

# RNA Meeting Minutes

Wednesday January 11, 2017

Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building- South (Room 159 - EOC)

## Committee Members in Attendance

Johnny Williams, Vice Chair

Nicole Harris, Secretary

Antwyne Calloway

Scott Horchler

Amy Morgan

David Parr

Cindy Pasternak

Dwight Steele, Jr

## Committee Members Absent

C.J. Meidlinger, Chair

Brenda Allen

Barbara Evans

## Guests

Chris Chittum, Director, Roanoke Planning Building & Dev.

John Garland, Roanoke City Councilmember

Brian Townsend, Roanoke Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Byron Hamlar, Citizen

## Welcome to Members and Guests

Vice Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 5:33p.m. and welcomed those present and recognized guests.

## Reading and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Morgan motioned to approve the November 9, 2017 RNA meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steele. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved.

## Guest Presentations

- Chris Chittum, Director, Roanoke Planning Building & Development

Mr. Chittum provided an overview of the updates made to the information on the city's website regarding the proposed amendment to the city's RM-1 Zoning. He noted the addition of new detailed maps that were created at the request of various citizens, to help show the impact this may have on different neighborhoods. He also noted he hoped to present the idea before the Planning Committee in late spring or early summer.

- John Garland, Roanoke City Councilmember

Mr. Garland discussed the Neighborhood Blight Taskforce he is creating in partnership with the RNA, City Council, Neighborhood Groups, Code Enforcement, and other City Employees. Mr. Garland explained he had met with several of these groups earlier in the day and explained how he feels many are committed to this type of collaboration to improve neighborhoods. Mr. Garland also discussed the conversation City Council is having regarding the opening of the public pools in the 2017. He noted the city is facing a \$4 million shortfall and needs to find the funding to make repairs now

in order for the pools to open in May 2016. He suggested the RNA review the city's budget to help determine areas where cuts could be made as he personally was not in favor of closing the pools. The RNA discussed possible funding options to open and operate the pools such as pursuing grants or partnering with Carilion as their current Community Health Initiative is taking place in both NW and SE Roanoke where the pools are located.

## Reports of Special Interest

- Neighborhood Reports

Mr. Horchler and Mr. Parr had no reports to provide.

Vice Chair Williams noted that the Melrose Towers Resident Council was undertaking fund raising efforts to financially support their attendance at the upcoming NeighborhoodsUSA (NUSA) conference taking place in Omaha, NE in late May. He invited everyone to attend a pancake breakfast scheduled for 8am on February 6 at Melrose Towers in the Community Room.

Ms. Morgan advised the Belmont Neighborhood Association had met on Monday and received updates from the Salvation Army. She noted the Salvation Army representative advised they had recently received a grant to create a community garden at their location and that they are also planning the 2nd Annual Garden Show scheduled for the spring as well as a rabies clinic. Ms. Morgan noted the Belmont Neighborhood Association continues to partner with the Salvation Army to hold monthly paint nights but these events were being changed to craft nights which instead will be held weekly. Ms. Morgan also advised the nonprofit REACH had recently purchased an abandoned home in the Belmont neighborhood as a community collaborative project and would shortly begin its renovations starting with a kickoff event scheduled for Friday, January 13. She noted all were welcomed to attend the event. Ms. Morgan also advised the new CEO of Rescue Mission was planning on attending a future Belmont meeting. Ms. Morgan noted she had also attended a recent meeting of the Mountain View Neighborhood Association. She noted the association was planning to pursue a FY2018 Neighborhood Development grant to create 2 bus shelters in the neighborhood. Ms. Morgan also advised a new pizza shop is in the works for the neighborhood, heroin use is up in the neighborhood and the association is committed to enter a float in the city's 2017 St. Patrick's Day parade.

Mr. Steele stated he had attended the most recent meeting of the Grandin Village Business Association held at the Grandin Village CoLab. He noted Jeremy Holmes with Ride Solutions spoke about a new Bikeshare initiative coming to Roanoke in the spring that would generate more bicycling in the Grandin and Downtown Roanoke areas. Mr. Steele also noted Sam Wilson discussed upcoming changes underway to the VA Blue Ridge Visitor's Guide. Mr. Steele advised the association is currently looking to erect a statue to honor local resident James Tarpley and is also pursuing grant funding for several other community projects.

Ms. Pasternak noted she had attended the Riverdale Farms Neighborhood Organization meeting at which Rachel Ruhlen, a Transportation Planner with the Roanoke Valley-Allegheny Regional Commission, discussed the potential Williamson Road Diet and bike lane additions. Ms. Pasternak also noted Ray Bemis with the Roanoke Prevention Alliance spoke at the meeting about their efforts with youth in the area including efforts underway to work with local stores on the issue of alcohol sales and single container sales. Ms. Pasternak also advised Riverdale Farms is having a neighborhood yard sale on Saturday April 22nd. Ms. Pasternak also advised the 'Adopt a Block' idea was a go. She

also noted the association would be submitting a FY2018 Neighborhood Development grant application to purchase and install trash receptacles in needed areas of the neighborhood. She also advised the police reported crime rates are low in the neighborhood.

Mr. Calloway noted NNEO did not meet during December as a Christmas party was held at McCray Court. He noted the organization held new officer elections for 2017 and continues to works with the McCray Court and Gilmer Avenue housing projects. Mr. Calloway advised he plans to attend the Loudon Melrose Neighborhood Organization next week.

Ms. Harris advised during the recent meeting of the Southeast Action Forum that the organization had passed resolutions to oppose the proposed amendment to the RM-1 Zoning proposal and closing of the public pools for the 2017 season. She noted the organization was pursuing FY2018 Neighborhood Development grants for several projects including funding for a traveling pop-up neighborhood coffee shop and a youth program in partnership with the Jackson Park Public Library.

## **Reports of Officers – Standing Committees**

- Report from FY 2016/2017 RNA Budget Committee

Mr. Clement provided a proposed FY2017 RNA budget draft for the RNA review and consideration. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Morgan motioned the RNA approve the RNA FY2017 budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Calloway. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

- Report from Garland Neighborhood Blight Committee

Ms. Harris reported she and Ms. Pasternak had recently met with Councilmember Garland to discuss the creation of Neighborhood Blight Task Force. She noted the outcome of the meeting was to create a task force of people comprised of RNA, City Council, neighborhood group leaders, code enforcement and other city employees to have a brainstorming session as to how the city could partner with neighborhoods to bring about the changes desired. She noted the task from that meeting was to create a list of individuals who could be brought together to begin the having discussions. Once the list has been shared with Councilmember Garland and city administration, the individuals would be contacted and a meeting scheduled shortly thereafter. Vice Chair Williams volunteered to also serve on the committee at future meetings.

## **Unfinished Business**

- 2016 Neighborhood Partnership Awards Update

Mr. Clement noted he had received the invoice from La Cove for their catering services provided at the November 2016 annual Neighborhood Dinner and Awards Celebration. He noted the RNA had paid for this service in prior years. Ms. Morgan motioned that the RNA pay for the catering service provided by L Cove catering for the November 2016 annual City Neighborhoods Dinner and Award celebration. The motion was seconded by Mr. Calloway. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

- Follow-up Discussion re Participation with Citizens' Convention in Hosting March 2017 Workshop

Mr. Clement advised the RNA that they had tabled discussion following Mr. Tim Dayton's presentation during the last RNA meeting at which Mr. Dayton suggested the RNA consider partnering with the Citizen's Convention to host a workshop for

neighborhoods in the spring of 2017. Following a brief discussion, the RNA asked Mr. Clement to reach out to Mr. Dayton and request a written proposal with details regarding the workshop for the RNA to consider at their February meeting.

## **New Business**

- **RNA Surveys**

Ms. Harris provided an overview of several surveys she had designed as an unbiased tool to collect community feedback regarding the proposed amendment change to the city's RM-1 Zoning and opinions on closing ad/or opening of the city public pools for 2017 season. She noted the surveys were created using Google Forms and can be shared online as an easy method of collecting responses from citizens who may be unable to attend neighborhood meetings or City Council Sessions. Ms. Harris requested feedback for the RNA regarding the use of these surveys as a tool for collecting the community's feedback that in turn could be shared with City Council members before the issues are put to vote by City Council. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Morgan motioned that the RNA adopt and promote the use of the surveys created by Ms. Harris a tool for collecting the community's feedback on the proposed RM-1 Zoning amendment and status of the city pools for 2017 pool season to be shared with City Council members before the issues are put to vote by City Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Horchler. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

- **Resignation of RNA Chair by CJ Meidlinger**

Mr. Clement shared an email received by current RNA Chair CJ Meidlinger expressing his immediate resignation of the RNA Chair position due to conflicts with his work. Ms. Morgan motioned that the RNA accept Mr. Meidlinger's resignation of the RNA Chair position effective immediately. Mr. Parr seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved. Following a brief discussion, the RNA agreed to hold a special election at next month's meeting to replace the Chair. RNA members were encouraged to submit their interest in being considered for the Chair position by contacting Mr. Clement prior to the meeting.

- **FY17-18 Neighborhood Development Grant Review Committee**

Mr. Clement reminded the RNA that the FY2018 Neighborhood Development grant applications are due by close of business on Friday January 20. As a result, he requested RNA members to volunteer to serve on the FY2018 Neighborhood Development Grant Review Committee. Mr. Horchler, Mr. Williams and Ms. Morgan volunteered to serve on this committee.

- **May 2017 Conference for Roanoke Neighborhoods**

Mr. Clement solicited interest from the RNA members as to if they would be interested in partnering with the Office of Neighborhood Services to host another Neighborhood Conference for Roanoke Neighborhoods to kick-off the May 2017 Neighborhood Month as was done in 2016. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Morgan motioned that the RNA partner with the Office of Neighborhood Services to host a Neighborhood Conference for Roanoke Neighborhoods on Saturday, April 29, 2017 to kick-off the Neighborhood Month activities for 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Horchler. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Morgan, Ms. Pasternak, Mr. Steele, Mr. Williams and Ms. Harris volunteered to serve on a committee to begin planning the conference. A brief discussion took place suggesting following up with attendees from 2016's conference to find out if they found the information useful, having City Council attend and maybe even invite a Council member to be a guest speaker. Mr. Clement said that the former Director of TAP, Ted Edlich had expressed offered an interest in offering a workshop on the topic of Community Organization Development Matrix and Mindfulness. Ms. Morgan volunteered to reach

out to Mr. Edlich to learn more about the topic after which she would share with the RNA to decide if the topic was relevant to the conference.

## **Open Forum / Announcements**

- None

## **Adjournment**

- Vice Chair Johnny Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:33pm.