



# WESTOVER HILLS

neighborhood  
association

## Monthly Meeting Agenda – July 11, 2023 Location – Westover Hills United Methodist Church Chapel

### Opening (7:00pm)

Welcome .....Fran Eckenrode  
Tom Tichenor sent his regrets.

### Guest Reports

**Police Department Update .....Lt. Andorfer**

Lt. Andorfer reviewed last 28 day trend. If you have a Hyundai or Kia, he recommends getting a steering wheel lock. 200% increase in car thefts in recent months in district. Thieves appear to be kids aged 17-20 challenged to see how many cars they can steal. Based on a TikTok challenge from a few yrs ago. 7-8 catalytic converters are stolen per month. If you hear a suspicious noise, get vehicle description and report it.

Pursuit of dirt bikes. Police are not pursuing dirt bikes all the time for safety reasons. Same for bicycles in huge groups. If you can get a photo that id's a bike driver, report to police.

Dennis Donahue had a Hyundai stolen at Dorchester and Sylvan in the middle of the night. Thieves bash rear driver side window and use a USB cord to start the car. Within 24 hrs police found Dennis' car. The stolen cars are being left in near-by neighborhoods, supporting the idea that the thefts are pranks.

Lt Andorfer suggests getting on the Nextdoor app to read info if you don't come to meetings. He regularly posts information out there.

**4<sup>th</sup> District Report .....Kristen Nye/Timmy Siverd**

Kristen Nye updated the group on the Use Permit filed for a home on Forest Hill Ave near Dorchester and Forest Hill. The Permit is for seniors with disabilities. Per

state and city law, don't need a special use permit and do not require a community meeting. City permits up to 8 individuals with disabilities in a home.

You may have seen speed and slow-down signs in nearby areas. These signs are being put in around city. They have not been activated yet, they just say slow down. The signs are movable and intended to remind drivers of their speed. They are being placed in spots with high speed issues and areas with complaints.

Good news: Paperwork is before council to do safety improvements in front of 48 St (O'Toole's). Proposal is on line and will be in the next news letter. It will include a beacon that allows pedestrians to walk across Forest Hill.

Update regarding issues with fence at WHES. Right now the playground and park are all part of portfolio of the school. However, City Park Dept went in and fixed the fence since it was a possible safety issue.

The lake in Forest Hill Park has been dredged once about 5 yrs ago. A lot of trash has been collecting, building up on the sediment. The 4 bays in the lake that collect sediment will be cleaned this fall and dredging will occur next year. Some folks in kayaks went out and cleaned the lakes. However, all the rain has brought more trash.

Kristen had 2 contest trivia questions:

Who knows Night out this year?

Nat'l Night Out is August 1. Intended to bring communities together to meet neighbors.

WHNA and WHUMC will partner with Councilperson Kristen to put on this event.

The interim police chief will likely stop by.

What cemetery is located in neighborhood over and is being restored? Forest View on a vacant lot. Sonar scan shows multiple graves at the corner of Bassett Ave and Forest View Drive. The burial site has been researched and land has been cleared and cleaned. Goats will come in August to further clear growth from the property.

Tennis under the lights. An event at tennis courts on Arthur Ashe Blvd. Round robin doubles tournament. There is a big photo of Kristen.

Go to: [tennisunderthelightsrva.com](http://tennisunderthelightsrva.com)

The blasting occurring is a by-right project. Riverside drive was recently closed for a cave-in not related to the blasting. Project came up several yrs ago when property was purchased on Riverside at corner of SouthCliff. Lots have been subdivided for development, which is by-right. Developer came to a meeting 4-5 yrs ago. Project just started recently. Developers were given a permit to blast to put in utilities. Blasting is controlled, Fire Dept is on-site. Notices going out via city emergency notification system. Expected to go on every day for about 2 weeks. A warning siren goes off 3 times before blasting.

Westover Hills Blvd near bridge: Safety signs in area need to be redone. Kristen recommended sending information to 311 and you will get an email receipt. If request not acted on, send receipt to Kristen for further action. It was suggested that “closed bridge” signs be posted earlier than right at the downhill slope to bridge so that drivers have a chance to divert rather than try to turn around and create a dangerous situation.

**School Board Report .....Jonathan Young**

Jonathan is traveling and sent his regrets.

**WHUMC Report .....Nicole Timms**

Nicole briefly mentioned several updated and noted that these can be found on the church website: <http://www.westoverhillsumc.org/>

**Commerce.....Bruce Gould**

Bruce reported that the Dobson Development request to the city to increase the height of the development at the former Bank of America property by 4ft was approved. Bruce also reported that demolition at Westover Place has started. This work has initially been slow since demolition started on the building sharing a wall with Riverside Tavern.

**Neighborhood Invasive Plants and Watersheds**

Friends of Forest Hill Park.....Chris Catanzaro

Reedy Creek Coalition.....Suzette Lyon

The WHNA hosted presentations by Chris Catanzaro and Suzette Lyon. Chris’s basic mission is to inform neighbors of what Friends of Forest Hill Park and Reedy Creek Coalition do and how you can learn more. Chris is of the opinion that native plants are better than exotic imports. Native plants are part of life cycle of many critters. Va Creeper is host plant for a type of moth. Insects can be a critical part of plant life cycle. He showed a fruiting stem of *Arum italicum*, which is not native here. If you have them, snip off the fruiting stem, take seeds off, put in a bag, and discard. Birds eat mature berries and spread them.

English Ivy is another invasive plant. It inhibits growth of native seeds and creates a monoculture that is bad for biodiversity.

Bradford Pear is another invasive that is prolific in producing fruits and seeds.

Oriental bittersweet. Don’t put this on compost piles, it is like Kudzu and can climb trees up to 60ft. Get rid of it.

Next work day in Forest Hill Park is Sept 30 . Volunteers will work for 2 hrs. pulling English Ivy. Meet at 10 am near corner of Roanoke and FH. Park across the street.

Funding from Keep VA Beautiful allowed planting a couple dozen native plants near the pyramid in FH Park. The Pyramid used to be covered with ivy. Some progress is being made against invasives in the FH Park.

Reedy Creek Coalition (RCC). Suzette informed the group about Crooked Branch Ravine Park which is across the road from George Wythe HS. It is an undeveloped 17 acre park in the Reedy Creek watershed. Most of the watershed is covered with impervious surface causing runoff to fill the streams.

RCC is working on invasive plant problem in park. Sheep were brought in to graze english ivy. With ivy gone, Oak seedlings are coming up. Oaks as a genus support over 450 caterpillars. RCC occasionally sponsors a nature walk. Come to the work days if you can!

RCC has a lending library where you can check out books. Look at their website under "Good reads for the watershed" and you will find images of book covers, a link to book reviews, and learn how to check out books. Books are picked up at the book box at Suzette's house. You can borrow for 3 weeks and then return books to the book box.

Check out their website: [Friendsofforesthillpark.org](http://Friendsofforesthillpark.org)

### **Meeting Adjourned at 8:30**

Following the meeting, Val Murphy explained a project she has undertaken to further research the bicycle lane project on Westover Hills Blvd. To volunteer, residents can contact Val at [val.murphey@comcast.net](mailto:val.murphey@comcast.net).