

The Historic Jackson Ward Association

Historic Jackson Ward Association

Public Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2017

This month, the HJWA Public Meeting was held at UNOS headquarters, located at 700 North 4th Street, due to construction at the usual meeting location. Members in attendance were Marilyn Milio, Zach Jesse, Jay Som and Gary Flowers. Marilyn began the meeting at 6:00.

Lizzie Basch / 10 West Leigh Street

Lizzie and her husband are rehabilitating the dilapidated property at 10 West Leigh Street, located at the corner of Leigh and St. James. Using a diagram and visuals, she discussed the work planned for the property. She aims to have the property include 14 units with a mixture of multi- and single-bedroom units. She plans to have work reflect the original building: adding a grand staircase to the first floor that existed originally, using a storefront looking facade, etc.

She will eventually need to get some SUPs for the property. She is working with another property to manage parking requirements.

Lt. Greene / RPD

Lt. Greene delivered the crime statistics. Overall, violent crime was down and there was little property crime. The most common crime in Jackson Ward was theft from motor vehicles, of which there were 8 instances over the last month. Five of these involved windows down / unlocked doors, and Lt. Greene stressed hiding valuables and locking doors to deter these crimes. There was one violent crime to note, an attempted armed robbery on Brook Road between Clay and Marshall.

Several members brought up some concerns. Gary Flowers noted that a business had illegally affixed a business sticker on the newly completed Maggie Walker Plaza. Jim Vigeant brought up the high frequency of T-bone crashes at the intersection of 1st and Clay. Regarding this issue, Kim Gray said that they're presumably changing the stop lights to address these crashes. Other issues voiced included an increase in graffiti, aggressive panhandlers, and litter from garbage cans being left on the sidewalk.

A particular point of frustration for the membership was the increase in derelicts at Abner Clay Park, the result of a church group providing food. Captain Blackwell noted that the serving of food was not in and of itself illegal, and that therefore the Richmond Police could not justifiably do anything to curb it. He noted that they could, however, address many of the symptoms, such as public defecation / urination, gambling, drug use / deals, and use of a PA system to play

music. To do so, he encouraged residents to call in to report the issues, either via 911 or the non-emergency number. He stressed the importance of these calls as data points that the RPD looks at to assess problems.

Captain Blackwell also encouraged any to reach out to him directly: (804) 814 - 7134

Greg Felton / VCU Police

Greg Felton noted that the July 8th garbage pickup in the neighborhood yielded a large volume, probably 10 tons of trash.

As always, he encourages residents to call if any issues arise: (804) 301-5704

Matt Engel / CPDC

Matt Engel of CPDC provided an update about their project at 1st & Duvall. A mixed-income, mixed-use project, it would serve as partial replacement housing for seniors in Fay Towers.

Matt reiterated the commitments he gave when he originally came before the HJWA:

- Not to overwhelm the neighborhood by maintaining a 40% affordable / 60% market rate ratio
- Blend architecture with historic Jackson Ward
- Put retail at corner

He came before the HJWA now to discuss a funding shortfall CPDC needs to clear. CPDC had counted on \$2.5 million grant from Gov. McAuliffe which they unfortunately did not receive.

Their solution for this shortfall involves slightly redoing the site plans. Specifically, they are forgoing the roofed parking on the inside and reducing the unit count by 40 units (while maintaining the percentages of market rate / affordable and with senior units staying the same). Even with this change, the project is still approximately \$600K short; however, CPDC assumes that they will be able to satisfy this amount via either money from the city (based on infrastructure work) or via a bank deal.

Zach made a motion to approve the CPDC SUP. Gary seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor. Motion passed.

Walker Parks / Marshall street project

Walter Parks graciously came in to discuss the upcoming project on Marshall street for which he is the architect. He noted that this was a “by right” project: the property was not in the Jackson Ward Historic District and was zoned as B4 which encouraged development. Therefore, he was under no obligation to ask of the HJWA anything and was present as a kindness.

The plans currently entail a 5-story building with 167 apartments with 1.5 stories of below grade parking. These apartments are looking to be higher end and have amenities which reflect that, such as a pool and restaurant.

While no physical plans were present at the meeting, Mr. Parks corroborated that the building would have a more modern look. Tensions ran high as residents expressed frustration and concern about this choice, namely that it did not “jive” with the historic nature of Jackson Ward. In response to whether or not Mr. Parks would be willing to work with the community to develop a more appropriate look, he laconically stated, “Maybe.”

Kim Gray / City Council

Kim was able to deliver some discretionary funds to the Association from the city budget for use in beautification.

She also noted the Kaboom! project date was slated for October 27. This project will need 250 volunteers to be completed in a day, so residents were encouraged to reach out to organizations, friends and others that might be interested in helping.

Meeting adjourned

Marilyn adjourned the meeting at 8:15.