

RNA Community Meeting Minutes

May 22, 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 Jeff Dewberry, Jackson Fisher, John Pare (immediate past president), and Rachel Wagner

Next meeting: Monday, June 26, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Rich Badmington, Welcome

At 7:00 p.m. Rich called the meeting to order and welcomed residents, introduced the RNA Board members, ran through the evening's agenda, and then welcomed Officer Owens, BPD.

Public Safety Update

Officer Owens shared:

- Upcoming redistricting within the Police Department will reduce the number of sectors from four to three, with five posts per sector, starting July 1. He said there are no anticipated changes that will affect our community.
- Kia/Hyundai wheel locks are available for free at the Southern District Police Station, just south of the Hanover Street Bridge, across from the hospital. This is in response to the high incidence of theft of these brands due to manufacturer defects.
- There have been two burglaries in the area. In both cases, perpetrators checked unlocked windows and stole possessions while residents were sleeping. Please lock doors and windows. There is no apparent large trend.

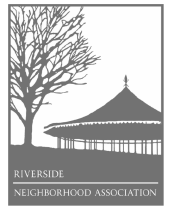
He then ran through the crimes so far this calendar year in the vicinity (not all within Riverside). These included (some not captured in minutes) 7 aggravated assaults, 20 larcenies, 20 thefts from autos, 4 burglaries, 13 robberies (this has gone down so far this year, typically goes up in the summer), 1 commercial robbery, 2 carjackings. He also announced the next larger community meeting at the police station will be on June 6 at 7:00 p.m. for anyone who wants a deeper dive on crime metrics in the area.

Rachel Wagner reported on specific local crime she is aware of, including:

- Saturday night, a resident reported that two masked juveniles brandished a weapon late at night near the park.

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- There have been several broken car windows down along the 1800 block of Johnson between the construction site and NFB.
- There has been a man in the park who started staying overnight, broke several branches off a tree, built a lean-to, built a campfire by the playground, and had several liquor bottles there as well. He's also been reported as exposing himself in public in the park. Rec and Parks is aware. If you see something, please call 911

Officer Owens urged residents to report apparent crimes. He noted that 911 reports of criminal activity directly impacts where the department deploys resources, with more being placed in areas where crime is highest. Units will not be deployed or know what to watch for if issues are not reported. You can report online or through 311 if you really don't want to call 911, though 911 is the preferred way to report criminal activity.

Q: What about getting additional lighting on Jackson St. (or other areas)?

A: Submit a 311 request with a picture of the area. Councilmember Costello's representative Nancy Meade said also send the request to Councilmember Costello's office as well as to Officer Owens directly.

Q: What about a stop sign that's blocked by a tree branch and people are blowing through the stop?

A: Follow the steps above regarding lighting.

Local Representatives, Senator Bill Ferguson and Delegate Robbyn Lewis

Rich welcomed Team 46 Delegate Robbyn Lewis and Senator Bill Ferguson.

Senator Ferguson welcomed new Delegate Mark Edelson (not present) to Team 46. He said the next four years are a huge opportunity for the City given all the new elections at the State level for this term.

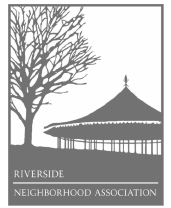
Some highlights from the last year:

- Pushing forward support for MD schools and children. This is the first year of implementation for Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which includes the highest level of public school funding yet and the highest level of accountability.
- \$200M investment to be used as a down payment for transit/transportation projects, such as East-West Red Line, for which MD is also seeking federal funding.
- Responses to Supreme Court rulings included legislation supporting women's rights to choose, gun safety via Bruen's legislation (see Del. Clippinger's notes last month), and public health and regulations related to the legalization of cannabis that will begin July 1.

Senator Ferguson noted significantly more collaboration and coordination between the State's Attorney's office and other state and local organizations since the election. Additionally he noted

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his three core focus areas include transportation, mental health, and development of the MD workforce.

Q: What about transportation plans in our local South Baltimore area such as safe biking lanes on Hanover bridge?

A: Baltimore City controls its own transportation. There are projects ongoing such as Hanover St. Bridge that should have protected bike lanes, but much remains to be determined.

Q: What about mental health?

A: Funding is coming for mental health services for kids and is in reaction to lingering effects of COVID. A second issue is general mental health support. The new 988 number (a 911 call center for mental health) is now in service. Mental health is a very difficult issue since support must be voluntary and dealing with involuntary care is problematic.

Q: What priority legislation didn't make it last year? (for both representatives)

A: Bill Ferguson: reimagining downtown Baltimore; Robbyn Lewis: revitalizing the City bus system.

Robbyn Lewis introduced herself and shared a brief history. She used to work in Public Health for infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins and has lived in Patterson Park ever since she came to the city. She has been very involved in grant writing, greening, supporting schools, working in her neighborhood association, etc.

She fully commits to being environmentally-friendly and is the only car-free member of the MD General Assembly. She serves on the Health Committee (deals with insurance issues, medical services, etc.) and wants to expand the health workforce (of all kinds, nurses through physicians).

RNA board member and immediate past president John Pare thanked both public officials for their service and special attention to Riverside, including their ready willingness to come to these meetings periodically.

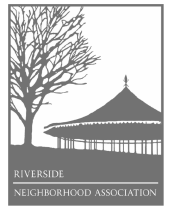
Riverside Committee Updates

- Riverside's Sunday summer concert series is starting in June and continues on every second Sunday in the park. Watch FB and for more information.
- For those in the Residential Permit Parking area, there are changes to hours coming soon. We are awaiting the final City Council hearing, which may come by the end of July.

For those interested in expanding the RPP, we want the currently planned changes to be implemented and operating smoothly before expanding the parking permit area. Then we will look for volunteers who would like to help with area expansion.

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Serious questions remain about the City's ability to enforce the regulations. Federal Hill residents have been tracking and say up to 25 percent of cars parked in permitted areas do not have permits and parking is not being enforced in RPP areas. Nancy Meade mentioned an upcoming meeting with City parking enforcement at DOT to discuss the situation, which appears to be much broader than just the Federal Hill/Riverside area.

- RNA received \$95K in state grant funding for Riverside, such as fencing for our gardens in the park, license plate cameras, Webster St. crosswalk improvements such as flashing lights for pedestrian safety. Discussions with vendors and City officials will be taking place. See previous minute notes for more project details.
- Riverside Park Pool will open this weekend. Longer sessions (than the recent 90-minute COVID-era limit) will be allowed again. Expect the pool to be open only on weekends until schools are out June 15, with hours from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday to Sunday. On Monday to Thursday, hours are noon to 3:00 p.m., and 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The reservation policy is not known at this time. Watch for updates on social media and on BCRP website. Cost is expected to return to \$2/session/person, rather than the free admission we saw during COVID.

Local Development

Rich shared an update on the proposed development at 1302 Key Highway.

Since the last meeting, a group including RNA board members, residents, and members of the Federal Place HOA met with the developer to understand their reasons for requesting rezoning and shared news of the group's vote to oppose legislation. Another meeting scheduled for June 8 to discuss further.

A joint statement has been drafted explaining why our group opposes the rezoning Council Bill. (See previous meeting minutes for additional details.) We continue to refine the language and arguments and expect to submit materials to the Planning Dept. making our case. Of note, the RNA board is not opposing development in general. However, we'd like to see the standard process followed, allowing community engagement and input on the merits of the project that will affect many of our members.

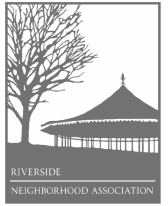
Federal Place and Federal Hill South resident, Zach, mentioned some local work to improve an intersection in that area. (No further details captured.)

Zoom Meeting Notes

- Turell Brooks Community Liaison, Office of State's Attorney of Baltimore City
tbrooks@attorney.org
- Ondoria Harmon, Senior Advisor to Mayor Scott Older Adults, Office Of Neighborhoods
Ondoria.harmon@baltimorecity.gov 443-721-5906

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- Melanie Pillaca-Gutierrez, Staff to Delegate Robbyn Lewis, MPillaca@house.state.md.us
- Cory Jeweler, Special Assistant to Eric Costello, Cory.jeweler@baltimorecity.gov
- Colline Emmanuelle, SBGP Communications & Outreach Manager, cemmanuelle@sbgpartnership.org 443-920-4554

Rich accepted a motion to adjourn and concluded the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Charlton
May 22, 2023*