

HISTRIC JACKSON WARD ASSOCIATION

Membership Meeting - April 19th, 2011

533 N 3rd Street

The President, Charles Finley called the meeting to order at 6:15. There were 22 members in attendance.

The President introduced himself and then requested that each person introduce him/herself. Ms Jennifer McClellan, 71st District representative in the House of Delegates, was introduced as the first speaker. She proceeded to give an update of the 2011 session of the General assembly.

Ms McClellan's Presentation/Update:

Ms McClellan read the contents on a plaque dedicated to an ex-member of The House of Delegates. She acknowledged the appreciation that the House has for those who have served the community and the commitment to honoring their memory.

She explained the plans for educational system in Richmond. She detailed some of the challenges that she faces when trying to present and have certain legislation passed. She reminded that there were a number of successes and failures.

The Department Of Justice just released a report on how Virginia treats individuals with intellectually disabilities. She explained that there is pressure on the state to "clean up its act" when it comes to the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities. The consequence to such human right violations by the state could result in lawsuits. The state is looking at ways to adequately deal with that issue.

The city will have the authority to create a fund to give loans or grants to individuals or organizations that plan to embark on venture that will develop the city. On July 1st that issue will be visited. There will be further information on that as it becomes available.

A law was passed that would allow unemployment compensation to be offset by social security. She requested that that bill be eliminated.

She expressed her desire to introduce a bill that would allow companies to operate both as for-profit and also non-profit organization. This should alleviate conflicts between shareholders and the original owners of the company.

Redistricting

A new bill that was recently introduced in the senate will affect the Jackson Ward district in terms of redistricting. Governor McDonald has so far vetoed that bill. At this point, it

is uncertain how the senate will vote. It is now up to the governor or possibly a court to decide.

Ms McClellan answered questions from the members. She wrapped up by referring members to get more information about the bills from the handout she had passed out. For a detail explanation of those legislation and others that were presented, people can also visit the website at [HYPERLINK "http://dls.virginia.gov/pubs/hilights/welcome.htm"](http://dls.virginia.gov/pubs/hilights/welcome.htm) <http://dls.virginia.gov/pubs/hilights/welcome.htm>.

Ms McClellan renewed her commitment to continue to fight to get more done for the community.

Mr Peter Chapman - Arts and Cultural District

The President gave a brief introduction of Peter Chapman, the Deputy CAO for Economic and Community development.

Mr Chapman informed about his background and his purpose for being at the meeting.

He proceeded to educate about the benefits of an Arts and Culture District in the city

The city's main arguments for an Arts and Cultural District in downtown is:

- An Arts and culture serves as a catalyst for economic growth and facilitate revitalization of downtown.
- It creates a vibrant downtown.
- There will be an emphasis on using existing tools to transform under-utilized and distressed property
- Major landmarks will be included due to their marketing value. It will address areas that are more severely distressed, also called "Targeted areas."

The benefit of pursuing ordinance is that it designates boundaries that can generate economic input. The community has a say in where investment dollars go. There will be strategic property rehabilitation and façade improvement. Mr Chapman said that two properties are already in the works for renovation. They are 213 E Broad Street and 214 East Grace Street.

The boundaries for the project in the Jackson ward district will be Broad Street-Grace Street.

Small Business Support – Funding

The city will establish a micro loan project exclusively for the Arts project. It will start with half a million and expects to build long-term capacity.

Objective:

- Facilitate an arts district that will be successful
- Build on good work done by pioneers
- Provide economic incentives

The office of economic and community development hopes to secure city approval of boundaries by May.

Mr Chapman consistently reinforces his argument about the possible success of the program by citing evidence of success in other cities, such as New Orleans and Denver. Many questions were asked and many reservations were expressed. Mr Chapman agreed to return to explain and try to clear any further uncertainties.

Lieutenant Hood:

The President informed that Lieutenant Hood had asked to be excused because he had to go to another meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.