



WESTOVER HILLS

neighborhood association

Monthly Meeting Minutes – June 13, 2023

Location – Westover Hills United Methodist Church Chapel

Opening (7:05pm)

Welcome Fran Eckenrode

Guest Reports

4th District Report Kristen Nye/Timmy Siverd

Hon. Kristen Nye opened the meeting with her update.

The Reedy Creek Bypass Trail has been approved for construction and may be completed this summer.

Friends of James River Park are funding 70% of the section of trail. The new trail will be about 900 feet long and will run parallel and to the South of the existing road. It will be an 8 foot wide compacted gravel trail. This section is needed to separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic near Park HQ and Reedy Creek

Dredging on Forest Hill Lake: The lake was rebuilt ~12 yrs ago and is scheduled to be re-dredged about every 5 yrs. Storm drains upstream of the lake bring a lot of litter and sediment. Volunteers are using kayaks to help remove some of the trash. This effort will be followed by dredging. There will be no change to standard or infrastructure. A question was asked: where does dredge go? Kristen did not know, it is handled by a contractor. The dredging will take several weeks. Last time it took 6-8 wks. A start date has not been set. Expected to occur in the next 12-18 months.

City Council recently addressed an ordinance to ban exotic animals in Richmond (snakes, panthers, certain birds, etc.) Legislation was delayed in response to a group of falconers who want to engage in their sport. A decision was delayed in order to allow time to address this issue but the plan is to pass a modified ordinance once changes are made. Once the ordinance is passed, Animal Control will have authority to enforce the ordinance.

Many attended the meeting on WHES/Jahnke Rd and bike lanes held at the WH Elementary School. The city's survey for input closed on June 2. To date, Kristen has not been updated on input and on any changes. Val Murphy has filed a FOIA for additional info that she requested which has not been provided.

HS graduations are going on this week. They were moved from Altria Theatre to individual schools to be more manageable safety wise.

Parks and Recreation is sponsoring a senior wellness event at FH park on June 15th from 10am to 2pm.

DJ Mike Jones is holding a Juneteenth event at FH Park on Saturday, June 17, from 11am to 2pm.

Work at intersection of Forest Hill Ave and Westover Hills Blvd is related to water utility. Work will last a couple of months. The city usually sends out a notice to Kristen, but a notice was not sent this time. Resident question: "Will landscapers continue to weed median on Forest Hill"? They were supposed to maintaining it for a period of time. The City Dept of Works is now maintaining the median.

The City is having a second referendum on a casino. Resident question: "Is this setting a precedent"? Kristen indicated that there is no state law prohibiting a second referendum. A state study looked at the economics of having casinos in the city (including Petersburg). The casino would be in the 8th district where there is strong support. The 8th district has struggled financially. The casino would be an economic development project at no cost to the city. City Council is being encouraged by the 8th district rep. The 8th district is in South Richmond along I-95. It is a long narrow district abutting Chesterfield and is an economically depressed area. If approved, 25 million dollars gets transferred from developers to city. A casino will also generate tax revenue. Bidding was a competitive process that included several casino developers.

Police Department Update Lt. Marvin Marsh stood in for Lt. Andorfer. Lt. Marsh reported the stats for crime in the area. There was a recent 29% reduction in incidences in general. The usual theft of catalytic converters and car break-ins is still being reported. Catalytic converter thieves target cars sitting higher off ground. It takes them only about 2 minutes to remove a converter. They strike day or night and at events.

School Board Report Jonathan Young was not able to attend.

WHUMC Report Nicole Timms sent regrets- no updates to report.

Neighborhood Updates

4701 Forest Hill (Bank of America site) Development..... Dodson Development Group:
Adam Tiller, Mark Baker,

Adam Tiller presented an update on Dodson Development plans for the former Bank of America site.

Adam lives on King William. He presented information on a special exception request to city to raise elevation of the building 4 ft, from 35' to 39'. This increase will be absorbed in the first floor retail space to allow for higher ceilings to accommodate utilities and provide a more pleasing aesthetic than would be achieved by low ceilings. The goal is to attract higher-end retail commercial tenants.

Mark Baker of Baker Development Resources is assisting Dodson with the special exception request. He explained that the property is zoned B2 for community business. Current zoning specifies a height of 35 ft. Dodson is requesting an additional 4' is a special exception request. All other zoning requirements are met. The special request is a simple and specific request that goes to Board of Zoning Appeals. It is not a Special Use Appeal. Mark asked residents who support the special exception to write a letter to the Board of Zoning Appeals and voice their support. The City has no parking standards but the project is providing 59 spaces and 8 short term bike spaces. This exceeds requirements.

B2 Mixed Use Development zoning can include some unattractive businesses including carwashes, gas stations, motels, and auto service centers among other. The Dodson plan is a positive type of B2 Development. There will be 4-6 commercial tenants on the first floor. Fifteen parking spaces are planned in front of the businesses and 44 spaces will be behind the building. The Plan of Development (POD) has been approved by the city and construction is anticipated to start in Q3/Q4. The last hurdle is the special exception request.

Traffic and parking were considered in the approved POD. The city estimated that this development will contribute about 100 additional vehicles/day compared to when the property was a bank. Existing trees will remain in the 20-25 feet of city right-of-way. Other trees will be removed and some added when the development is landscaped. EV parking is being planned. Construction will last 16-20

months. There is no storm water mgmt. facility on-site now. An underground system will be installed in front of the building and drain into city system along Forest Hill Ave. Apartments will be 600 sf and 900 sf. Target rents in current dollars: \$1400-\$2000/month.

July 4 - Kids Parade and FireworksCarrie Rogers & Will Chapman
Time ran out on the agenda for this topic. Talks are ongoing with city. Updates will be sent to the neighborhood via social media.

Upcoming Events

July 4 - Kids Parade and Fireworks

Adjourn

Reminders:

July 11-WHNA Monthly Meeting