

MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

June 11, 2008

Turk Sties, Presiding

Members Attending:

Brian Ohlinger, Janice Nuckolls, John Peters, Turk Sties, and Todd Woodson.

Guests Attending:

Rachel Flynn, Chuck Davison, DCD; Jason Kuti and Matthew McHugh, RPD; Horace Parham; Richmond Health District; Kelly King Horne, Homeward; Byron Brown and Ron Brown, VCU.

Mr. Sties opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

The notes from the previous May meeting were accepted.

Mr. Ron Brown and Bryan Brown of VCU Special Events made a brief presentation about their October 25, 2008 event in Monroe Park. This event, which will celebrate the 40th anniversary of VCU, is scheduled as part of a series of events at VCU during the entire week of October 25th.

Mr. Sties inquired about zoning issues as it relates to feeding programs in the park and on the public sidewalk. It was reported by Chuck Davidson of the Planning Dept. that although enforcement has not been done in any park concerning religious institution feeding programs, the Parks Department is in violation of the zoning ordinance. During this discussion, Horace Parham from the Richmond City Health District shared information that cited the state code as it relates to give-away feeding programs by religious institutions. According to state code, there is no regulatory authority as it relates to health regulations and religious institution feeding programs.

Kelly King-Horne of Homeward gave a presentation on the various homeless support networks that are working in Richmond to solve the problem of homelessness. She corrected a misunderstanding concerning the Conrad Center in stating that they do indeed offer weekend feeding programs. Prior to this, staff and the Advisory Council were under the mistaken impression that the Conrad Center did not operate on weekends. Ms. Horne also presented a copy of Homeward's ten year plan to solve the issue of homelessness in the area.

Todd Woodson commented that the religious institution providers, as well as others who do feeding programs, are creating a significant trash issue in the park

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and asked that the VCU park keeper inform all feeding programs, regardless of their nature, that they must clean up after their program.

Mr. John Peters noted that there seemed to be a lack of political will to change City code or advocate for change of State code as it relates to feeding programs in or on public spaces. The Advisory Council concurred with this statement.

The Richmond City Police Department HOPE unit discussed with the Council what they are doing to address the unsheltered population in the City. This specialized police unit has been charged with engaging, assisting, and working with homeless persons to get them off the streets and out of the City's public spaces.

After this discussion, Brian Ohlinger suggested that the Advisory Council move to work with the homeless through the Homeward organization. A vote was held and the result was unanimously in favor of this. A sub-committee comprised of Janice Hall Nuckolls, Pat Daniels, Turk Sties, and Elinor Kuhn was established to begin work on this.

Lt. Drew with RPD gave a brief crime report stating that in the sector crime was down overall 54% and that if there were any problems to give her or the Police Dept. a call.

Larry Miller was charged with investigating the expense of buying outdoor tables and chairs, as well as establishing "a patio" adjacent to the parkhouse. This would complement VCU's proposed plan of establishing some level of food service in the park later this summer/fall (Larry will report on this today).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to July 9, 2008.

MEETING NOTICE

MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.

**Location: RICHMOND'S LANDMARK THEATER
Lounge B - Upstairs
6 NORTH LAUREL STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23220**