

# RNA Community Meeting Minutes

**April 25, 2022, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom**

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

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

Number of Zoom Attendees: 37

Next meeting: Monday, May 23, 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

Jeff Dewberry, Public Safety Chair

Jeff welcomed Officer Owens of the BCPD.

**Officer Owens, Peninsula Sector 4, BPD Southern District**

2 larcenies (1 from auto, one person of interest), 1 carjacking (believed to be juvenile), 2 commercial robberies (persons of interest identified). 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 keeping your car empty of valuables

Jeff reminded the community to trust your gut if you see or feel that something in your environment is suspicious, drive around the block, or call police if you feel a situation should be investigated. If you live here, you have a good idea of what is going on and what is normal behavior in the neighborhood.

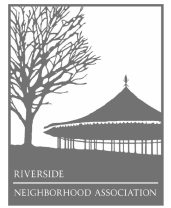
Jackson Fisher, Friends of Riverside Park

Construction projects:

- Field renovation project: Bids are still under review for feasibility and other requirements. If these bids qualify, the City should be able to award a contract to start construction later this year.
- Park gazebo project: SBGP is coordinating and underwriting renovation for 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.

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- We've heard that some work may be coming to the pool; no specific details to share yet.

### Activities

- RNA co-hosted with the South Baltimore Neighborhood Assn. a spring fundraiser at Little Havana last Wednesday that raised \$800. The money will largely go to community cleanup and planting, specifically during an upcoming RNA/SBNA cleanup day (see below). Thomas Mackay joined the meeting from SBNA and agreed that the event was well-received and that they're also looking forward to the upcoming cleanup day.
- This weekend, May 1, RNA will be hosting a table at I Love SoBo Day at BMI, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., and we hope to see you there.
- The community cleanup day for RNA and SBNA will take place May 14 beginning at 9:00 a.m., with volunteers spanning out to clean up streets and some planted areas. Dumpsters and tools should be available in the morning. Meet at the red house. Volunteers are invited to grab a beer and snacks at Delia Foley's afterwards. There will be sign up information in a social media/FB post ahead of time, and all are welcome.
- Summer concert planning is in the works for the second Sundays in June-Sept.
- There are some park clean-up projects with St. Ignatius students coming up the Monday mornings of May 2 and May 9. They will involve classrooms 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 will be a neighborhood/RNA Social on Sunday, May 15, where neighbors can come together in the park to hang out. RNA will provide a DJ and have confirmed the Harborque food truck and Miss Twist ice cream truck will be there. Otherwise, BYO food and drinks.

### Riverside Park Pool

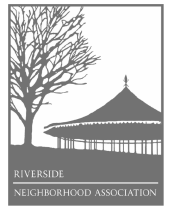
- Aquatics would like to offer some programming again this year but nothing has been confirmed at this time. RNA is looking into programming for the pool this summer, which would likely require some volunteer time.
- Some minor improvements to the exterior of the pool building (repairing cracks in the 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. We have indications of approval for a mural on the front of the pool building and are in early planning for this.

### Delegate Luke Clippinger, Team 46

Delegate Clippinger joined to share that the 46th District was very successful getting funding for parks this year. \$600K was secured for lighting upgrades at Riverside that were left unfunded

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from the field renovation project. With support from all Team 46, another ~\$1M was secured to begin work on the bathhouse and other improvements at the pool. It is expected to be a multi-million dollar project (likely \$4-5M), but this is a great start. Money is budgeted to go to BCRP and they will work to program it. The hope is this initial funding will help get the ball rolling on the major pool renovation project.

Del. Clippinger also mentioned other substantive legislation that was recently passed, including:

- Reforms to the juvenile justice system that aim to get juveniles into rehabilitation programs closer to their neighborhoods.
- Banning ghost guns that are untraceable and unregulated. This legislation will work in tandem with federal law.
- Updated tax credits for senior citizens such as limiting taxes for single filers with income under \$100K and couples under \$175K, and eliminating sales taxes on some medical devices such as equipment for diabetic patients.

Luke is available at [luke.clippinger@house.state.md.us](mailto:luke.clippinger@house.state.md.us) if you have any questions for him.

## Rich Badmington, Recent Community Concerns

Rich noted that there have been multiple liquor license and operating concerns over the last couple weeks from RNA residents regarding Park Bench Pub. RNA is in discussions with key stakeholders, including the license holder and previous owner Steve Puzio, the new owner Al Ballinger, area residents, Councilman Eric Costello, and the liquor license authorities, to discuss the concerns and the way forward.

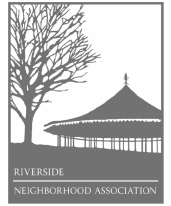
Neighbor Sul (Covington St.) shared that Al (new Park Bench owner) has an opportunity with his new ownership of Park Bench Pub. Sul has some ideas for additional ways to use the space, such as coffee and donuts to address needs/appetites that he sees as currently underserved in the RNA area.

Al Turner, the bar manager of Park Bench Pub, apologized for the DJ and late night hours recently. He said Park Bench will be updating its hours to M-Th 5:00 - 11:00 p.m.; Fr/Sat 5:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m. He said they will not have a DJ until they get license approval for it, and that they do plan to play music from a jukebox but turn music down after 10:00 p.m. He also expressed the desire to host the community after a local event in the future, such as the social planned for after the upcoming RNA/SBNA cleanup day. Additionally, Park Bench is currently hiring for a cook and waiting staff.

Rich Badmington thanked him for coming to the meeting and took note of the operating hours changes. He said, however, that RNA would continue discussions with the new owner to

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address the many concerns that have been raised by neighbors, including those that would not be addressed by the changes mentioned by Mr. Turner.

Rich asked for any further comments or concerns from people on the call. None were offered.

## Guest Speakers

### Augusta Chistensen, Candidate for Dist. 46 Delegate

Augusta is a Light St. resident and active member of SBNA who grew up in Harford County, MD. Before running for office herself, she has spent many years working “to elect Democratic women” to a variety of offices. Her top priorities are public safety, transportation, and the public education system. She is happy to meet with neighbors if they have issues they want to discuss.

Website: <https://www.augustaforbaltimore.com> | Cell: 443-987-7268 | Email: [ayc@augustaforbaltimore.com](mailto:ayc@augustaforbaltimore.com)

### Sean Burns, Candidate for Dist. 46 Delegate

Sean was born in Cherry Hill and now lives downtown. He is an attorney and advocates for the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). He cited a long list of roles and affiliations over a career he said has been focused on advocacy for progressive causes. His top priorities are public safety, transportation, and education. Sean was joined by Leland Shelton, his campaign manager.

Email: [sean@seandburns.com](mailto:sean@seandburns.com) Website: [www.seandburns.com](http://www.seandburns.com)

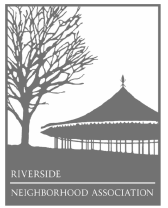
### MTA Update (MARC railyard improvements project and ongoing BGE work)

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

Lineta said gas line crews should have been at Boyle and Heath St. today but due to a water leak, they postponed that work. Starting Wednesday, the crew should begin work on E. Fort Ave., which will last a couple weeks. Lawrence St. (and the end of the project) will follow. They will not be on site tomorrow, Tuesday. Fliers will be distributed in the next week to upcoming work area residents.

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George Bell, MTA/MARC Construction, noted the facility construction project is mostly on schedule. The current work on Webster street should be done by lunchtime Tuesday. Ludlow St./Fort Ave. paving was completed after which Merritt resurfaced the entire parking lot, so there are no seams. There is a small area in front of B Gate—the middle of three gates, closest to the Merritt recycling dumpster—that will require some repaving. The building itself will continue going up next, infrastructure is going in currently, and you'll see more progress on the external surface coming soon. He does not anticipate any disturbances beyond the work that has been done.

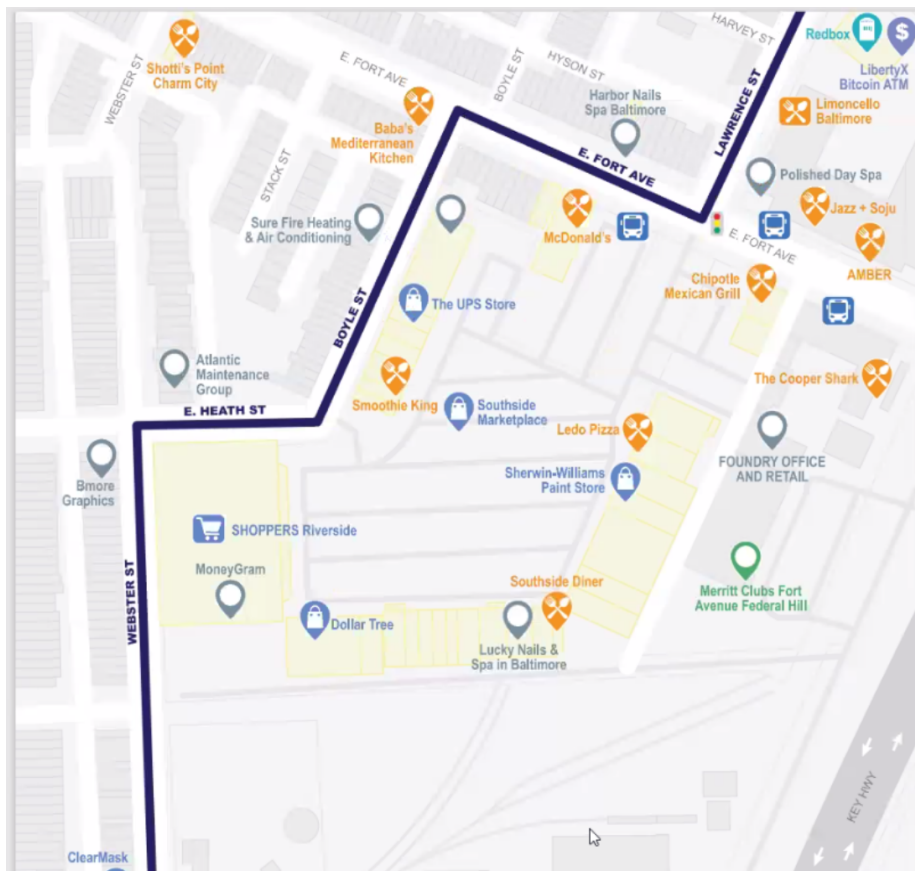
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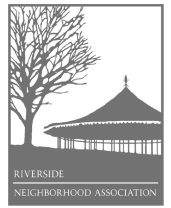
For information on parking or other updates, sign up for text message by texting BGERIVERSIDE to 844-786-0130.

Lineta can be reached at [Lineta@assedollc.com](mailto: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](mailto:acampbell2@mdot.maryland.gov)

Again, a map of the gas line project:





## Other Questions/Announcements

*Jen Mclaughlin*, shared Councilman Costello's recent posts re: Charm City Circulator

Circulator changes plan meeting:

[https://streetsofbaltimore.com/tdp/forum\\_topics/public-meeting-2](https://streetsofbaltimore.com/tdp/forum_topics/public-meeting-2)

<https://streetsofbaltimore.com/tdp>

From the Councilman:

"Years ago we fought to keep the Charm City Circulator Banner Route, and routes serving our community are on the chopping block again. If you feel passionately about this, please read on from Councilman Costello today: Proposed Changes to Charm City Circulator – Virtual Public Mtg on Tuesday, April 26 @ 6pm -- proposed expansions are important, the proposed reductions are NOT acceptable.

"The Charm City Circulator (CCC) bus system, run by the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT), provides a safe, reliable, affordable, and clean means of transit for our residents to access jobs, school, grocery stores, and a variety of other daily needs. It reduces traffic congestion in Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods by reducing the number of vehicles on our streets. It also ensures our visitors are able to shop at our small businesses and visit cultural attractions, especially the only National Monument and Historic Shrine in the nation, Fort McHenry.

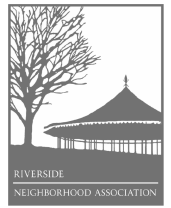
"We have long needed modifications to its existing circulator routes, specifically, the need to expand the service to additional historically disenfranchised communities while continuing access to dense residential areas. However, we now know the full scope of what those changes will look like for South Baltimore residents. While the proposed changes include a long overdue expansion to Cherry Hill, a move I have advocated for since 2014, it comes with the elimination of service to several areas on the South Baltimore Peninsula, including major population centers, a grocery store, Latrobe Park, and Fort McHenry.

Now as Covid restrictions are being lifted and people are returning to in-person work, school and social activities, DOT is proposing cutting service to our community with significant modifications to the Purple Route and the elimination of half the Banner Route. While the proposed expansions are important, the proposed reductions are NOT acceptable.

DOT is hosting a public meeting on Tuesday, April 26, @ 6:00 - 8:00pm. I hope you will consider joining your neighbors to learn more and ensure your voice is heard. You may register for the meeting here: <https://bit.ly/3oNgQnQ>"

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*Sam Cogen, SBNA Board member & Candidate for Baltimore City Sheriff*

Rich Badmington recognized Sam and invited him to speak. Sam said he hopes to come speak to the community in his capacity as a candidate for Sheriff at a future meeting. That appearance is expected at the May meeting.

*Hope from the Fort Ave./Webster St. area*

Hope brought up pedestrian safety concerns at the Fort/Webster new stop sign that drivers regularly run. She is interested in pursuing grant funding for more safety features such as reflective tape around the stop sign. Information for South Baltimore Gateway Partnership (SBGP) community grants were shared. Jeff D. mentioned the need to work through DOT to make any changes.

*Kelly on Covington St.*

Kelly added this to the meeting chat:

"Hi all. Just want to remind you there will be a plant/art/book sale on the corner of Covington & Heath on 5/7 from 1 to 4 pm. Starter veggie & herb plants from Pyramid Acres, local writer & photographer Jim Burger, will be selling & autographing his new book "What's Not To Like" - local sculptor, Shipley Lucas, will be selling his decorative bird houses & I will have my HeartFelt pins available for sale. Please stop by & visit us!"

*Dr. Larry Nunley, DPW*

ANY AND ALL DPW ISSUES - Email [Larry.Nunley@baltimorecity.gov](mailto: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.

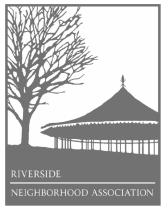
He also reiterated the Mayor's Cleanup event at the end of April, on Saturday. You can register at 311 and the City will pick up bags of trash afterwards.

*Vince Andrews, Candidate for Dist 46*

Rich recognized Vice Andrews, who greeted the community. Vince is a former teacher and attorney in the City and has spoken about his candidacy for the House of Delegates at a previous RNA meeting.

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## RNA Membership and Email Updates

If you do not get the RNA neighborhood emails and want to stay in the know about developments, 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*

*April 25, 2022*