

Monroe Park Advisory Council Meeting March 14, 2007

At 4 p.m. Tyler Potterfield welcomed the assembled. After a brief introduction and some comments about the Master Plan process, Tyler gave a lecture and slide show about the history of Monroe Park. The group numbered about 25 total including the MPAC members. Tyler concluded his presentation with a question and answer period and the public was advised to visit MonroePark.com to keep up with the progress of the Master Plan.

At approximately 4:45 the MPAC business meeting began. The member in attendance included David Clinger, Pat Daniels, James Hill, Janice Nuckols, John Peters, Turk Sties and Todd Woodson. Other participants included Elinor Kuhn, Sgt. McRoy (RPD), Lt. Mike O'Berry (VCU PD), and Tyler Potterfield. Members informed us of messages from absent members - Acting chair person Alice Massie was out of state and Larry Miller had been called away prior to the meeting to help with a City matter.

We had a brief discussion of the minutes and by consensus tabled any further discussion of them until the next meeting with the thought that we would like for Alice Massie and/or Larry Miller to be present for that activity.

Lt. O'Berry said the VCU police were routinely visiting the park and monitoring the activity there. Todd Woodson thanked the police for their efforts and for keeping us informed. Sgt. McRoy reminded us that with warmer weather more thefts from vehicles was expected based on his experience and advised us to keep our vehicles locked and to keep valuables out of sight and preferably locked in the trunk.

Todd Woodson said he had sent a request to Billie Raines to provide periodic machine sweeping of the park's paths and that she had not yet replied. Todd is going to follow up with Billie.

Janice Nuckols and Pat Daniels spoke about a meeting they had with Melba Gibbs regarding the homeless situation. Melba had offered some ideas about how the homeless might be better served if those who provide feedings and other services would work through the Conrad Center. Janice and Pat also spoke about how the parkkeeper could be helpful. Melba had talked about a zip card the Homeward created that lists the services available to the homeless in Richmond. Melba said that Freedom House and the Conrad Center has a commercial kitchen and seating for 275, a recreation room, and that it provides counseling and other services, which the homeless could avail themselves of. Janice and Pat recommended that the parkkeeper could give the zip cards to the homeless in the park and to those who serve them in the park so all would be better aware of what alternatives were available.

Pat also related that for her and Janice Nuckolls' meeting with Melba: Melba will give us information about the Conrad Center and asked if VCU might be able to "glitz" it up into a marketing piece. Then, if VCU would make copies available to the park keeper, he/she could hand them out to feeding groups. Pat has since asked Brian if he would front this through VCU for us, but Brian had not yet responded. In addition, Melba asked if the park keeper would ask each group who they are, where they are from, and who their coordinator is. She asked if the park keeper could make that information available to her, then she will follow up with the entity and try to get them to move to the Conrad Center. Future supply of the zipcards will be made available to park keeper through a contact at Homeward

Turk talked about the card that the Sector 311 work group had sent out by email which described the new panhandling ordinance on one side and the service providers on the other. A copy was given to Lt. O'Berry.

John Peters spoke about Caritas. James Hill knows people involved in Caritas and is willing to contact them. John said he would be glad to help.

Tyler Potterfield provided an update on the consultants. They will be back for more study on March 20th and will interview stakeholders at that time including representatives of the city administration for Rec. & Parks, Community Development, and the Real Estate office, as well as some people from the public sector.

John Peters asked about the nomination and election process. After discussion the consensus was to postpone that discussion to the next meeting when Alice Massie, who was receiving the nominations, was present.

Todd Woodson told us that the Oregon Hill association was in favor a having a new fire station built at the Northwest corner of Belvidere and Canal/Albemarle. Todd will follow up on this topic with Chief Creecy of the RFD. Todd also advised us that WCVE tv would broadcast a special presentation on Patrick Henry on March 26, 2007 and that while the show itself was going to be very good, Todd could personally guarantee us that the drum track was fabulous. (He actually said only that he had had the honor and pleasure to play drums for that production.)

Other items:

We talked briefly about the upcoming (4/28) anniversary of James Monroe's birth and whether any special events would occur at the park. Nothing was recommended. Someone suggested that we contact Bill Thomas of the Monroe Foundation, someone else said they heard he might be recuperating and unavailable.

Elinor Kuhn said the next FDA clean up would be on April 14th and we should be looking to participate in Monroe Park. And also that the Tour de Monroe (a children's bike event) would be held in the park on April 21, 2007.

Todd Woodson talked about the horse drawn carriages that come through the city as part of the Strawberry Hill races. He is going to check on having the carriages again make a stop in Monroe Park.

Meeting adjourned.