

South Roanoke Neighborhood Association Meeting

Minutes from the South Roanoke Neighborhood Association Meeting; Wednesday, October 4, 2006

President Bill Thomasson called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Thirty-eight people were in attendance.

He addressed updates about ongoing neighborhood projects. An engineering firm is currently designing the outside renovation of the “business district” of Crystal Spring project. This project will begin at the first of next year; it should take 30/60 days until completion with minimal disruption to the business owners. Additional parking, landscaping, and new sidewalks will be the result. Also, an engineering firm is looking into the design of some type of “traffic calming” for Avenham Avenue and Franklin Road to cut down on the number of cars traveling on Avenham and to hopefully reduce the speed of the drivers.

Board Member Barbara Duerk announced that the City Parks and Recreation department is having an open meeting to get ideas from citizens as to how to develop facilities and amenities. The meeting is being held at William Fleming High School on Thursday, October 5 at 7:00.

Treasurer Curt Davis stated that the neighborhood association is “financially solid.” We started the year at \$3,778. and raised \$3,645. \$1,758. has been disbursed for administrative/ mailing costs. Our current balance is \$5,665; and we have 165 members.

The evening’s guest speaker was Roanoke City Manager Darlene Burcham. She announced that the leaf collection policy will be changed this year to coincide with our trash pick-up day and that 24014 will have their leaves picked up the week of December 11-15.

She was given four questions in writing to answer.

1) How is City Council going to help the School Board bridge the gaps between what the initial thought for the cost of improvements at Patrick Henry and William Fleming High Schools versus what the actual costs are?

Mrs. Burcham said that she feels that the current Council and School Board have a good working relationship, and that they are looking at services that they are currently doing independently to see if the two organizations could do any of these together to cut down on costs. There are two committees that have formed to look at cost cutting; the finance facility with School Board member Jason Bingham and City Councilman Bev Fitzpatrick and the facility with School Board member Courtney Penn and City Councilwoman Gwen Mason. One other way to cut costs will be to readjust the formula by which the city figures their budgeting, because this formula is over 20 years old. Mrs. Burcham didn’t feel that this would increase any savings. She thinks that the only way to really make more money for the city is to expand our tax base – bring more businesses and people to Roanoke City. This is difficult because Roanoke has the largest amount of poverty, the lowest per capita income, and the greatest amount of

renters than any other city in Southwest Virginia.

2) What will happen to the land that housed Victory Stadium?

City Council stands behind its promise to have it be for public use. Studies are currently underway to for a final design that could also involve the entire tract along Reserve Avenue. The buildings on the same side of the street could be vacated and the land may be used in the final decision. For now, Victory Stadium's land will be seeded and used as playing fields for youth sports. The ticket booths and some of the bricks from Victory Stadium were kept and will be part of the final master plan, and some sort of memorial to the Veterans will be erected.

3) What will the renovation of the library be like?

The downtown library will be renovated, but it will not be made larger. It will focus more on technology and the Virginia Room will be enlarged and improved. More satellite branches will be built.

4) How far away are we from the Greenway project being completed?

The flood reduction project by the core of engineers is being worked on. In the next five years, all of the greenways should be completed and connected.

Questions from the audience.

What is the status of the Wilton case? Mrs. Burcham said that it is in the hands of the judge now.

A resident expressed her concern over the dangers of backing out of her driveway onto Avenham Avenue. She said that she was speaking for several of her elderly neighbors, as well. She asked that the city put this issue on the front burner, and that they come up with some type of solution before an accident occurs.

When will the football stadiums be completed? Patrick Henry will be done by August 2007 and William Fleming will have theirs in 2009.

Are our Fire Departments understaffed? No, in fact more firemen were added at the Clearbrook Station, which puts more firemen covering South Roanoke. Is the First Street Station going to be closed? No, but the new Headquarters will be the newly constructed Firehouse located at Elm Avenue and Franklin Road

What will happen to Wasena Park as a result of the flood reduction project? Mrs. Burcham was unaware of any changes that might occur to the park; however, she stated that Wiley Drive will be impacted by the flood reduction plan. The road may be closed to traffic again.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm