

Minutes from RNA Meeting on July 11, 2018

Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building
Room 159 (EOC) at 5:30 PM

Committee Members in Attendance

Kate Lewis, Chair
Charles E. Wilson, Vice-Chair
Ellie Rigby, Secretary
Barbara Evans
Jamaal Jackson
Cindy Pasternak
Russell E. Thomas

Committee Members Absent

David Parr
Dwight Steele, Jr.
Johnny Williams

Guests

Joe Cobb, Vice-Mayor, City of Roanoke
Wayne Leftwich, Senior City Planner, City of Roanoke

Welcome to Members and Guests

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 5:32pm and welcomed RNA members and guests.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

Ms. Evans moved to adopt the RNA July 11, 2018 Meeting Agenda. Ms. Rigby seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the meeting's agenda was unanimously approved.

Reading and Approval of Minutes

The May 8, 2018 RNA Meeting Minutes were distributed for review as no meeting was held in June 2018 due to lack of quorum. Ms. Rigby made a motion to approve the May 2018 RNA Meeting Minutes as presented. Ms. Evans seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion to approve the May 2018 RNA Meeting Minutes passed unanimously.

Guest Presentations

- **Plan Roanoke – Wayne Leftwich**

Mr. Leftwich advised July 19th, 2018 is when the city will 'kick off' the planning for the update to the city's new Comprehensive Plan. He stated the 'kick off' will take place at the City Market where Mayor Lea will give a short speech after which materials will be handed out alerting people to a series of ten (10) Open House Community Meetings planned at libraries across the city at various days and times to allow neighborhood residents to participate. Mr. Leftwich also noted there is a survey on the website, www.planroanoke.org as well as a mapping tool that the city will keep active and interactive for people who want to provide their suggestions and ideas who cannot attend the community meetings or who may want to participate more. City residents can also go to this website and sign up to receive updates as the plan develops. Mr. Leftwich noted the city's Planning Department had created a new brand and logo for this planning process called 'Plan Roanoke' that they hope to utilize for a long time. He said they went to the Planning Commission for assistance with the logo and marketing design which comprises blues, greens, an urban grid, the Mill Mountain Star, the Taubman Museum, and the scenery. Mr. Leftwich stated the Planning Department is using this website for all public engagement moving forward including the current comprehensive plan update providing the example that there is also a Bicycle and Pedestrian Survey on the site currently as well. He also

noted after the city's comprehensive plan has been updated and approved that the Planning Department hopes to begin updating the neighborhood plans for which this website will also be used to solicit residents' ideas and suggestions.

The city's current *Vision 2001-2020 Comprehensive Plan* is a 20 year plan last adopted in 2001. Mr. Leftwich noted since the plans' approval that the city had largely implemented most of the ideas noted in the plan including the development of greenways, Elmwood Park, neighborhood plans, and more. He said now they want to identify the goals moving forward through 2040 hoping to gain a feel for the vision Roanoke residents want for our city and the issues that need to be addressed to improve the quality of life in Roanoke. The City Manager wants the new Comprehensive Plan developed in eighteen (18) months so that the city can move forward in updating the neighborhood plans that are already a decade old. Mr. Leftwich stated the goal is to have the new Comprehensive Plan adopted by December 2019 so that the Planning Department can begin updating the city's neighborhood plans in 2020. He noted to help in this endeavor, City Council had approved funding for two (2) new planner positions for a period of two (2) years to help with the creation of the new Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Leftwich hopes at least one (1) of those positions is kept to help with the updating of the city's neighborhood plans.

Chair Lewis asked who would be attending the Open House Community meetings in August to which Mr. Leftwich responded that the meetings will be fully staffed as the Planning Department is working with the Whitney Slightham, the city's Citizen Engagement Officer, the city's GIS staff, Bob Clement, the city's Neighborhood Services Coordinator, and others from the Planning Department. The meetings will be an open house style as residents can attend them at their convenience any time during the meeting's scheduled times. Mr. Leftwich noted there will be different staff at different stations set up at the meetings. He noted the meetings will be repetitive although they will probably change somewhat as time goes on so he suggested if one is compelled to attend more than one that they attend one scheduled early in the month and then attend another one later in the month. He noted the Planning staff still need to put the maps together that note resident-identified opportunities and problems from meetings held last year.

Mr. Leftwich advised staff will be distributing cards containing information about the new Comprehensive Plan Open House Community Meetings during upcoming National Night Out events. He also acknowledged that Planning office staff is available to attend neighborhood meetings as well. Mr. Leftwich noted Phase Two of the planning process would be the creation of working groups noting the new plan is to be established around six (6) themes modeled on those of the US Planning Association that they deem to be the best themes for building sustainable comprehensive plans. He noted they want to emphasize healthy communities and curing social inequities along with of the livable built environment (different types of housing, village centers, etc.), transportation into the new plan. The working groups will be comprised of 15-24 people – a targeted mix of stakeholders and normal citizens who have an interest in the city and plan's creation. The monthly working groups will be comprised of different people in each group. Mr. Leftwich said they hope to begin enlisting people to serve in the work groups during the August meetings and if there is a broad interest that they might have to move to an application process. He noted the hope is to touch at least five hundred (500) people at the meetings. Mr. Leftwich advised Phase 3 will consist of another round of public meetings probably taking place in February 2019 and he suggested the city hoped to get people involved early in the process.

Reports of Special Interest

- **Neighborhood Reports**

Ms. Pasternak

Riverdale Farm Neighborhood Organization

Ms. Pasternak advised that the organization had a memorial for the historic Riverdale Farm house recently demolished by the city due to safety concerns. She noted it was a very nice event as three (3) generations of the family were at the event and attendees were surprised to hear of the family's impact on the community, and that they were excited to get more involved.

Southeast Action Forum

Ms. Pasternak reminded RNA members of the upcoming Love Southeast Fest scheduled for Saturday, July 28th noting event organizers have a lot of SE neighborhood businesses and churches involved. Everyone is invited to attend. She noted the organization is not certain if they will be participating in this year's National Night Out. Ms. Pasternak also advised the Roanoke Rescue Mission's 70th Annual Dine and Dash is scheduled for Wednesday, July 25th noting they also have a "Fill-a-Box" program underway with a deadline of August 6th.

Belmont Neighborhood Association

No report.

Vice-Chair Wilson

Miller Court Neighborhood Alliance

Vice-Chair Wilson noted the organization has not met in about a year noting they have no new issues. He noted the group is comprised of older citizens that do have concerns about the congestion when there are soccer tournaments held at Countryside Park. Vice-Chair Wilson noted the organization would like to see permanent toilet facilities be provided in the park. He also advised he would be meeting with the organization's president, Robert Reed, to determine ways of getting younger people involved in the organization.

Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum

No report

Chair Lewis

Neighbors in South Roanoke

No report.

Grandin Village Business Association

Chair Lewis noted the association was trying to organize a clean-up Tarpley Park hoping to schedule on during the first week in August.

Raleigh Court Neighborhood Association

Chair Lewis advised the association had concerns about the future of the old Raleigh Court Elementary School building as they want to make certain that the neighborhood stays informed about what is going on with that building for currently only half of the building is being used by the nonprofit, TAP.

The Peacemakers

Chair Lewis advised she will be reaching out to the organization now that they are under new leadership.

Ms. Evans

Grandin Court Neighborhood Association

Ms. Evans advised there were eleven (11) people at the Grandin Court Neighborhood Association's May neighborhood month event plant giveaway but only two (2) were members of the association. She advised the association really needs help getting people to participate in their neighborhood.

Loudon-Melrose Neighborhood Organization

Ms. Evan advised fourteen (14) people attended the most recent meeting but only one (1) was a member of the association. She noted there was a new man in attendance who suggested some ideas that were shot down. The Police Department officer in attendance gave out his number so that people can contact him as needed. Ms. Evans advised the organization would like to have additional streetlights installed and are not happy about all of the vacant, boarded-up properties.

Ms. Evans mentioned on a personal level that she is frustrated with the number of groundhogs that seem to be prevalent in the city neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Assignments

Mr. Thomas advised he would represent the Grandin Court Neighborhood Association to which Ms. Evans said he could attend their next meeting scheduled on Thursday July 19th with her at which she would introduce him to the attendees. Mr. Thomas also advised we would represent the Airlee Court Neighborhood Watch Association.

Mr. Jackson volunteered to represent the Greater Grandview Area Neighborhood Watch Association and Wildwood Civic League.

Reports of Officers – Standing Committees

- **Update re RNA Welcoming Committee – Parr**

Chair Lewis asked for a motion to consider this issue resolved recommending it not be incorporated into the RNA By-laws as the document provided by Mr. Parr outlining a process for indoctrinating new RNA members should be recognized as a best practice and not a by-law. Ms. Evans motioned that the RNA Welcoming Committee be disbanded and the process noted in the document provided by the committee become a best practice of the RNA for welcoming new members rather than an amendment to the RNA Bylaws. Ms. Pasternak seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously passed.

- **Update re RNA By-Law Committee - Lewis**

Chair Lewis advised with the earlier approval of the RNA May 2018 Meeting Minutes by the RNA that the proposed amendments to the RNA By-laws have been made and approved.

Unfinished Business

- **Update re Survey re Disposal of Properties in Public Parks - Lewis**

Chair Lewis advised no one has completed the survey and suggested it be posted to the Planroanoke.org site to encourage more participation.

- **Update re Online Form for Reporting of Neighborhood Concerns - Lewis**

Chair Lewis noted the RNA By-laws state that a neighborhood organization or individual is supposed to submit a Petition for Advocacy form that is located on the RNA website. Ms. Rigby suggested that a link also be posted to the City Council webpage.

- **Update from RNA Budget Committee**

No report. Chair Lewis noted the RNA's fiscal year budget began July 1, 2018 and there is some money in it for RNA members to attend the Virginia Statewide Neighborhood Conference and other training opportunities.

- **Review RNA Structure (Neighborhood Reports/Agenda/Social Media) - Lewis**

Chair Lewis suggested tabling the idea of neighborhood representations by quadrant for the time being as most neighborhoods are assigned.

New Business

- **Gun Buyback Program**

Chair Lewis advised she and Vice-Chair Wilson are currently meeting monthly with City Manager Bob Cowell. She proposed that they discuss the possibility of the RNA coordinating a gun buyback program with other area sponsors/participants noting other cities have been successful in providing a \$200 gift card for each gun collected. She advised the program does not necessarily deter crimes but does get unwanted guns out of homes. Ms. Pasternak

