



## General Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting

### Meeting Minutes

March 10, 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>

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**VHCA Directors:** Alex B. Jones (President), Melissa Clark (Vice President) (Absent with Notice), Karri Hobson-Pape (Secretary), Miguel Barrios (Treasurer)(Absent with Notice), Johnson Bazzel, Kevin Cronin - virtual, Amy Harward (Absent with Notice), Kenneth Herring (Absent with Notice), Karen Isenberg Jones (Absent with Notice), Mary Frances Jones, Tim Langan

#### Community Members In Attendance:

Approximately 14 (8 in person, 6 online)

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#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Alex B. Jones. A Quorum was established. All board members in attendance, except for Melissa Clark, Miguel Barrios, Amy Harward, Kenneth Herring, Karen Isenberg Jones.

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/Hobson-Pape) Motion to approve the agenda.



Motion Passed 6 in favor/ 0 opposed.

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

## Consent Agenda

### Motion #2:

(A B Jones / Cronin) Motion to approve the consent agenda, including

- Approval of Minutes
  - Minutes - February 10, 2025 Board Meeting 2025
  - Minutes - February 10, 2025 - March 10, 2025 Electronic Minutes
- Planning - Residential Variances
  - V-25-032 (NPU F) 918 Glen Arden (was passed unanimously by planning committee and no neighborhood objections)
- Financial Statements
  - 2025.02.28 VHCA Balance Sheet
  - 2025.02.28 VHCA P&L
  - 2025.02.28 VHCA Historic Actuals

Motion Passed 6 in favor/ 0 opposed.

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

## Recognition of JD Christy

Karri Hobson-Pape shared the following recognition of former VHCA President & Board Member, JD Christy:



*Virginia-Highland has lost one of its greatest champions, but JD Christy's legacy will forever be woven into our neighborhood. After taking early retirement from GM, he dedicated himself fully to community involvement, making it his second career. For several years he served as president of the VHCA and the Neighborhood Planning Unit, played a key role in shaping Summerfest, and sat on the board of the John Howell Park Association. In fact, he was part of the founding board that made John Howell Park a reality.*

*A service of remembrance was held on Saturday, March 8, at 3 PM at Virginia-Highland Church UCC (743 Virginia Ave NE), followed by a short walk to John Howell Park for a brief tribute. In fact, he was honored at City Hall this week.*

*If you are looking for a way to honor JD's legacy his family would encourage your support of the renovation efforts of John Howell Park. We invite you to join us in this meaningful tribute by making a donation to support the park's revitalization. Your generosity will help preserve and enhance this cherished community space in his memory.*

### **Guests & Elected Officials**

- Atlanta Police Department
  - Feb 10, 2025 - March 10, 2025 - Lt Carroll (Zone 6)
    - 0 burglaries
    - 3 car breakins (prints all unsuccessful)
    - 1 autotheft
  - Neighbor, Mary, asked about information from a neighbor about a violent rape on March 3rd
    - Lt Carroll shared that he cannot share crimes of a sexual nature because they have to keep them confidential. Cannot share if a crime existed or not.
    - Asked if we could get the information after the person is formally charged.
    - Lt. Carroll shared that citizens can contact Sex Crimes to get more detail. Johnson Bazzell volunteers to call Sex Crimes
- City Councilman District 6 - Alex Wan
  - Thanks for mentioning JD Christy and recognition at City Hall.
  - Updates on Amsterdam Walk - interesting conversations happening at City Halls
  - Monroe Safer Streets - met the 50% design mark; 2 reps from NPU F attended.
    - Improved sidewalks
    - New traffic light at Westminster
    - Question: Bike lanes - Answer is "kind of yes" - can do unprotected bike lanes (4.5' - only a 6" wide paint strip would protect bikers). Stakeholder group was evening split. Some of the bulb outs for pedestrians would have to come out for bike lanes. So, DOT is going back to take a closer look at it.
    - Look closer at the Master Plans of Morningside and VH
    - Optimistically, if easements are negotiated, shovels may be in the ground at the end of the calendar year or early 2026.
  - Moving Atlanta Forward - North Highland Paving Project - will be in 2026, funding is still intact.
    - Entire stretch of North Highland: Sage Hill to North Avenue or Inman Park
  - Tree Protection Ordinance is coming up next - leans more favorably to tree advocates
  - Comprehensive Development Plan - Plan A - Looks like adoption will be fast. Not sure if it will take place before the election.
    - Tim Langnon asked for great clarity on RG2 and RG3. Alex Wan would ask for greater clarity.
  - Budget coming



- Priority Crosswalks Submission
  - Johnson Bazzell shared the desire for specific crosswalks on North Highland
  - Katie prepared a deck with the most critical
  - Alex Wan recommended several that are geographically together. Asked for pictures as well. Because we are in to the warm weather, it will be about 90 days after Alex receives the final list of priorities in 3 separate emails of high priority, medium priority, lesser priority. Put on a map and highlight the intersections (this will save Lance time).
- FS #19 Electric Fire Engine Updates - Alex will find out about details, it is moving forward with legislation. The Executive Director of the Fire Foundation was not aware.
- Board discussed the opportunity to paint the whole square at VA and Highland to note the center of Virginia-Highland. Opportunity or tactical urbanism effort. Bazzell suggested potential next steps.
- Alex Wan heard from Commander regarding violent incident and confirmed that a violent rape occurred on March 3rd but do not have a good description from suspect. Requesting help from the community for the suspect.
- City Councilman District 2 - Amir R. Farokhi - did not attend.
- State District 57 Representative - Stacey Evans (Kennedie McClung, Chief of Staff) - did not attend.
- US House 5th District - Nikema Williams - did not attend.
- District 4 Fulton County Commissioner - Moe Ivory (Anita Harris? - Chief of Staff) - did not attend.

## Officer & Committee Updates

- Planning Committee
  - Amsterdam Portman Project - Committees will see on 3/23 and 24; Full Council on 4/21
  - Comprehensive Development Plan - Plan A - need more information on RG2 and RG3 - affects St. Charles and Greenwood where there is a combination of residential building. Recommend information at the community meeting.
  - V-25-018 (NPU F) 983 North Highland
    - Presentation by Nina Gentry - non-conforming R4 lot. Homeowners relocating from out of town 2-story garage with extra living space on 2nd floor, not a full kitchen and not for rental. Existing home have additional square footage. Driveway turnaround
    - Have not heard further from neighbor in the rear
    - Brian, homeowner, provided more context. Shared existing garages in vicinity; felt in line with other contextual garages.
    - Variances
      - Reduce South Side Yard Set back from 7' to 3'2'
      - Reduce Rear Yard Set back from 7' to 4'2'
      - Increase in width of the driveway so that a car can back out. Allowed 20, asking for 30 ft.
      - Agreed to enter into a boundary tree agreement with a tree to the rear; city only requires when impacting at 20% but more than happy to do that.
      - Instead of 2 windows on the rear side, will have transom windows for more privacy.
      - Moved stairs from rear to side
      - Will do plantings and work with landscape architects in the rear and south on the neighboring side.
      - Increased set back in rear to 5'



- Sam and Lee, neighbors in the back, shared concerns about set back in back and second story. Received plans over weekend and the landscape architect shared that vegetation won't be able to grow. Very appreciative about changes made with privacy but concerned about the 2nd floor. Did talk to Nina directly and have had several emails and one revised set of plans but the 2nd floor did not change. Concern is the accessory building at 30% and reduction in setback.
- Howard Kaufman, on North Highland Avenue 2 houses away. House is double the size now and with the full plumbing will convert to AirB&B. A two-car carport would be ideal, with a turnaround.
- Property owner of 977 North Highland shared that he was supportive because he feels it is a good improvement to the neighborhood. Have spent many years thinking about how this neighborhood has developed. The subject house has been towered over by his house for close to 100 years; not personally affected by homes that loom over property next door. A lot of time, effort, and money to improve these houses.
- Alex Jones thanked everyone for being neighborly and talking to each other.

### **Motion #3:**

(Langan / Cronin) Motion to approve V-25-018 (NPU F) 983 North Highland the variances for a 2-story accessory structure including

- Reduce South Side Yard Set back from 7' to 3'2'
- Reduce Rear Yard Set back from 15' to 7' to be conditioned on site plan
- Exceed 30% to 36.8%
- Increase in width of the driveway. Allowed 20, asking for 30'.
- Transom windows as shown on plans; privacy screening on rear steps of structure; planting to be shared with the neighbors on the rear of the building between the fence line and 7' buffer.

Motion Tied 3 in favor/ 3 opposed.

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

### ■ V-25-049 (NPU F) 788 Barnett Street

- Mark Arnold presented changes to RG2 zoned home, representing Alex and Katie. Worked with city zoning downtown for RG2. Going up on house with steeper gable; footprint of porch changes in right to left justification. Building out heated space above the porch.
- Variances:



- Reduce South Side Yard Set back from 40' to 16'6"
- Reduce South Side Yard Set back from 7' to 2'4"
- Approvals from all neighbors; Langon gave a special thanks to Mark Arnold for coordination with neighbors
- Passed 5-1 at Planning Committee

**Motion #4:**

(Langdon / AB Jones) Motion to approve V-25-049 (NPU F) at 788 Barnett variances including:

- Reduce Front Yard Set back from 40' to 16'6"
- Reduce South Side Yard Set back from 7' to 2'4"

Motion Approved 6 in favor/ 0 opposed.

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

- New Tree Protection Ordinance Legislation - currently reviewing
- Atlanta Rezoning 2.0 Next Steps - will continue to monitor for RG2 and RG 3 because both are changing; a lot of language about respecting character of neighborhood but need to have a better report to the neighborhood about potential impacts on reduced setbacks, specifically on St. Charles and Greenwood. May want to have an open house presentation on this.
- Selig Properties - own land east of Portman property now. Have ideas with how they would like to redevelop it. Conversations are starting with the Planning Committee.
- Executive Committee
  - Treasurer Duties
    -
  - Update re Subcommittee for VHCA / VHCL / JHP Renovations - Governance Structure
    - Operating agreement being drafted for Friends of JHP - will share with the board. VHCL will pay for the
    - Engagement letter for VHCL/VHCA coordination.
      - Jim Coe mentioned that someone needs to discuss who pays for the VHCL bylaw changes. To date we have not paid any legal overhead.
    - Subcommittee is Jim Coe (VHCL), Peggy Berg (VHCL), Mary Frances (VHCL/VHCA), Miguel Barrios (VHCL/VHCA), Karri Hobson-Pape (VHCA), Johnson Bazzell (VHCA)
  - Update re Virginia-Highland Conservation League & VHCA Bylaws Update
  - Upcoming Town Hall Schedule & Agenda - April 22, 2025 7pm, in old Hand & Hand space. Alex Jones shared that will be good to have Councilman Wan, breakouts for different committees



- Planning Updates - Amsterdam Walk
- Planning Updates - Zoning 2.0
- Budget Committee:
  - Updated Annual VHCA Budget - still need to vote on a budget, need to get Summerfest updated #s and incorporate into the main budget.
  - Cash Flow Analysis conducted and shared that VHCA is not strong
- Parks Committee:
  - Jim Coe shared that there was a Parks Committee meeting
    - April 15th the new city benches are coming in - 11 new benches for \$18K
    - Friends of John Howell Park - will begin when there is a bank account set up (estimating 2 weeks from now); will be good to launch at April 22nd Townhall.
    - A lot of mulch spread in the last few months
    - Orme Park did another planting and hopefully will work better than last
    - North Highland - Mark Nevitt takes lead with this; reached out to VH Security Patrol for \$25/month the on-duty officer will come and interact with the homeless person.
- Safety & Transportation:
  - Tactical Urbanism Proposal Update - Johnson Bazzell shared that there are no updates
  - Mary Frances worked with Midtown bike lane project and could connect with the mural artist.
- Communications Committee - no updates
- Elections Committee - no updates
- Fundraising Committee:
  - Summerfest Update (Kenneth)
    - Sponsorship is critical
  - Tour of Homes Update/VHD Update (Amy, Melissa)
  - Friends of VAHI (Karen, Karri)
  - VAHI Yard Sale - March 29th - 10 families enrolled (Alex, Miguel, Karri, Amy)
  - Films in VAHI - Update on process (Karri, Mary Frances)
  - Merchandise (Miguel, Karri)

## **Old Business**

- Annual Meeting - Tentative: Sept 8th, 7pm (pending Mayor's availability)

## **Adjournment**

Meeting ended at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Karri Hobson-Pape