.

Craft stated that he did not share the proposal with all board members prior to the board meeting.

Two community members in the audience also requested the document. One member stated that she comes to VHCA meetings to participate and would expect to see the material being discussed as well. One community



member stated that it feels secretive when the board is not willing to share information. Nickels stated that “it is actually posted on robinragland.com.” The context for that remark was not provided.

See Appendix A for the full proposal. Craft presented proposed changed Committee Structure:

- Budget Committee
 - Grants Subcommittee
- Communications
 - Other Events
- Elections Committee
- Fundraising Committee
 - Summerfest Subcommittee
 - Tour of Homes Subcommittee
- Parks Committee
 - Historic Preservation Subcommittee
- Planning Committee
 - Transportation Subcommittee
- Education Committee. Craft shared that some board members agreed that the Education Committee, which is not required by the bylaws, is important in discussion with the Atlanta Public Schools System.

Hobson-Pape stated that she felt that committee restructuring requires and merits discussion and potentially the opportunity for public input. She shared the philosophy that VHCA is designed to garner community input and to involve and encourage residents who have interest in a topic to get involved.

Craft shared that being directors of the corporation is the priority, which includes the legal obligation to keep order in our meetings. Several community members reacted vigorously to his comment, suggesting that this meeting was orderly and that his comment had an exclusionary rather than inclusive impact.

Craft recommended that the Board move forward solely with the election of the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Motion #6:

(Stephenson) Motion to nominate Kevin Cronin as Chair of the Planning Committee. No second was noted. There was discussion, but the Board took no action on the motion.

Motion #7:

(Stephenson) Motion to nominate Jackie Brown as Acting Chair of Planning Committee for purposes of the October 7 meeting. Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

Planning Committee

Jackie Brown presented two variances.



V-24-163, 762 St. Charles Ave. NE; the zoning is RG-2. Applicant and owner seeks a variance to convert a space now used for a garage into an ADU. The proposed new residential structure will occupy more than 35% of the main home, which requires a variance

Adjacent neighbor Holly Fisher on Greenwood Avenue directly behind the applicant; her property is at a lower elevation from the applicant's and receives stormwater from the alley that serves as the rear property boundary behind both their homes. Some of those flows originate on the applicant's property. She does not oppose his request, but she wants the applicant to comply with all city stormwater codes, which require on-site treatment of the discharge related to the new construction.

Fisher explained that she received a certified letter with a list of meetings to express her concerns and the planning committee was listed as October 9th, not October 2nd.

Hobson-Pape shared background on the date change; approximately 8 months ago the October board date was moved from its usual 2nd Monday to the first Monday to avoid a federal holiday and overlapping APS fall break. As the Planning Committee meeting occurs the Wednesday prior to the Board meeting, this had the effect of changing both dates.

None of this was shared by the Planning Committee with this month's applicants or the NPU and no one corrected the inaccurate dates that were provided to the sole adjacent neighbor who got notified on the second variance. (Per NPU-F policy, all adjacent neighbors should have been notified.)

Fisher noted that the outcome of all this was that there had been no site visit and no formal opportunity for her or other neighbors to communicate their concerns about stormwater entering her property. An ideal solution would have been deferring the app for a month to allow normal processes to be followed, but the applicant had the right to ask to move forward as scheduled, and he stated that he wanted to do so. Neither neighbors nor the neighborhood association have the ability to delay the application process.

After discussion, the Board reached a consensus to hold its regular planning meeting on Wednesday, Oct 9th and conduct a site visit on Friday, Oct 11th.

V-24-178, 876 Arlington Place NE. Applicant/owner was in person and the architect provided overview. Neighbor, Jess Liddick, stated support for the plans.

Motion #8: (Brown/Craft) Motion to approve Variance V-24-178, 876 Arlington Place NE.
Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

ABI subarea 6 master plan updates presented.

Motion #9: (Brown/Stephenson) Motion to approve ABI subarea 6 master plan
Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.



Virginia-Highland Pool. After John Kloss' presentation about Virginia-Highland Pool, Craft conveyed that the planning committee supports exploratory conversations between John Kloss and Atlanta Public Schools.

Clark shared that APS owns several excess properties and they have a process for applicants to rent for community use. Clarified that it is APS, not Virginia-Highland Elementary School. Stephenson shared that this would be land for sale if not used; Clark clarified that this would be leased by APS, not sold. John Kloss confirmed that it would be leased, not purchased.

Clark shared that decisions are made by January by APS. If this is not resolved by that time, it may be pushed to next January.

A series of nearby neighbors shared various concerns about the uncertainty and ambiguity of the contemplated timeline, the absence of a definite site plan, the absence of adequate parking on site or of any study of the volume of resolution to that challenge, and the importance of a study of the impacts of added traffic on (1) the Virginia-Highland Elementary School (located catty corner at the intersection), the (2) Virginia-Highland Church located directly across Ponce Place, (3) the availability of street parking impacts routinely utilized by neighbors (A) to the north and east (past the church) on Virginia, (B) Ponce Place to the south, and C) on Virginia Circle and Adair.

Kloss acknowledged the importance of formally acquiring neighborhood input that was based both on a defined site plan and that analyzed anticipated use of the facility hour by hour, and offered specific details and definition of parking capacity. His emphasis was not on approval of the proposal at this point but on asking APS to agree not to use the land for new purposes for a period of time that would allow him to undertake a study to address these challenges and questions.

He suggested that getting approval from APS would hold land for 3 years for Kloss in order for him to raise investment and develop plans.

Harward emphasized that our letter should not endorse or approve the plans for this pool.

Community member shared that there has been extensive community input for 18 months and there has been no change to the plans. Kloss has not updated the site plan; he needs additional investment.

Community member, Anne Farrissee, shared an extensive list of concerns from neighbors close to the pool location. Farrissee emphasized that she is not against the concept, but concerned about traffic, parking, entrance, noise and other specific planning details.

Community members shared strong concern that VHCA support will be viewed as an endorsement by APS.

Currently zoned R4 and in Beltline Overlay. Kloss agreed to no pickleball.

Kloss shared that the Virginia-Highland Pool is run by a board of 8 people (he indicated 4 from VH, 2 in Morningside, 1 Midtown).



Mr. Craft introduced a prewritten letter offering conceptual support for exploratory conversations between John Kloss and Atlanta Public SchoolsCraft - see Appendix B.

Motion #10:

(Craft/Stephenson) Motion to approve letter to APS as read by Craft. (See Appendix B)
Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

Board Resolution Authorizing Change of Control of Bank Accounts

Motion #11:

(Craft/Stephenson) Motion to approve board resolution authorizing change of control of the bank accounts.
Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.

Historic Preservation Committee

Update about 100th Anniversary of Fire Station #19 held on Sunday, October 6, 2025 from 11am - 2pm (First day of National Fire Prevention Week). Co-Leads Robin Ragland and Hobson-Pape shared overview of the event, which had deep engagement from Central Atlanta Fire Rescue Service to recognize the first day of National Fire Prevention Week. Programs include puppet shows, coloring books, pictures with the firefighters, dog show demonstrations from the Greater Atlanta Dalmatian Club.

Speakers included historian Dr. Catherine Lewis, Fire Chief Smith, Alex Wan to discuss the history of service and the individuals that currently serve our community. Community members and donors to renovation were acknowledged.

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Service used this event to make announcement that FS#19 will be the first fire station on the east coast to have an electric fire engine, which is planned to be operational within the year.

More than 500 people attended.

Executive Session

Extensive discussion among board members.

VHCL

Motion #12: (Craft/Stephenson) Motion to schedule the election of VHCL board members at November VHCA meeting. Motion Passed 11 in favor/0 opposed.



Treasurer's Report

Stephenson distributed a printed Treasurer's report, but it was not discussed. She had no other report. See Appendix C for full report.

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karri Hobson-Pape



Appendix A - Policy Statement concerning the operation of subcommittees (Presented by John Craft)

Policy Statement concerning the operation of subcommittees

The Bylaws of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. (“VHCA bylaws”), mandate that six committees be staffed during each Board term. The bylaws are silent as to the staffing and operation of subcommittees. This document is adopted to provide guidelines for the operation of subcommittees.

Structure: subcommittees are chaired by a voting member of the parent committee. Members of subcommittees must be proposed to the Board of Directors by the Committee, and approved by a vote of the Board of Directors. Subcommittee members may be approved by an email vote as allowed by Article IV, Sec. 4.8 of the VHCA Bylaws.

Subcommittees may make recommendations to the parent committee for a vote, and/or recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Subcommittees may not bind or encumber funds, enter into contracts, or otherwise bind the Association.

Subcommittees may include non-voting Committee Volunteers in the work of the subcommittee. Subcommittees may seek advice and counsel from committee volunteers, including taking non-binding straw votes of the volunteers, when preparing recommendations for the parent Committee.

The VHCA Board of Directors may alter or amend this policy sheet in accordance with Article IV of the VHCA Bylaws.

A MOTION to dissolve the membership of all 2023-2024 Committees and subcommittees of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. (VHCA) adopt a policy statement governing subcommittees, establish Committees and subcommittees for the 2024-2025 term, and appoint members of the 2024-2025 Committees, in accordance with the VHCA Bylaws

WHEREAS, numerous valued volunteers have served on the several Committees and subcommittees of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. during the 2023-2024 term, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. thanks all volunteers for their service; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors seeks to communicate the importance of committee service in order to encourage as many Virginia-Highland residents as possible to serve on committees;

NOW THEREFORE, The Board of Directors of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc., in accordance with Articles VI of its Bylaws, dissolves the membership of all 2023-2024 committees and subcommittees, removes all members of all 2023-2024 Committees and subcommittees, authorizes the following Committee and subcommittees for the 2024-2025 term, and makes the following appointments:

Committee:



Transportation Subcommittee of the Planning Committee -

Amy Harward
Johnson Bazzel

Education Committee -

Melissa Clark (Committee Chair)
Amy Harward (Board Member)
Jansen Ellis (member)

Committee chairs are encouraged to nominate subcommittee members for inclusion or removal as appropriate during Committee reports at the November 11, 2024 Board meeting or later.

IN ADDITION, the Board of Directors encourages all previous committee members and volunteers not named above to volunteer as non-voting Committee Volunteers or non-voting subcommittee members during the 2024-2025 term.

A motion to appoint Liaisons from the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc., to other Atlanta civic organizations

WHEREAS, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. (VHCA) frequently collaborates with numerous organizations within Atlanta, and

WHEREAS, VHCA continuously seeks to improve the effectiveness of these collaborations,

NOW THEREFORE, the VHCA Board of Directors appoints the following Liaisons:

Liaison to the Virginia Highland District Association, Inc.: Leah Matthews and Amy Harward

Liaison to the Virginia-Highland Security Patrol, Inc.: Kay Stevenson

Liaison to Trees Atlanta, Inc.: TBD

Liaison to City of Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit F: TBD



Appendix B - Letter to APS regarding VAHI Pool

October 7, 2024

Mr. Larry Hoskins
Atlanta Public Schools
Chief of Operations
130 Trinity Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Hoskins,

On behalf of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, I am writing to inform you that our Board of Directors voted (votes in favor - votes opposed) to “express our support for exploratory conversations between Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and the Virginia-Highland Pool Association regarding the potential development of a swimming pool on the Field of Dreams in Virginia-Highland.”

During the discussion prior to our vote, we reached a clear meeting of the minds with Mr. John Closs that this vote is to express support for a conversation, not the project itself. He agreed that he understood the distinction between supporting a conversation and supporting a project, and he assured us that he will make that distinction when speaking with stakeholders.

Mr. Closs agreed to liaise with our Planning Committee chairperson regarding zoning issues; with our Education Committee chairperson regarding discussion with Atlanta Public Schools; and with our Parks Committee chairperson regarding non-pool amenities, so as to minimize duplication of facilities such as playgrounds and athletic fields in the immediate vicinity.

The Civic Association looks forward to reviewing details of the proposed project as they evolve, including site plans, amenities, and financial projections. Only after such a review of the final proposal can we make an informed determination of whether we believe the project is both financially viable and a benefit to the community. Until such time, we have taken no position on whether the Virginia-Highland Pool proposal has met our criteria.

A copy of our October 7, 2024 meeting minutes is attached.

Sincerely,

Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc.



Appendix C - Treasurer's Report

October 7, 2024

- Thank you to Jess Windham Liddick for her hard work as a director and treasurer for the past two years, and for being so helpful in my transition into the role of treasurer.
 - Transition largely complete including online access to applications & files as well as transfer of paper records, checkbook, etc.
 - Will meet at bank on 10/8 to transfer accounts
- P&L for September 2024 (Forecast vs. Actual) attached.
- Property taxes for 2024 have been paid. We need to monitor assessments. Our assessment has remained low since it was appealed in 2018. No need to appeal again unless the assessment changes dramatically.
- Upcoming Actions for Budget Committee:
 - VHCA is overdue for an audit. Should be done every two years and has not been done since 2017. Consider an audit after year end.
 - We have a CD coming due in November. Review and decide whether to roll over or do something else.
 - Meeting with Melissa Kriest, our bookkeeper and George Zirkle (on Budget Committee and former Treasurer) in next couple of weeks to review/update policy and procedures.

See next page for Budgets and Actuals, September 30, 2024

Virginia-Highland Civic Association Budgets and Actuals

September 30, 2024

	9/30/2024	2024 Budget	Over (Under)	
Income				
General Income	10,623.93	30,000.00	(19,376.07)	Friends of VaHI
Communication Income	1,383.34	0.00	1,383.34	
Film Income	4,500.00	10,000.00	(5,500.00)	
Historic Preservation	5,368.60	0.00	5,368.60	
Neighborhood/Social Income	7,040.80	30,500.00	(23,459.20)	Gala, Raffels, etc.
Parks Income	700.87	0.00	700.87	
Home Tour Income	13,536.83	40,000.00	(26,463.17)	
Summerfest Income *ESTIMATE	331,123.47	304,100.00	27,023.47	
Total Income	374,277.84	414,600.00	(40,322.16)	
Expenses				
Administration	20,811.57	22,280.00	(1,468.43)	
Communications Committee	14,289.99	3,184.00	11,105.99	
Decorating	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)	
Education	0.00	400.00	(400.00)	
Grants/Donations	10,750.00	13,500.00	(2,750.00)	
Historic Preservation	5,596.85	1,050.00	4,546.85	
Home Tour Expenses	5,359.29	12,500.00	(7,140.71)	
Neighborhood/Social Events	16,820.96	31,900.00	(15,079.04)	
Parks Committee	14,962.08	33,820.00	(18,857.92)	
Planning Consulting	3,000.00	18,780.00	(15,780.00)	
Transportation/Safety Committee	0.00	1,750.00	(1,750.00)	
Summerfest Expenses	301,789.31	235,850.00	65,939.31	
Total Expenses	393,380.05	377,014.00	16,366.05	
Net Operating Income	(19,102.21)	37,586.00	(56,688.21)	
Savings Balance at End of Period	100,146.82			Inc. 50K CD exp. 11/24
Checking Balance at End of Period	59,107.72			
Specific Reserves	0.00			Need to look into these
- John Howell Park	0.00			
- N. Highland Park Payoff	0.00			
- N. Highland Park Improvements	0.00			
- Neighborhood Branding	0.00			
- Atkins Park Tree Planting	0.00			
Tour of Homes Revenue	13,536.83			
Tour of Homes Expense	5,359.29			
Tour of Homes Net Income	8,177.54			
margin	60%			
Summerfest Revenue	331,123.47			
Summerfest Expenses	301,789.31			
Summerfest Net Income	29,334.16			
margin	9%			