



VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND  
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

**VHCA General Meeting**  
**Monday, December 12th 2016; 7:00 PM; Ponce de Leon Library**

**Minutes**

Attendees: Eleanor Barrineau, David Brandenberger, Cindy Kaufman, Jenifer Keenan, Steve Messner, Debbie Skopczynski, Kay Stephenson, George Zirkel  
Attending via Telephone: Robin Ragland  
Excused: Jess Windham  
Resigned: Paige Hewell

The president called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and board members introduced themselves.

It was announced that Paige Hewell has resigned due to personal reasons but will continue to assist with Summerfest. Steve Messner, the alternate board member, will now serve as a full board member.

The agenda was reviewed. A motion was made by D. Skopczynski to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by D. Brandenberger and approved unanimously.

Public Official Reports and Guest Presentations were deferred until representatives arrive.

**Committee Reports:**

Reports from Robin Ragland were advanced.

History and Preservation Committee – Robin Ragland

- We are in the second of four phases for the Fire Station #19 design services. A meeting to review the Fire Station #19 renovation plans is scheduled with the Atlanta Urban Design Commission is scheduled for Wednesday 12/14/16. Three community input and outreach meetings will also be scheduled during this phase.
- Rich Chey's Breakfast with Santa event held annually at Osteria 832 raised \$5,000 bringing his total contribution over several years to \$55,000. He will also be hosting the Morningside Mile race on March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- The Santa-thon event held at the Firehouse on Sunday 12/12/16 raised \$4,000. Rob and Melanie Wallace, owners of Marco's Pizza locations in Virginia-Highland and Buckhead delivered a check for \$5,000, which brings their total contribution to \$6,800.
- The committee coordinated a history tour in conjunction with this year's Tour of Homes event. The tour was approximately 45 minutes. The committee has now created two tours.



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The other tour is 20 minutes long. The longer tour will be polished and published as a self-guided tour on vahi.org. Future plans are to have the tour included in the Atlanta Preservation Center's Phoenix Flies program.

- A donation button has been added to the home page for Fire Station #19 to encourage end-of-year donations

Tour of Homes - Robin Ragland

- The Tour of Homes event went well with the sale of 4 more tickets than last year despite the weather. Gross proceeds include \$45,000 from sponsorships and \$35,000 from tickets for a total of \$80,000. Expenses are still being calculated, but expect the net to be around \$56,000.

Planning Committee

Variances were deferred as the applicant was not present

Liquor licenses – Jenifer Keenan

- No applications this month

Recent annexation by City of Atlanta – Jenifer Keenan

- Recently thirty+ homes on University Avenue and a nearby townhome community were annexed by the city. This was not a focus of Virginia-Highland as the properties were completely contained within the Morningside neighborhood. Since approval we have learned that the children from these homes have been assigned to the Springdale Elementary School rather than Morningside Elementary. The Planning Committee will write a letter to Atlanta Public Schools (APS) requesting that they look at opportunities to move those home back into the Morningside Elementary School district.

Budget Committee/Treasurer's Report – George Zirkel

- A meeting is planned with Pam Papner this week to finalize the Summerfest budget. At that time the 2017 budget will be complete and can be reviewed.

Parks Committee – David Brandenberger

- Still selling bricks for North Highland Park. There are 24 available at \$100 each. In addition to placement of a brick in the park, donors will receive a t-shirt and certificate.
- The committee is talking with property owners adjacent to the triangle at N. Highland and Virginia regarding sharing of landscape maintenance resources to keep this area looking tidy.



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- Following discussions regarding illegal behavior taking place in N. Highland Park, any member of the public can call 911 and report illegal activity. For park rules violations, please contact the committee or a board member.

Committee reports were interrupted to allow the Renew Atlanta and APD representatives to present.

#### Regan Hammond, Renew Atlanta Monroe/Boulevard Complete Streets Project Update

- A public meeting was held in August at Grady High School to gather public input on the Monroe Drive/Boulevard Complete Streets Project and understand what modes of transportation are most important. <http://renewatlantabond.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Renew-ATL-Monroe-Drive-Boulevard-Meeting-Packet-8.23.16.pdf>

A summary of this input is available on the Renew Atlanta website:

<http://renewatlantabond.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Monroe-Drive-Boulevard-Summary-of-Comments.pdf>

- Currently the team is working with design consultants to capture additional data such as turning movement counts.
- One-on-one meetings have been held with individual neighborhood representatives.
- Input is leading to a wide variety of improvement options. The team is currently testing and modeling the options.
- The next public meeting will be held in late January to share results of technical analysis, present different Complete Street scenarios, allow for Q&A, and to do some interactive real-time polling.
- In late March or early April, a final meeting will be held to present recommendations.
- Expect work on small projects (e.g. signage improvements) to begin while engineering is happening for bigger components.

#### Response to specific questions:

- Traffic counts show that a road diet is feasible even though the counts are at the upper limit of volume for that to work.
- In addition to neighborhoods, meetings have been held with MARTA and APS at all levels.



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- The intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> and Monroe is the highest priority for this project. The project will address the entire corridor from Piedmont Circle at the northern end to Woodward Ave (two blocks south of Memorial).
- The impact of special events and associated road closures are not being modeled because they don't have the data, but it is a concern. Not being looked at as a number crunching exercise, but rather as a policy issue.
- Concerns over cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods due to changes in Monroe can be addressed individually. For example, traffic calming measures (chicanes, speed humps) or turning restrictions can be applied. Turning restrictions would be handled legislatively by City Council. Note that such restrictions will apply to residents of the street as well as those who wish to use that street as a cut through.
- During the summer, there will be a project to install and connect stop lights to traffic control and to re-time these lights.
- Widening of Monroe is not feasible due to cost to acquire land.
- An educational program will be included in the January meeting to explain the benefits of complete streets with real world examples.
- Jenifer Keenan thanked Regan for coming to the meeting and reiterated that the Virginia-Highland community, as reflected in the Virginia-Highland Master Plan adopted by City Council, strongly supports a road diet for Monroe from 10th to Piedmont.

Planning Committee - Continued

- Variances
  - V-16-320 1165 Monroe Drive  
Applicant seeks a variance to reduce the north sideyard setback to install a second floor addition in the existing footprint.
- This home is currently in the setback. A 5' variance was requested. However, the actual drawings show a 6'6" setback.
- The committee recommended approval with refiling to reflect the plans as submitted. The homeowner requested that the 5' variance be granted to allow flexibility.
- A motion was made to deny approval of this variance by D. Skopczynski and 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Stephenson. The straw voice vote was unanimous to deny approval as was the board vote.

Committee Reports were again interrupted to allow the Atlanta Police Department representative to report



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### APD – Lt. Floyd, Zone 6

- Overall APD has been busy in Virginia-Highland, Poncey-Highland and Inman Park.
- Vehicle break-ins are almost double in the past twenty-eight days. Patrols are being asked to work the blocks just off the main drags (Ponce de Leon Ave., N. Highland Ave., Lanier Blvd.) as well as the parking lots in the commercial districts.
- Good homeowner descriptions from two robberies on Park and Crestridge led to the arrest of several juveniles. The individuals were found in Piedmont Park with the back pack that had been described and the firearm that was used.
- There were also two commercial burglary incidents; one on Pylant and one at Highland Pet.
- Seeing more property crime than violent crime.
- Regarding package thefts, residents need to be creative with delivery such as having packages delivered to the office, or some other safe location.
- APD is still accepting new unwrapped toys for children ages toddler to 14. They have doubled the number of families to serve this year from fifty to one hundred.

### Fundraising Committee – Continued

Summerfest – Jenifer Keenan

Looking for new volunteers to work on the committee and planning will start up after the first of the year.

### Safety Committee – Eleanor Barrineau

Working on recruiting replacement street captains, plans for security cameras and a streetlighting assessment pilot.

### Communications Committee – Cindy Kaufman and Kay Stephenson

The survey closed on Sunday 12/11/16 with over 400 respondents. Analysis will begin shortly.

### President's Report

After the holidays the board will be working on increasing community outreach and volunteers.

### Piedmont Park Conservancy – Ken Haldin

- PPC Board member provided an update on Tour of Homes promotional cooperation.



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- During November, the park had 460 volunteers who contributed 1400+ work hours.
- Operations staff installed 7,000 flower plants.
- Please check out the new reading circle near the 12<sup>th</sup> street entrance.

Calendar: (All meetings are public)

- NPU-F Monthly Meeting at Hillside: Mon., Dec. 19th at 7 pm
- VHCA Planning Committee at Garrison Hall, Church of Our Savior: Wed., Jan. 4th at 7 pm
- VHCA General Meeting at Ponce de Leon Library: Mon., Jan 9th at 7 pm

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm

\*Note: The following two items on the agenda under new business were not discussed and will be discussed at the January meeting:

Vote on Committee Goals 2016/2017  
Vote on 2017 Budget

\*\* Note: Following the meeting, members of the Board were given a brief overview of the Virginia-Highland Master Plan by Aaron Fortner, the consultant who conducted public meetings and wrote the plan based on public input. The purpose of the briefing was to introduce Aaron to the new board members and educate/remind board members on the priorities of the Master Plan so that they can be incorporated into committee objectives for the year. There were no policy discussions, decisions or votes taken at the meeting which lasted approximately 30 minutes.