



# RNA Community Meeting Agenda

**September 30, 2024**

**7:00 p.m. at Salem Lutheran/Riverside Third Space (Hybrid: in-person via Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83025276168?pwd=WUIZZXZKKys1aEdCTIQ1ZEtlaEo0dz09>)

Board Members in attendance: Rich Badmington (President), Jeff Brown, (Vice President), Becca Charlton (Secretary), Jeff Dewberry, Jackson Fisher, Rachel Wagner

Members absent: Connor Eagleson (Treasurer)

## Welcome

RNA President Rich Badmington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., welcomed neighbors and guests, and introduced the RNA Board members.

## Our agenda:

1. Reports of our standing committees (Public Safety, the Park, Parking, Development)
2. Report on Board actions since we met last (Bylaws)
3. Special guests:
  - a. Mary Jo Kirschman, to talk about ballot Question H, the proposal to reduce the number of City Councilmembers by six. Mary Jo represents a coalition of community groups known as “Baltimore Not For Sale,” which opposes the change.
  - b. Shelly Smith, Preparedness Section Chief, Office of Emergency Management, Baltimore City Fire Department, who requested the opportunity to talk to us about emergency planning.
4. New business, including an issue about TJEMS drop-off/pick-up parking

## Welcome from Hosts

Our hosts at Salem Lutheran Church, Pastor Corey and the Salem Council President introduced themselves to community members and welcomed us to continue using their space for RNA events.

## Public Safety/Police Update (Rachel)

Rachel welcomed local BPD officers including Sargent Washington who provided a local crime report and police stop metrics for the last month. He noted crimes have been decreasing overall in our neighborhood. Neighbors asked where to check for stolen bikes or mopeds. He recommended residents go to Evidence Control, where they will need the registration/VIN number for tracking and verifying ownership.



Rachel then discussed her role as representative to the Baltimore Police Southern District's Community Relations Council (CRC) and some of the issues we have been discussing recently in the neighborhood:

1. Neighbors are gathering evidence and police reports for bike/stroller thief operating around the Fort/Riverside area. Reach out if you have anything to share, [rnabaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:rnabaltimore@gmail.com).
2. Some residents along the streets traveled by trucks delivering to businesses at the end of Barney St. have shared comments and video documenting their concerns. RNA will meet with the manager of the business to address the issue.
3. A public safety pocket reference has been created in collaboration with other associations. It explains the difference between emergency/non-emergency reporting and when to call 911 vs 311.
4. Businesses can also share camera footage with BPD, as many local residents do now. Rachel will be reaching out to businesses to share information. There is also a South Baltimore Camera Network that is run by neighbors. Police do not have access to personal cameras in the network unless provided by the resident. Police will inquire with registered camera owners in the event of a nearby incident.
5. What if a neighbor finds stolen packages or boxes? It's up to the victim to notify 911 and/or file a report for package theft, so you can walk boxes/items back to the intended recipient and recommend they file a report. Anything residents can do to not leave packages sitting on stoops is recommended (e.g. Amazon lockers, residential lock boxes).
6. Bill Ferguson has written a statement recommending Juvenile Services change their operating procedures; a petition may be going around, but RNA has no further information at this time.

## Friends of Riverside Park Update (Jackson)

Thanks to volunteers who helped make our concert series a success; and thanks to Domino Sugars and M8 Brewing for sponsoring the events.

St. Ignatius kids have already been out volunteering and distributing mulch around Riverside Park trees this year. They come out about once/month. Next event is ~9:30 a.m. Monday, Oct 28.

A volunteer opportunity on the Mayor's Clean Up Day (Sat. Oct. 26, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.) is planned for the new area south of the field renovations near an abandoned homeless encampment. There is plenty of work to do in that area (trash removal, brush removal, tree trimming).

Salem Lutheran Oktoberfest is also Saturday Oct. 26, as is the annual Halloween Bash not run by RNA but held in Riverside Park 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.



Jackson shared that there was a recent pool forum held with City residents, which was one of few opportunities to provide feedback to BCRP and their Aquatics program. This is a City process, even though it likely would not have happened without the push from Rachel requesting an opportunity for community engagement. RNA was well represented and we are awaiting next steps.

Tree Baltimore planting event will take place the weekend after Halloween (first weekend in November).

Question about killing lanternflies in the park.

Answer: There is no official program, but kill as many as you can.

Question on when the remainder of the construction fence in the park will come down.

Answer: No official update this month but best estimate is at least one more month.

Grant updates:

- Garbage can liners will be ordered shortly using extra grant funding to replace cans in the park.
- Soccer goals delivered to Riverside Park, funded by South Baltimore Gateway Partnership grant.

RNA has expressed our objections to the parking of vehicles in Riverside Park... it is against BCRP's own rules. Will revisit in the Spring as this is a continuing issue.

## Parking (Jeff Brown)

RNA members voted months ago to change parking hours, then the City's sign machine was broken. Signs finally went up a few weeks ago. For the most recently added Riverside block, they are waiting on their parking signs but expect they are getting close. There are additional blocks now working through petitions to be added to the Resident Permit Parking area.

Thanks to the efforts of Jeff D., DOT will be installing speed humps on 500 - 600 blocks of E Clement St.

The City continues its evaluation of sinking/shifting ground near the Clement St. lot.

## Development (Rich)

**1302 Key Highway** - Rich reported on his conversation with David Altfeld, owner of Southern Land. They are still interested in developing the property. Rich reiterated the community's concerns, especially regarding the height of the building and retail opportunity on the ground floor. David said he is revisiting the company's approach and will be back in touch when they have a proposal to consider.



**1921 Light St.** - Eric Costello let us know in advance that he was submitting two bills regarding 1921 Light St. at the request of developer Pat Grace. This is the property Rich toured and we then provided a letter of support (narrowly written to support their application for historic tax credits). The community has no objection to the proposed project and will invite the developer to meet with us to share additional details.

## Other executive/board business

**Amended the Bylaws** – In compliance with the process specified in our previous Bylaws, the Board has amended RNA's bylaws to bring them current with things like technology, meeting practices, and other general practices that we have been using for several years.

Key changes include:

- Return to a version of our previous boundaries to include blocks on the East side of Covington down to Cross St. and including Federal Place (carving out Federal Hill South);
- A new election process for Board members (nominating committee, January nomination announcements, February election); and Officers (to be elected by the Board, rather than the membership); and specifying two-year terms, without term limits

These will be posted on our website shortly.

## Special Guests

**Mary Jo Kirschman** – Mary Jo gave a presentation about ballot Question H, the proposal to reduce the number of City Councilmembers by six. Mary Jo represents a coalition of community groups known as “Baltimore Not For Sale,” which opposes the change. Following the presentation, Mary Jo took questions.

Mary Jo described Question H as an effort being pushed by Baltimore County resident David Smith, owner of Fox 45 and Sinclair News Agency that proposes reducing the number of City Council representatives. Representatives are currently responsible for ~40K residents in their districts. This change would increase the amount to ~70K residents per representative. The coalition argues that this will make the City less democratic and reduce service levels without gaining any significant cost savings. She said charter amendments are hard to read and most pass, so if you care and agree, please spread the word and vote “No.”

**Shelly Smith, Preparedness Section Chief, Office of Emergency Management, Baltimore City Fire Department** - Shelly spoke to us about emergency planning. Her organization works like FEMA but at the local level, to engage neighbors, write/oversee disaster risk mitigation grant projects, and help with response/recovery efforts. September is national preparedness month, which starts with being prepared at home:

- 1) Be informed (signup for Bmore Alerts, like Amber Alerts but just for Baltimore City); know your phone numbers, for example 211 (state/human resource services), 311 (City services), 911 (emergencies), 988 (mental health services);



- 2) Make a plan: have emergency contact information (including out of state point of contact) written down, and know your evacuation route. She also suggested changing your voicemail recording to alert people of your status after an emergency and before your phone dies. She shared a strategy of checking fire alarms when clocks fall back as a helpful reminder;
- 3) Pack an emergency kit: keep three days of supplies of water, food, medications, pet supplies, etc. at home to be ready during times of highest need/strained resources;
- 4) Practice your response plan and share it with your family.

If you would like more information, the presentation, and/or resource documents after the meeting. email [michelle.smith@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:michelle.smith@baltimorecity.gov)

## New Business

Lauren Rosenfeld let us know she'd like to discuss concerns about cars blocking her ally at times of TJEMS pickup/drop off. In her communication with Principal Brown, it was suggested RNA might be an additional resource. The specific issue: illegal parking that occurs during this time period. This has disproportionately affected the residents of the 1700 block of Byrd St. as parents park/idle in the alley and block parking pads, or double park and block crosswalks. Lauren is hoping we can start the discussion on possible solutions or next steps as a community. While RNA doesn't have any way to enforce parking regulations, some strategies for raising awareness were mentioned and one board member confirmed that TJEMS has sent reminders to school families to respect the signage and needs of nearby residents during drop off/pickup times.

Colline Emmanuel, Senior Communications and Outreach Manager, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership made several announcements including SBGP's free professional development workshop series that the public is welcome to attend. The next session is Oct 24 on External Communications. There will be a Nonprofit Bootcamp and Fundraising session in November. Feel free to reach out with any questions on projects.

Shannon noted Aquatics parking in Riverside Park and damaging vegetation. It has also been noticed by others and non-BCRP staff have been found to be driving into the park and parking illegally.

## Adjournment

Rich adjourned the meeting at around 8:00 p.m. and welcomed residents to join again in October.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Charlton, RNA Secretary  
September 30, 2024*