



General Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2025 - 7:00 - 9:00 PM

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

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

VHCA Directors: Alex B. Jones (President), Melissa Clark (Vice President) - virtual, Karri Hobson-Pape (Secretary), Miguel Barrios (Treasurer)- virtual, Johnson Bazzel, Kevin Cronin, Amy Harward, Kenneth Herring (absent - rolled off board - moved away from VAHI), Karen Isenberg Jones, Mary Frances Jones, Tim Langan (absent)

Community Members In Attendance:
Approximately 12

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Alex B. Jones. A Quorum was established. All board members in attendance.

Jones read the following prologue to begin the meeting:

Welcome, everyone, to the Virginia-Highland Civic Association meeting. As we gather here, we'd like to first express our gratitude to each of you for joining. This association has proudly served our neighborhood for over 50 years, powered entirely by dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy to help shape a stronger, more vibrant community. Together, we work on initiatives that support our parks, guide thoughtful planning, and bring neighbors together in meaningful ways.

We know that Virginia-Highland is home to a diverse group of voices, and with that comes a wide range of perspectives. While we may not always agree, we hope that everyone feels comfortable to share their thoughts in a way that is both respectful and neighborly. Disagreement is ok. Disrespect will not be tolerated. Let's continue to build on our legacy by focusing on what connects us and working together for the future of our community. Thank you for being here and for being part of this ongoing work.

Approval of Agenda

Motion #1:
(A B Jones/Clark) Motion to approve the agenda.
Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed.



Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzel	<i>Approved</i>	Alex Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Melissa Clark	<i>Approved</i>	Karen Isenberg Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Kevin Cronin	<i>Approved</i>	Mary Frances Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Amy Harward	<i>Approved</i>	Tim Langan	
Kenneth Herring			

Alex B Jones conveyed the outstanding work of Kenneth Herring and his valuable contributions through Summerfest and more.

Consent Agenda

Motion #2:

(A B Jones/Clark) Motion to approve the consent agenda, including June 2025 minutes and residential variances.

- Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes - June 9, 2025 Board Meeting 2025
 - Minutes - June 9, 2025 - July 14, 2025 Electronic Minutes
- Planning - Residential Variances
 - After reviewing the application and getting the applicant and attorney to modify their operating hours to Sunday - Thursday, 5pm-12am; Friday - Saturday 5pm-2am, the Planning Committee made a motion to approve Stealth Enterprise Agency LLC d/b/a Here Today, ALCO-0525-40324. 5-0 Vote by planning Committee

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed.

Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzel	<i>Approved</i>	Alex Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Melissa Clark	<i>Approved</i>	Karen Isenberg Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Kevin Cronin	<i>Approved</i>	Mary Frances Jones	<i>Approved</i>
Amy Harward	<i>Approved</i>	Tim Langan	
Kenneth Herring			

Guests and Elected Officials

- Guests and Elected Officials
 - Atlanta Police Department - Lt Carroll, Zone 6 APD
 - Crime Statistics - May 14th through June 14th



- Theft from autos: 24
- Burglaries: 3
- Motor vehicle thefts: 7
- June 14th through July 14
 - Theft from autos: 19
 - Burglaries: 5
 - Motor vehicle thefts: 6
- No update on alleged sexual assault on Fredericka in March; must call SVU 404.614.6544
- Question about a report on NextDoor regarding a gunshot at 800s North Highland Avenue. The lieutenant will get back to us.
- City Councilman District 6 - Alex Wan
 - Safe Streets Project - was hoping to have more information. Community meeting on June 24th; logged a bunch of questions. Questions remain about how pedestrians and cyclists navigate through the circle. Getting the answers to all those questions out in July
 - Cheshire bridge project that is part of moving Atlanta forward - launching a community meeting.
 - North Highland repaving - should be in 2026 work.
 - Remove the parking spaces at Atkins Park - had a work session on our Street curb management program; holding the current parking contract just for them to build out the RFP more; need to adjust the number of spaces we have. RFQ expected in early 2026. Trying to expand who can write a parking ticket (e.g. Wouldn't require an to go right violation of residential permit or expired meters or blocking driveways)
 - Mayor's Budget - currently suggests that property tax increases are inevitable. All of us on council don't agree with that. Fulton County right now is talking about a 14% increase. Evaluating nice to have and not need to have budgets and initiatives
 - There is a runoff election tomorrow, for Public Service Commissioner. Turnout is going to be super low, I think at last, count, it was point 2% of the registered voters in the State of Georgia
 - Question about where we stand with Crosswalks submitted to City Council for repainting - 2 striping machines and one of them always broken. They are on the list. Completed Montgomery Ferry
- City Councilman District 2 - (vacant) - not present
- State District 57 Representative - Stacey Evans (Kennedie McClung, Chief of Staff) - not present
- US House 5th District - Nikema Williams - not present
- District 4 Fulton County Commissioner - Mo Ivory (Anita Harris - Chief of Staff) - not present

Officer & Committee Updates

- Executive Committee
 - Peggy Bird (VHCL) presented update re Restructuring Virginia-Highland Conservation League & VHCA for the Future
 - Why are we doing this?
 - The current relationship between VHCA & VHCL is unnecessarily complex and makes charitable giving confusing and inefficient for donors
 - Volunteer time and talent are scarce resources. Operating two volunteer-led nonprofits with overlapping missions dilutes overall impact and efficiency
 - It's been a long time since 1972 (VHCA) and 2009 (VHCL).
 - Regulations around 501c3's and 501c4's evolved, creating new opportunities
 - VHCA formed as a 501c4 to enable lobbying, but the organization's focus now is on planning, neighborhood improvements, and fund-raising which are a better



fit for a 501c3 (a 501c3 can lobby within financial limits that are above anticipated VHCA needs)

- Comparing 501c3 and 501c4 Structures

Comparing 501c Structures

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>501c4: Like VHCA</u>	<u>501c3: Like VHCL</u>
Tax deductible donations	No	Yes
Membership	Yes	No (but we can convert to members)
Board terms	1 year	1 year
New Board Term Begins	October 1	November 1
Lobbying	Yes	Not more than 20% of budget and time
Captive LLCs can take deductible donations (Eg., Friends of John Howell Park, LLC)	No	Yes

- What constitutes lobbying for a non-profit?
 - Lobbying
 - Contacting legislators or officials to support or oppose specific legislation
 - Asking others (members, the public) to contact legislators on your behalf (a.k.a. grassroots lobbying)
 - Paying someone to engage in such activities on behalf of your organization
 - 501(c)(3)s may lobby within limit of 20% of total time and budget
 - Not Lobbying
 - Educating the public or policymakers about issues (without referencing specific legislation)
 - Responding to requests for information from public officials
 - Nonpartisan research, reports, and discussions of broad policy topics
 - Lobbying activities are under 5% of VHCA's total time and budget – some years as low as 0%
- Common Purpose of VHCA and VHCL
 - VHCA
 - organized to defeat the construction of Interstate 485 through the neighborhood
 - now the promotion and furtherance of the common good, general welfare & interests of residents of
 - Virginia-Highland coordinates planning, zoning, safety, park maintenance, communications, history, events, fundraising, traffic, sidewalks, parking
 - VHCL
 - organized to promote the common good, general welfare and interests of the residents of Virginia-Highland
 - serves the broader Atlanta community by improving community recreation areas and green space
 - focuses on water quality, conservation, scenic areas, trees, and streams for enjoyment



- Matching Structure to Purpose
 - Current Dual Structure
 - The purpose of VHCA and VHCL coincides.
 - The dual structure no longer matches the organizations' mutual purpose.
 - Both organizations currently operate separately despite coordinating objectives.
 - Both organizations track and allocate Designated Funds to specific projects
 - Benefits of a Single Organization
 - Administrative, volunteer and fundraising efficiency
 - Less complexity benefits the neighborhood
 - Ensures transparency and legal compliance
 - Designated Funds remain attached to originally specified projects
- Recommended Approach: Bringing VHCA and VHCL Together
 - Modify VHCL mission to continue as VHCA.
 - Transfer assets and operations of the current VHCA (c4) to VHCL (c3)
 - File to change the c4 to a new name such as Virginia-Highland Resident Association
 - File to change the name of the c3 from VHCL to VHCA
 - Keep c4 in dormant status via annual registration (<\$100); it will have a single member – the new VHCA c3. Future treasurers would need to be aware of this.
 - Keep c4 just in case it is needed in the future (e.g. future highway)
 - Still file a 990 postcard each year.
 - Next Steps:
 - July 13, 2025: Board vote to engage Jeff Woodward, Attorney to work with VHCA-VHCL subcommittee
 - Provide information about the change to the VAHI community through the Voice and a public meeting in July or August;
 - transparency is critical
 - Share recommended changes via vahi.org, the Voice and meetings, for community review and feedback
 - August 11, 2025: VHCA Board votes (VHCL has voted unanimously to approve the concept already)
 - Sept 8, 2025: Membership votes (1. approving the structural change and new bylaws, 2. regular annual Board election)
 - Implement legal changes with support from Jeff Woodward
- Alex Wan shared that the following would need to be communicated:
 - If City funds anything to VHCA, just need to ensure the EIN number is updated.
 - Across the city, there are a lot of Associations that are c4 or c3.
 - Work with NPUF to ensure the official voice is recognized; would be the same name, so this is not a concern.
- High Level Planned Timeline:
 - July 2025: Subcommittee to make formal presentation to board - Board Budget vote
 - August 2025: Structure & Bylaws - Board vote
 - September 2025: Structure & Bylaws - Membership vote

Motion #3:



(MF Jones/Hobson-Pape) Motion to approve budget up to \$6000 to engage Jeff Woodward for legal work to support related to the proposed consolidation with the Virginia-Highland Conservation League and VHCA's transition to 501(c)(3) status, including legal counsel, document drafting, bylaws revisions, communications guidance, work to be completed by the end of September.

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed.

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Kenneth Herring			

- Budget Committee
 - Results of Summerfest - Karen Jones shared that the finance team is still finalizing the revenue/expenses. Definitely a profit, not sure exact amount.
 - 74 families gave for Friends of Summerfest. That number is included in Summerfest #s.

- Planning Committee
 - New Tree Protection Ordinance Legislation- no new updates
 - Atlanta Rezoning 2.0 Next Steps - no new updates

- Parks Committee:
 - Update on John Howell Park
 - Jim Coe shared that Benches are complete - looks excellent. City paid for them.
 - Saturday 10-noon work day to spread the mulch pile (double load)
 - Update on Orme Park - not many new updates
 - Update on North Highland Park - not many new updates
 - Langan shared via email that due to the evening events, a lot of the garbage is spilling into the streets and into the park. Proposed to host a garbage clean up. Board members felt that VHD should be doing this. Organize the group via Voice/social outreach. Needs to be organized further.
 - VHD co-hosted a Saturday bar crawl. Noted the issues with garbage after that. Have a blower every Tuesday - the goal is to expand that to do it more often. Need to engage businesses now. Also trying to get a few more trash cans in front of Atkins Park.
 - Stephanie Coffin shared the importance of electric leaf blowers vs gas leaf blowers. Shared that Mark Nevitt is teaching environmental law and has a leaflet to share broadly.
 - Working with Trees Atlanta and they are converting from gas to electric



- Virginia Highland District is also going to try to switch from gas to electric for blowers along North Highland.
- Jim Coe recommended pushing landscapers (sponsorship) that currently use electric blowers. Create groundswell support.

- Safety & Transportation:
 - Tactical Urbanism Proposal Update - Install day is coming soon!
 - Day 1 - Wednesday 7/30 (backup Thursday 7/31)
 - Day 2 - Friday 8/1 (backup Friday 8/8)
 - Key messages:
 - This is a pilot program (one year), not a permanent installation
 - This segment does not go in front of any single family driveways
 - Done in coordination with Midtown Neighbors Association and through City of Atlanta
 - 5th Annual Bike to Howard Class - August 2nd 8-10am

- Communications Committee
 - VHCA website refresh & Committee Audit of pages to look for outdated information, missing information, or broken links.

- Elections Committee - nothing to report

- Fundraising Committee:
 - Summerfest Update (Karen)
 - 74 families signed up for Friends of VAHI - Summerfest
 - Tour of Homes Update (Melissa, Amy)
 - Sponsorship in process
 - Homes are still in process - still looking for a few homes
 - Shared logo with VHD
 - Friends of VAHI (Karen)
 - Capitalize on the Friends of Summerfest families
 - Need to fix the website to easily get donations
 - Films in VAHI (Karri, Mary Frances)
 - Progress being made with additional movies in the neighborhood; one \$500 check this month
 - Merchandise (Miguel, Karri)
 - Saw at Summerfest that people love the merchandise; send to realtors

Old Business

No new business.

New Business

- Possible Candidate Forum for City of Atlanta City Council District 2



- Cronin recommended hosting a debate for neighbors. Hobson-Pape added that students at Midtown High School (The Southerner) can host and we can support. Exploring further with Midtown High School students.
- Annual Meeting - Sept 8th, 7pm, Virginia-Highland Elementary School Cafeteria
 - Alex B Jones shared that Mayor Dickens indicates that he is planning to attend
 - Include VHCL

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karri Hobson-Pape

Appendix: Alex Wan Report - VHCA Transportation Committee Crosswalk Tracking

Tr Crosswalk Location	📍 Status	Tr Notes
Virginia & N Highland	Critical ▾	All 4
N Highland in front of YWCA	Critical ▾	Acts as a school crossing
N Highland in front of Ace/CVS	Critical ▾	Major crossing along a busy street
Los Angeles and N Highland (in front of Paper Source)	Critical ▾	Major neighborhood crossing and school route
Greenwood and Ponce Place	Critical ▾	Major crossing point to The BeltLine-cracked
Barnett and Virginia	Critical ▾	Major artery to VHE
Park Dr/Ponce Pl and Virginia (western and northern crossing)	High ▾	
Todd and Virginia	High ▾	Faded and dangerous to cross
Virginia & Rosedale Rd	High ▾	Route to SPARK Elementary school and completely faded at a 3 point intersection with lots of of traffic for Ash Coffee
Both Crosswalks on North Highland on St Charles Place NE	High ▾	Faded and dangerous
Crosswalk on North Highland at Briarcliff Place	High ▾	Faded and dangerous to cross
Glen Arden and N Highland	Medi... ▾	Totally faced, major crossing point
Crosswalk at Kentucky Ave and North Highland Ave - severely faded crosswalk and stop line	Medi... ▾	
Crosswalk on North Highland at Greenwood	Medi... ▾	Faded and dangerous - I cross this routinely to go to yoga, and 80% of cars don't stop
Crosswalk on North Highland at St Louis Place	Medi... ▾	Faded, and dangerous
Crosswalk on North Highland and Highland View NE	Medi... ▾	

Appendix: FS#19 Concern re Green Dot Box

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ratner, Jeremy** <jtratner@atlantaga.gov>

Date: Mon, Jun 2, 2025 at 7:37 PM

Subject: Green dot box

To: Karri Hobson-Pape <karrihp@gmail.com>, Castronova, Joette <JCastronova@atlantaga.gov>

Cc: Stewart, Chad <cstewart@atlantaga.gov>, robin ragland <robin_ragland@bellsouth.net>, Lola Carlisle <lola@rupertandwenona.com>, Jess L. <jess.liddick@gmail.com>

Good evening yall,

I was wanting to see if you could help me brainstorm and see how we can come up with a solution for this weekly problem we are having. As you are probably aware we have a green dot donation box next to the station. I know it helps out the community to donate to the less fortunate and for those less fortunate receive the gifts donated. But today this is what our station looks like. I am asking our members to bag these things up weekly and call the company to have them pick it all up. It is meant for clothes but as the box fills up neighbors place dishes, rugs, housewares, along the sidewalk in the rain as it is a Goodwill. I am extremely thankful for our neighborhood and don't want to sound insensitive as our jobs are community outreach, service providers and public servants. But maybe a few signs can be placed to discuss the parameters and maybe some further discussion is in line with the members of VHI? Attached is a couple pictures and please offer some input on how you think we should go about correcting this issue.

Cordially,

Captain Jeremy Ratner

Station 19 A Shift





Appendix: Residential Variances

V-25-106, 916 Virginia Circle

Applicant seeks a variance from the zoning ordinance

Planning Committee Vote 3-0 in Favor

- V-25-106, 916 Virginia Circle



Appendix: Safety & Transportation

We have slightly modified the [presentation](#) to incorporate ATLDOT's pre-application suggestions and modified timeline. The suggestions were:

- Add stop lines for vehicles at the Park intersection
- Show min bike buffer design
- Show Beltline access along Monroe and through Midtown Promenade

Modified Timeline

- 1/15 Submit Application and during this time:
- 2/1 ATL DOT Application Review Complete + Submit Road Closure Application
- 2/28 Right of Way Granted
- 3/7 Install

Appendix: Communications

We invite all committee members to contribute stories for *The VOICE*, VHCA's bi-monthly e-newsletter. If you or someone in your committee has Virginia-Highland neighborhood-related news to share, we'd love to feature it! Submission Details:

- *The VOICE* is distributed on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month
- Submit your stories using this form: [HERE](#)
- If the form isn't for you, you can email content to communications@vahi.org
- Links to the form are also included in every issue of *The VOICE*

In addition to stories, we are also looking for advertisers! We are especially focused on supporting small, local, and home-based businesses. If you know of any businesses that might be interested, please encourage them to review the attached rate sheet for pricing and details.



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2025 PUB DATES

The Voice publishes year round on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Upcoming dates include:

- Feb. 6
- Feb. 20
- March 6
- March 20
- April 3
- April 17
- May 1
- May 15

RATES

1 issue	\$100
2 issues	\$180
3 issues	\$270

If your needs don't fall precisely into these categories, let us know