

Monroe Park Advisory Council
Meeting Notes
08 February 2006

Pat Daniels, Presiding.

Members Attending: David Clinger, James Hill, Alice Massie, Janice Nuckolls, Brian Ohlinger, Edward O'Leary, John Peters, Turk Sties, and Todd Woodson.

Guests: Elinor Kuhn & Kitty Winkler, Friends of Monroe Park, Rev. John Rains, Ron Worley, Worley and Associates Architects, and Lt. Mike O'Berry, VCU Police.

Pat Daniels opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She asked that Lt. O'Berry give a brief report on Police activities in the park. Lt. O'Berry reports that staffing in the park is up due to new recruits that have joined the VCU Police force. There is now an officer assigned to the Park on Sundays from 12 NOON to 6 PM to focus on enforcement of rules and regulations in terms of littering, sleeping on park property and illegal parking during the feeding programs conducted on Sundays. Lt. O'Berry also reported that a number of arrests have occurred since the increase in enforcement by VCU of the rules and regulations. Four (4) arrests have been made for illegal use of the park after Sunset, one (1) arrest for littering, one (1) arrest for sleeping on park benches, and two (2) arrests for being drunk in public. In addition, two (2) persons with prior "wants" have been apprehended. The overall assessment by both the Police and members of the Advisory Council is that this is really good work and is making a real difference in the park.

Mr. Peters did bring to everyone's attention that there is still a "sense of fear" by many persons walking through the park at night. However, there has been real improvement since VCU began enforcement along with some increased presence by RPD. The priority should continue to be the weekends.

There was a discussion about emergency contact information signs for posting in the park. Larry Miller is work up design for discussion by the Advisory Council.

Todd Woodson presented a draft letter to the numerous religious institutions that use the park for feeding programs outlining the "rules of the game", which is a revision of an existing letter that Rev. Rains uses in assisting us in getting the word out to various groups he works with.

Everyone thought the letter was fine, but the delivery of the letter was problematic. Whom to deliver to and where to deliver were the key questions as there are possibly a thousand churches and religious groups in the central VA area who could at any one time want to do a "feeding". The suggested alternative was to carry the letter once its approved to the various identified care agencies nearby (Freedom House, Salvation Army, etc.) and have them distribute as necessary. Rev. Rains volunteered to assist on this if necessary, as the real issue is holding groups responsible for their clean up and removal of garbage and trash. Pat Daniels reported that she has attempted to get in touch with "Food not Bombs" about this...with no result. Apparently the two (2) members who attend occasionally the MPAC meetings presented fake email contact information or their service has been turned off. There was no firm recommendation on an approach on this subject. Discussions will continue to find a solution at the next MPAC meeting.

Pat Daniels reported that there is a change in the WIFI set up whereby we can now keep a log on 'hits" on the server. This has always been the intention of the WIFI team, which is led by

Mike Rohde. Gaining better information on use is important in gauging the success of the installation and relates directly to use patterns in the park.

There was a discussion about changing the existing pump at the Fountain to a recirculating type pump with a water treatment system. This approach is under consideration, as it would eliminate most of the staining that is occurring due to "hard" water. Larry Miller is to explore this option and report back the potential expense of converting the system. There was a motion by the MPAC to repaint the existing pool color to dark gray. This was passed unanimously by the MPAC membership. Larry Miller is to work on getting this done as soon as possible.

Also discussed was contacting Lt. Nolan to have Officer Woo finish the re-painting of the light poles in the park. Larry Miller said he would contact Lt. Nolan about this.

There was a discussion about the "roadway to pathway project". Many of the VPI designs have some compelling design elements that need to be incorporated into the final plan for the park. Ed O'Leary said he was interested in seeing more open space in the park so the park could be used for student activities such as concerts and "free play". Depending on the final design...this could require some removal of existing trees as the plan goes forward, which is very difficult for everyone on the MPAC as all members agree that the existing trees help "make the park". Everyone was in agreement on moving the statues to the corners of the park to create "gateways" into the park area. Moreover, there was discussion about adding new statues if the funds could be raised. Suggestions ranged from statues of Maggie L. Walker to John Marshall. The overall consensus of the group's thinking was passed on to Ron Worley, the "roadway to pathway" project architect for inclusion into his design work.

A question was asked of Mr. Ohlinger concerning the status of the newly installed irrigation system. Mr. Ohlinger said he would check on its status and when it would be turned on this spring. Todd Woodson said he had information on a high traffic turf grass that he wanted to share with members of the MPAC. (Update: Todd forwarded this information to Mr. Ohlinger and members of MPAC via email).

Elinor Kuhn, President of the Friends of Monroe Park announced that a perennials planting plan has been developed and it is hoped that the plant material would be installed in April. (Update: Mr. Ohlinger offered the services of VCU's gardeners to maintain the fountain bed, which was gratefully accepted).

Eddie O'Leary said that he would check on the student art show and set up a new date for the sub-committee to meet. Janice Nuckolls, Turk Sties and Alice Massie agreed to assist.

There being no additional business, the Monroe Park Advisory Council adjourned. **The next meeting of the Monroe Park Advisory Council will be Wednesday, 08 March 2006 at 4 PM. Meeting location is Richmond's Landmark Theater – Lounge B - Upstairs.** See meeting notice on next page.

~ MEETING NOTICE ~

City of Richmond
Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 08 MARCH 2006

**AT
4:00 PM.**

**LOCATION: RICHMOND'S LANDMARK THEATER
6 North Laurel Street
Richmond, VA 23220
LOUNGE B.**