

# Minutes from RNA Meeting on July 12, 2017

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

## **Committee Members in Attendance**

Johnny L. Williams, Chair  
Nicole L. Harris, Vice-Chair  
Antwyne U. Calloway  
Barbara Evans  
Scott Horchler  
Kate Lewis  
Cindy C. Pasternak  
Ellie T. Rigby

## **Committee Members Absent**

Byron L. Hamlar  
David D. Parr  
Dwight O. Steele, Jr.

## **Guests**

Corey Beiswanger (city intern)

## **Welcome to Members and Guests**

Chair Williams called the meeting to order and welcomed guests and the two new members of RNA, Ms. Ellie Rigby and Ms. Kate Lewis.

## **Reading and Approval of Minutes**

The Meeting Minutes from the RNA's May 2017 meeting were briefly discussed and approved unanimously.

## **Guest Presentations**

None

## **Reports of Special Interest**

### **• Neighborhood Reports**

Chair Williams noted that once the RNA is at full membership that he would look to have responsibilities for attending neighborhood meetings distributed amongst the group. He urged the new members to look at the list of neighborhood groups and decide which neighborhoods they would like to coordinate with to attend their meetings.

Ms. Lewis as a new City Council-appointed RNA member had no reports.

Mr. Calloway reported the Loudon Melrose Neighborhood Organization did not meet this month. He noted he is reaching out to West End Watchers to confirm date and time of their meeting. He also noted he may no longer be able to attend their meetings due to a work conflict. Mr. Calloway noted NNEO is partnering with Apple Ridge on some urban farming work.

Ms. Rigby as a new RNA-appointed member had no reports.

Ms. Harris noted Star View Heights Neighborhood Watch reported there was a code enforcement walk held a few weeks ago and she reviewed what was cited noting the focus was on code enforcement and nuisance houses located on Mountain Ave. She also noted that the neighborhood group asked the Community Resource Officer for the Rescue Mission to provide more information about the impact to the community in future meetings, citing crime activity around the Mission as one item they would like to hear about. Ms. Harris also noted the Riverland Walnut Hill neighborhood had concerns with a specific house. She advised that four police officers were present at the meeting who updated the group on what they've been doing (95 citations in area). The neighborhood was impressed but it's difficult to articulate the process. Ms. Harris also noted she had spoken with Amy Morgan, president of the Belmont Neighborhood Association who noted the group discussed crime concerns around the Rescue Mission as well and how they were trying to get the Mission to support their petition to VA ABC to eliminate single container sales of alcoholic beverages at a nearby convenience store. Ms. Harris concluded that the Airlee Court Neighborhood Watch Association did not meet in July due to the 4th of July.

Chair Williams advised that the Melrose Rugby Neighborhood Forum and Hurt Park Neighborhood Alliance groups did not meet. He noted he had reached out to the Fairland Civic League and RRHA on fundraisers and National Night Out noting RRHA had been hosting blood pressure checks and free food distribution events. He also noted the Peacemakers now have a donated van which now makes them accessible to all quadrants in the city. He expressed the desire to see their efforts expand beyond NW. Chair Williams also noted there is a group related to Kissito Healthcare that helps transport the elderly and suggested the RNA introduce themselves to these groups to see if they can help spread information about their services.

Ms. Pasternak noted she had not attended the Old Southwest meeting and that the Mountain View Neighborhood Association meeting had been cancelled. She noted she had spoken with SW Community Resource Officer Ronnie Hodges who advised overall crime was down significantly in last few months noting there had been some arrests made for reported larceny/burglary activities. Ms. Pasternak also noted regarding the Peacemakers that police officers had expressed some concern about how they might work noting it was a good concept but had some general concern. Ms. Evans noted a meeting she had been present at with Chief Jones where he noted that they are good neighbors trying to be responsible and that there needed to make certain there is coordination. Ms. Pasternak noted there was a Riverdale Farm Neighborhood Association potluck in lieu of their normal monthly meeting tomorrow night.

Mr. Horchler noted the Southeast Action Forum had recently held officer elections with Ms. Harris elected as the group's new president. He noted there was a discussion on changes planned for Dale Avenue near Fallon Park by adding pedestrian crosswalks (section from 13<sup>th</sup> Street to Vinton) as currently there is not a lot of opportunity to cross. He noted city staff presented options that included possibly closing the existing left turn lane at 19th Street and that there was general discussion about needing crosswalk attention closer to the WalMart.

Ms. Evans noted she had attended the Raleigh Court Neighborhood Association in May at which the organizations had switched meeting times and location. She noted there was a good turnout with discussion on gardening and the house in Fishburn Park that the city has listed for sale although it is not in the Raleigh Court neighborhood. Ms. Evans also noted that the Grandin Court Neighborhood Association had held a meeting on the former Shenandoah Life property but advised she did not attend. She noted that the issue is that the prior owner, Shenandoah Life Insurance Company, allowed people to use the rear of their property as a park although it really isn't one. Ms. Evans also noted there was a discussion about the city selling off the old Blackwell House located in Fishburn Park and that the group's president, Freeda Cathcart, also expressed a concern with the city's removal of the old stone restroom facility from Fishburn Park which was replaced by a new facility. She noted that it appeared by the general discussion held that the restroom was not an issue. Chair Williams noted he does not like the City selling parkland that the city wastes money on other things and should use that money on park space. RNA should communicate their concern to City Council which may be an item for the 'Neighborhoods First' task force.

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

- **Report from Garland Neighborhood Blight Committee**

Ms. Harris and Ms. Pasternak noted the ‘Neighborhoods First’ Task Force meeting is scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup>. The goal will be to come up with a list of common issues/concerns from the various neighborhoods/neighborhood organizations and community organizations/affiliations who attend and to create a plan of action to work on the priority items raised. She noted that the meeting was open to all RNA members.

## **Unfinished Business**

- **Annual RNA State of the Neighborhoods Report**

Ms. Harris created a PowerPoint presentation with information and asked for ideas on how, what and when to share it with City Council. Mr. Calloway asked if a committee should be formed to formalize the report, etc. Ms. Evans motioned that a committee be formed to formalize the RNA State of the Neighborhoods Report to be present to City Council at a future Council meeting and was seconded by Ms. Harris. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Harris, Mr. Calloway, Ms. Evans and Chair Williams volunteered to serve on the committee and will report back to the RNA at the August meeting. It was agreed that the format of the report would be a PowerPoint presentation and that multiple members of RNA would like to attend the session to present. Mr. Williams suggested that he would contact Bob Clement on ordering RNA shirts for the new RNA members to wear when they are attending meetings, festivals, etc. as representatives of the RNA. Ms. Evans made a motion to order shirts which seconded and unanimously approved.

RNA will work with Mr. Clement to schedule a time to present the report to City Council.

## **New Business**

- **Donation to First Christian Church for Hosting Conference**

Discussion was tabled until Mr. Clement returns for discussion in conjunction with the annual budget.

- **Election of RNA Secretary**

Ms. Rigby was elected as the RNA secretary by unanimous vote.

- **FY2018 RNA Budget**

Discussion was tabled until Mr. Clement returns.

- **Presidents Council, Mayor’s Advisory Committee and RNA’s Role**

Mr. Calloway noted that he may become involved with the Mayor Lea’s Advisory Committee as a citizen but not necessarily as a representative of the RNA.

Ms. Harris noted she will also be participating as a representative of the RNA. She asked if there should be neighborhood representation from each quadrant. Mr. Calloway suggested that the RNA wait to see who is currently serving on the committee to see if neighborhoods are adequately represented.

Mrs. Pasternak also stated she'd be participating as a representative from SE.

Mr. Horchler asked why the Mayor formed an Advisory Committee when the RNA already exists. General discussion followed about ways to partner with City Council, city administration and/or other entities to get information out about RNA, neighborhood groups, etc. Ways to disseminate this information included sending notices out in conjunction with water bills, tax bills and/or other mailings from the city.

- **Discussion on RM-1 Survey and Follow-up to Old Southwest, Inc. re RNA stance on RM-1**

Ms. Harris reported there were a total of twenty-two (22) responses received to the RM-1 online survey she posted with six (6) responses in support of the proposed change in RM-1 density, one (1) supporting the change with stipulations and the other fifteen (15) opposing.

There was discussion and agreement to form a committee to put together a report from the survey with that committee including Ms. Lewis, Mr. Williams, and Ms. Pasternak. The committee will reach back out the neighborhoods to see if any have resolutions related to the RM-1 density change. Amy Morgan has done some research on RM-1 and that will be included in the report. It was also noted that several neighborhood groups had decided upon a stance regarding the proposal and coupled with a report provided to the RNA by Old Southwest resident Dinah Ferrance will be covered in the report.

### **Open Forum/Announcements**

- **State of the City Address (August 24, 2017)**
  - Ms. Rigby and Chair Williams plan to attend.
- **Other**
  - Ms. Harris suggested that the RNA look into entering a float for the Dickens of a Christmas parade and to encourage the neighborhood groups to enter floats behind RNA.
  - Mr. Horchler announced that he was resigning from the RNA.
  - National Night Out is on Tuesday, August 1, 2017 this year.

### **Closed Session**

Per a communication from Chair Williams requesting that RNA convene in a Closed Meeting to discuss two (2) vacancies appointed by RNA, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, Chair Williams 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, Mr. Williams reconvened the meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Vice-Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 6:55 P.M.