

RNA Community Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2022, 7:00 p.m. at Salem Lutheran/Riverside Third Space and on Zoom

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

Board members absent: Jeff Brown, Jeff Dewberry

Number of Residents Present: 12 (in-person), 19 (on Zoom)

Next meeting: Monday, October 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. (same locations as above)

Committee Updates

Rich Badmington, RNA Membership

Rich welcomed residents, introduced the RNA Board members, and then welcomed Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) Owens of the BCPD.

Officer Owens, Peninsula Sector 4, BPD Southern District

Officer Owens reported on local crime numbers from the last 30 days (garbled over Zoom connection, but included) 6 auto thefts, some larcenies. He reminded residents that it's safest to keep things, especially valuables, out of your car or not visible to avoid break-ins. He also mentioned maintaining awareness of your surroundings as it starts to get darker earlier.

Q: I've noticed patrols in/around the park, anything to share?

A: There has been an issue with homeless people in the gazebo burning tables and doing drugs. They have been connected with a homeless outreach team to attempt to find them alternative places to stay.

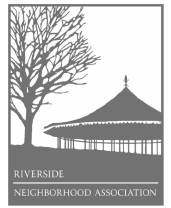
Jackson Fisher, Friends of Riverside Park

Jackson discussed the renovation work that has begun at the Park. Last Monday, the contractor obtained a permit from BCRP to access the park, so the initial work on this 2-year project is getting underway. An exclusion fence has been erected from Johnson St. into the park, around the pickleball court and red house, and down to the service way/road on Covington St.

This is the outer perimeter of Phase 1 work, which includes renovation of the entirety of the athletic fields to include new grass, new drainage and irrigation, new lighting, basketball court, pickleball court, handicapped accessible dugouts, new staircase down to the fields, tiered seating into the hill, field fencing, new sidewalk from Covington St. to Johnson St. along the

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South side of the park, new sidewalk on the 1800 block of Johnson St. (which currently ends at Barney St.). The project is estimated at over \$1M right now, and will include significant work to utilities, lighting, water/sewer connections. It will take a minimum of 18 months, but Jackson expects it will take closer to 2 years.

Work by contractors will be primarily M-F 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Heavy machinery and noise is expected but should be restricted to daytime hours and only during certain phases of the work.

Parking on the 1800 block of Johnson St. will be restricted during daytime construction hours, but will be open for overnight parking. Those who park there overnight must move their car by 7:00 a.m. M-F or additional restrictions may be added. A new construction entrance is coming to the end of Wells St. in the next week and the expectation is construction traffic will be coming/going there, not down Johnson St.

The project will entail removal of trees on the former CSX property adjacent to the railyard. A total of 123 trees have been identified as needing to be replaced by the Forestry department, but they will be removed initially. Some plantings may come back earlier but some of the replanting is included in Phase 3 and will not be immediate. Note that Phase 3 has not been designed or funded yet.

Q: What about the possibility of a dog park?

A: This question comes up every now and then. There is a possible area in Phase 3, but BCRP published restrictions for dog parks that cause issues here, including slope, drainage, size, proximity to residences. The area we have available was restricted. The goal is to find another space that has more acreage (closer to 2 acres) for a dog park that would work better than the small spaces we have.

Q: What about the skate park "pickle park"?

A: The court used to be exclusively a basketball court, but was informally set up as a pickleball court and skateboard park alternately using the same. This worked well and we expect that to be possible again after the work is complete. There's a possible flat space that could be shared between those activities and even others such as fitness classes.

Q: Will there be signage on the fencing posted about the project for those not on social media?

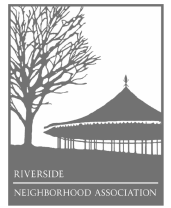
A: BCRP put up signage. It has been slow and communication has been relatively poor but we expect it will come eventually.

Q: What about potentially adding a path around the red house? Why block off the sidewalk?

A: The inclusion of the red house in Phase 1 was unexpected but there are linkages to the utilities (lighting, electric, water) there which now will be addressed in Phase I. We may address informal or temporary mulch paths as needed, but nothing else planned right now.

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Q: What parking is planned for the south side of the park?

A: That is proposed for Phase 3, which has not been designed or funded yet, but the expectation is that a small lot specifically for the fields, such as that down by Banner Field at Latrobe Park, may be installed.

Q: What are the project phases?

A: Phase 1: fields; Phase 2: interior of red house to include bathrooms facing the athletic fields, center of building with roll window with controls for scoreboard, roll window on side for concessions or community access, small storage area for sports equipment, intermediate storage for main room, small storage area for community park tools/equipment; Phase 3: parking and anything else that may be designed for the 2 acres at the bottom of the park.

Q: Any park expansion in Phase 1?

A: A small expansion for the softball field to extend the current size, and a walkway to Johnson St. The walkway from Covington to Johnson Sts. will be fenced once complete. There is an issue with soil contamination further south in the old CSX land.

Q: Will parking be blocked for a full 2 years at Johnson/Barney Sts.?

A: We expect parking to be affected for close to a year, though we imagine when a smaller crew is on-site, there will be less disruption. There will be a portion of time when construction is done and we're waiting for grass to take root/grow, during which parking should no longer be restricted.

Pastor Emily Ewing, Salem Lutheran Church

Our host, Salem Lutheran Church's new pastor, Emily Ewing (Pastor Emily) introduced herself and welcomed RNA to the facility's "Third Space." She noted that Salem Lutheran's Oktoberfest festival is coming on Oct 15. They will close the 500 block of Randall St. and will offer food, drinks, family activities, fall festivities, etc. Everyone is welcome.

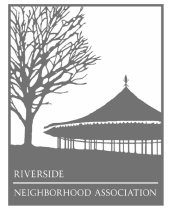
She invited members of the community to reach out if interested in using the Riverside Third Space. It is available for the community's use.

Chris Firehock, Community Development Grants Specialist, Mayor's Office of Community and Economic Development

Rich Badmington invited Chris Firehawk of the Mayor's Office of Community and Economic Development to address the group. Firehawk said that his office oversees half of the casino impact funds coming to Baltimore (with the other half managed by the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership). The OCED funds are overseen by the Local Development Council (LDC) which

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includes state and City elected officials, community members, and representatives from institutions, nonprofits, and businesses. Riverside has never had a representative, but, based on Firehawk's earlier conversation with Rich Badmington, this is expected to change, with the addition of a representative. The Board role is for five years and the fiscal year starts with the calendar year. The LDC's purpose is to bring projects to the attention of the Mayor's Office. When funds are awarded, they typically supplement existing programs and City functions (beyond the normal expectation and mandate of these departments). Current projects include renovations at Solo Gibbs Park and the Reimagine Middle Branch project. Grants often cover planning and capital improvements. There is significant latitude in the use of the funds, for literacy, safety, parks, and programming. Residents are invited to contact Rich to explore ideas and grant recommendations.

Q: How complicated is the grant process from the Mayor's Office's side?

A: It's different than SBGP's process. We use city agencies to perform the work, e.g., BCRP for the park, ClityWatch for cameras, DPW for supplemental trash pick-up, etc. Again, these funds should cover services or investments above and beyond what the City is already slated to do. Sometimes the group refers requests to SBGP if it's not a good fit for us.

Q: What's the scale of grants?

A: Baltimore gets approx. \$14M each year, depending on casino revenues. Our office got \$7M a couple years ago; this past year it was closer to \$8M. The precise number for next year is unknown but should be on a similar order of magnitude.

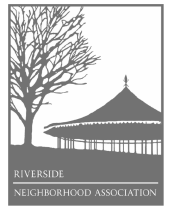
Rachel Wagner, Community Events/Public Safety

Upcoming Events

The annual Riverside Halloween Bash will be held from 1:00-5:00 p.m. on Oct. 29 in Riverside Park. There will be crafts, games, music, food, and drink. The event is great for families but not exclusive to kids. Costumes are encouraged!

Public Safety

Rachel noted that she tries to keep abreast of and understand what's happening locally with crime and understand the judicial process in order to be a resource for residents who may be victims of crime. She has supported residents in the past and is happy to again or put victims in touch with other public safety representatives in the area. Please do call 911 and file police reports rather than just post on FB when incidents occur. Also, save all information such as business cards with case numbers from police officers who respond to 911 calls. Feel free to share with RNA and ask for support.



Rich Badmington, Other RNA Business

Rich thanked Mary Brahman for drafting a grant application for some decorative/protective fencing for plants around the park.

He also mentioned that the RNA meeting next month will be on Oct. 24, (not on Oct. 31, Halloween), at 7:00 p.m. in the same location. It will be our Annual Meeting, at which we'll consider new board members if anyone is interested in joining. We have a great, responsive board, and we do see opportunities to raise our vision beyond the day-to-day "constituent service" matters that the board deals with extremely well. We would welcome the engagement of anyone who has the time, passion, or talent to offer to our neighborhood. Email RNABaltimore@gmail.com

Q: Can you provide an update on Park Bench Pub after some commotion last weekend?

A: As most know, the new ownership had a rough start with noise and liquor board violations. There are lots of parties involved but the liquor license was withdrawn by the license holder/owner. That license is effectively on hold unless/until the owner reactivates it. If the owner chooses to do that, the owner may pick up and resume business. If a specific amount of time passes, there may be a hearing required. On record, the RNA Board currently opposes reactivation of the license for use with the current business and manager unless and until we are provided with meaningful assurances that the disruptive incidents and practices will not recur.

Other Questions/Announcements

Matt Achhammer, Liquor Board Community Liaison

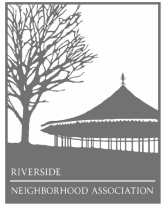
Matt introduced himself and said he will hear concerns local residents have, so please reach out. First call 311, and classify your concern as a Liquor Board matter. The 311 service does not stop at 10:00 p.m. (as some believe). The liquor board receives tickets/complaints immediately and usually responds within 2 hours, as long as it's before 2:00 a.m. when called in. You can reach him at matt.achhammer@baltimorecity.gov 410-241-6525 (text or call).

Max Reed, from Baltibrew

Baltibrew is a homebrewing club in Baltimore that started in 2009. Board member and cofounder Max Reed started it with some others in Riverside/Locust Point. They are bringing back their homebrew and chili cookoff competition that supports small businesses. This year it is in support of Baltimore Greenspace and will take place on October 8 at Zion Hall.

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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

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