

Minutes from RNA Meeting on January 10, 2018

Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building

Room 159 (EOC) at 5:30 PM

Committee Members in Attendance

Nicole L. Harris, Chair

Kate Lewis, Vice-Chair

Barbara Evans

David Parr (arrived at 6:55pm)

Dwight Steele, Jr. (arrived at 5:50pm)

Johnny Williams

Committee Members Absent

Ellie Rigby, Secretary

Byron L. Hamlar

Christina Hatch

Guests

Frederick Gusler, Chair, Roanoke Regional Housing Network

John Garland, City Council member

Charles Wilson, RNA Applicant

Ms. Charles Wilson, guest

Welcome to Members and Guests

Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 5:56 and welcomed all members and guests.

Reading and Approval of Minutes

The RNA's December 13, 2017 Meeting Minutes were distributed for review. Ms. Evans noted a needed correction on Page 1 to read as follows "Ms. Rigby noted she had a scheduling conflict with the meeting time and date of the Fairland Civic Organization. Ms. Evans volunteered to attend their future meetings and Ms. Rigby volunteered to attend the Miller Court Neighborhood Alliance meetings." Ms. Lewis motioned to approve the RNA's December 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes with corrections which was seconded by Mr. Williams. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Guest Presentations

Chair Harris welcomed Frederick Gusler who advised he was attending the RNA meeting in his role as the Chair of the Roanoke Regional Housing Network. Mr. Gusler provided a brief overview of the nonprofit organization including their mission, purpose and goals. He noted as a subgroup of the Council of Community Services, their focus was working with others such as local governments, nonprofits, builder associations, financial institutions, realtor associations, housing interest groups and others to advocate equal opportunities for all types of housing throughout the Roanoke region, for people of all income levels and population groups; and providing affordable housing for everyone in area.

Reports of Special Interest

- **Neighborhood Reports**

Ms. Evans

Ms. Evans advised her neighborhood groups did not meet during the holidays and that she would be attending the *Grandin Court Neighborhood Association* meeting next week.

Mr. Steele

Historic Gainsboro Preservations District

Mr. Steele reported he had not been successful in catching up with the leadership of the Historic Gainsboro Preservations District organization.

Northwest Neighborhood Improvement Council (NNIC)

Mr. Steele advised he speaks regularly to the group's president, Elizabeth Hairston to keep abreast of their neighborhood's concerns. He noted the group is small and comprised mostly of senior residents.

Gainsborough SW Community Organization, Inc.

Mr. Steele advised he had recently attended the Gainsborough SW Community Organization meeting which had a good attendance. As their scheduled guest speaker, Mayor Lea, was unable to attend, the group's conversation focused on neighborhood crime and issues such as the need for housing rehab to fit with the existing historic character of the neighborhood.

Youth Services Board

Mr. Steele advised the Roanoke Youth Services Citizen Board, led by Vice Mayor Anita James Price, recently held a Celebration of Youth Leaders event at which representatives from local youth leadership groups came together to discuss their groups' missions and service activities. They also held a roundtable discussion on youth related topics. Mr. Steele also advised the group plans to be part of a job fair scheduled to be held in March.

Chair Harris

Southeast Action Forum, Inc.

Chair Harris noted the Southeast Action Forum held a holiday social in lieu of their business meeting in December.

Chair Harris also advised her other neighborhood groups, *Belmont Neighborhood Watch, Riverland Walnut Hill Neighbors, Starview Heights Neighborhood Watch and Riverdale Farm Neighborhood Organization* did not meet during the holidays.

Ms. Lewis

Grandin Village Business Association

Ms. Lewis advised she was attending the association's meeting also as a representative of the Raleigh Court Neighborhood Association. She noted the association accepted new board members, worked on the 2018 Grandin Chillage schedule, tweaked the Santa schedule, and were working on funding for a lighting feature for Grandin Road. She noted city Code Enforcement officer Dale Crawford was also present who spoke about the issue of people parking in their front yards. Ms. Lewis also advised of Black History Month events being planned at the Grandin Theatre that included a screening of the movie *Thelma* and a plaque presentation to Mr. Tarpley at the farmer's market in the spring.

Neighbors in South Roanoke

Ms. Lewis advised the group is scheduled to meet next week and noted a recent concern for the neighborhood appeared to be a recently submitted application for an Airbnb. Neighbors are circulating a petition against the application noting that as there is no screening process for Airbnb guests, the neighbors nearby have concerns about whom is coming into their neighborhood.

Melrose Rugby Neighborhood Forum, Inc.

Ms. Lewis advised the group's next meeting was scheduled for later in the month.

Mr. Williams

RRHA Resident Council - Melrose Towers

Mr. Williams advised several dinners were provided to all of the residents during the recent holidays. He noted the building had recently undergone a rehab by RRHA and expressed his appreciation for the work done.

Mr. Williams advised his other neighborhood group, *Hurt Park Neighborhood Alliance*, did not meet during the holidays but he stays in contact with them.

- **Review of Neighborhood Assignments**

Chair Harris advised she had asked Mr. Clement to make this topic a reoccurring feature on the RNA agenda to allow time to talk about neighborhood reassignments. Mr. Williams advised he would begin attending the *Northwest Neighborhood Environmental Organization* meetings and would assist Mr. Steele with the *Historic Gainsboro Preservation District* meetings. Mr. Parr volunteered to begin attending the *Westwind Watchers, Old Southwest, Inc. and Mt. View Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.* meetings. Ms. Evans volunteered to begin attending the *Loudon Melrose Neighborhood Organization, Inc.* meetings.

Reports of Officers – Standing Committees

- **Update from Neighborhoods First Committee**

Chair Harris suggested the RNA come together as a group to address neighborhood issues. She suggested the RNA create a Google account which upon doing so would allow for the creation of a Google drive account from where neighborhood-related information could be shared amongst the RNA as well as publicly. She noted the account could be utilized to bring attention to neighborhood issues in a productive way. Chair Harris advised the result would be a simple URL that could be added to the city's website and would provide a location for different folders containing a variety of different information of benefit to neighborhood groups could be posted. Chair Harris agreed to create the account to which the RNA unanimously agreed.

- **Update re RNA Welcoming Committee**

Mr. Parr provided an update on his thoughts for how best to welcome and provide an orientation to newly appointed members to the RNA. During the discussion, the RNA agreed of the importance of inviting applicants to attend a RNA meeting to allow the RNA and applicant to meet each other and converse about the RNA and applicant's expectations of serving on the RNA and answer any questions raised. At the conclusion of the discussion Mr. Parr agreed to email an outline to each RNA member for their review and input prior to the next meeting. He noted it was important for everyone to be involved in providing input into the process for everyone would be involved in new RNA member orientation.

Unfinished Business

- **Creation of Survey re Disposal of Properties in Parks – Harris**

Ms. Lewis questioned what the RNA's role was on this topic and asked if it should be addressed by the Parks & Rec Advisory Board since the topic involved the disposal of city-owned properties located in parks. Chair Harris responded that when she initially created the survey that its purpose was solely to provide citizen feedback that the RNA could provide to City Council when this issue arises. Ms. Lewis distributed a list of questions she developed that could help derive feedback from residents to Council. Following a brief discussion on the questions distributed, Mr. Williams made a motion for the RNA to post an online survey using the questions presented by Ms. Lewis to solicit resident feedback on the disposal of city-owned properties in city parks. Ms. Lewis seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

New Business

- **Creation of Online Form for Reporting of Neighborhood Concerns**

Ms. Lewis presented an online form used by Roanoke County to solicit resident input on neighborhood issues. She also showed an online form used by the city noting the city's form seemed to emphasize city services needed as opposed to neighborhood issues. Mr. Clement advised that the city's online form was directly linked to the iRoanoke request for service system that incorporated many neighborhood concerns that could be reported. He offered to invite Ms. Faye Gilchrist who administers the iRoanoke program and database to attend the next RNA meeting to discuss the program and advise how the RNA and Office of Neighborhood Services could be informed of the neighborhood-related concerns being submitted.

- **FY2019 RNA Neighborhood Development Grant Program Application Review Committee**

Mr. Clement reminded the RNA of the January 19, 2018 deadline for neighborhood groups to submit their application(s) for consideration of grant funding for the upcoming fiscal year. He reminded the RNA of the need for a grant review committee to decide which proposed projects to fund and for how much. Mr. Williams, Ms. Lewis and Mr. Parr volunteered to serve on this year's Neighborhood Development Grant Program Application Review Committee.

Open Forum/Announcements

- Monday January 15, 2018 – Martin Luther King Holiday (Municipal Building Closed)
- Friday, January 19, 2018 – Deadline for FY19 Neighborhood Development Grant Applications
- Monday, January 22, 2018 – Peacemakers, Inc. Meeting (514 24th Street NW) at 6:00 PM (Mr. Williams and Ms. Lewis volunteered to attend)

Closed Session

Per a communication received from Chair Harris requesting that RNA convene in a Closed Meeting to discuss vacancies appointed by RNA, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, Vice-Chair Harris requested that the RNA convene in a Closed Meeting to discuss vacancies appointed by the RNA. The RNA unanimously agreed and hearing no further discussion, the meeting was recessed for the closed session. All guests excused themselves.

Meeting Reconvened

Following the closed session, Chair Harris reconvened the meeting. Chair Harris asked Mr. Clement to contact the City Clerk and request a copy of all applications received for appointment to the RNA that he in turn could provide to the RNA for their review.

Ms. Lewis reminded the RNA that their next meeting was scheduled to occur on Valentine's Day. She suggested that the RNA consider moving the meeting date to either the Wednesday before or the Wednesday after Wednesday, February 14, 2018. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Lewis motioned that the February 2018 RNA meeting date be moved from February 14, 2018 to Wednesday, February 7, 2018. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Adjourn

Vice-Chair Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.