



RNA Annual (Community) Meeting Minutes January 27, 2025

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

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

Welcome

RNA President Rich Badmington called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., welcomed approximately 20 in-person and 6 on-line participants, and introduced the RNA Board members, noting that Rachel Wagner has stepped down from the Board and thanking her for her years of support.

He introduced the evening's agenda as follows, noting that, according to changes in our bylaws, January's meeting is now RNA's annual meeting:

1. Public safety update from BCPD
2. Guest presentation: Trademark Properties, on 1901 Light St. redevelopment
3. Welcome City Councilmember Zac Blanchard
4. Treasurer's report
5. President's report
6. Ad hoc Nominating Committee report, in anticipation of our Feb. 24 election
7. Updates on the Park, Development, Parking
8. Ad hoc committee update from Placemaking Committee
9. Other new business

Public Safety/Police Update

Police Sergeant Rivera presented recent crime statistics for the Riverside area. He reported details, including that, year-to-date, there have been year-over-year reductions in both violent and property crimes. Metrics for the last 28 days include a spike in larceny from auto and auto theft, particularly the stealing of airbags. He reminded residents not to leave any valuables visible as these are usually crimes of opportunity. There are also a handful of Hyundai and Kia steering wheel locks left for resident pick-up at the District office.

Special Guest: Trademark Properties

Eva Hadsdon, and Patrick Lundeston, Architect, reported on Trademark Properties' redevelopment of 1901 Light St., a project for which RNA took a site tour and provided a letter of support for the developer's application for historic tax credits.

Patrick and Eva shared that the property is currently a storage facility and this development will turn it into a multifamily residential building. Of the 5 existing buildings, the non-historic metal buildings will be removed and the space reused for ~100 surface parking spaces while the 3 brick buildings will be renovated to



include ~150 units of studio-to-2BR size. Their rezoning was approved (elimination of former PUD) and they are now moving into the funding phase and anticipate the units becoming available in 2026.

In response to resident questions about affordable housing, they noted that their units skew towards “workforce housing” with few extra amenities, which results in lower market rates; the plan does not include subsidized housing.

Treasurer’s Report

Connor Eagleson presented a report on RNA’s financial situation as well as its membership. Key points included:

- RNA manages its own finances and is the fiscal sponsor for two local events, the annual Halloween Bash and EasterEgg Hunt and selected other grants
- Overall the accounts have ~\$17K total, about \$9K of which is uncommitted (not attached to any specified project or grant) and available for use by the Association
- RNA’s main funding sources are state and local grants, RNA dues (\$5/year per member), and the annual summer concert series
- Recent grants have been used for soccer goals and equipment for sports fields, public safety initiatives including lighting and license plate readers, park greening efforts, and our Placemaking initiative

President’s Report

Rich Badmington presented a report on RNA’s work over the last year with comments about upcoming activities. The full report is appended to these meeting minutes.

Nominating Committee Report

Rich briefly explained the new nominating committee process, the decision by the board to continue with 7 members, and presented two nominees for open board positions.

Rich explained that elections will be held at the Feb. 24 community meeting. All those who have paid 2025 membership dues of \$5 (through the website) may vote. If there are no new nominations, this entire slate will be elected. If there are new nominations, the top 7 vote-getters will be elected. The Board will select officers in the days following the election.

Laurie Scudder and Liam Durfee were invited to introduce themselves and speak briefly about why they would like to serve. (Their written expressions of interest are appended to these minutes.)

Rich opened the floor for additional nominees, noting that self-nominations are welcome. No further nominations noted and nomination period closed.

Special Guest: Councilmember Zac Blanchard

Rich welcomed City Councilmember Zac Blanchard and his Chief of Staff Brandy Savarese, who offered brief remarks and distributed a handout. Zac shared that he lives nearby with his family, took office on



Dec 5, and has been building out his team in addition to serving as Vice Chair of the Public Safety Committee and as a member in several other committees.

Residents asked about Constituent Services and how to work together better. Zac and Brandy requested residents always submit 311 tickets so their office can track responses and raise issues, as needed. Please include the 311 ticket number when you reach out to expedite their response.

In response to resident questions about his priorities, Zac also shared efforts to increase public safety by supporting at-risk youth, bolster redevelopment by increasing taxes on vacant lots, and support clean, green, and community-friendly Main Streets across District 11.

To reach Zac's team, residents can reach out to Ja'Heim Brodie, Constituent Services Manager. Please first Report issues to 311 (dial 311, download the 311 mobile app "BALT 311", or go to 311services.baltimorecity.gov), then email zac.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov or call 410-396-4816.

Committee Updates

Friends of Riverside Park (Jackson Fisher)

Jackson reported that the construction project continues with the red house (as previously reported, with relocated bathrooms, reconfiguration of storage used by various groups including City Parks and Rec, RNA, Friends of Riverside Park, various sports leagues, and the St. Ignatius and Thomas Johnson schools' sports programs) is due for completion in the spring and field lighting next up. He noted that his group obtained a significant number of trees (18) and shrubs at no cost from the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show again this year. St. Ignatius students will be planting next Monday at 9:00 a.m. Volunteers are welcome to join.

He will start looking ahead to the concert planning, including permitting, and other prep work for the summer season.

Parking (Jeff Brown)

Jeff provided an update on enforcement, sign installation, and new Residential Permit Parking blocks. Specifically:

- The Parking Authority runs the program but relies on DoT for sign installation and enforcement.
- The City is out of sign posts, which explains lack of implementation for approved blocks.
- There is an app, Permit Connect, for purchasing permits and handling guest permits.
- For enforcement, the Parking Authority has updated software, scanners on cars, etc but DoT has no officers to physically do the enforcement.

Once these issues are resolved, there will be an opportunity for additional adjacent blocks to opt into the RPP program.



Development (Rich Badmington)

Rich reported that:

- Representatives from Southern Land have reached out again, sharing a new plan that includes the Verde Pizza restaurant on the first floor. He noted that he has asked the developer to look carefully at other concerns raised by the community, specifically, relating to the height of the building, which would require changes to zoning. Rich mentioned that Zac Blanchard has been working to facilitate this discussion, which will resume when the developer is back in touch with us. Verde will be there for Summer 2025.
- Damian Park, the owner of Jen's Place liquor store on Light St., has reached out to RNA for assistance with his effort to retain the liquor license under which he has been operating. The issue became more public with a Facebook post by a friend of Mr. Park's. RNA has put Mr. Park in touch with Delegate Clippinger and Councilman Blanchard, and agreed to testify at any upcoming Liquor Board hearing.
- RNA board members met with the manager of Legacy Building Materials to discuss concerns about truck traffic to and from their location at the end of Belt St. First, it should be noted that the manager said he was looking to relocate the business. He described steps he has taken to speak with neighbors and take certain deliveries off-site to allow for delivery on smaller trucks. We discussed preferred truck routes in and out of the neighborhood, the need to allow trucks to turn around in the yard of the business, the need to add signage at the intersection of Belt and E. Barney. We have contacted DoT and been told we are pretty far down on their list of priorities.

Placemaking (Becca Charlton)

Becca reported on the work of the expanded Placemaking Committee. With an extension of the SBGP grant, the team continues to work with the City to find locations for street banners. The brochure, also paid for by SBGP, has been created to help us focus on what messages we want to project to folks considering Riverside as a place to live. It is at the printer now—being reprinted at no cost due to some errors—and should be ready by next month. It's messaging and design are informing work on a new website, also targeted for launch in February.

The committee will expand its work when these deliverables are complete.

New Business

Rich opened the floor for new business or comments.

Rebecca "Becca" Mark, District 11 and Jewish Community Liaison, Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, introduced herself and offered an additional avenue for engaging with City Hall to raise resident concerns and support community initiatives. She welcomed being copied on issues residents send to the Councilman's office and can be reached at: rebecca.mark@baltimorecity.gov, 443-615-2262.

Adjournment



Riverside
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The meeting was adjourned around 8:10 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Charlton, Secretary
January 27, 2025*

[President's Annual Report and information on Board Nominees attached below]



2025 President's Report to Members of the Riverside Neighborhood Association

**Presented Jan. 27, 2025 by
Rich Badmington**

I'm sure that at some time in the past, the president gave an annual report to the community. And like so much of what happens in a community association, the practice was set aside for one reason or another, only now to cycle back with a with the turnover of time and people in this role.

So, here is a brief report on what happened last year, and a chance for you to imagine a little of what might lie ahead.

This organization is little more than the neighbors taking some joy in making Riverside better. There is an RNA Google drive; articles of incorporation; records of meetings, grants, correspondence, and so on, but that's all there is in terms of a corporation. RNA is all about what we do together and the relationships we maintain; not about an institution or even a meaningful bank account.

You've heard from Connor already about the piggy bank, so I'd like to comment on that work and those relationships.

And as I do, you are welcome to think of it as a menu of volunteer opportunities. As Jeff Brown has reminded me, anyone who is going to contribute to this effort is going to do so because they have a passion for one thing or another about Riverside.

Three of those passionate people stepped down from the board this year, and each one deserves our sincerest thanks. Each served RNA for many years and will always be ready to help Riverside.

Jen McLaughlin, who was serving as Vice President; Joelle Woolston, who was serving as Treasurer; and Rachel Wagner, who was chair of our public safety committee and who led social media and events and much more for a long time. In fact it's a little hard to imagine RNA without them.

As of next month, I will join this exiting group, as my term ends after three years.

We welcomed our new Treasurer, Connor Eagleson to the board last year, and will elect new members at our February meeting.

But beyond the board, there are others—including many of you—who volunteer, most often quietly or focused on one particular area of interest. These include a team who coordinate our summer concert series; a group that works with Jackson on the park; a group now working on our ad hoc placemaking committee; many who mobilize on development issues; others who help with events, social media, photography; and more.

We owe a huge thank you to every one of these neighbors helping neighbors.

One of the features, if not peculiarities, of Baltimore City governance is the outsized role that neighborhood associations play in decision making. Agencies are often formally mandated to



consult us. City Council members rely on us and we, in turn, rely heavily upon them. Elected officials at every level open their doors and personal email addresses, and RNA board membership is a ticket not just to countless fundraising events, but also to conversations and meetings of every kind that shape the direction of our community and our city.

The more we do together, the stronger the relationships we forge with agency personnel and, of course, our City Council member's office. This year, as you all know, we have transitioned from a strong relationship with Eric Costello to Zac Blanchard, who continues to work very closely with us on every manner of issue and is with us tonight.

All of which points me toward two kinds of work that these volunteers undertake, as I see it.

The first you would recognize as constituent service... getting the attention of a City agency to add a speed hump on the 600 Block of Clement Street... or pressing Public Works to investigate the sinkhole in the same area that appears to be creating cracks in the basements of nearby homes.

Other work is more proactive, even strategic, like leading the care of Riverside Park or hosting four very popular summer concerts, or applying for grants to fund a range of improvements.

Most of that work is done by committees—or often, individual board members whom we *call* committees.

Finally, there is a little bit of work in the business of sustaining our organization, and our ability to do those other things. A few highlights last year from this list include updating our bylaws to remain relevant and helpful. This year the board approved bylaws changes including:

- Simple updates, like acknowledging virtual meetings and shorter notice cycles.
- We restored some territory that had been removed from RNA's boundaries, presumably when Federal Hill South was created, welcoming back the Federal Place town homes between Jackson and Covington, and the strip of residences down the East side of Covington to Cross St., both areas that were unaffiliated with any recognized neighborhood association.
- We established a board member nominating process and a formal two-year election cycle, specifying an annual meeting with president's and treasurer's reports.
- We changed the way officers are elected, shifting that responsibility to the newly elected board itself, which will happen immediately following our board election next month.

Those revised bylaws will appear on a new website I hope to have launched before our February meeting.

We also modified the cadence of community meetings, discontinuing the August meeting, turning April's meeting into a social event, while continuing the practice of combining our Nov. and Dec. "holiday" meetings into one that is largely a social meeting, leaving all the other months for regular business meetings.

We created a little more structure around our committees... articulating the difference between ad hoc committees created for a specified duration and purpose, and our standing committees.



Let me point to some highlights of the work of those standing committees starting with Friends of Riverside Park, led by Jackson Fisher. Jackson reports each month on all the work his volunteers and he do to maintain and improve our crown jewel. When the City or Recreation department or the Council member wants our input about anything park related, they come to Jackson. As do the rest of us.

- Again this year, Jackson and others obtained thousands of dollars worth of trees and shrubs that are left behind at the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show. Our collaboration with students at St. Ignatius continues, providing help with mulching and lots of other assistance.
- We remain in close touch with the Recreation Department and were instrumental in initiating a City-wide forum to address opportunities to improve pool programming and management.
- Jackson has been in constant touch with the contractors completing the massive athletic facility project including the expanded and rebuilt field and infield, lights, pickleball and basketball courts, and transformation of the “red house” into bathrooms, and more.
- RNA has managed grants from the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership that have funded various park improvements from new mats for the playground to garbage cans and liners to soccer goals, and more. We have served as fiscal agent for other groups obtaining grants and provided letters of support for still others.
- As you’ll recall, we supported Eric Costello’s bill to rename of Riverside Park Pool to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool.

Another standing committee is focused on development. With the help of various neighbors, we spent considerable time on a handful of matters, including:

- The continuing Park Bench Pub saga, closing out issues with the previous operator and engaging with the landlord who assures us they plan to reopen eventually as a neighborhood pub;
- Redevelopment of the 1921 Light St. warehouse into market-rate apartments;
- Redevelopment of 1302 Key Highway;
- Engaging with management of the MARC railyard to win improvements to the fencing and monitor progress toward the electrification of the cars that idle overnight on dirty diesel fuel.
- Engaging with MAG Partners and Baltimore Peninsula on future connections to Riverside and in anticipation of impacts to peninsula infrastructure, services, and schools;
- Engaging with the owner of the building supply business at the end of Barney St. to find ways to help them achieve their goal of relocating, and to address myriad concerns about truck traffic.

Jeff Brown, our vice president and longstanding leader on parking matters continued his work to enable individual blocks to opt in to Residential Permit Parking, including specific blocks along Randall St., Johnson St., and Light St. He has worked hard to press the City to finally get RPP signs installed so enforcement can begin in earnest.



RNA also initiated and managed a \$95,000 grant from Md. Dept. of Housing and Community Dev. For the installation of License Plate Readers. We agreed recently to suspend our standing public safety committee, which had been led by Rachel Wagner, given the support we continue to receive from the police—who report each month on incidents and answer questions about everything from dirt bikes to the spate of Hyundai car thefts. Going forward, the full board will address public safety issues as they arise.

We again held a handful of events, including our Summer Concert Series that was attended by hundreds of neighbors and sponsored by Domino Sugar and M8. Domino has agreed to increase its grant for concert sponsorship to \$7,500, up from \$5,000 in previous years. Many of you enjoyed the Halloween Bash, the Holiday Cookie Contest and Gazebo Lighting, and our April social at Little Havana, with thanks to Marc Gentile.

New ad hoc committees include our placemaking committee and our nominating committee.

The placemaking committee began its work focused on what is special about Riverside, developing an understanding of what members of this community value about where we live, and refining the way we will share that story in the future. This will come to life on our new website, in a brochure—that is more about refining our messages and graphic standards, than promotion—and street banners that will soon announce to everyone that they are not in Locust Point or Federal Hill. The committee will continue its work to help neighbors connect with an eye toward elements of civic health; things like neighbors knowing neighbors, volunteering, participation in groups, and so on.

And none of this, from these community meetings to concerts to social media posts would happen without volunteers, and especially this board.

In addition to thanks to Jen, Joelle, and Rachel, I am especially grateful for the work of this group:

- Jeff Dewberry for his incredible commitment to this work and encyclopedic knowledge of how the City works;
- Jeff Brown, the definition of persistence with a Parking committee of one that began as ad hoc effort and has become a forever chemical; and for his always wise counsel; and especially this year for his help on the bylaws project;
- Becca Charlton for her reliable support as Secretary, her help with grant management and service on the placemaking team, and most important for her invariably thoughtful perspectives and can-do optimism;
- Connor Eagleson, for taking on the thankless Treasurer role, and for his consistently positive and supportive mindset, as well as all his help in the park;
- And finally, Jackson Fisher, for his wisdom of years at this work and what is truly his living legacy; his relentless stewardship over the centerpiece of Riverside.



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It's been an honor to serve, and I know that with this group, our new board members, and continuing help from all of you, this good work will continue.

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Badmington
President
January 27, 2025



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Liam B. E. Durfee

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My name is Liam Durfee, a native of Buffalo, NY and current resident of Baltimore, MD. After graduating with a degree in Political Science and a certificate Arabic from the University of Pittsburgh, I commissioned in the U.S. Navy in 2015. I served in the Navy for nine years, deploying to U.S. warships, working on fleet-level staffs, and managing government R&D contracts.

I moved to Baltimore in 2019, eventually settling in the Riverside community in 2020. In 2022, I enrolled in Maryland Carey Law and one year later transferred to Georgetown Law. I am focusing on housing, real estate, and corporate finance, and expect to graduate in 2024.

I am passionate about urban development and city life. I strongly believe that systemic racism and segregation have led to many of Baltimore's problems and want to combat them with inclusive urban design, increased walkability, improved public transit, and affordable housing. I live with my wife Ally, who is a professor at Towson University, and my daughter Marion and son Eamon.

I am hoping to join the Riverside Neighborhood Association (RNA) Board of Directors beginning in 2025. I welcome the opportunity to learn more about my community and actively contribute to my neighborhood. Among initiatives I'd like to help RNA address are:

- Improving the RNA membership page to check membership status
- Prioritizing high-traffic intersections for daylighting
- Increasing residential tree planting
- Increasing density and affordability of housing



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Expression of Interest: Laurie Scudder

I'm a relatively new resident to Riverside. My husband and I raised our kids in the burbs and always had a goal of moving to a walkable city. We moved here in August 2021 because Riverside provided everything we had always wanted in a community: small, friendly, diverse (though sadly less diverse than the Columbia neighborhood from which we moved), walkable with a plethora of things to do. Shopping, restaurants, theater, sports. Riverside had it all. In fact, our two adult children were so sold on the community that within a year, both moved to Baltimore - one to Federal Hill and one to Locust Point (though he and his girlfriend have now moved to Mount Washington).

We began our search for a home in late 2020 -- just before the holidays. So we got to see the magic of Jackson Street (we live on Harvey just 1/2 block off Jackson) over the holiday season! We have met neighbors both older and younger than we -- and many of our conversations take place from our roof decks, which is something with which big yards with great distances between houses just cannot compete!

We have always considered ourselves to be fairly active & involved community members -- whether coaching sports or serving on PTAs or helping to organize neighborhood block parties. And so involvement with RNA would be a continuation of a life we have always lived. Contributing to one's community invariably accrues more benefits than the output required. We're older & retired and so that is a different perspective. But I've spent my life working with kids (I'm a pediatric nurse practitioner) and believe strongly that a community that values and promotes the wellbeing of children is a healthier, happier one. So I hope I also bring the perspective of a lifetime of loving kids.

I'd be honored to play a small part on the RNA board.

Any questions at all for me -- please don't hesitate to ask.

I'll look forward to hearing from you. And to continuing to live and thrive in Riverside!

Laurie