

RNA Community Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2022, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Board Members in attendance: Rich Badmington (President), Becca Charlton (Secretary), Jackson Fisher, Jen McLaughlin (Vice President), John Pare (Immediate Past President), Rachel Wagner, Jeff Brown.

Board members absent: Jeff Dewberry, Joelle Woolston (Treasurer)

Number of Zoom Attendees: 41

Next meeting: Monday, April 25, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Note: We plan to stay virtual on Zoom for the time being but hope to resume in person sometime this year.

Board Updates

Rachel Wagner, Communications and Public Safety

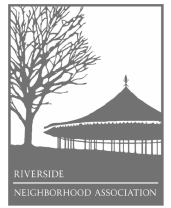
Rachel welcomed Officer Owens of the BCPD.

Officer Owens, Peninsula Sector 4, BPD Southern District

Officer Owens updated the neighborhood on the number of recent crimes in the general area (not just Riverside), including: 2 thefts from autos, 7 larcenies, and 1 residential robbery. He noted that police are seeing an uptick in carjackings in surrounding areas, again, not specifically in Riverside. He said these have happened at different times and places including when people are waiting at red lights or are getting into their cars in the morning. He suggested being aware of your surroundings at all times and especially watching at quiet intersections and red lights if you are approached by anyone wearing masks or looking suspicious. He suggested turning or moving carefully through an intersection if this happens. He also reminded the community that anyone can be caught up in this; victims are not restricted to any specific demographics.

Neal Friedlander spoke up from Councilman Eric Costello's staff. The Councilman is on the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) board and wanted the community to be aware that SBGP neighborhood grants are now available for security projects/measures as well as community and greenspace enhancing projects. This new area for grant proposals could cover acquisitions such as license plate readers, that were unlikely to be supported in the past.

Rachel also noted a few recommendations that recently came from the Community Relations Council meetings, which include keeping your car empty of valuables, looking around when you're walking rather than being focused on your phone, and generally being aware and vigilant with regards to your surroundings.



Jackson Fisher, Friends of Riverside Park

Construction projects:

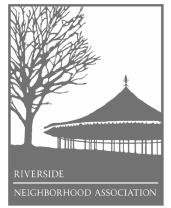
- **Riverside Park field renovation project update as of mid March:** Within-budget bids have been received and are under review for feasibility and other requirements. These are better than the fall bids, none of which were appropriate and caused the project to be readvertised. If these bids qualify, the City should be able to award a contract to start construction later this year.
 - John Pare asked about parking or walking areas - Jackson said those are included in a subsequent stage of the renovations, but plans do include a pedestrian pathway along the south side of the fields connecting Wells St. and Covington in the future. The sidewalk on Johnson St. will be extended to the south edge of the park and Wells St.
 - Question on pickleball court usage - The court is currently shared with skateboarders, so the arrangement is informal. He suggested users have a conversation if they want to share the space. A net is available at the court. After the renovation, there will be a full-size basketball and pickleball court. He expects pickleball to have designated play times when skaters will remove their equipment, then replace it when skating resumes. Pickleball players are encouraged to talk to skateboarders about arranging a time to play. Other pickleball users can be reached via Instagram @pickleparkdiy.
- SBGP is coordinating and underwriting renovation of the park gazebo with a new roof, paint, and ironwork. A contractor has been identified and contracts are being finalized. The expectation is that it will be done sometime this summer, maybe over the course of a month.
- BCRP has a mowing contract in place for the park. It should be mowed for the first time Monday, April 4th and then should be every other Monday throughout the summer. Each city park has a day of the week.

Activities

- Summer concert planning is in the works for second Sundays in June-Sept
- Jackson has planned some park clean-up projects with St. Ignatius students. They will be Monday mornings of April 4, May 2, May 9, and June 6 and will involve a classroom of 15-20 kids, from 10:30 a.m.-noon. Anyone is welcome to join. Meet at the red house about 10:30. Jackson will be leading these activities.
- There is a larger community cleanup planned between RNA and SBNA, with volunteers spanning out to clean up streets and some planted areas. Dumpsters and tools should be available on the morning of May 14. Again, meet at the red house. Volunteers are invited to grab a beer and snacks at Delia Foley's afterwards. Watch for upcoming announcements. There will be sign up information in a social media/FB post ahead of time
- A happy hour fundraiser is also being planned at Little Havana for the latter part of April close to the next RNA meeting.

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- There will be a neighborhood/RNA Social on Sunday, May 15, where neighbors can come together in the park for BYO picnics. RNA will host and provide a DJ. We also expect there to be a food and ice cream truck. It will be a precursor to the concerts.

Rich Badmington mentioned the Mayor's cleanup day on April 30. Although RNA has nothing specific planned that day, if the weather is nice there will likely be neighbors out working in the park, possibly spreading mulch or topsoil.

Rebecca Charlton offered some updates on this year's plans for Riverside Park Pool.

- Opening day is expected to be Memorial Day weekend, with COVID restrictions from the last two years still in place. This means none of the pool furniture will be out.
- Entry will still require online reservations through the CivicRec reservation system online, <https://secure.rec1.com/MD/baltimore-md/catalog>. Tickets will be free and walk-ups will be allowed if the sessions are not full or, if 15 minutes into the session there are reservation no-shows.
- Aquatics would like to offer some programming again this year but nothing has been confirmed at this time.
- Some minor improvements to the exterior of the pool building (repairing cracks in the facade and a fresh paint) are expected to begin soon. RNA has requested that BCRP consider adding some color and vibrancy to the repainting, similar to the colors added to the pool deck during the Splash City project in 2019, though we don't yet have any confirmation.

Rich Badmington, Development

RNA provided a letter of support for Local Oyster's liquor license, given no additional concerns after the last RNA Community meeting.

Jeff Brown, Parking

RNA decided not to extend/broaden the RPP area within Riverside since enforcement wasn't happening. We are waiting to access additional enforcement data and may seek to remove the 2-hour grace period in the parking areas so that ticketing is easier. When the pilot rolled out, the RPP only included one side of the 1500 block of Battery. Residents on the other side had temporary permits, but now have full permit privileges. Signs will go up on the other side of the block sometime in May.

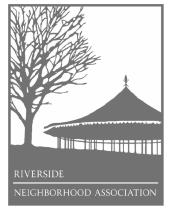
Guest Speakers

Al Balingier, new owner of Park Bench Pub, 1749 Belt St.

Mr. Balingier mentioned that he took ownership on Feb 1 2022. He is now doing some interior renovations and updating the menu. He expects to open Friday, April 1. He plans to keep the pub family-oriented

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while expanding hours of operation to 11:00 a.m.-midnight, offering a full lunch and dinner menu. They will no longer offer sushi, but will add in new seafood and vegan options to the current menu.

The liquor license is in the process of being transferred and he will operate under the previous license until the transfer is complete.

On a personal note, he mentioned that he lives in Pigtown with his family and is originally from Anne Arundel County/Annapolis. He's been in the City for 10 years. He became aware of the opportunity through family members who worked at the pub previously. He is excited and looks forward to being part of the community, volunteer events, etc.

Aaron Campbell, Community Relations Manager, MTA (update on the MARC railyard improvements project and ongoing BGE work)

MARC was also represented by George Bell, area manager and Lineta Duren of Assedo Consulting (Community Relations Manager for this project), and Malik Jordan (BGE)

In response to paving and repaving questions around Fort, that work has been rescheduled. Expect to see flyers come out ahead of that work with additional information.

George Bell said the building construction continues, relatively on schedule. The BGE-managed gas line trench work is now finishing work along Webster and Heath Streets, working at a pace of approximately 20 ft. per day.

On the Ludlow St. entrance to MARC facility (Merritt parking access), work will soon begin on electric service and inside the facility. They will complete landscaping in collaboration with the City, though the schedule is not yet determined. This should complete work near Key Highway.

Lineta Duren and Malik Jordan from Assedo Consulting provided additional updates.

Malik noted that the bump-out at Boyle and Heath will be the laydown area for the duration of the project. This is where some pipes and the backhoe will be stored. There may be some pieces there now. The work or materials should not obstruct the sidewalk.

Lineta mentioned that work along Boyle St. will begin soon. According to DOT, both the gas contractor and the Ekiben contractors have permits to work in the Boyle/Fort area at the same time. Both crew are in touch and will be working out logistics around the Ekiben construction and dumpster. Closures around this project will be from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., plus some set up and clean up time, but not 24 hrs/day. Door hangers have been left with residents in this area and they will provide more active text communication as they get closer to that area.

They met with Local Oyster staff as well and residents who use the alleyway off Lawrence St. The allye will be closed for approximately four days total between 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. The Lawrence St. trench alignment has been shifted to the center of the road to avoid disruption of the newly completed bike lane and sidewalk.

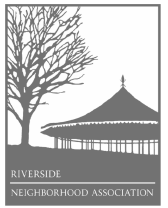
RNA requested that the outreach team consider potential schedule conflicts with the Little League parade and Kinetic Sculpture Race in early May.

RNA thanked Lineta, Malik, and the team for all the improved communication on this project!

Contact Info:

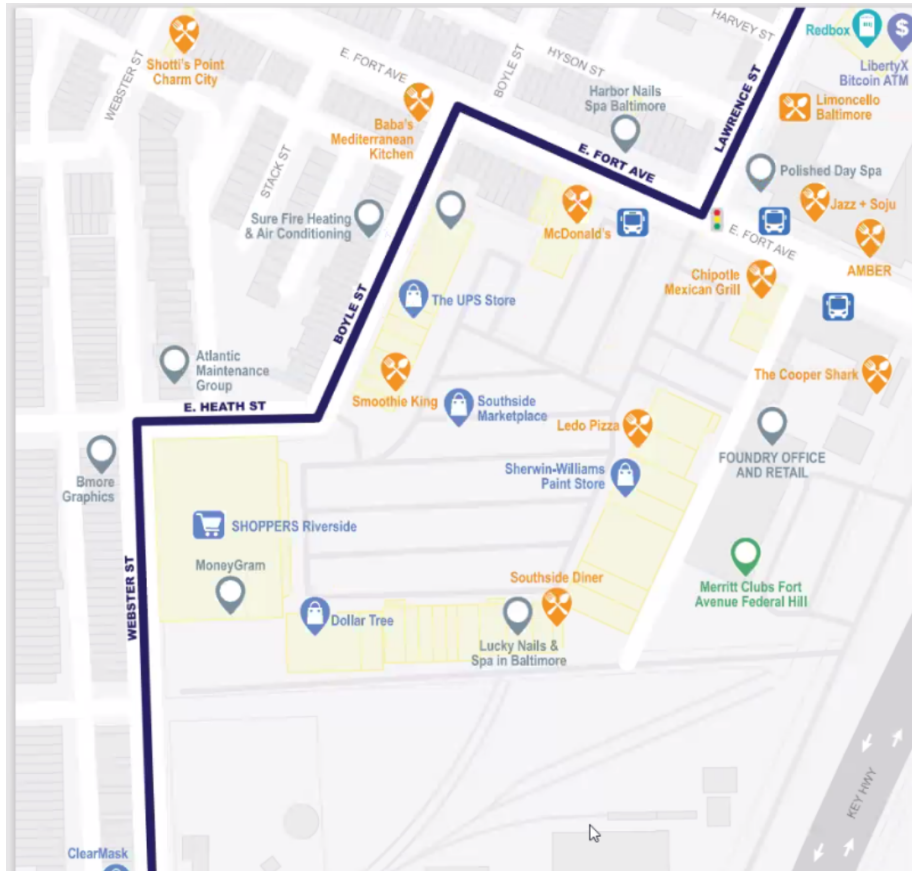
For information on parking or other updates, sign up for text message by texting BGERIVERSIDE to 844-786-0130.

Lineta can be reached at Lineta@assedollc.com or by phone at 410-618-0102.



Aaron Campbell - MTA Office of Customer & Community Relations Community Relations Officer
acampbell2@mdot.maryland.gov

Again, a map of the project:



Other Questions/Announcements

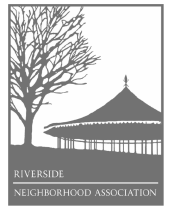
Rachel called on Steve Cole, editor of Peninsula Post, to share news of their one-year anniversary. They are planning their first in-person community celebration—"I Love SoBo Day"—on May 1 at the Museum of Industry. Details will be published in the next issue of Peninsula Post Friday, April 8.

Ed on Fort Ave asked about the railway bridge at McComas St. Has it been inspected and what were the results? Who is responsible for this?

Jackson said that CSX has plans to replace that bridge, but it is not likely to happen soon. It is inspected regularly and while it is not in great shape, it is not failing. A MARC representative confirmed it is a CSX asset and not used by MARC.

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Question on electric scooters - Is it possible to have the scooters and bikes deposited on the park side of streets instead of in front of homes? No one had a definitive answer but the following link was provided to City guidance: <https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/dockless-vehicle-committee>

Jackson mentioned that if you wish to have City tree pits expanded, please reach out to TreeBaltimore. Charles Murphy (Charles.murphy@baltimorecity.gov)

ANY AND ALL DPW ISSUES - Email Larry.Nunley@baltimorecity.gov or call him at 443-615-2626. If you need assistance, please report your issue at 311 and get an issue tracking number. Then provide that to Larry who can escalate it. He also reiterated the Mayor's Cleanup event at the end of April.

If you do not get the RNA neighborhood newsletter and want to stay in the know about these events, sign up here: <https://us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=f041e7d880c228be17f7081e8&id=598555dc69>

You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram @rnabaltimore.

For anyone who is not yet an official RNA member, please pay your 2022 dues online. The cost is only \$5 (\$5.46 if you're able to help us cover the processing fee) per person per year. If you've not yet paid your 2022 RNA Membership dues, you can do so here:

<https://www.riversideneighborhoodassociation.com/about/dues-and-donations/>

You can use the same link to make a donation to RNA any time to help with park improvements, events, and more.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rebecca Charlton, Secretary
March 28, 2022*