



Monthly Meeting Minutes

DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2024

TIME: 7:00 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: BRYAN CARLSON, PRESIDENT

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

- **President:** Bryan Carlson (present)
- **Co-Vice Presidents:** Val Murphey (present) and Mark Bouziane (present)
- **Co-Secretaries:** Heather Putnam (Absent) and Erin Nicholson (present)
- **Treasurer:** Melissa Butler (Absent)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

N/A – will approve this month’s minutes in next month’s meeting

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elizabeth Linka Commonwealth Atty McEachen’s office/ 3rd precinct prosecutor (Contact: (804) 646-2905)

Wednesday 21st: Town Hall meeting at VCU Cabell Library, 901 Park Ave, Richmond, VA 23284, 6-7:30, Room 303 - to address what City is doing/can’t do about the postal service deliveries issue during holidays. Free, but please sign up to see how many are coming. Board will post/send email with sign up link.

LT. Scarborough, Richmond Police— Filling in for Warren Andover who will be back in May/June. Rash of motor vehicles theft last week/week and a half. There have been 5-7 reports of car theft/damage. Viral video going around showing how Hyundais/Kias can be broken into and started with a phone app. Get a steering wheel column lock – from the city for free if you can show registration and have Kia or Hyundai. Police may reach out if you have ring camera, asking for information. This is the biggest problem happening in our neighborhood. Police may reach out to those who have ring cameras/other security cameras during their investigations. Likely door-to-door. Please assist if you are willing. There are active cameras in the city to find people vandalizing, theft. Other big issue is speeding on Forest Hill. Speed bumps aren’t likely to be installed – Fire and EMS need to get through swiftly, hard to get through with speed bumps.

Do have speed enforcement with active camera going live on Semmes soon. Highly sensitive license plate readers, may come down to Forest Hill Ave.

NEW BOARD INTRODUCTION – Bryan Carlson

Membership dues reminder: Dues are essential for us to be proactive for activities throughout year -- 4th of July, beautification, community support, picnic, other activities.

COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

John Coski – Stray watch – lost dogs/cats, social and email – works when it doesn't need to work. Helps to have pet tagged. Know your neighbors. Most lost pets have just wandered over to a neighbor. Committee doesn't really need volunteers.

Dick Bragg – Rag distribution 4 x year; Community Involvement Committee – 5 volunteers. Formed in 2009. When outsiders approach neighborhood for support, such as church, tot lot, etc., committee helps make decisions on how to spend money. Elementary School, Music in Park.

Bruce Gould – Merchants committee – no volunteers currently. Liaises with merchants and businesses in our biz district – both sides of FH, between Prince Arthur to 47th Street. South to Dunston, east of WH Blvd. Keep in touch with merchants to let them know we can support them. Would like to have article in Rag that's a merchant profile. Need a volunteer to write article, take photos. Good way to get involved without getting too involved.

Robert Kelly – Beautification committee (absent), passed along message that he is ready to mentor someone to pass along chair position.

Pam Zell – Garden Committee. Garden Week – Week of April 20-27; Wednesday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in River Hill. 5 houses, 6 gardens. Garden Week is the largest tour in the U.S., 92 years old. Proceeds go to restoring and caring for historic gardens – including Executive Gardens, gardens at William and Mary, and Kenmore. Will bring Garden Tour books to next meeting. \$20 online. Call Pam with questions. <https://www.vagardenweek.org/tours/richmond-historic-river-hill/> for more information.

BOARD UPDATES:

Val Murphey -- Proposed events for 2024 & tentative dates:

Picnic, 1st weekend in May

Yard Sale – 1st/2nd weekend Jun

Cleanup – TBD

Parade on 4th, hopefully close Riverside Drive that night

National Night Out – Aug 6th sponsored by police and church

Music in park dates TBD

April 24 Historic Garden Week Tour – River Hill Area of WH

Will send official dates out soon. List is tentative

Mark Bouziane – Procedures

Meetings always 2nd Wednesday of month from 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., will have refreshments in future. Minutes will be posted online, Westover-Hills.org under events. Motion to approve minutes of previous month made at each meeting.

We will always have bylaws available. It has been multiple years since updating bylaws. If anything needs to be tweaked, we will create task force and present to membership at large before amending. 2017 last update. Should be reviewed annually.

At meetings we will try to organize timed elements (10 minutes) for presenters, so we can avoid having a speaker run over without time for questions.

Roberts rules of order should anything arise.

Will work with Bruce Gould to bring in a merchant to give update about their business.

Question – does Board only have to approve minutes? Will look up.

BIKE LANES PROJECT

Val Murphey – Update. In the fall, the Group for Sensible Bike Lanes produced report based on survey, met with Lincoln Saunders and Jake Helmboldt. They said they will proceed as planned. However, 100% plan has been released. Committee has looked at it. Not very different from 90% plan. Wayne Collier, Reid Carter and others have stepped up and got a spot at City Council meeting in January. Nineteen people from neighborhood brought signs, Reid Carter spoke, others in favor also spoke. Reid brought up cut through traffic that may result. Got two media exposures on Channel 8 and RTD article last week. Group for Sensible Bike Lanes is not giving up, will talk to anyone who will listen: Mayor, VDOT, City Council. Plan still has to go out for bids, not sure how long that will take. Reason to believe city is taking another look especially the part about Evelyn Byrd.

Q&A/DISCUSSION

Tom Lynn: How can we find the 100% plan? Online? Not online. Val has it, will post to the WHNA website.

Virginia Watson: When will it happen? 2024 is the latest date, but seems unlikely. Hasn't gone out for bid. Lots of moving parts. Trying to stay on top so we can communicate to the neighborhood and also want to include any questions/concerns and go to the City

Val: One of the supporters is the Sportsbackers CEO who lives in neighborhood. May come to some agreements, unsure about how that meeting went [with Reid Carter]. GSBL was advocating more cross walks. Bicycle and neighborhood people share many of the same concerns.

Teresa Weston: Seemed to be second part of plan on Jahnke Rd. in front of school. Timing? Unsure.

Diane Holford: CSX has not signed off yet, until they do, nothing will happen [on Jahnke].

Bryan: This is going to be a big topic – may need a separate update meeting on bike lanes, special meeting or include in monthly meeting. Will keep everyone informed as well as we can.

Susy Meyer: Is there a person to respond to directly our feelings – with the city? We will find out.

Erin: Why does the city want the lanes? Federal grant they have to spend.

Grant [Last Name]: Why the blvd? To connect the bike lanes. Overall plan to incorporate with Rails to Trails, to the Blvd. Once you cross Forest Hill, 49th street track will be a connection of the bike trails to connect to the Capitol Trail – through to Rocket's Landing.

David Holford: Business section. What can we do to support them besides patronize them?

Bryan: would be nice to include merchant at each meeting to get to know them/us, how we can support them.

Val: Bruce – is there an active merchant's association? There was one, going in name only but not active. Hopefully will soon have more merchants to make it worthwhile. Dissolved but kept name and corp., WHNA is holding their treasury.

John Coski: Blvd master plan connects north and south. Rag – inherited collection of old Rags no master collection. Giving it to the library. If you know anyone who has a collection before 1997 – started in the 70s.

Sankita Ryan: Happy to help writing articles for Business section.

Mark Berkowitz: Is there an update on the properties they tore down next to Riverside? Bryan – put on hold. Demoed for safety. Not much confidence we will see much happening quickly. Was an eyesore by Riverside. Some financial reason for leaving up.

Tom Flynn Bruce could advise business owners of the bike lanes issue. CVS manager had no idea.

Teresa Weston: Is there a BoA development timeline? End of '24, maybe longer, leasing commercial space. Developer very into local businesses. No chains. Church Hill development, Dodson. Does good work. Maybe next month. Lives in neighborhood.

Chip Williams: Repaving Evelyn Byrd, Prince George. Called city to see when repaved last? Told it was already repaved. Who do we talk to about? It's been 20 years. Kristen Nye response – it's been done up to this point.

Mark Bouziane: Dpt. Public Works. No way we can communicate with our leaders b/c they have removed the directory from the website. Hoping this is updated. Supposedly removed b/c of

security. Bryan will do research. Thinking about doing liaison group for us and the city. Build a relationship with city rep that we can get good information, have a contact, get things done.

Wayne Collier – Blvd. project – whenever there’s a problem in the alley with potholes, etc., there is a movement -- an anarchist movement -- to come up with decent representation as of the next election, for every district. Commission organized by Thad Williamson from UR, city council wanted to know if there was a better way to govern. Came up with a number of recs – wording in the Richmond charter that needs to be updated. Council members need a raise. Primary emphasis is to go back to old council and city manager, but we need to elect people to represent us. Not to have the response that we get when we call. Similar experiences with our council woman and her office. There is an underground movement to come up with a better system for the City of Richmond.

Bryan: We should invite those running for office to meetings.

Dick Bragg: Kathy Graziano – former councilwoman, she is leading a group looking at all districts for council representation, which ones have good leadership now, which districts need someone to run against – we are in the latter. District 4 is one of priority districts that needs improvement.

Mark Bouziane: Commission did suggest mayor should be back on city council, but then there would be 10 members, so they would need to decrease districts to make odd. Our city council is the only one in a large region with the lowest salary, and they have been denied a raise recently.

Colman Ticer: Bike lanes is not about bike lane. It’s about bureaucratic tyranny. City council had no vote on this issue. So citizens had no vote in this issue. They have the money. They need to spend it. Is that a good reason? But is that a good reason when we know it’s dangerous, being reversed elsewhere. When Jan 1st hit, it was already considered 90% done. It was a show by the City. Taxpayer money. We need to look at this process from the federal government. We need to get to the heart of the problem. This process stunk. We had no vote.

Teresa Weston: Federal grants – someone made a proposal, put this together.

Mark Bouziane: City council has no jurisdiction over the bike lane. It’s Dpt of Public Works.

Colman Ticer: Jan Hein, editor Bicycle Quarterly – “Any barrier that separates the cyclist visually from other traffic effectively hides the cyclist.”

Deborah Nolan: Bag of clothing put in my recycle bin, if anyone’s missing clothes. Maybe from a car that was tampered with?

CLOSING -- 8:04 PM