

The Historic Jackson Ward Association

Historic Jackson Ward Association Public Meeting Minutes May 16, 2017

The Public Meeting was held on the first floor of the UNOS center located at 501 North 2nd Street.

Marilyn Milio, Vicki Mollenauer, Zach Jesse, Gary Flowers, Jourdan James, Julius Richardson, Janet Armstead, Donna Alleyne and Jay Som were board members in attendance. Marilyn called the Meeting to order at 6:02.

Reports

Richmond Police

Lt. Greene, with another officer, came and gave Jackson Ward crime statistics. Overall, crime over the past 28 days has been down considerably. Specifically, there was/were:

- 1 robbery
- 3 thefts from motor vehicle (two due to unlocked doors)
- No violent crime
- 2 B&E (one was stolen copper wiring from house under construction)

Lt. Greene encouraged residents to report criminal/suspicious activity.

VCU Police

Greg Felton took questions, but did not otherwise have anything to report.

On behalf of a constituent, Kim Gray asked about whether VCU could provide a dumpster to Jackson Ward for when students move out similar to how they provided one for the Fan neighborhood. Greg stated that the Fan's dumpsters are part of an old agreement with that neighborhood, but that it wasn't exclusive to the Fan. Tito Luna from VCU noted that the biggest issues to doing so currently are monetary costs and space.

Kim Gray

Marilyn announced that an anonymous neighborhood resident had donated \$250K for the redevelopment of the playground in Abner Clay. They are working with KaBOOM!, a national non-profit devoted to rebuilding community playgrounds. The project will eventually need 200 volunteers and will ideally be completed by October, 2017.

Kim gave an update on the city budget.

- The City Council took a different approach with the city's budget this year in order to provide a better understanding of how the money is spent. Specifically, the new budget is more detailed, delineating how funds are to be spent and limiting the ways in which unspent money could be moved to other projects.
- They were able to secure salary decompression funding. Due to a trend of losing 3-5 officers a week, city police officer salaries were unfrozen to allow for raises.
- They did this for teachers as well and used some additional funds in the school budget to allow teachers to make one-time purchases (such as laptop computers).
- Increased spending for core city services, e.g. potholes, alleyways (for which previously there was no funding)

She noted that City Council is revamping rules and regulations regarding AirBNB to allow Richmond to collect taxes.

Kim then took community questions:

- Regarding Abner Clay Park renovations, Kim discussed how the project is progressing, namely that old plans are scrapped and new ones were being redrawn
- In response to a concern about increasing Jackson Ward's economic development, Kim noted how the Pulse Corridor Plan will help dictate how the overarching plan of economic development will unfold in Jackson Ward.
- Kim didn't have new answers to questions about the purchased Saison parking lot and the proposed building project. Perhaps a special meeting needs to be planned. Tito offered that VCU could help oppose.

There is an education compact at Carver Elementary Wednesday May 17 at 6:00pm.

Presentations

Sen. Jennifer McClellan

Contact Information

- **Phone:** 698-7509
- **Email:** district09@senate.virginia.gov

Sen. McClellan passed around legislative highlights from the short General Assembly session this year.

- Creating a public/private partnership between coding institutions (Code VA probably) and NOVA community college to ramp up computer curriculum in Virginia schools
- Create school program on how to avoid/prevent sexual assault and dating violence. In addition, sex ed courses now teach more about consent and what that means in the context of sex
- Regarding transportation network companies (Uber/Lyft) - UZURV is an app that helps Richmond residents broker rides in advanced with transportation network companies; however, it does not want to be classified as a transportation network company. A bill would help them not be construed as one.
- VA drivers ed curriculum now includes "how to interact with police"

Budget: There is a budget shortfall of \$1.26 billion, mainly due to federal sequestration. While unemployment is low at 4%, it has seemingly come at the cost of higher salary jobs transforming to lower salaried ones. Her Priorities: no cuts to K-12 education (accomplished); raises for state teachers (accomplished); improve VA mental health system.

Senator McClellan started the year as a delegate! As a result, she was limited in the number of bills that she could introduce because delay caused her to miss filing.

Tanya Denis (Ezibu Munto Dance Company and Cultural Foundation)

Located at 418 East Main Street for 27 years, The Ezibu Munto Dance Company is now looking to move to Baptist church at 1st and Leigh Street which they are looking to purchase for \$630K. In addition to using the space as a dance studio, they hope to create a cultural foundation headquartered in the space. Through that foundation, they hope to provide theatre, art, classes, and training. Plans include dining room, dance room, recording studio, band practice room, banquet room with full kitchen (seat 100) with everything being ADA compliant.

Richmond Market Survey reveals there is no other venue in the city that offers these types of services. Ultimately, they hope this will result in an increase in Richmond tourism and revenue. They are looking for support for project but did not provide any details.

Parking: Working with various local businesses to rent their parking spaces.

Zarina Fazaidin (506/508 St. James Update)

Zarina recently purchased the properties at 506 & 508 St. James. The primary lot is 9000 sqft and, notably, was originally designed by one of the first black architects in the country. It served first as home for a Dr. Hughes, then deeded to Negro Training Center for the Blind, but has remained empty since 1962. The property is in dire need of repairs and will need a lot of work done on it.

Zarina is looking to construct 4 apartments in original structure, with the second story unit (4K sqft) serving as her house. The long range plan for second structure is to demolish it and rebuilt as a single family home. Parking in the back for residents. They intend to make very few changes to the exterior (e.g. small elevator on back, side porch) and obviously will need to get approval from CAR for most of these.

These apartments are comparatively large, and Zarina is hoping to attract nice residents.

She will need an SUP. The property is currently zoned as single family and therefore they need a variance to build multiple units in building.

Update

Website

Jourdan: Probably up by end of the week; Monday at the latest.

Clean & Green VCU (July 8th 8:00am)

Tito presented. Like last year, neighbors and students will go with trucks through alleys to get bulk items. VCU encourages students to call 311 if items aren't usable and provides links to areas to donate

ICA (May 18, 5:00)

This Thursday, there's going to be a listening session at the ICA. Also another on the 22nd [I didn't catch where]

Dog Stations

Jay, Jourdan, Gary leading charge on installing the dog stations as soon as sites are finalized. HJWA is the first neighborhood association able to install these throughout their neighborhood.

Abner Clay Park

Starting with playground as mentioned above. No further details.

Maggie Walker Statute Celebration - July 15 @ 10:00

The festivities will include activities, speakers, and walking tours. Formal invitation for HJWA forthcoming. There will be street closures.

Firehouse Renaming and Recommissioning - July 2

Janet working on this committee.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30