



General Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2024 - 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-virtual, Kenneth Herring-virtual, Karen Isenberg Jones, Mary Frances Jones-virtual, Tim Langan

Community Members In Attendance:
Approximately 25 (15 in person, 10 online)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Alex B. Jones. A Quorum was established. All board members in attendance, except for Karri Hobson-Pape, who provided prior notice.

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:

(Jones/Clark) Motion to approve the agenda with amendment to ad report from Stephanie Coffin about Parks..
Motion Passed 10 in favor/ 0 opposed.



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

New Director of VHCA

Mary Frances Jones was introduced to serve as a new member of the Virginia-Highland Civic Association, since there were currently 10 directors. Jones shared information about her professional and personal background.

Motion #2:

(Jones/Bazzell) Motion to approve Mary Frances Jones as 11th member of the board of directors of Virginia-Highland Civic Association. Passed 10 in favor/ 0 opposed.

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

Guest and Elected Officials

Atlanta Police Department - Lieutenant Carroll (Zone 6) shared that in last 30 days period the following:

- Crime Nov 1 - Dec 1: 23 thefts from autos, 4 burglaries,7 auto thefts
- Crime Dec 1 - Jan 1: 17 thefts from autos, 2 burglaries,3 auto thefts - coming down
- Jones brought attention to APD about encampment on Paris on Ponce. Lt. Carroll agreed to check it out again with Quality of Life officer; Cronin shared additional detail and location. On private property so need to talk with owner; can find out who owns the lot.
- Thank you from Jones to Zone 6 team.

City Councilman District 6 - Alex Wan

- Agreed to work with Atlanta Police to see how he can assist APD with Paris on Ponce encampment.
- Update re [PADS Contract](#) - services are continuing for 18 months, as authorized by Council. Call 311 for encampment, fire, etc.
- Will be a busy year in final year of Dickens administration
 - Will revisit short term rentals (party buses)
 - Tree protection ordinance - draft is coming in tomorrow. Will likely lean toward community tree advocates vs business

- Inspector General - Council recognizes we need a watch dog. Current IG may have overstepped authority and all employees should have some protections. Navigating the needs and provides reasonable protections for employees.
- Zoning
 - 2.0
 - Plan A - Comprehensive Development Plan - Atlanta for all.com please provide feedback by the end of the month.
- Monroe Drive - working to get it past the point of no return this year. Priority for Wan this year. Trying to get the next stakeholder meeting planned. At 60% design. Understanding is that suggestions have been incorporated, including optimism about bike lanes.
 - 10th and Monroe - still doing some refining, based on community feedback no turn on left to Kanuga has been lifted.
 - No turn on red is not consistent across the whole city, but it does affect 10th/Monroe
 - Working with family of Midtown/Grady student that was killed at the intersection to honor her in February.
- North Highland Paving - \$2M+ included in MovingAtlantaForward bond but not very realistic for 2025 because DOT so far behind. The money is there, but the timing will be 2026.
- Billboard swapping went to full council and Wan voted for it.
- World Cup Funding - there is a lot of money but it is all being focused on downtown infrastructure improvement. Some of the schools/universities are getting involved with soccer. Alex will make a note of opportunity for JHP and potential through Parks & Rec.
- Crosswalks Repainting - Bazzell will collaborate with Wan to develop the priority list of intersections. City has one striping machine.
 - Jim Coe shared concerns about lack of stop lines at the cross walks. There are several stops that do not have stop lines.
- District representation changes in January 2026; election in November will determine.

Approval of Minutes

Motion #3:

(Jones/Cronin) Motion to approve the December 9, 2024 minutes.

Motion Passed 11 in favor/ 0 opposed.

Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzell	<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	<i>Approved</i>
Kenneth Herring	<i>Approved</i>		

Motion #4:

(Jones/Clark) Motion to approve the December 9, 2024 - January 13, 2025 electronic minutes.

Motion Passed 11 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	<i>Approved</i>
Kenneth Herring	<i>Approved</i>		

Planning Committee

- V-24-224 676 Elmwood Dr NE.
 - Previously passed electronically so we do not need to go over it again. Going to NPU.
- V-24-225 816 Adair
 - Planning committee reviewed and approved it, and asked Pam Bulloch to review plans.
 - Deferred from the December VHCA meeting to allow neighbors to have input and made additional revisions.
 - New house on existing empty lot; additional hardship of 24" storm water pipe that runs through middle of property. (22' area that can't build in)
 - Seeking 53% lot coverage, but using pavers to effectively bringing it down to 50%.
 - Community feedback - Limit of 2 minutes / household.
 - Andy Solomon: neighbor at rear, shared concerns about plan and issues with the fact that the existing plan every setback has a variance and there is a large buildable area - more structures could be in buildable area.
 - Jane Rice: Charles Rice's daughter & POA. West of lot, Opposing west side and front side. Claimed unfair, biased factors for Rice vs Mossings.
 - Kate Bullen: NE of lot, shared concern that planning committee did not listen fully to 5 issues. BZA specifically says a cleared lot is a clean slate. The hardship is minimal for applicant and significant for neighbors. Shared that she felt last week's committee meeting was concerning because of tone and nature.
 - Stephanie Coffin: asked about trees that were removed. Told by Mossing, applicant, that 8 trees taken down and 3 taken down illegally and applicant paid the fine.
 - Cristy Solomon: Concern about planning committee process with 2 minute limitations.
 - Cronin shared that it is standard in city to have time limits for points to be made at the planning committee.
 - Cronin agrees to put better information on website for neighbors, in addition to applicants.
 - Hobson-Pape shared concerns about water mitigation and Bulloch shared that they immediately engaged the consultant.



- Mossing, Neighbor and applicant. Supports and shared that they have spent more than 7 hours with neighbors over months. Tried not to create a high multi-story house; goal is to plant new trees.
- Additional input regarding timeline and process of the variance process and timely submissions of applicants.

Motion #5:

(Cronin/Langan) Motion to approve V-24-225 816 Adair subject to the following.

- West side yard set back to 6'
- East side yard set back to 6"
- Front yard set back to 21'
- Rear yard set back to 6'
- Lot coverage to 53% and immediately commence water mitigation plan.

Plan received 1-7-25. Motion Passed 8 in favor/ 2 opposed.

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

Virginia-Highland Conservation League Update

- Dr. Catherine Lewis provided an update
 - Officers chosen for 2025:
 - President: Catherine Lewis
 - Vice President: Paul Burk
 - Secretary: Peggy Berg
 - Treasurer: Barry Loudis
 - Meetings are open to anyone
 - Priority in 2024 was the 100 year celebration of Fire Station #19
 - Priority in 2025+ will be John Howell Park
 - VHCA board members are currently serving on VHCL Board for improved continuity: Migueal Barrios, Tim Langan, Mary Frances Jones
 - Hobson-Pape shared that updates will be important, especially for financials as fundraising starts for JHP. Dr. Lewis said that as things ramp up, there may need to be monthly updates.

Motion #6:



(Alex B. Jones/K. Jones) Motion every 3 months to have a representative from VHCL attend the VHCA meeting in person to provide an update, including financials. Motion Passed 8 in favor/ 2 opposed.

Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzel	<i>Approved</i>	Alex B. 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	<i>Approved</i>
Kenneth Herring	<i>Approved</i>		

Governance Discussion regarding Fundraising Initiative for John Howell Park

- Hobson-Pape shared that in 2024 the fundraising committee for John Howell Park generated discussions about the best structure for the campaign estimated at over \$1.5M. Neighbor Jill Gossett introduced them to neighbor Jeff Woodward, an attorney who works exclusively with non-profits.
- Jim Coe, Parks Committee, shared that to generate donations Virginia-Highland will need a clear structure for all donors to feel confident about donating to support the park efforts, specifically. VHCL is not a well known entity in our community though it is a 501c3.
- Jeff Woodward, attorney and lived in VH for 28 years. (1:35)
 - Explored the best structure to raise capital for a community park.
 - Since already a tax-exempt resource, VHCL, can create a tax-exempt status that is separate
 - Stronger for branding perspective
 - From legal perspective, if contracting, it is nice to isolate the VHCL and VHCA. Liability reasons
 - Money is completely separate - restricted.
 - Sole member is VHCL. So it is a flow-through entity.
 - Can have a separate board just to focus on this project.
 - Efficiencies with the 990 for VHCL, same accounting system in VHCL.
 - Cost perspective it is a lot cheaper and faster (9 months for separate 501c3)
 - Not just for Friends of JHP. Could also be Friends of Orme, Friends of NHP. If there is a park close, the low-hanging fruit is for a neighbor to give to
 - This also creates longevity for the park.
- Jim Coe explained that the JHP park renovation has been a function of VHCA. But the fundraising would be from Friends of John Howell Park. Process has been going on for 4 years; presentations at Town Halls. City has already committed \$300K, hopeful for a Park Pride grant for \$100K. The struggle has been what the right entity is for bringing in the money.
- Jeff Woodward recommended a review of bylaws of VHCA and VHCL. He said that it was incorrect that VHCL is a subsidiary of VHCA. This needs to be improved. Recommendation is that as this park LLC is set up, it can be a beta for other capital initiatives. Board needs to consider an operating agreement that can change for each initiative.
 - Coe wants a strong continuity in the structure and governance so there isn't dramatic change in



- Coe shared that the City / Park Pride needs a 501c3.
- VHCA would require a motion to support for the VHCL to take the next step to set up LLC.
- Woodward encouraged starting quiet discussion for fundraising because it will instantly be tax-exempt.

Motion #7:

(Hobson-Pape/Jones) Motion to begin exploring this work. Have ongoing conversations with the Hcl. Between now and the February meeting to identify exactly what the process would be for us to move forward.

Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzel	<i>Approved</i>	Alex B. 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	<i>Approved</i>
Kenneth Herring	<i>Approved</i>		

Officer and Committee Updates

- Volunteer Appreciation Event - Dec 15
 - Approx 80 people attended; positive results.
 - Kenneth Herring shared the list of people that signed up on sign up sheet.
- VAHI Holiday Decorations Contest
 - Confusion with judging process, needs to be clarified
 - Bazzell felt that we should not allow the VHD Winterfest street to win.
- Expectations of Committee Chairs - Review timeline or committee review and approval
 - January 13 - VHCA Board Vote to Approve Budget and Committee members
- Board Communications - Jones encouraged all board members to include all on board emails.
 - Tom Schwab, Alcohol Licensing Chair for NPU-F - shared that he used form and sent email and no one received the email.
 - Barrios encouraged greater structure needed for VHCA.
 - Hobson-Pape recommended a board retreat; all agreed.
- Budget Committee
 - Need an additional person for the Budget Committee.
 - 2024 P&L was sent
 - Budget for 2025 is on Google Drive. Budgets are consistent with prior years. Melissa Clark shared the historical process.

Motion #8:



(Jones/Langan) Motion to table budget vote and get all documentation for board retreat and do an electronic vote later.

Miguel Barrios	<i>Approved</i>	Karri Hobson-Pape	<i>Approved</i>
Johnson Bazzel	<i>Approved</i>	Alex B. 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	<i>Approved</i>
Kenneth Herring	<i>Approved</i>		

- Planning Committee
 - Cronin shared that Rezoning 2.0 information is being shared on webinar tonight.
 - NPU policy statement is being discussed. Biggest issue with VH is Amsterdam Walk to be consistent with the Comprehensive Development Plan.
 - Residents are sharing input independently; VHCA is not currently developing a perspective.
 - AB Jones felt that there should be a Townhall; Cronin felt City should come out and address people directly at that Townhall.
 - Harvard agreed to send anything through comms channels; Cronin would share details.

- Parks Committee
 - North Highland Park
 - Paul Burks rescheduled for February meeting re name change
 - Exploring new lighting options to improve safety for park; APNA and VHD support
 - Grass improvements planned
 - Stephanie Coffin, neighbor, shared concerns about VAHI temporary sign due to size limitations, over extended time in park, and necessary insurance. Request for the sign to be taken down.
 - Bazzell shared we should investigate the insurance requirements immediately
 - Orme Park
 - Stephanie Coffin, neighbor, presented 148 trees planted in Orme Park and 2 streets that feed in to Orme Park. Prior trees died because of the draught. Provided a report with # of trees & species. Tree species considerations due to climate change.

- Safety & Transportation
 - No new updates; the application for Tactical Urbanism will be submitted before the next board meeting.
 - 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
- Midtown Neighborhood Association has reached out to Alex re bike lane.

- Communications
 - Going to monthly VH Voice
 - Exploring increasing pricing for Voice and hope to create more revenue generating.
 - Adding Amy and Megan Graddy to Summerfest Comms Committee.
 - Karen has been working with Ida to update the Summerfest website.

- Historic Preservation
 - Orme Park Bridge turned 100; used to have gas lights on it. Interest in (1) celebrating 100 (2) sharing history (3) raising money.
 - Cronin shared concern about fundraising for JHP simultaneously.
 - Interest in connections with Fundraising, Parks and Planning

- Summerfest
 - Herring provided an updated budget to board. Increased last year's actuals by 10%. \$300K in 2024; Planning for \$330K in 2025. Opportunity to generate more revenue is through sponsorships; 2024 sponsorship was \$78K.
 - Exploring the possibility of moving the festival to a more prominent location at VA & NH. Have had conversation with Premier and Policy Liaison to determine if this is possible (would include closing of North Highland).

- Old Business
- New Business

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karri Hobson-Pape