

Monroe Park Advisory Council Meeting

12 January 2005

Meeting Notes

Ms. Alice M. Massie, presiding.

In Attendance: David Clinger, James Hill, Janice Nuckolls, The Honorable Bill Pantele, John Peters, Turk Sties, Richard Stutts and Todd Woodson. Note: Ms. Daniels is on a brief leave of absence to take care of family issues. Ms. Massie will be in charge until her return.

Guests: Jan Girardi, Council Liaison to Councilman Pantele, Peter Girardi, City Arborist, Andrew Coyle and Ms. Elinor Kuhn of the Friends of Monroe Park.

Ms. Massie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Peter Girardi gave a brief report on "Phase II" tree work in the park. Mr. Girardi recommends that four to five dogwoods be removed, as well as the "limbing up" of the tree canopy. Mr. Girardi also presented a tree inventory of all the trees that are in the park, which total 144. As part of the discussion, it was also stated that the limbing up of the tree canopy would also reduce the risk of failure of some of the older, maturer trees.

It was also recommended that a tree-planting program be part of the overall plans of the Advisory Council, as eventually the mature tree will begin to fail, regardless of pruning.

Mr. Girardi also announced that the City will be redoing its aerial photographs in the next few months. If there are any special identification markings that the Council wanted to put into the park so they were picked up as part of the aerial photos, now was the time to do that. Turk Sties stated that having a new aerial base map was very important and could lead to additional solutions in the redevelopment of the park.

There was a brief discussion about the Perimeter Parking Plan (which is ready for Citizen sign-off) in that the north side of the park should be used for special event parking Monday thru Friday. Mr. Peters also informed the Council that VCU does not want any changes made to the parking prohibitions that currently exist in front of the dormitories on West Franklin Street. All other portions of the park plan would remain as is.

Larry Miller announced that the installation of the benches surrounding the fountain should begin in mid February, weather permitting. There was a discussion by the Advisory Council about the concrete pads of the old benches, which are scheduled to be removed as part of the new benches' installation on a one for one basis (i.e. one new bench, remove one old bench). It was suggested that the existing concrete pads where the old benches are secured to should be left and reused as bases for flower planters. However, after debating this subject, the Advisory Council unanimously voted to have the concrete pads, as well as benches, removed over the next few months.

Mr. Pantele expressed his pleasure at the good efforts of the Advisory Council this past year in taking "a giant step to reclaim Monroe Park" for everyone's use and enjoyment. Mr. Pantele stated that he also was working with a number of parties on the development of park conservation easements and that he was very pleased to be working on the development of a "protection device" for the park system. Mr. Pantele thought that a formal proposal concerning park easements would be forthcoming later

this spring. Mr. Peters echoed this sentiment by stating what all the Advisory Council members agreed to that we must preserve our parks the way they are for future generations.

These park easements, when they come forward as a final plan, will not be limited to Monroe Park, but the entire Richmond park system. The concern as stated by many is that any future City Council could repeal the existing ordinances that prohibit the sale of parks within the park system. As such, from a long-term point of view to protect and preserve the existing Park system, conservation easements on the parks in general may provide a better control overall.

After the discussion about park easements, Mr. Todd Woodson presented the skeletal framework of a master plan to guide us in future development projects within Monroe Park. Everyone on the Advisory Council was supportive of this concept and additional discussion on this framework will take place at future meetings. Alice Massie stated that we will have to prioritize many of the elements in the framework and that we may need to enlist the help of a professional planner to help us with the process.

Mr. Peters announced that April 28 at 1:00 p.m. has been set for the historic marker dedication ceremony at Monroe Park. Mr. Peters is co-chairing this sub-committee with David Clinger. Additional details will follow as they become available (Mr. Pantele suggested that the sub-committee get in touch with the James Monroe Foundation, whose executive director is Bill Thomas).

Mr. Woodson also initiated a discussion on masonry restoration as it relates to the brickwork at the World War II memorial and the park house. Everyone on the Advisory Council was supportive of these restorations but no final decision has been made.

Janice Nuckolls asked about the price of replacement trashcans in order to get rid of the "bumpy trashcans" that are currently within the park. Larry Miller stated that VCU had called and were ordering some new trashcans for the park, using the same type of trashcans (the Victor-Stanley type) that are currently in use along the City streets. The Advisory Council will make a decision about additional trashcans at some point this spring. The estimated price per trashcan is \$548.00.

Mrs. Kuhn, of the Friends of Monroe Park, asked why there were small survey flags in Monroe Park? Larry Miller responded that he thought it was "Miss Utility" marking where the existing underground utilities were in the park in preparation for the installation of the historic marker base and the roadway test borings. (The test boring results are back and will be presented at this month's meeting).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the **Monroe Park Advisory Council will be 4:00 p.m., Feb 9, at Richmond's Landmark Theater, Lounge B - upstairs.**

See meeting notice on next page.

MEETING NOTICE
MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 9, 2005 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Location:

RICHMOND'S LANDMARK THEATER
(Lounge B - Upstairs)