

The Historic Jackson Ward Association

Historic Jackson Ward Association

Board Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2019

This month's meeting took place at UNOS's offices at 502 North 2nd Street. Members in attendance:

- Zach Jesse
- Lynne Lancaster
- Janis Allen
- Vicki Mollenauer
- Julius Richardson
- Janet Armstead
- Jourdan James
- David Hahn

Reports

Richmond Police Department - Lt. James Roberts

Lt. Roberts, Sector Lieutenant for 413, presented. Things are moving in the right direction.

He noted a slight uptick in both theft from motor vehicles and burglaries (10 in JW) over the last month. However, he also stated that RPD had recently made an arrest on 5/12 of the alleged perpetrator and that since that arrest the neighborhood had seen no burglaries/theft from motor vehicles. This arrest was directly tied to a resident victim tip. Most of the vehicle thefts were from unlocked vehicles.

Lt. Roberts introduced Bobby Plasket, RPD detective. She presented about ways residents could protect themselves, noting RPD's "Love it? Then Lock it. Or Lose it." campaign. She reiterated the same advice that RPD has given previously, cautioning folks to lock their cars and hide visible valuables. She also noted that folks should take down the serial numbers of home electronics in order to help combat pawning.

Chelsea and Amy from RPD Public Relations presented two campaigns.

- Ring doorbell App partnership: "Neighbors by Ring". Residents can join the app without a device, but having a device can enable residents to upload videos. Joining the app provides updates on relevant neighborhood concerns.
- Nextdoor - This app narrows down on a neighborhood and provides relevant, filtered information. They encouraged residents to download the free app.

Captain John Hall, in charge of city at night, was present at the meeting.

Finally, Lt. Roberts announced that RPD had finally made an arrest in the Tommie the Dog case, but did not elaborate.

VCU Police - Officer Jonathan Wade

Officer Wade left his business card for residents.

Graduation was at the Richmond Convention Center this year for the first time. It went smoothly, and looks like it will continue for the foreseeable future.

He noted that, between June 14 and June 22, high school graduation is scheduled. He suggested that residents keep traffic in mind on these dates.

There are plans for a joint bike patrol with RPD in upcoming weeks.

An HJWA resident informed Officer Wade about 109 East Clay Street, a potential party house. Officer Wade commented on VCU protocol in such instances: VCU Police send a letter to the student's house, then if there is another call for service within a year, they will contact the landlord.

Old Business

Spring Clean up

Vicki gave an update about the HJWA April neighborhood cleanup. For the first time since 2005, HJWA was able to clean up the entire neighborhood. Vicki gave props to organizations which helped out, namely Gallery 5, VCU, and Food Not Bombs.

Jackson Ward Project

Gary Flowers and Janis Allen are working with CPDC to name both buildings.

Jackson Place Development

Damon Duncan, new CEO of RRHA, gave an update on the Jackson Place Developments. He discussed his work with Janis thus far, especially regarding the 63-unit issue, claiming to have come to a consensus that was eventually found favorable to RRHA, HJWA, and the developers. They are moving forward with the goal of a 63-unit reduced-density, mixed-use proposal. However, he noted that the procurement is not complete until the agreements are finalized. He also allayed fears saying that, even though RRHA may select a developer's proposal, RRHA reserves the right to modify the proposal, e.g. the ultimate density/number of units.

Desi Winter will be providing updates about the Jackson Place project. He noted that, at the moment, they could not reveal information. They have a developer in mind and have started negotiations; however, whomever they choose ultimately, they will ensure that that developer has a good plan for community engagement.

RRHA is submitting an application for a planning grant to the US Government for a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant concerning Northern Jackson Ward areas, i.e. Gilpin Court, Faye Towers, etc. They want to help families with rental assistance to help move forward in their overarching strategy. They may even want to do some new construction. Ultimately, they want HJWA input on this project moving forward. The goal is redeveloping all of Gilpin for a safer family neighborhood.

Maggie Walker National Historic Site

Ajena Rogers introduced Maggie Walker's new park superintendent, Doyle Sapp.

The site's major event, Maggie Walker's birthday, will be happening this summer, Saturday, 7/13. It is scheduled to start at Mrs. Walker's Statute at 10:00, and continue until 2 or 3 at both the statute and the Maggie Walker House. There's a leadership institute ceremony scheduled to look back at the inaugural class of leaders from 10 years ago.

Lastly, Ms. Rogers noted that this year was the 40th anniversary of Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site. In 1979, the family deeded the house to the National Park Service.

2nd Street Festival

Gary Flowers discussed his and Janis' discussions with Venture Richmond with regard to the 2nd Street Festival, currently scheduled October 5 and 6. Gary and Janis wanted to ensure two things: First, that the neighborhood is seen as a neighborhood. Second, they wanted to work on the festival itself to see if a story corridor can be included in the event. Gary also noted that last year, for the first time, they had a "Renaissance Roll Call" where turn-of-the-century fraternities and sororities celebrated. There is a parade planned for this year, from Broad to Leigh, where organizations will be marching with their colors.

SNP Properties

Eric Phipps (SNP Developer), Bryan Smith (SNP Developer), Catina Cosby (SNP PR), Karen Dickens (Rocket Pop) presented.

Catina spoke on behalf of the group.

She rattled off the various properties that SNP had purchased recently.

- The Mezzo at City Center - 102 apartment homes. Exterior improvements.
- Leased 1315 W. Broad, Switch? Nama?
- 23 W Broad Street
- 11 W. Broad Street
- The Penny at Jackson Ward - First residents move in 6/7. 2500 sq. ft. of restaurant space. 67 units

Janis noted before the conversation continued that she had spoken to them about our push back against being rebranded as “City Center.”

Catina noted that they were really proud of their naming conventions. For example, they had incorporated the name Jackson Ward into the name of The Penny.

City Center is Broad Street. She stated that they chose this name because it’s where East and West Broad meet. She noted that The Penny is a nod to St. Luke’s Penny Savings Bank.

Lynne noted her disapproval of the name, and asked how they arrived at that. Catina relayed that their research involved speaking with random folks in a coffee shop within the neighborhood. If we want more details, they are happy to provide them.

Parker questioned about the names of the floors. Catina noted that they chose jazz artists that played here in the turn of the century.

Eric Phipps spoke about their involvement with the site in 2017. He noted that, since their initial foray into the neighborhood, they realized this project was part of something bigger than what they originally envisioned. This is what prompted their decision to ostensibly rename/rebrand their properties to more Jackson Ward centered ones. Says that the name has been very well received. Plan to have some local artists showcased in the Penny.

Why “City Center” from Parker. Catina noted that they have a whole block, and wanted to create a destination space within the city.

Marilyn expressed concern about renaming in general, but with particular emphasis on how they've already attempted to intrude "City Center" into Jackson Ward. Also, noted that they haven't really engaged us since 2017.

Zach, in response, brought up Walter Parks' disastrous presentation at a previous HJWA meeting. Other gentrification concerns, e.g. the pictures in the complexes, were brought up.

Due to time constraints, Janis concluded the meeting. She opined that hopefully this introduction would open the lines of communication with moving forward.

New Business

No new business was addressed due to time except one presented noted that he had purchased 106 E. Clay and was meeting with the Zoning Appeals Board to work on the zoning for his new parcel.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Zach Jesse
Secretary