

4th District Update



6948 Forest Hill Avenue
Richmond, VA 23225
900 E. Broad St., Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23219

Phone: 320-2454

Fax: 320-6030

Email: kathy.graziano@richmondgov.com
Website: www.kathygraziano.com

February 2008

Councilwoman Graziano

Dear Neighbors,

I am beginning my fourth year as your representative on City Council, and nothing has been a greater honor.

Together we have lowered the real estate tax rate by 15 cents in three years and expanded and strengthened the tax relief program for the elderly and disabled. We have invested in our parks with repairs and remediation at Forest Hill Park, the conservation easement on James River Park and the foot trails through Larus-Stony Point Park.

With the help of community and civic associations, our streets are safer with enhanced fines for speeding on Cherokee Road east of Huguenot, with better signage and patrolling on Bliley Road, and a new plan for Westover Hills Boulevard at New Kent Road. The police department has been especially responsive in this regard.

We have made a good start, but our work is not over. This spring, I expect we will focus a great deal of attention on the proposed stormwater utility. I am convinced that we cannot continue to fund stormwater programs the way we have in the past. We have neither been able to address routine maintenance such as ditches, drains and culverts nor major capitol projects such as Shockoe Bottom and Battery Park. I hope you will continue to share your thoughts with me as City Council decides on a course that will protect our lives and property. We cannot continue to ignore this problem and hope that it gets better. It won't.

We are working this winter and spring on a new Downtown Master Plan. It's a good blueprint for our future in the downtown area, but there are some unanswered questions. I'll keep you posted on our progress, and I encourage you to get involved by coming to the public meetings and voicing your opinion.

Finally, we look forward to receiving a draft budget from the mayor. We have adjusted previous proposals to lower the tax rates and redirect spending into investments for the future. As a result, our real estate revenue increases will be less than in the past few years, and we will also receive fewer state and federal dollars. It's going to be tough. I expect cooperation from the school system and city agencies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies where possible and to work together to lower costs without sacrificing essential services. We must address these issues on a city-wide basis, working for all of Richmond.

Thank you for all your help, support and advice.

Kathy

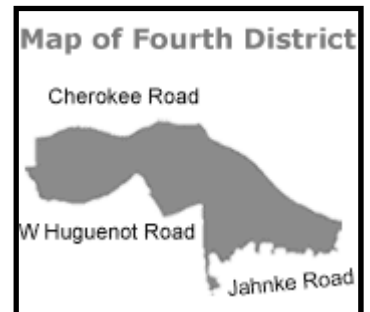


MARK YOUR CALENDAR COMMUNITY MEETINGS

February 13, 7:00 pm

Southampton Baptist Church
at the corner of Chellowe Road and Comanche Drive.

See back cover for more information.



HELP KEEP THE WILD GEESE WILD

Have you noticed the flocks of Canada geese along the river and in our parks? It seems that once upon a time they migrated to and through the area from their Canadian home. Now they have moved in as permanent residents.

Approximately 300 Canada Geese now call Byrd Park their home and several hundred more are living comfortably along the river. With free food readily available in a well-maintained environment that's free from predators, they have failed to continue their migration.

Geese that don't migrate fail to teach their young to migrate, and their numbers multiply rapidly. As their numbers grow and more geese live crowded together, they suffer from increased stress and also become more susceptible to rapidly spreading diseases. In addition, human food is not healthy for them, and typically the public feeds them stale bread. This can result in malnourished and deformed birds.

Large numbers of geese are also detrimental to the park. They ravage the landscape, and each goose leaves behind approximately one and a half pounds of droppings each day. This makes for a not-so-pleasant experience for park visitors and can pollute the lakes and increase algae blooms.

Geese residing in the park also lose their fear of humans and can become quite aggressive.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities wants to preserve our parks as a place that families can visit and enjoy and is asking for the public's help in encouraging the Canada geese to continue their migration. Please do not feed the geese as this encourages them to remain in the park and ensures that their numbers will grow.

Signs will be placed around the park reminding the public that it is harmful to feed the geese and requesting the public's cooperation in this effort to keep the wild geese wild.

PARK SAFETY

We have some great parks in the Fourth District - James River Park, Forest Hill Park, Pony Pasture, the Wetlands and Huguenot Flatwater. Thousands of walkers, bikers and motorists visit every day and have a great time.

As wonderful as the parks are, however, we do have to remember reasonable safety rules. **LOCK YOUR CAR.** Keep valuables out of sight and preferably locked in the trunk. Police warn us that potential thieves see power cords left in the car and realize that electronic devices may be hidden somewhere in the car, increasing the chances for break-ins.

If you are the victim of a break-in at the parks, or anywhere else, report it. The Police Department needs to know about crimes occurring for future planning, for patrolling and for gathering information that could lead to your property being restored.

FINALLY!!!

Work resumes on the long-delayed drainage project for the Staffordshire neighborhood.



This work will complete Phase 2, with Phase 3 to begin in the spring under the direction of the Department of Public Utilities.

FASTER ANSWERS WITH 311

Starting in January, citizens can dial 3-1-1, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday, to receive answers to their questions. By central phone bank in Room 109 of promptly on issues ranging from non-maintenance violations as well as in-resentatives will receive comprehensive of multiple City agencies.



solidating the City's seven call centers into a City Hall, citizens will receive information more functioning streetlights to graffiti and property formation about City programs. City phone rep- sive training in order to provide answers on be-

SERVICES AVAILABLE

SUPERCANS: The Department of Public Works has a plan to help homeowners who have difficulty getting their Supercan back and forth to the curb. You can get a form from the department or from Kathy Graziano's office at 320-2454. Fill it out, get your doctor's signature and submit it to the department for review.

TAX ASSISTANCE: If you disabled or over the age of 65, on a fixed income and having difficulty paying your taxes, you can apply for tax relief or a real estate tax freeze using the same form. The form is available in the spring through the Department of Finance at 311 or Mrs. Graziano's office at 320-2454. Information on the program is also available at www.kathygraziano.com. You can also pay your taxes on the installment plan by arranging a payment schedule through the Department of Finance. Ask for information on the tax escrow program.

YEAR-ROUND HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

Richmond is preparing to launch year-round disposal of hazardous wastes. The measure, initially created and funded by Council Members Chris Hilbert and Kathy Graziano, was first proposed almost three years ago but delayed by the Department of Public Works.

City Public Works officials now expect to open the facility to collect hazardous waste in March at the East Richmond Road Landfill & Convenience Center, 3800 E. Richmond Road.

"The staff and outside personnel are already on site," Rosemary Green, interim director of public works, told a City Council committee this month. "We just had to set aside an area for it."

Richmond held its annual hazardous-waste collection day on Nov. 17 at The Diamond.

The event gave city residents an opportunity to dispose of hazardous wastes that can't be safely sent to the landfill or the sewage treatment system. Hazardous wastes include solvents, such as paints and fuel; car fluids and batteries; household cleaners and drain openers; herbicides and pesticides; and thermometers and other devices containing mercury.

The collection day cost the city about \$98,000 this year, but city officials think they can save money with the year-round disposal site. The current Public Works budget includes \$150,000 for hazardous-waste collection and disposal this year.

The plan thrilled 4th District Councilwoman Kathy C. Graziano, who told Green, "That's my Christmas present! If not for your work, Mrs. Green, I don't know if we would ever have had a project."

(Adapted from a Times Dispatch article)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

It seems as if there's one in every neighborhood. The person who doesn't keep up his or her property. It may be tall grass and weeds or tree limbs and brush. It may be old cars or even appliances left in the yard.

For others, its an inappropriate business in a residential neighborhood with large trucks coming in and out and parked on residential streets.

They create a problem for our neighborhoods and for our property values. They may be breaking the law. So what can we do?

That's the question we'll pose at our next district meeting. We'll talk about blight prevention, property maintenance, code enforcement and the CAPS program.

We hope to see you for our fourteenth district meeting. There's plenty of available parking.

February 13, 2008

7:00 pm

Southampton Baptist Church

The church is just off Cherokee Road at the corner of Chellowe Road and Comanche Drive.

Councilwoman Kathy Graziano
6948 Forest Hill Avenue
Richmond, VA 23225