

Minutes of Virginia-Highland Civic Association October 10, 2016 Board Meeting

Monday October 10, 2016 - 7:00 PM - Church of Our Saviour Pettway Hall

Board Directors Present: Eleanor Barrineau, David Brandenberger, Paige Hewell, Cindy Kaufman, Jenifer Keenan (via phone), Steve Messner, Robin Ragland, Debbie Skopczynski, Kay Stephenson, Jess Windham, George Zirkel

Election of VHCA Board Officers - Kevin Cronin

President Jenifer Keenan
Vote: 9 in favor; 0 - opposed; 2 - abstentions
VP Kay Stephenson
Vote: 10 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 - abstention
Secretary Jess Windham
Vote: Unanimous
Treasurer George Zirkel
Vote: Unanimous

*Jenifer attended the meeting by phone and turned the meeting over to Kay to conduct the meeting.

Reports from City Department Representatives

None Present due to holiday

Comments from Elected Officials

None Present

Guest Presentations

None

Secretary Report

Report by Kay Stephenson: Board met last week with outgoing Board members to hold transition meeting along with attorneys from Todd Memorial. The Board will continue tonight to discuss committee chairs. Received several nice thank you notes for the Grants given at the annual meeting.

Treasurer Report

The new treasure, George Zirkel, has met with outgoing treasurer Peggy Berg. Account transfer in process. George will provide a more detailed report at the November board meeting.

Committee Reports

Planning - Jess Windham

- Variance Application(s)

V-16-260; 797 Greenwood Ave. NE. RG-2; BL OL

Applicant Kelly Reilly of Wright Gardner Architect (on behalf of owner Michael Jenkins) seeks variances to (A) reduce the required front yard setback from 40 feet to 18 feet 10 inches (pre-existing); (B) reduce the required half-depth front yard (on Bonaventure) from 20 feet to 7 feet 11 inches; and (C) reduce the required sideyard setback from 7 feet to 6 feet 10 inches.

Planning Committee Report: The Planning Committee made a site visit on 10-4-16. A large tree in the front yard is not in the buildable area and will not be disturbed. The lot is level, and the stormwater ordinance will apply. All neighbors have been notified. The foundation remains from the demolished former home. There are no barriers across the rear of the stoop that leads to over a drop of several feet or across a separate and deeper drop into an interior subbasement pit below the basement level, nor any signage warning of such hazards. The architects relayed on 10-2 that they had notified the owners of our safety concerns on those points and our request that access to the site be blocked and that rubble from the demolition be removed. As there had been no changes on site by 10-4, a formal letter was sent to the owner (via the architects), and a complaint was filed with the city. The Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval to the Board.

Recommendation of approval by planning committee per Jess and 2nded.

Discussion around tree fencing not being protected. A stop work order has been placed due to this. Site plan shows that all trees will be saved and protected. Question was raised on lot coverage. Lot is zoned RG-2. Question was raised about site plans being available for the membership to review at the meeting. All site plans are on NPU website.

Straw vote of meeting attendees: 12 in favor, 3 opposed, and 2 abstentions

Board Vote: 10 in favor, 1 abstention. Site planning ok

V-16-266; 560 Cresthill Ave. NE; R-4

Applicants Earl Jackson and Susan Johnson of Metro Atlanta Permits (for owner David Taylor-Klaus) seek a variance to reduce the required western side yard setback from 7 feet to 2.9 feet (existing on rear deck) to add second story addition in the existing footprint to a single-family dwelling and to expand the rear deck entirely over an existing patio.

Planning Committee Report: The Planning Committee site visit on 10-4-16 noted that the existing home setback appears to be at 3' or greater. Two

existing stormwater discharges on the west side were reviewed. The architect wants to relocate one for foundation protection; the other discharges onto the western neighbor's property in a manner no longer consistent with code. The logical destination for both is downhill to the mostly flat rear yard full of trees, and those goals outcomes will be discussed with architect. The rear yard has five significant trees, all of which are slated for preservation. A 28" tree near the construction will need special attention. The site will remain 52.7% impervious, unless it can be reduced by a contemplated driveway on the shared driveway to the east. All neighbors have been notified, some personally. The last-minute arrival of the variance meant that an inadequately notified neighbor is still possible. The Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval to the Board.

Motion made to approve. Straw Vote: 14 In Favor. Opposed 0. 1 Abstention

Board Vote 8 in favor, 1 abstention.

V-16-224. 695 Cooledge Ave. NE; R-4 - Withdrawn

V-16-232; 834 Clemont Dr. NE; R-4 - Deferred until November

V-16-239; 1079 North Highland Ave. NE; R-4 - Deferred until November

V-16-242; 866 Arlington Pl. NE; R-4 - Deferred until January

- Monroe Drive Complete Streets Update - Jenifer Keenan
Last week Jack White, Eleanor and Jenifer attended an MLPA traffic forum that focused on the Monroe Complete Streets Project. Representatives from Renew Atlanta indicated that engineering analysis/study(traffic study) is ongoing. In May, they did traffic counts, which showed volume between 18,500 and 21,000. This info is available on the Renew ATL website. In January, Renew Atlanta will present several proposals in a public meeting based on the engineering studies and public input and will have options for online input. Based on all those inputs, they will make a final recommendation to City Council and present it in March. VHCA will invite Renew Atlanta present to VAHI in the future.
- Fire Station 19 Update
Catherine Lewis said she is available to continue to chair this effort. Latest fundraiser with Marco's Pizza at New Park raised \$4900.00

Fundraising

- Summerfest - Paige Hewell
Brainstorming session with Jean Jordan and Kevin Cronin to look for new ideas and refresh Summerfest

- Tour of Homes - Robin Ragland

Tickets can be purchased online from the tour website starting this weekend for \$25. A home tour ticket + a history tour ticket can be purchased in advance for \$30. Like the tour Facebook Page to follow along for your chance to win one of the many gift certificates from our sponsors. Giveaways total more than \$1,500 this year. Volunteer for the tour by visiting the tour website.

Parks - David Brandenberger

Several incoming bids for John Howell Park, focusing on Hardscape. Need to review and would expect other bids to come in for landscaping and rain garden.

Orme Park to develop a "Kick Ball" Would need to gather input from local neighbors. Looking for volunteers to join the parks committee.

David needs to follow up on the issue with the creek to see what the resolution was of this issue.

Stephanie Coffin brought up the issue of the Crape Myrtle trees in front of John Howell Park. AT&T should be following the City of ATL law regarding tree pruning. Greg Levine is working with AT&T to try and get them to help monitor the trees. Stephanie is going to forward a copy of agreement that they need to David.

Safety - Eleanor Barrineau

- SPARK Road Safety Meeting

On October 5th Eleanor represented the VaHi Board at an observation/ meeting held at SPARK Elementary School regarding road safety concerns. Also attending were APS Superintendent Meria Carstarphen, some of her executive team, School Board member Matt Westmoreland, Chief Applin of the APS Police Department, SPARK principal Terry Harness, several representatives from City of Atlanta Public Works, Kelli Taylor from the Druid Hills Civic Association, and a number of SPARK parents (led by Sara Zeigler and Steve Gregg) from their PTO and GO Team who had organized the event in conjunction with International Walk to School Day.

Issues highlighted during the event included:

Ponce de Leon - no overhead "school zone" signage approaching from the east, the overhead signage approaching from the west is before the corner with Briarcliff so doesn't have the desired impact, poor visibility of existing school sign, no fence between the school and the property immediately to the east (this was both a visibility issue and a safety issue for students on the school property).

Briarcliff - cars regularly run through the Hawk signal, no "school zone" signage overhead or on the sides of the road, frequent absence of a crossing guard at the Hawk signal, sign explaining what a Hawk signal is was knocked over and not replaced.

Lack of speed reduction zones on the two streets.

Challenges discussed included:

Both Ponce de Leon and Briarcliff are state routes and there was no one at the meeting representing the state DOT, which would be responsible for improved signage and speed zone changes.

Due to the congestion and multiple stops on Briarcliff heading north between Ponce and the Hawk signal, frustration sometimes leads drivers to run the signal.

Druid Hills has a historic designation so there are additional hoops to jump through to get a fence around school property.

Actions proposed which would be coordinated between APS and other organizations:

Documenting better signage at other schools on state routes in Atlanta (e.g. Briar Vista on Briarcliff); coordinating with GDOT for improved signage surrounding SPARK; working with Druid Hills Civic Association and the city's Urban Design Commission concerning the fence issue; assuring that a crossing guard is present at the Hawk signal on Briarcliff; educating the community about safety issues and determining if any signage on private property would be helpful/possible.

Question asked about whether GDOT was invited to attend this meeting given that Briarcliff and Ponce are state routes. Suggestion made to invite Park Cannon/state representatives to get involved.

- Street Captain Report

Refresh of the street captain list in progress. Deborah Schwartz in process of updating street captains.

President Report

Jenifer completed the transition meeting. We are working on getting committee structure in place. Will work on outreach to provide information on committee roles and responsibilities and encouraging others to get involved.

Unfinished Business

Todd Memorial and Lawsuit

VHCA has spent \$42,000 in legal fees to date, and is awaiting one additional invoice from its attorney. VHCA's attorney will not charge the Association for any more of his fees for the suit against the defendants - the family has indicated they will cover future attorney's fees. The defendants have filed a motion to dismiss and countersuit against VHCA for trespass. VHCA's Insurance has been notified about the trespass claim. VHCA has asked its insurers to cover the fees to defend the trespass suit and any damages that could be awarded from that suit.

VHCA's response to the Motion to Dismiss is due on 10/21, but an extension may be requested.

VHCA will continue to provide updates on the litigation and will seek public input on this issue.

New Business

Proposal for Survey of Association Members - Kay Stephenson

Proposal to form an ad hoc committee to develop a survey to gather input from the community. Lola stated that VHCD did a Master Plan for the neighborhood over a year ago and questioned why do we need to do this now? Kay responded that the survey was to provide input on how VHCA can better serve the community.

Jess asked about the scope of the survey.

A vote was taken and 6 were in favor of forming the ad hoc committee. The vote did not include "no votes" or abstentions.

Announcements:

November 12th - Come plant trees with Tree's Atlanta. Start at 9 and end by 12. Info to be posted on VAHI Website. Neighbors being notified on planting and input.

Jack White reported that boy scouts and cub scouts worked with Jess Windham to install storm drain markers close to Orme Park.

Congratulations to Jess Windham who is getting married this weekend in Highland Park

David shared the city of Atlanta, has a program to put in Bike racks. The board will solicit input and develop a recommendation. Motion to support a singular recommend to the City. **Motion passed**

Adjournment at 8:30