

DRAFT
Ginter Park Residents Association
Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
3616 Hawthorne Avenue

Board members in attendance

Melody Imburg
Ingrid Harding
Rick Jones
Karen Bernhard
Nany Falcone
Candace Blydenburgh
Stephen Weisensale
Matt Berical
Prudence Justice

General Business

- Melody welcomed everyone and wished all a happy new year.
- A quorum was established
- The minutes from our last meeting were approved, save for a change of date.

Treasurer's Report

- Rick noted that his report is largely unchanged from last meeting
- He was, however, able to obtain a checkbook, and has secured a PO box: 1801 Brook Road #25374, 23232-5001
- Rick explained the issue with Matt's old QuickBooks account and suggests we start over with a new version of Quicken for \$98/year. We'd use the online version so it can be transferred easily going forward.
- Related, Rick denied the charge to the intuit account, so it cancels the payment for the previous QuickBooks account.
- It was brought up that sometimes we get checks from advertisers and Rick wanted to discuss how to keep those records.
- Karen asked about a list of advertisers that are overdue; Rick said he doesn't have them because his current books only go back to September.
- Melody suggested we get in touch with Dave Foster (ad guy), to get to the bottom of it. It was also mentioned to find contact for Jan, who produces the newsletter as well as Anne Thorne, who does the writing, to help figure it out.

Ways and Means

- Nancy mentioned that Nick and Dave, on Noble, expressed interest in hosting the 2025 Harvest Fest.

- Nancy said she reached out to Tracy and Michael to wish them a happy new year and gauge interest in potentially hosting again. Melody suggested to lead with gratitude and leave the conversation open-ended if they want to host again, as they were very pleased with how the last party turned out.
- Candace suggested we thank them and ask for any ideas to make the event better, to make them feel invested and potentially encourage them to host again. This would help give them a sense of ownership.
- Nancy had nothing to report about the garden soiree and likely won't have any information until February or even March. She knows she wants to have it on her side of the neighborhood and has an idea of who she wants to host. Nancy suggested she might be the last home folks visit for the progressive.

Events/Social

- Candace and Prudence shared the year's events:
 - The Garden Soiree in May (potential date: May 17th)
 - Family picnic in June (potential date: June 21st or 22nd)
 - Porch Party in July
 - National Night Out in August
 - Harvest Fest in October
 - Chili Cookoff in November
 - Cookie Exchange in December.
- Also discussed as potential events were a porch party in April to kick off the season as well as some impromptu parties when people are interested.
- Candace and Prudence noted some popular city events to avoid event conflicts:
 - Virginia Wine Expo (February 28th- March 9th)
 - Ukrops Monument Ave 10k (April 12)
 - River Rock (May 16th-18th)
 - Iron Blossom Music Festival (Sep. 20- Sept. 21)
 - The Folk Festival (October 10-12),
 - Richmond Marathon (November 15)
- While there was discussion of a Valentine's Day party last time, Candace and Prudence pivoted to a Mardi Gras party with March 1st as the suggested date. Lakeside Park has availability.
- Everyone seemed excited by that idea, especially because of staff, parking, no volunteers needed. They would have different foods like dirty rice and jambalaya and king cakes.
- A discussion about the bar followed. Open bar would cost \$2,000. If 100 people come, it could be a cash bar. Or there could drink tickets (two per person with entry) and then cash bar after the tickets are used.
- Candace suggested wine and beer. If we wanted, the venue could make hurricanes and have beads and masks for guests.
- Rolling cost of between \$5500 and \$7000, the latter which would be on the extreme side. Prudence said the estimate would be is under \$6000.

- A discussion followed about motivating people to sign up for the event and regulating the amount of people who show up. How many people can the venue accommodate? There should be an RSVP. No children would be allowed at this party.
- The venue will let us play music for the event and we can make a playlist. Candace suggested we could include a callout for songs in the newsletter so members could feel more involved.
- There was a discussion about the recent water crisis. Candace suggested that because of the water and the low temperatures we're experiencing, as well as the fires western part of the county, we should align with certain charities. Perhaps people can bring canned food or clothing or mittens that we can give to the local shelters or support the food bank at Saint Thomas. Everyone agreed; Prudence said club members could help.
- Melody asked if they'd arrived at a budget for their yearly planning. Questions were asked about what falls under what budget. The chili cookoff falls under general programming. Harvest dinner is a ticketed event. Garden soiree is a fundraiser.
- A spirited discussion followed about the budget. Candace said the only outlay the social/events team would need a budget for would be the Mardi Gras party. People can bring ice and their own drinks to the porch party so there's no real cost.
- Action item: Rick will need numbers to approve. Board members said they would provide him that information soon.

Membership (Karen)

- Karen said we're staying flat in terms of growth. Ticketed events are what really grows the membership. Only one person's payment is outstanding. She is reminding him to change his credit card, which was expired.
- There was a discussion about the Ginter park flags and who has paid for them and where the flag are being kept — are they in the storage unit? Karen doesn't mind monitoring. She will email Maggie.
- Ingrid brought up the fact that we should have membership goals for the year. What Do we want to grow by a certain percentage year over year? Melody suggested noting how much growth we see in the list after events so we know the stats.
- Karen said she would keep track of that.
- Melody suggested that Karen reach out folks who are new to the neighborhood to encourage them to join. Or perhaps we create a QR code that makes it easy to get to the site.

Planning and Zoning (Stephen)

- Stephen discussed the building of the six townhouses facing Laburnum. They've applied for an SUP. The hearing is February fifth.

- Stephen mentioned the building out of the new Pulse route, which will going to take several years to complete. They would narrow the median on Chamberlain, making it 6-8ft wide, with trees running down the middle. The bus would run up Chamberlain and take a left on Azalea, and either circle back or, if Henrico ~~has any say, continue up~~ County plans to continue the route north on Rte 1, to the new County sports facility at Va Center.
 - ~~A P&Z Cmte rep (Andy Morris) attended a meeting late last year, and Stephen told advised the GRTC stsf~~ them that we need the street lights redone to be upgraded, better pedestrian safety, and that all the trees they tear out must be replaced. ~~Stephen, and~~ jokingly suggested to the board to maybe tear down that awful marathon station on the corner of Azalea Ave.
 - The big discussion surrounded the building of the Hermitage elderly living facility. Stephen said the Pinnacle Group that owns the property wants to completely bulldoze the site and build 161 senior apartments instead of the current nursing home rooms and 80-90 continuing care-style ~~places~~ rooms. A group or residents representing the three affected associations has just started working on the issue. ~~Senior living.~~
 - One issue to note is that they need to build the bulk of ~~the new building down~~ along Westwood and Hermitage Road, and then have the primary entrance be on Palmyra which would ~~divert traffic~~ lead to significant traffic on this street. The service entrance would be off Chatham.
 - The scale of what they want on Westwood and Hermitage would be a five-story ~~Scott's addition style~~ apartment building, similar to the type in Scotts Addition, which raises concern regarding both the scale and appearance.
 - Stephen has had several meetings and there are three associations involved and they have a meeting with the Pinnacle group on Thursday. Pinnacle are also meeting with the immediate residents of the area next week.
 - Stephen has a long list of issues with the early plans in terms of scale and architectural appropriateness. The architect is out of Minnesota and doesn't ~~know~~ appear to have fully appreciated the the flavor of the neighborhood, particularly regarding the largest proposed portion.
 - Big point: Nobody is adamantly saying no to this project. But it needs to be done responsibly. A concern is that it's always been a home of the aged or a nursing home and basically what they're ~~putting up~~ proposing is an age-restricted apartment building. There will be levels of care but the bulk of the units will be independent living. They're also not making any effort to enhance the bus stop on Hermatage, though they mention its importance in their application ~~that is there, which is odd.~~
 - Rick talked about what the interior currently looks like, as his mother is a resident.
 - Melody asked how open they are to changes to the design; Stephen says he'll know more on Thursday.
- Timeframe: It will take at least six to nine months ~~for~~ to get the Special Use

[Permit \(SUP\)](#). If there's opposition, it could be a year. [This will be required prior to applying for any construction permits.](#)

- Melody wants to be clear that we're not opposed; we want it to be appropriate for the feel of the neighborhood. "We don't want to be Scott's Addition 2.0" – Stephen
- [Ingrid](#): One thing to bring up, is wind tunnel effects of the proposed building.
- Finally, Stephen mentioned some good news about the fall line trail, which is that [City DPW suggested it will that it](#) go under the bridge near 95 on [Old Hermitage](#) and [into the Diamond District, then turn east on Overbrook and](#) lead past Hardywood towards [Brook Road the diamond](#), which means [that the Diamond](#) area will be [renovated for the better more readily accessible from the trail](#).
- There was a final discussion about the intersection of Arthur Ashe and Hermitage and how it might become a traffic circle. [This will also impact the plan for the Hermitage project as the proposed development does not accommodate the trail or the intersection improvements.](#)

Public Safety (Mary Ann)

- Mary Ann was out sick and will provide an update when she can.

District Reps (Ingrid)

- Ingrid connected with Prudence to get information to start new files of all the contact lists.
- She has a meeting scheduled with Matthew Conrad, previous president of the union hill association. He wants to be the N1 district rep. They are meeting Thursday about getting together. She said Norma expressed interest in helping out with that as well.
- Ingrid is hoping to have a meeting at the end of February. Where should they have it? Melody suggested the church, who has been really kind to us. With the water crisis, maybe people would want to be more involved. She wants to take what happens on Facebook — the community and the humor and support — and make that available in person, especially for those who aren't in that group.
- A discussion took place about the water crisis and how to alert people. Ingrid suggested making an old-fashioned phone tree to call district leaders and block captains.
- It was discussed how, with Mail Chimp, we can send out a mass text to people, and also ask if they want to opt into. (A discussion about the city's response to the water crisis and issues with the DPU and who else got water cut off)
- There was discussion about meeting with Kenya to bring up concerns, including how are we going to be notified when there are issues such as the water crisis?

- Ingrid wants to start a Facebook group with all the reps so there's an easy way to connect everyone. A discussion was had about how to do this easily. Matt suggested perhaps moving it to Discord, which is easy to build subgroups in.
- Ingrid said they're going to move forward with redesigning the website. She uses GoDaddy's site builder. Anyone can use it and it can link to the Google Calendar.
- Once the website is up, we're going to have merch: bags, shirts, flags. for block captains.
- Ingrid asked about the survey she's planning to send. No one had any major comments, but it was mentioned how it would be a good idea to add some questions related to the water crisis to encourage people to sign up for the email or more information.
- Rick suggested making the resident association benefits more present so that people understand exactly what they are.
- Ingrid will talk to Mary-Ann about having a contact number that people can call to ask about issues.

Other Business

- Melody urges us to get proposed 2025 budget numbers to Rick so that we can get the budget voted on. Members agreed to send them to Rick this week.
- There was a discussion about a mailer Prudence wants to send out, which would have critical numbers to call for the city, and how it would be good to mention the Mardi Gras party within it.
- Melody talked about how we have been approved as Google non-profit. This will streamline meetings, calendars, email address, google workspaces, and more. She's going to be working on onboarding board members.

Meeting was adjourned.