

# RNA Community Meeting Minutes

**October 24, 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, Jeff Brown, Jeff Dewberry

Number of Attendees: approximately 40 (in-person), 35 (on Zoom)

Next meeting: In-person only, Monday, December 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. (Note: no meeting in November)

## Committee Updates

### Rich Badmington, Welcome

Rich welcomed residents, introduced the RNA Board members, ran through the evening's agenda, and then welcomed Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) Owens of the BCPD.

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

Officer Owens reported that in the last 28 days, Riverside had only 2 reported incidents of crime, 1 auto theft and 1 larceny from auto. He reminded everyone to pay attention to their surroundings, especially around Halloween when it's dark and people are in masks and costumes. He warned of a recent federal arrest with fake pills mixed into candy containers and recent incidents in Federal Hill of young people asking to borrow cell phones to make calls "to a parent," with malicious intent, including phone theft or theft of funds using phone apps.

### Rich Badmington, Volunteering, RNA Bylaws

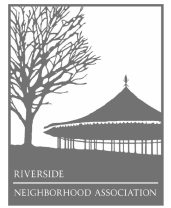
Rich mentioned that several residents have approached him or another member of the board about lending some expertise or a hand. Our committee structure has gotten lean over probably years, and our board members all are problem solvers on their own, and we've recognized that we don't have a good, simple on-ramp to welcome people into this work... which we are going to fix!

He invited the community to sign up to get involved in the community via sign-up sheets in the room. We expect to cover this more in our next meeting as well. You can also email [rnabaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:rnabaltimore@gmail.com) with your interest in contributing or volunteering.

Rich shared that the RNA Board has the authority to change the bylaws. He covered highlights of what the current bylaws mandate and invited members to ask for additional info. The board is currently considering updates to the bylaw, about 95 percent of which are simply to clean up

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and simplify overly formal language. Other simple updates are not especially material, but are overdue... things like removing reference to our no-longer published newsletter, making accommodation for hybrid meetings, and stipulating that Board members should receive no compensation for their work. The board is also working on substantive updates regarding how elections are held.

## Rich Badmington, Elections

Rich noted that we elected our board officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) last year (2021). This meeting was set to elect our 5 additional general board members, for a total of 9 board members. In the coming weeks we will finalize the bylaws, including designating 2-year terms for all board members. Rich reminded attendees that those who were in-person, live in Riverside, and had paid their \$5/person dues were eligible to vote. He noted that all current board members were willing to continue in their roles and noted that any additional nominees in-person with a second nomination could be added to the ballot. No additional nominations were made.

The final ballot included the current board members:

- Jeff Brown, Parking
- Jeff Dewberry, Public Safety/Tech/Liquor & Zoning Boards
- Jackson Fisher, Chair of Friends of Riverside Park (standing committee)
- John Pare, Immediate Past President
- Rachel Wagner, Public Safety/Communications/Social Media

All board members were unanimously officially elected as RNA Board Members. Rich thanked them for their continuing service.

## Jeff Dewberry, Public Safety

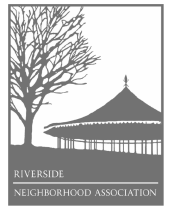
Jeff reiterated that as Officer Owens said, crime has been light this year in Riverside but some incidents have occurred in Federal Hill. There was a pop-up marijuana dispensary in Fed Hill that has been shut down. There was also a carjacking and shooting in Fed Hill/Sharp Leadenhall area.

He mentioned that a grant proposal for several safety/security measures was put forth on behalf of several local neighborhoods, including in Riverside:

- Intersection of Fort and Webster (more permanent safety features at the 4-way stop). Potentially solar-powered flashing lights manually illuminated by pedestrians
- Permanent fencing in Riverside Park around flower beds to prevent vandalism
- A new City Watch camera at the intersection of Fort/Lawrence or Fort/Key Hwy since those are common places for criminals to enter/exit the neighborhood

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He noted that DOT received 500 traffic claiming requests from South Baltimore during COVID and DOT needs assistance prioritizing, so RNA will help with guidance and to design solutions.

Q: 600 block Clement gets people racing through the block to get to Key Highway. What could/should be done?

A (Jeff D.): Baltimore City does not like speed bumps (fire department reasons); there have been discussions of diagonal parking but due to the historic nature of the street this was denied; license plate readers and other solutions were deemed to be ineffective; nothing has been decided. Curb bump-outs can affect bike lanes and are expensive solutions that are not prioritized (cost-effective) for secondary streets in the City. (Some additional discussion followed and was not captured in its entirety for these minutes.)

### Jeff Brown, Parking

Jeff reminded everyone that Riverside voted to eliminate the 2-hr. parking allowance in the pilot Residential Permit Parking area because of the additional work required for officers to come check vehicles twice before ticketing, and the resulting lack of enforcement/effectiveness. Over the past several months the paperwork was in review, open for public comment, etc. and is now on track to be approved by the City by the end of the year. We should enable the community to make additional petitions to add blocks to the parking area in the near future as well.

### Jackson Fisher, Riverside Park Construction Update

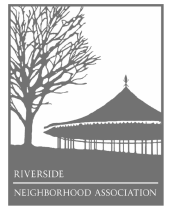
Jackson mentioned that the construction crew is now working regularly on the fields. Most of the trees have come down by the highway on the South side of the park, with noticeable adverse visual and audible differences. The area was surveyed by Tree Baltimore before the construction and it will be replanted after the 18mo-2yr project is completed. The next impact to neighbors will be utility work along Johnson St., which will start in the next ~3 weeks. There will be impacts and restrictions to parking. They will try to minimize restrictions to areas where they need to work during the day, 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. This will not impact overnight parking but vehicles must be moved by 7:00 a.m. for work to start or they may be ticketed/towed at owner's expense. We won't see big visual changes to the project for another several months, other than the downed trees, until the utility work is complete and they start rebuilding the athletic fields.

Q: A resident mentioned he contacted BCRP about kids playing or walking dogs after hours in the construction site. Anything else neighbors should do?

A (Jackson): Yes, there are hazards and people disregard the notices. It is an off-limits construction site. BCRP is aware of vandalism issues. (The Middle Branch Rec Center was vandalized, even inside the property and buildings, which pushed back opening by 5-6 months,

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so they are aware.) Enforcement is still difficult. If you see something, please report it to 911 and send a follow-up to BCRP, or email [rnabaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:rnabaltimore@gmail.com) to forward on to BCRP.

## Joelle Woolston, Annual Financial Report

Joelle presented highlights from her recent annual financial report. At the end of last year RNA had roughly \$25,000 on hand. We serve as fiscal sponsors for the SoBo Halloween Bash, Federal Hill Easter Egg Hunt, and pool/other grants in the area, so ~\$5,000 is committed to those projects.

For awareness, the Summer Concerts cost about \$5,000, with Domino Sugar grants covering most of the cost, so beverage revenues from these events benefit the Association. We spend some money on neighborhood socials; ~\$3,000 is spent on park supplies and maintenance; and we have an annual expense for holiday lights at the park gazebo. Small amounts are also paid for insurance, renting the Salem Lutheran space for meetings, and miscellaneous donations.

Q: Does RNA receive any City money?

A: No, we're a nonprofit and operate only on donations and grants such as the SBGP funding.

## Rich Badmington, Park Bench Pub (PBP) Update

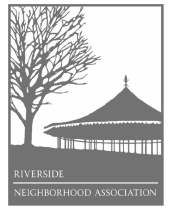
Following up past conversations at RNA meetings, Rich mentioned the Liquor Commission has posted notice of the indefinite suspension of the PBC license. We also have been advised by one of the property owners, David Makarovich, that he has begun eviction proceedings, which he expects will be contested.

There may be an opportunity for directly-affected residents to offer some sort of testimony, but that's not yet clear. RNA will submit the same concerns that we raised directly with Mr. Ballinger, the operator, should the opportunity present itself. Email [RNABaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:RNABaltimore@gmail.com) if you have a question or an interest in this proceeding.

## Zoom Question

Q: What support is there for the homeless population in the park/neighborhood?

A (Jackson): We try to connect them with homeless support services and let them know it's a public space.



## Development Proposal, Southern Land Company

To kick off a discussion of the proposed 7-story, ~70+ foot, 70-unit multi-family building at 1302 Key Highway, Rich mentioned he was invited by Councilman Costello a few weeks back to a meeting of several community association leaders in the offices of Southern Land Company, down on Henry St. The meeting was hosted by Southern Land principle David Altfeld. They shared their concept for the redevelopment of the triangular property now occupied by the Brazilian food truck and the derelict gas station. His group was in attendance and they asked for the opportunity to share their concept with the community, explain where they are in their process, and address as many questions as they can. Rich reiterated this discussion as an initial presentation and proposal that RNA expects to be the first of multiple conversations on this topic, then offered the floor to SLC.

SLC was represented by Joe Woolman, a local land use attorney and 20-year resident of Riverside, and two employees of Southern Land Company. Joe mentioned that the site is bigger than people realize. It has been under SLC control for over 10 years. They are looking at a solely residential project, nothing commercial. They're calling it a 70/70/70 concept: at 70 units, 70 feet high, 70 parking spaces. It will include 10 studio units plus slightly larger apartments, and 1 parking spot per unit (more than required by zoning). Residents will not be able to get Residential Parking permits in the neighborhood. He reiterated they are early on in their planning process and nothing has been submitted to the City. They'll try to be responsive to feedback.

Q: Where will you find 70 parking spaces?

A: Two levels of parking, the bottom two levels of the building, which will include two entrance/exit areas, at Jackson and Key Hwy.

Q: Will there be changes to traffic flow for parking entrance/exits? New lights?

A: We will have to work with the City on those, for lights, crosswalks, etc. That's further down the road.

Q: About the triangle shape, are you taking the small alley that's behind the existing property?

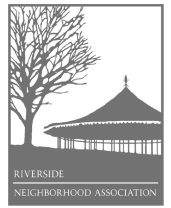
A: We're not taking anything we don't currently own, the alley will remain. So will the gravel lot behind the gas station where some residents currently pay to park.

Q: What environmental remediation and hazard mitigation are needed given that it was a gas station?

A: We have to consult with various City/State requirements and follow the process. Right now we're starting with meeting with the community.

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Q: The long-term or masterplan approach for Key Hwy development was a commercial, walkable, pedestrian-friendly vision. Authors wanted more of a boulevard feeling with streetside cafes and shops for residents in this area. Why should this project be built, which essentially feels like adding a high-rise?

A: There is a 40 sq ft corner of the property that is zoned C-1 (for an old newsstand). The rest of the lot is zoned C-2, which allows for commercial and residential. We want to see only residential since we think that fits into the neighborhood better.

Q: What is the logic in changing the zoning?

A: By going to OR-2 you eliminate the commercial uses we've been approached about like automotive shops. That wouldn't be as good for traffic in the area. Coffee shops and cafes haven't been going in and there is still demand for multifamily residential and we've identified it as a good use for the site.

Q: You mentioned the properties all "around" the site; what do you mean by "around?" There are residences in very close proximity that are not OR-2 zoned.

A: Directly behind and on both sides is OR-2 zoned land.

Q: Are there rent-controlled units? How will this support potential residents who can't afford the higher rents going in?

A: We haven't considered price points yet. Expect 10 studios, maybe 35 1-bedrooms, not sure. There are no plans for rent-controlled or mixed income units.

Q: What compensation will there be for residents losing their views... for additional noise and issues from open balconies... for huge brick walls in front of homes?

A: We've had lots of questions and haven't determined any finalized designs.

Q: (Zoom question) Why the 1:1 parking:units?

A: Zoning code calls for less but we think there is demand for parking and we think this will best serve residents.

Q: I live on Clement. Why have you only reached out to Jackson residents and not Clement St residents?

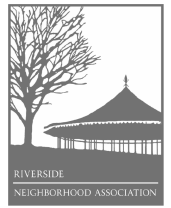
A: We let the abutting property homeowners associations know and RNA.

Q: Have you contributed to Eric Costello's election campaign? I can't see this making it this far forward without our representatives' support.

A: (Joe) I can't say right now, I have in the past.

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Q: Any alternate ideas for what might fit in current zoning and be less detrimental to current area residents? Other concepts on the table?

A: We've been approached by automotive shops. There were previous other concepts that we determined were not viable.

Q: It's not clear how you get cars into/out of the garages in the renderings. The slope of Jackson St. is not included clearly in the rendering, which will greatly affect the flow of cars/traffic.

A: It's there, but we can address it.

Q: Does 70/70/70 mean 70 feet high from the ground at Key Hwy?

A: From whatever the building code is. We can provide additional information and views.

Q: How long would a project of this magnitude take?

A: About 18 months

Q: Regarding affordable housing, can you make a commitment to it for this project? It's a value, even if you don't commit to numbers or percentages. Will you make such a commitment?

A: We're early on... We're not prepared to make any commitments tonight, though we will consider it.

Q: Will you be seeking public subsidies?

A: I don't believe so.

Q: Will you be charging for parking? Because if it is extra, residents will just park in the neighborhoods.

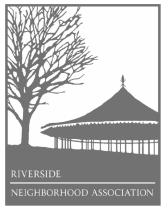
A: We're not sure yet.

Q: This is early on, there are a ton of stakeholders. Some requirements will require neighborhood communications. Will RNA be the conduit for this project? We as residents don't always hear about public comment times. How do we make sure we all stay on top of all aspects of this project?

A (Badmington): Great question. RNA will not be signing off on anything conceptual. We will review any plans and documentation shared with us. We seek the community's continued input and we will move this conversation into a different setting than our monthly public meetings for more focused discussion. RNA is often notified via email of updates and will post to Facebook, Instagram any updates we have to share with residents. Zoning hearings and information is also required to be posted to the site, so you can watch there. You can also sign up for zoning updates with the City.

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Rich wrapped up the conversation and the evening and thanks were given to SLC for coming out to start the dialog with the community. Then he thanked all our attendees and reminded everyone the next meeting will be a combined Nov/Dec meeting on Monday, December 12, 2022 - the last of the year!

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Charlton, Secretary  
October 24, 2022