

Minutes from RNA Meeting on November 8, 2017

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

Committee Members in Attendance

Nicole L. Harris, Vice-Chair
Ellie Rigby, Secretary
Barbara Evans
Christina B. Hatch
Katelynn Lewis
David Parr
Cindy Pasternak
Dwight Steele, Jr.

Committee Members Absent

Johnny Williams, Chair
Antwyne Calloway
Byron L. Hamlar

Guests

None

Welcome to Members and Guests

Vice-Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

Reading and Approval of Minutes

The Meeting Minutes from the RNA's October 11, 2017 meeting were distributed for review. Vice-Chair Harris noted she had provided the report on the Wildwood Civic League and Ms. Hatch noted the spelling of her first name needed to be corrected. Ms. Evans motioned to approve the October 2017 RNA Meeting Minutes with corrections and Ms. Lewis seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Reports of Special Interest

- **Neighborhood Reports**

- **Ms. Hatch**

- Ms. Hatch agreed to represent Greater Grandview Neighborhood Watch as Mr. Parr indicated he had a scheduling conflict with the organization at a prior meeting.

- **Ms. Evans**

- Ms. Evans advised she attempted to attend the Grandin Court Neighborhood Association monthly meeting but the group decided not to meet unbeknownst to her. Mr. Clement reminded Ms. Evans that the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance would be meeting on Monday, December 11th.

- **Ms. Rigby**

- Ms. Rigby advised her schedule would not allow her to represent the Fairland Civic Organization to which Ms. Evans advised she would represent them and Ms. Rigby, in return, agreed to represent Miller Court Neighborhood Alliance. Ms. Rigby also advised the Melrose-Orange Target Area Stakeholders

meeting was scheduled for Monday November 13th and the next meeting of the Wasena Neighborhood Forum was scheduled for Thursday meets December 7th.

○ **Vice-Chair Harris**

Vice-Chair Harris noted the Riverland Walnut Hill Neighbors organization advised there is one problem house on Arbutus Avenue SE that has been a problem for years. During their recent meeting police officers reassured those attending that they just needed to keep calling 911 with their concerns. The officers spoke about making their presence better felt in the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Harris also noted she invited the group members to get involved with the SE Action Forum Christmas Parade float. She advised that on November 30th at 6:00 at Jackson Park, a supper was being hosted by the Roanoke Police Department as part of their neighborhood thank you tour around the city. Vice-Chair Harris also advised Belmont Presbyterian Church is distributing 'I Love SE' stickers.

Vice-Chair Harris also advised that City Planners Ian Shaw and Wayne Leftwich would be attending the next meeting of the SE Action Forum, Inc. to begin discussion about updating the SE Neighborhood Plan. She also advised she had attended the Starview Heights Neighborhood Watch meeting at which those in attendance were reminded about the upcoming annual City Neighborhoods Potluck Dinner & Awards Celebrations taking place at the Jefferson Center on November 10th. She also advised meeting attendees had concerns about a problem house on Mountain Ave SE. She noted the group desired to file a public nuisance on the property but the police reminded everyone that doing so would require neighbors to appear in court. Mr. Clement stated that code enforcement is on top of the issue. Vice-Chair Harris also noted that the group had a question about the proposed amendment to the RM-1 zoning to which she replied that it would likely not be until spring 2018 that the RM-1 zoning would come before City Council.

○ **Ms. Pasternak**

Ms. Pasternak noted she was unable to attend the Old Southwest, Inc. meeting but understood the organization was seeking public opinion about the possibly of reducing Elm Avenue, SW from three travel lanes to two travel lanes and including bike lanes.

Ms. Pasternak advised she had attended the Melrose Rugby Neighborhood Forum, Inc. meeting at which the neighborhood survey conducted on October 14th was discussed. She also noted discussion focused on an area at 18th Street and Moorman Avenue, NW where members are particularly concerned about drug activity. Police officers present at the meeting encouraged the need for citizens to report crime noting there was a murder in the 1600 block of Mercer Avenue NW and gun shots had been reported at Westland Apartments. Ms. Pasternak also advised a woman named Lisa Hamm was there to present about Damsel in Defense.

Ms. Pasternak noted the Riverdale Farm Neighborhood Association had a good meeting with discussion about the Opioid epidemic. She stated Roanoke County Chief Hall was present along with Dr. Pasternak and Tracy Coltrane who is the Director of Blue Ridge Behavioral Health and Scott Leamon of the Roanoke Prevention Alliance (RPA).

Ms. Pasternak advised she had attended the Mountain View Neighborhood Association, Inc. meeting at which Community Resource Office Ronnie Hodges reported neighborhood crime was way down in the West End area. She also reported group members enjoyed a potluck dinner during the meeting.

○ **Ms. Lewis**

Ms. Lewis advised she had attended the most recent meeting of Neighbors in South Roanoke at which a candidate's forum had taken place for the positions of Commonwealth's Attorney and Sheriff. She noted it was a well-run meeting.

- **Mr. Steele, Jr.**

Mr. Steele advised that the Gainsborough SW Community Organization was meeting the following day noting at their last meeting organizational members were trying to figure out ways to get the neighbors to attend the meetings. He also advised he had been speaking with the president of the Northwest Neighborhood Improvement Council, Elizabeth Hairston, who advised there is a tree located on the 500 block of McDowell that needed to have dead limbs removed, a trash can lid at the bus stop that has been vandalized, and numerous cars parked on the 500 block of McDowell that have not been moved in a while.

Ms. Steele stated he is trying to figure out when the next meeting of the Historic Gainsboro Preservation District is so that he can begin attending. Mr. Clement recommended he check with the Gainsboro Library Staff since that is where the meetings are held. Mr. Steele also advised the Youth Services Citizen Board would be meeting on November 27th noting they are hosting a job training summit coming up in February 2018 and that they are also working on identifying three youth to send to the National Youth Services Board.

- **Mr. Parr**

Mr. Parr advised the Grandin Village Business Association, Inc. members have an ongoing concern about the panhandling near the Village businesses noting but there is not much that can be done about it. He noted they are also looking for a Raleigh Court neighborhood resident to join their Board. Mr. Parr advised the association desires to continue with the decorative lighting and the lamp post baskets but the organization can only find one company – Roanoke Landscapes – who could do the lighting for the holidays. Mr. Parr noted shortly after their Holiday Parade on November 18th the organization is planning to host a Harry Potter Festival with all of the businesses creating magical gift items. Mr. Parr also advised they are hoping to have a non-profit to host a gift wrapping station to raise money during the event. The organization is also planning to borrow a fire pit from Black Dog to provide free s'mores and is also planning on selling s'mores kits as a fundraiser. The Grandin Theater will be showing the movie, Charlie Brown Thanksgiving after the parade as well. Mr. Parr also advised the association will be promoting their second Saturday's events when if you make purchases in the Village stores you can receive great deals at the Village restaurants. He also noted the first Saturday of December will be the Association's Holiday Open House and on the 27th there will be a blood drive at Black Dog Salvage.

Reports of Officers – Standing Committees

- **Report from Garland Neighborhood Blight Committee**

Vice-Chair Harris reported the committee had a less than robust turn out on October 14th to distribute the community survey than they were hoping for. She also advised no one showed up who attended the original task force committee meeting. Ms. Evans suggested distributing the survey at the churches that could lead to a discussion of different tactics that could be used to move the survey completion forward. Vice-Chair Harris asked for other ideas on how to move the Task Force forward noting that people from many different areas of Roanoke government, organizations and media had attended the first meeting. Ms. Lewis suggested another Task Force meeting be held for attendees to decide on the fate of the task force. Ms. Rigby volunteered to put together a model of what a possible compilation of a deliverable from RNA for best practices will be.

- **Report from the Welcome Roanoke Mailing Committee**

No report provided.

- **Update Regarding RNA Welcoming Committee**

Mr. Parr advised he has created a draft proposal that he will share at the next RNA meeting on how to welcome and orient new RNA members.

Unfinished Business

- **Creation of Survey Regarding Disposal of Public Properties Located in Parks**

Vice-Chair Harris provided a short survey for the RNA review and to provide feedback on regarding soliciting public feedback on a process for disposing of publicly owned properties located in city parks as this was particularly relevant now that the contract on the Fishburn Park caretaker's cottage house had been withdrawn. Ms. Lewis said she will brainstorm some multiple choice questions for inclusion on the survey.

Ms. Evans suggested that the neighborhood needs to get together with Carilion and the Shenandoah Life developers to come up with a plan in good faith for the neighborhood regarding the proposed development of the forestland adjoining the Shenandoah Life property. She also noted there are great concerns that the building is actually in worse shape than originally thought.

- **Update Regarding Councilman Garland's FY18-19 RNA Budget Request**

Vice-Chair Harris noted she had compiled and submitted the data requested by Councilmember Garland regarding the proposed RNA Operating Budget for FY 18-19.

- **Update Regarding Annual City Neighborhoods Potluck Dinner and Awards Celebration**

Mr. Clement advised Fitzpatrick Hall would be set up with 20-22 round tables with eight chairs at each for a total 160-176 place settings that the RNA could arrange as needed. He noted he was thinking about changing the beginning location of the food service line so that the lines don't meander through the crowd but rather would go around the room perimeter. Mr. Clement advised there are 135-140 people registered to date which appears to be slightly less than last year at this time but noted he has spoken to people who have not registered who said they were planning to attend. Mr. Clement also advised he has placed the order with La Cove adjusting the order based upon actual usage from last year. The Office of Neighborhood Services is providing three platters of chicken fingers. Mr. Clement also advised the RNA Awards Review Committee had met and the winners had been decided upon. He noted the model for the award presentations was based after the Academy Awards. Mr. Clement advised Vice-Chair Harris would be assisting Councilmember Bestpitch with the award presentations.

- **Update Regarding Proposed Amendment to RM-1 Zoning Report to City Council**

Ms. Lewis distributed a presentation she created regarding the results of a survey conducted regarding the proposed RM-1 zoning amendment. Mr. Clement advised City Manager Cowell had informed Old Southwest, Inc. that the proposed amendment was no longer being considered.

- **2018 RNA Officer Elections**

Mr. Clement reminded the RNA that they would need to elect new officers for the upcoming calendar year beginning in January 2018. He asked for RNA members to let him know if they had an interest in serving in a particular position, and if so, he would add them to a ballot that would be distributed at the next RNA meeting. The positions for which officers would be elected are Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Open Forum/Announcements

- Thursday, November 9th FY 2018-2019 Neighborhood Development Grant Workshop (Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, Room 159, 6pm)
 - Mr. Clement advised the program would begin with a presentation from Keith Holland regarding anticipated CDBG, HOME and ESG funds to be available for distribution followed by a separate presentation in another room he would provide regarding the Neighborhood Grant Program.
- Friday, November 10th – Annual City Neighborhoods Harvesting of the Fruits Potluck Dinner & Awards Celebration (Jefferson Center Fitzpatrick Hall, 6pm)

Adjourn

Ms. Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:01pm.