General Virginia-Highland Civic Association Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2026 - 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: Miguel Barrios, Melissa Clark (Vice President), Kevin Cronin, Kady DeWees, Rob Glancy (Co-Treasurer), Jennifer Hardwick (arrived late), Amy Harward, Karri Hobson-Pape (Secretary, not present), Alex B Jones (not present), Mary Frances Jones (Co-Treasurer), Tim Langan (President)

Community Members In Attendance:
Approximately 20 in person and 14 online.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Tim Langan, VHCA President 2025-2026. A Quorum was established. All board members in attendance except Karri Hobson-Pape (family matter) and Alex B Jones.

Faust 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.

As the last meeting of the 2025-2026 Board, Langan thanked the Board for a productive year, including:

- A much-needed rewrite of the VHCA bylaws.
- Creation of a 501(c)(4) to hold North Highland Park, and a long-term review of park ownership that concluded with the park remaining with the Civic Association.
- Two successful fundraising events: the Virginia-Highland Tour of Homes and Summerfest.
- Countless volunteer hours in the parks and record-breaking fundraising for the parks and Friends committees.

- Safe Streets progress, the neighborhood yard sale, and two History Committee talks in a row with over 100 residents each.
- An estimated 400 volunteers for VHCA-specific activities over the past year.

Approval of Agenda

The only change from the agenda initially distributed: the VHD request for $6,050 related to North Highland Park (the North Highland Master Plan connected to the VHD's CID effort) was removed and will not be discussed.

Motion #1:

(Langan/Cronin) Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed

Kady DeWees	*Approved*	Melissa Clark	*Approved*
Tim Langan	*Approved*	Kevin Cronin	*Approved*
Karri Hobson-Pape		Amy Harward	*Approved*
Mary Frances Jones	*Approved*	Jennifer Hardwick	*Approved*
Rob Glancy	*Approved*	Alex Bevel Jones	
Miguel Barrios	*Approved*		

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Prior Month Financial Reports, August 2026: **pulled from the consent agenda.** The bookkeeper had a family emergency and published the reports only a couple of hours before the meeting, so the Finance Committee had not reviewed them.
- Variance V-26-135, 811 Ponce de Leon Pl: pulled. The applicant is seeking a deferral to allow more time to talk with neighbors.
- Variances V-26-130, 914 Virginia Ave NE, and V-26-129, 840 Frederica St NE: both unanimously approved by the Planning Committee. No neighbors in the room or on Zoom spoke for or against either case.

Motion #2:

(Langan/Second) Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including minutes of the August 2026 Board Meeting, distributed by Karri Hobson-Pape.

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed

Kady DeWees	*Approved*	Melissa Clark	*Approved*
Tim Langan	*Approved*	Kevin Cronin	*Approved*
Karri Hobson-Pape		Amy Harward	*Approved*
Mary Frances Jones	*Approved*	Jennifer Hardwick	*Approved*
Rob Glancy	*Approved*	Alex Bevel Jones	

Miguel Barrios	*Approved*		

Brief Neighbor Updates

- None. Langan noted he did not call for these at the start; none were raised when he asked later in the meeting.

Guests and Elected Officials

- Atlanta Police Department - Lt Gensen, Zone 6 - degenson@atlantaga.gov
    - Indecent exposure cases: one incident with three separate reports tied to 1241 Virginia Avenue now has outstanding warrants. A resident spotted the suspect, saw him get into a car and gave that information to investigators; the victim identified him in a lineup. Some details are being withheld to protect the investigation.
    - A second incident near the Dark Horse Saloon: no police report had been filed. The SVU commander has an investigator contacting the victim. Video suggests a high likelihood it is the same suspect. Lt Jensen cautioned neighbors not to let their guard down as holiday parties increase.
    - Thefts from vehicles: 19 incidents this period versus 17 the prior period. Under FBI reporting guidelines, multiple cars broken into at one location count as one incident, so the actual number of cars may exceed 100.
    - 1110 North Highland Avenue break-ins: the tag traced to a dark-colored Malibu with Florida tags later used in a robbery. After a chase with Cobb County Police, three people were arrested and investigators obtained 32 arrest warrants, with more to follow.
    - Rosewood Drive: 30 or more cars broken into. A stolen credit card was used at the gas station at 486 Ponce de Leon (Boulevard and Ponce); video has been sent to Intelligence for identification.
    - Langan noted roughly 70 cars broken into in Virginia-Highland over the last two weeks. Lt Jensen asked that residents always call 911, even when nothing is stolen, so reports guide where resources go.
    - Paris on Ponce: neighbors reported a security breach with people inside. Lt Jensen, who also oversees the Quality of Life Unit, found no recent 911 or incident reports and asked for details. Langan will email a neighbor's photo.
    - Beltline: Langan noted a strong police presence on the Eastside Beltline at night now, compared with little presence before, and hopes it continues. Lt Jensen asked for ongoing feedback from residents.
    - Virginia-Highland Safety Patrol (Kay Stevenson): about 5% of the neighborhood subscribes; 10 to 12 households joined in the two weeks since the break-ins began. VHCA plans a membership push through its social media in the next 60 days. Lt Jensen is starting the winter holiday plan for retail areas and welcomed that support.

- City Councilperson District 2 - Kelsea Bond
    - Virginia Avenue bike lane: $200,000 in Moving Atlanta Forward renewal funding has been secured to make the current tactical urbanism project permanent and to extend it. The project has been assigned to a project manager; no timeline yet. Draft plans will come back to the neighborhood for feedback.
    - Pedestrian scramble: ATLDOT is reviewing the request. The Board hopes the North Highland repaving and complete street work can include the scramble at North Highland.
    - Zoning 2.0: organizations such as Abundant Housing and Partnership for Southern Equity have been discussing changes with the Mayor's administration focused on affordable housing and balanced growth.

- City Councilperson District 6 - Alex Wan
    - Monroe Drive Safe Streets: briefing Friday at 3:00 pm. Curb and sidewalk work has not started as expected; he will follow up.
    - North Highland: VHD is discussing a refreshed master plan for the commercial corridor; he is coordinating

so the North Highland project and community input do not get ahead of that work.
    - Piedmont Park special event season begins with Shaky Knees. The Special Event Technical Advisory Group convenes Wednesday; Rob Glancy is the VHCA appointee. Load-in is already blocking park access. Neighbors should send event concerns to Rob so they can be compiled.
    - Thanked the Board for its service and praised VHCA's planning review process as a model.
    - Before Council: the proposed sale of the City jail to Fulton County (about $60 million, with $20 million or more in annual operating costs to the City); Public Safety Committee held the paper. Legislation from Councilmember Bond to re-prioritize Beltline rail.
    - Zoning 2.0: paused by the administration; Councilmember Norwood introduced the latest version, with work sessions and listening sessions ahead. Wan supports moving forward if neighborhood-specific input (including St. Charles and Greenwood RG-3) is honored, and described himself as a strong protector of single-family residential zoning.
    - A board member asked whether APS is coordinating Midtown High School construction (groundbreaking hoped for February, staging at the 10th Street entrance) with Monroe Complete Streets. Wan noted the Virginia/10th/Monroe intersection is in the last part of the next phase because of easement issues.

- State House District 90 - Jonathan, staff for Bentley Hudgens, Democratic nominee for House District 90, introduced himself and noted part of the neighborhood is in District 90. Someone from the campaign plans to attend each monthly meeting.

- 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) - Elected Chair of Fulton County Commissioner, no current replacement. - Not present.

Officer & Committee Updates

- Executive Committee (Tim Langan)
    - General Meeting - September 1, 2026 - Review: good feedback and a great deal of good news to share; hopes it brings in new volunteers.
    - "New Neighbor" Initiative Update (Kady DeWees): the passport-sized booklets (neighborhood map and list of places) are being finished; packets are ready once they are printed. Board members can still send ideas. Langan asked that Trees Atlanta information be included.
    - VHD Request for $6,050 related to North Highland Park: removed from the agenda.
    - Formal Committee Debriefs to New Board: outgoing members should document their roles for successors (Tour of Homes, Treasurer, Planning, and others), for example by running notes or recordings through AI to produce to-do lists and timelines, as was done after Summerfest. Kevin Cronin offered to keep chairing the Planning Committee for a couple of months during the transition; the Board welcomed this.
    - The Board supported holding a New Board Orientation before October 1 with both the outgoing and incoming boards, so everyone hears who does what. Between three and five members will return, so most of the new board will be new.
    - Updates re Calendar of Events for 2025-2026 (see appendix).

- Finance Committee / Treasurer Update (Mary Frances Jones, Rob Glancy)
    - August 2026 Financial Reporting: not yet reviewed; to be published within about a week.
    - The Treasurer's Report should be published on the website with the financials. Editing access delayed completion; to be finished this month.
    - Need for Accounting Firm RFP for 2027+: outside accounting help is needed because of the workload. Current support includes Leah Bach and bookkeeper Melissa Kriest, who has kept the books for about 15

years and will likely roll off with plenty of notice. Shifting tactical work from the volunteer Treasurer to a paid bookkeeper would make the role manageable without two co-treasurers. Mary Stouffer was approached but is not available now. A neighborhood resident is preferred but not required.

- Planning Committee (Kevin Cronin, Tim Langan)
  - V-25-248 - 901 Los Angeles Ave NE
    - The Planning Committee voted 2-0 to recommend denial. The applicant revised the request after that meeting; the revised information arrived at 5:38 pm on the day of this meeting. The City will not defer the case again.
    - Presented by April Ingraham, with designer Alice Johnson and owner Boris Rakutenica: a new drive-under garage on an existing home built in 2011. After meetings with the City Arborist (David Gennaro) and Zoning (David Thompson), lot coverage drops below 50% (58% today).
    - Requested variances, as amended: (1) reduce the 35-foot front yard setback to 28.7 feet for relocated entry stairs; (2) waived; (3) front yard coverage of 65.86%, where 33% is allowed, using pavers with grass between them (the front yard is already paved as an apparently unpermitted three-car pad); (4) a 44-foot driveway, where 20 feet is allowed; (5) zero garage recess, where 10 feet behind the front facade is required; (6) a special exception to raise the side yard height from 6 feet to 13 feet for driveway construction.
    - The owner said the plan has been substantially the same for 18 to 24 months and asked that concerns be raised with owners early.
    - Neighbor Robert Samolyk (893 Los Angeles Ave) asked whether the City Arborist confirmed the plan meets the Tree Protection Ordinance. The applicant said the City does not pre-approve plans before permitting. He raised concern that the plan subtracts the area under private drives and walkways from the critical root zone of a large boundary tree, and said air-spade root mapping should be required. The applicant said the plan follows the arborist's recommendations and boundary trees are addressed at permitting.

Langan explained the recommendation: he could not support codifying paving this much of a front yard. He will attend NPU-F and remains open to more information.

Motion #3:
(Langan/Cronin) Motion to recommend denial of V-25-248, 901 Los Angeles Ave NE, for all variances requested, as amended.

Motion Passed 8 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 1 abstention

Kady DeWees	*Approved*	Melissa Clark	*Approved*
Tim Langan	*Approved*	Kevin Cronin	*Approved*
Karri Hobson-Pape		Amy Harward	*Approved*
Mary Frances Jones	*Approved*	Jennifer Hardwick	*Approved*
Rob Glancy	*Abstained*	Alex Bevel Jones	
Miguel Barrios	*Approved*		

- V-26-132 - 760 Virginia Cir NE
  - The Planning Committee recommended approval; the case was pulled from the consent agenda so

neighbors who had raised questions could be heard.

- Presented by Nina Gentry, with owner Ronak Patel and architect Brian Bellissimo (Bellissimo Homes). A sanitary sewer easement crosses the rear yard, leaving no other location for a pool.
- Requests: reduce the rear yard setback from 10 feet to 4 feet 11 inches (with a 5-foot credit for the 10-foot alley), and a special exception to allow active recreation (a pool) in a yard adjacent to the street. No work will be done in the alley.
- A fence with a locking gate will run along the rear property line, with an arborvitae planned behind the pool. Tree impact and lot coverage are within code limits. Outreach documentation was sent to Kevin Cronin.
- Next-door neighbor Lindsay Wheeler spoke in support. No one spoke in opposition.

Motion #4:
(Clark/Glancy) Motion to recommend approval of V-26-132, 760 Virginia Cir NE, to reduce the rear yard setback from 10 feet to 4 feet 11 inches, and a special exception to allow active recreation in a yard adjacent to the street.

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed

Kady DeWees	*Approved*	Melissa Clark	*Approved*
Tim Langan	*Approved*	Kevin Cronin	*Approved*
Karri Hobson-Pape		Amy Harward	*Approved*
Mary Frances Jones	*Approved*	Jennifer Hardwick	*Approved*
Rob Glancy	*Approved*	Alex Bevel Jones	
Miguel Barrios	*Approved*		

- V-26-128 - 1199 North Highland Avenue
  - Presented by 26th Street Partners: Noah Peters, Andrew Shaw, counsel Harold Buckley, and architect Dennis Hertline (Choate Hertline). The firm owns Morningside Village, the Highland and Amsterdam shopping center, the Kinship Highland buildings and Plaza on Ponce, and has no plans to redevelop those centers.
  - Proposal: five rear-loaded townhomes facing North Highland on the current surface parking lot, zoned mixed use under the 2008 NC ordinance. Cars enter from Amsterdam; no garage doors face the street. The raised flag-shaped portion of the lot, 18 feet above the street, will remain green space maintained by the homeowners.
  - Requested variances: reduce the transitional side yard from 20 feet to 11 feet; reduce the transitional rear yard from 20 feet to 10 feet (adjacent to R-4); and increase height from 35 feet to 45.8 feet for an enclosed rooftop amenity space for privacy and sound control.
  - Neighboring homes sit higher than the site. Letters of support from Mike and Mary Kane (993 Amsterdam) and Charles Klein; no objections from 1001, 989 and 1209 Amsterdam. Langan spoke with Barry at 989 Amsterdam, who supports the height.
  - Under the current Zoning 2.0 draft, the height, side and rear setback variances would not be needed.
  - Questions covered: no dedicated guest parking (two spaces per unit); pricing not yet set; about 8 months of construction; no underground tanks (Phase I and II testing completed); a zero lot line subdivision is an administrative process (question from NPU-F chair Debbie Skopczynski); package delivery and rideshare access to be studied; private trash pickup at the rear.
  - A neighbor asked that new street trees respect the neighborhood's crape myrtle plan for North Highland; the team was open to that, subject to the City Arborist and overhead power lines.

- Planning Committee reasoning: Aaron Fortner reviewed the case for VHCA. The Committee respected the NC controls the neighborhood worked hard to secure, but found a real hardship in the L-shaped lot. A rooftop cover would be allowed regardless, the shopping center meets its parking minimum without this lot, and five owner-occupied homes are a good outcome across from the commercial area.

Motion #5:
(Langan/Cronin) Motion to recommend approval of V-26-128, 1199 North Highland Avenue, to allow the transitional side yard to encroach 9 feet into the 20-foot requirement, the transitional rear yard to be reduced from 20 feet to 10 feet, and a building height of 45.8 feet where 35 feet is allowed, on the conditions that (1) the raised rear portion of the property remain undeveloped, and (2) the owner coordinate with VHCA and the City Arborist on tree species planted along the North Highland frontage.

Motion Passed 9 in favor/ 0 opposed

Kady DeWees	*Approved*	Melissa Clark	*Approved*
Tim Langan	*Approved*	Kevin Cronin	*Approved*
Karri Hobson-Pape		Amy Harward	*Approved*
Mary Frances Jones	*Approved*	Jennifer Hardwick	*Approved*
Rob Glancy	*Approved*	Alex Bevel Jones	
Miguel Barrios	*Approved*		

Applicants for all three cases will appear before NPU-F on Wednesday, September 16.

- Trees Atlanta Presentation - Discussion about a Tree Strategy for the Neighborhood (Todd Wiggins, Community Forestry Coordinator)
  - Trees Atlanta has planted nearly 200,000 trees over 40 years; about 3% (roughly 6,000) are in Virginia-Highland.
  - Last year's project: 135 trees over two weekends, with 114 volunteers contributing 464 hours. The mix was 75% native and 25% non-native, but only 10% (14 trees) were overstory trees, because of narrow planting strips and 40 households opting out (about 60 trees removed from the plan).
  - Tree canopy: the City fell from 46.5% (2018) to 45.7% (2023). Virginia-Highland fell from 39.3% to 37.2%, about twice the citywide decline. Single-family residential land holds 72% of the City's canopy, so reaching the City's 50% goal depends on homeowners.
  - Questions for the neighborhood: how to keep lots from being cleared and replanted with nothing but a fee paid, and where Trees Atlanta should plant next.
  - A board member noted that Parks Department arborists do not require protection of right-of-way trees during construction; trees planted around new homes have been lost. Neighbors who see unprotected right-of-way trees can call the Parks Department; a change in City law is needed. Utility pruning follows no required guidelines.
  - Requests: Langan asked for a Rosewood Drive planting this winter; a board member asked for overstory trees in John Howell Park, where trees were lost in the drought and an old water oak is marked for removal. Trees Atlanta will replace the trees lost.
  - Tree-friendly developers recognized: WH Property, which is planting 84 trees at Briarcliff property on October 24, and Golden Door Realty.
  - Virginia-Highland is piloting the first neighborhood Tree Care Steward group, founded by Mark and Kay Stephenson, with certified pruners and regular maintenance.

  - Free front-yard trees can be requested now; planting runs October through March, starting October 10. A small grant covers up to three yard trees. The native plant sale is open for online pre-orders.
  - Amy Harward will coordinate promotion with Mark and Stephanie Coffin, including Virginia-Highland street tree tours.

- Safety & Transportation (Amy Harward, Jennifer Hardwick)
  - Tactical Urbanism Bike Lane Update (Amy Harward): the one-year pilot is concluding. The committee went door to door along the corridor, met with community groups and has a survey still open. Its role was to gather feedback and pass it to the City, which is responsible for engineering and next steps. Harward has asked Councilmember Bond's office for next steps since March or April and does not yet have details on the $200,000; her understanding is that it would make the existing segment permanent, with a long-term view toward North Highland. Parking concerns came from a minority of respondents.
  - Langan noted the announcement made the extension sound settled, and asked for clarity before the next term.
  - Pedestrian Scramble Update: see Councilmember Bond's update above.
  - A painted bump-out with hatch marks recently appeared at the Virginia-Highland Elementary entrance on Virginia Avenue. It is unclear who painted it, and drivers continue to turn through it, which could endanger the roughly 500 children who walk out that door. Board members suggested interim bollards like those on the bike lane. Harward will ask the City for guidance.

- Fundraising
  - Tour of Homes 2026 Update (Melissa Clark, Amy Harward)
    - December 12–13 marks our 32nd Tour.
    - One or two more homes are needed, ideally near Amsterdam and McLean to bridge to Morningside. Last year VHCA worked with MLPA and made donations to MLPA and its elementary school as thanks.
    - Sponsorship Progress vs. Goal: about $40,000 committed and about $35,000 received, against a goal of about $58,000. The goal may come down if tote and magazine expenses are reduced.
    - A Tour of Homes insert in In Town, reaching about 37,000 households and listing all sponsors.
    - VHD Winterfest Plans & Partnership: collaboration with VHD again, plus new community events. Ansley has asked to coordinate on volunteers.
    - Tiny Doors Plan and Ribbon Cutting: not discussed
  - Summerfest 2026 Update (Rob Glancy): not discussed
  - Films in VAHI (Mary Frances Jones): not discussed
  - VHCA Merchandise - new vendor needed (Mary Frances Jones): not discussed

- Parks Committee (Miguel Barrios): Work days, the North Highland Park Incident Response Plan, signage and the alley fence were not discussed; confirm. See the Trees Atlanta section for John Howell Park trees.

- Communications Committee (Amy Harward): Trees Atlanta promotion (see above) and the Safety Patrol membership campaign.

- History Committee (Karri Hobson-Pape) (from the agenda; not discussed beyond Langan's opening remarks)
  - Sept 10, 2026, The Fight That Built a Neighborhood: How Stopping I-485 Created Virginia-Highland, Catherine Lewis, PhD, and Joseph Drolet, Founder VHCA: about 100+ attendees.
  - Nov 12, 2026, The VAHI Architecture, Pam Bullock, Mark & Julie Arnold
  - Jan 14, 2027, Workshop: Learn About Your House History, Victoria Lemos, Archive Atlanta
  - Feb 11, 2027, History of Atkins Park, Paul Burks
  - Mar 11, 2027, Early Atlanta Pioneer History (including Todd & Cheshire Family), Mark Pifer, Author of Hidden History of Old Atlanta

- Elections Committee (Kevin Cronin)
    - Voting is open and closes Friday, September 18, 2026. 13 candidates are running; voters may vote for up to 11.
    - Several registrants outside the neighborhood boundaries were told they may share input but not vote. Ida Centner will update the voting instructions.
    - The recent election email went out under Tim Langan's name; future election emails should come from the Elections Committee.
    - Election Results Announced September 21st, 2026. Board Planning Meeting planned immediately after September 21st. The current term ends September 30; the new Board is installed October 1, 2026, and will hold the October monthly meeting.
    - A board member asked whether the new bylaws allow a designated alternate, as earlier bylaws did. The Board's understanding is that it may choose an alternate if needed; confirm with the bylaws.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karri Hobson-Pape