

RNA Community Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2023

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), and General Members Jackson Fisher, Rachel Wagner, Jeff Dewberry, John Pare (immediate past president)

Number of Attendees: approximately 20 (in-person), 24 (on Zoom)

Next meeting: Monday, April 24, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Rich Badmington, Welcome

At 7:00 p.m., Rich called the meeting to order and welcomed residents and Nancy Mead from Councilman Costello's office, introduced the RNA Board members, ran through the evening's agenda, and then began updates from RNA committees.

Jackson Fisher, Riverside Park & Construction Updates

Riverside Park Renovation:

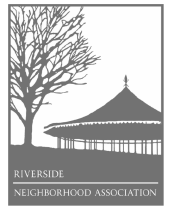
- The construction crew is preparing for and pouring concrete features throughout the area, including the sidewalk along Johnson St. near the National Federation of the Blind and along the back side of the park from Wells St. to Covington St. Additionally, they're working on ramps down to the baseball field dugouts to make them ADA accessible.
- Expect concrete and surface work for basketball/pickleball courts to also be done around the beginning of May. Then the work will focus on other areas such as water retention, grass, and finally fencing.
- Phase 2, including the red fieldhouse, is considered by BCRP to be a separate and smaller project. The expectation is they will use the same contractor as the current Phase 1 work, which might mean some work in parallel on the two projects.

Other Park News:

- Planning has begun with the Concert Committee for the Sunday Summer Concert Series. They're working on band lineup and food trucks. Tentative dates are June 11, July 9, August 13, and September 10, pending permit approvals. Concerts are family friendly events that usually attract 300-400 people per event.
- The electric vehicle chargers along Johnson are operational, there are 4 first-come spots.
- City Forestry may start coming around in the next few weeks to plant some new street trees. They've received the order that was expected back in November.
- RNA was notified that ZipCar will be reintroducing a reserved spot on Randall St. along the Park by Covington St. Two spots were in the same location pre-Covid and are being reinstalled.

Riverside Neighborhood Association Inc.

1501 Covington Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230
RNABaltimore@gmail.com
RiversideNeighborhoodAssociation.com



- Reminder: dogs must be leashed in public and in the park per City ordinance. There have been safety incidents and RNA continues to receive complaints from residents about dogs loose around the park.

Nancy Mead mentioned that BCRP recently agreed to place signs about off-leash dogs in Latrobe. If residents/RNA see the need for similar signs in Riverside, she will pass the same request to BCRP.

Q: How to recommend a band for the concert series?

A: Email RNABaltimore@gmail.com and it will be passed to the planning committee

Q: There's a large pile of dirt in the construction area. What's the plan for that?

A: It will be used to backfill and level the slope from the field down toward the railway area.

Q: What's the timeline for sidewalk along Johnson St.?

A: Will take a couple weeks for them to cure, then we expect the fence to be moved back behind the sidewalk so it can be used.

Q: What should people do about street tree wells?

A: The street trees are technically owned by the City. The area around is usually maintained by the owners closest to the tree.

Officer Owens, Peninsula Sector 4, BPD Southern District

Officer Owens took some additional time to review the meaning of each criminal charge as well as providing metrics for the area. So far this year in Riverside (which in City statistics includes Federal Hill South), there have been: 5 aggravated assaults (often involving weapons or overwhelming force); 2 burglaries (breaking and entering with intent to steal from a home); 10 larceny from auto (gaining entry into and theft from a car, or stealing from exterior); 1 carjacking (involves force or threat of force against a person plus auto theft); 3 auto thefts (stealing car, no force against a person); 22 larcenies (taking property without any force, e.g. stealing/package theft); 13 robberies (force or threat of force and stealing from a person); and 1 commercial robbery (can include Uber drivers as well as physical establishments).

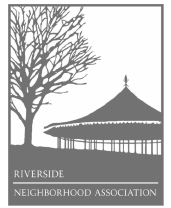
He strongly recommended reporting any and all of the above to the police so incidents are captured in statistics for the City. These statistics affect where/when police resources are deployed across the City. They also allow law enforcement to track criminal activity in the area and watch for trends so they can react.

Rachel Wagner also described recent issues of swastikas that were found drawn on the light poles outside Salem Lutheran in recent weeks. A police report recently was filed. She reminded residents that RNA also writes and coordinates distribution and delivery of community impact statements with other area neighborhoods. These statements are often helpful during judicial hearings, trials, and sentencings.

Officer Owens reminded residents about the City Watch program where residents can register that they own a camera. While you do not give the police access to your camera or footage stream, registration allows law enforcement officers who are investigating crimes in your area to ask if you have any

Riverside Neighborhood Association Inc.

1501 Covington Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230
RNABaltimore@gmail.com
RiversideNeighborhoodAssociation.com



evidence/footage to share that may help them close a case. This was the key factor and evidence used in arresting those responsible for the death in north Federal Hill a couple years ago.

Jeff Dewberry mentioned the imminent receipt of Public Safety Grant funds and the BCPD-managed Licence Plate Reader (LPR) camera and system that the grant will fund. The LPR will enable real-time reporting to police of cars that enter/exit the neighborhood and are on watchlists because they've been associated with crimes.

Rachel Wagner, Communications & Social Media

Rachel shared that there are a couple upcoming Easter events in the local area, though none currently planned in Riverside. Specifically, on Saturday, April 8 there is an Easter Egg Hunt at Federal Hill Park. There is also a Ravens' Roost event on Saturday, April 1 at Coke Field. More details will be available on social media.

Rich Badmington, Development

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the 1302 Key Highway development proposal. Rich reminded residents of the two bills requested by the owner/developer and filed by Councilmember Costello that RNA is tracking. The first would rezone the lot from the current Commercial 2 (C2) to Office/Residential 2 (OR-2). This would permit construction of a 100 ft. tall building. The second bill would amend the Urban Renewal Plan (URP) to remove the property from the plan. The URP currently limits building heights on the lot to 50 ft. and requires 1.75 parking spaces per unit. The proposal presented by the developer would require waiver of both limits.

Both bills have been referred to the Planning Department for staff review and recommendation to the Planning Commission and public hearing. No hearings have yet been scheduled. Other department reviews will be done by the Law Department and one or two others. No hearing has been planned or scheduled for either bill at this time. After departmental reviews, both bills then will be considered by the full City Council.

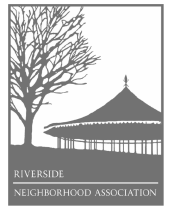
RNA has engaged with the Federal Place Home Owners Association, located adjacent to the lot, as well as Federal Hill South, to understand their position. The Planning Department announces its agenda two weeks ahead of any hearing. The property is then posted for a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing.

A key concern, as expressed in letters to the Planning Department and Councilmember Costello, is that by using the legislative process rather than the zoning variance process, the community will have no formal opportunity at a public hearing to address the merits of the project itself, in that the Planning Commission hearing will focus on the merits of the zoning change (not the project).

RNA's position continues to be that we will oppose until/unless the developer provides development details that would be included in permit applications. So far we have received nothing since the developers attended the October 2022 RNA meeting, at which time residents raised concerns and were told the developers were not yet at that point in the planning. We would like to engage on the merits of the project, rather than have zoning changed ahead of any specific proposals.

Riverside Neighborhood Association Inc.

1501 Covington Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230
RNABaltimore@gmail.com
RiversideNeighborhoodAssociation.com



Some comments from meeting attendees:

- The previous proposal was for 8 floors, not 7; 7 residential plus a full enclosed gazebo-type rooftop structure;
- Current zoning permits only a 60-ft. maximum height
- There is a petition, currently with 160 names, against the development. This is not an RNA-backed petition but is open to private residents to sign.
- There was general agreement in the meeting that the more signatures and emails to Councilmember Costello's office with community input, the better.

An attendee asked Nancy Mead, who is on the Councilmember's staff, for his thoughts/reasons for pushing forward both bills as described above. She reiterated that neither is scheduled for any hearings and believes the Councilmember is planning to speak again with the developers. Another resident asked her whether there was community input before pushing forward the two bills, and if not, why not. Nancy reiterated that he was planning to attend our last RNA meeting and got pulled into another engagement at the last minute.

Various meeting participants urged RNA to remain diligent and open to elevating this issue with residents and then to City officials. Rich Badmington said that the Board is committed to doing so. He mentioned that an informal meeting with Planning Department staff would allow the Board to refine its approach and promised to share the results of that meeting.

Other Announcements or New Business

Ondoria Harmon from the Mayor's Office announced the Mayor's spring cleanup event on April 22. Watch the Mayor's FB page or Charm City channel for more information.

RNA resident Mary announced the 7th Annual Bubble Parade which will take place at noon Saturday May 20 at Riverside Park. There will be bubbles, a photo booth, music, and costumes.

At approximately 8:25 p.m. the meeting was adjourned. The next RNA Community Meeting will be held on Monday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Charlton, Secretary
April 20, 2023*