

MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

April 11, 2007

Alice Massie, Presiding

Members Attending: Turk Sties, Dave Clinger, Pat Daniels, Eddie O'Leary, John Peters, and Todd Woodson,

Guests Attending: Tayeeb Faruk, Tyler Potterfield, Hassan Abdullah, Mohamed Sayed

Ms. Massie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Ms. Massie presented a copy of Turk Sties' "email minutes" which were approved as written by unanimous vote.

Ms. Massie reminded all the membership that 19 April at 6:30 PM the Monroe Park Master Plan Consultants will be in town to do a public design charrette.

Mr. Brain Ohlinger of VCU has offered the meeting room at the new Brandt Hall for the meeting.

Mr. Todd Woodson announced has a contact for Alice Massie to talk with about the Master Plan concerning a newspaper interview. Mr. Eddie O'Leary also reported that he would like to set up a more focused meeting with students and the consultants about discussing their ideas about the master plan.

It was announced that by common consent of the Advisory Council that Ms. Massie would be interim Chair and Mr. Turk Sties would be interim Vice-Chair.

There was a discussion about the new Park Keeper position. The new VCU employee is slated to begin work in mid-May. The Council has requested that the new employee attend their meetings as necessary to keep communications "open". Also, many Advisory Council members have ideas that this employee may find useful to implement.

Ms. Daniels opened a discussion on the numerous feeding programs that are currently in the park. Ms. Daniels suggested that, at the very least, we get the Park Keeper to "I.D." the various churches and non-profit organizations who are serving meals in the park.

Many of the members asked an open question concerning the groups that serve meals. That question was "Can we bar them?" Mr. Peters stated that the City needs to take the lead in getting the meal programs organized. It is a coordinating and location issue and, as such, a sub-committee comprised of Pat Daniels, Janice Nuckolls, and Dave Clinger of the Advisory Council has been established to discuss potential solutions on homeless issues. In doing so, perhaps programs can be consolidated, duplication will be eliminated, and feeding programs can be appropriately placed at appropriate facilities.

Turk Sties agreed fully with Mr. Peters' comment and expressed the opinion that Monroe Park, or any park for that matter, unless it is an emergency is the wrong place for a consistent feeding program. Pat Daniels responded that she and Ms. Nuckolls have met with Melba Gibbs of the Conrad Center and discussions are underway to offer additional feeding programs at a facility.

Pat Daniels also introduced Mr. Hassan Abdullah who is a film documentary producer who is doing a feature-length documentary on homeless in the metropolitan Richmond area. He has had discussions with numerous homeless groups, as well as shelter groups, on gaining an understanding of the complexity of the homeless issue. As an independent film director, Mr. Hassan Abdullah stated that he just simply wants to show the story as it is.

Mr. Woodson noted that not all people are congregating in the park are "homeless".

Rather, it is the "coupled" problems of ***hunger and homeless*** which creates all the associated issues that occur within the park (litter, trash, overabundance of feeding programs, illegal parking, etc.)

There was a discussion about meeting notification and using what has been called the Yahoo site. Unfortunately, many members of the MPAC are still not getting advance notice of the next meeting before they occur. Larry Miller was requested to send out an e-mail invite using the Microsoft calendar scheduler to see if this may work as a method of notification (Update: Nope, sure didn't work).

It was brought to everyone's attention that service workers and police, from VCU, City and RPD, continue to drive around the bollards.

In discussion about how to get these employees to set a good example for other employees who have a legitimate need to be in the park, it was discussed to ask about the Park Keeper chaining off the Pine Street entrance as necessary to gain control of the park.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until May 31, 2007.

The next meeting will be held on THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2007 at 10:30 A.M. with the Monroe Park Master Plan Consultants.

The location of the next meeting is the Landmark Theater – Lounge B – Upstairs.

SEE MEETING NOTICE – NEXT PAGE

MEETING NOTICE

MONROE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

THURSDAY, MAY 31, AT 10:30 AM.

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