

4th District Update



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May 2009

Councilwoman Graziano



Dear Neighbors,

We are deeply involved in the 2009-2010 city budget, and it has been a difficult process for us all. The previous administration left office with a \$13 million operating deficit in the 2009 budget, which Mayor Jones closed with careful financial management and some hard sacrifices.

On March 26, Mayor Jones presented his proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. He recommended no change in the real estate tax rate, but some other increased fees. For example, he is proposing a fee of \$50/ton for dumping at the city land-fill and small increases in the fees charged by the city's water, sewer and natural gas utilities. Mayor Jones is also proposing a stormwater utility in which property owners, all property owners, would pay a fee annually for handling drainage and stormwater management issues. The fee proposed for most residential customers will be \$45/year, if Council approves the budget. The budget also calls for the imposition of service fees for not-for-profits.

The mayor is also proposing to reduce personnel costs across city agencies by eliminating more than 200 vacant positions.

In total, the Mayor's proposed budget is \$629.6 million, a decrease of \$28.5 million compared to the current budget.

City Council does not escape the budget cuts. Our budget will be reduced by 19%, with the funds used to mail this newsletter and other district projects reduced by 11% this year and with further cuts planned for next year.



Kathy and Mayor Jones discuss budget.

Most of April and May every year are consumed by budget work. The difference is, this year we are working together with Mayor Jones' administration, and that makes a huge difference. There may always be differences in priorities, but this year council is pledged to work collegially to smooth out those differences in a way that best serves every citizen.

May is also going to be a big month in Forest Hill Park. The South of the James Market opens May 2nd at 8 am with more than 40 vendors already lined up.

Also in May, we expect the crews to be hard at work on the long-awaited restoration of Forest Hill Lake. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities has set aside more than \$1.7 million to pay to remove more than 40,000 yards of silt material that has washed into the lake over the past 100 years. When the project is finished in late summer or early fall, the lake will have been restored to its former glory. Parks Director J. R. Pope also has an ambitious plan for using the facilities at the lake including the gazebo for an historical display.

Many thanks to all the Parks Department for their work on this project.

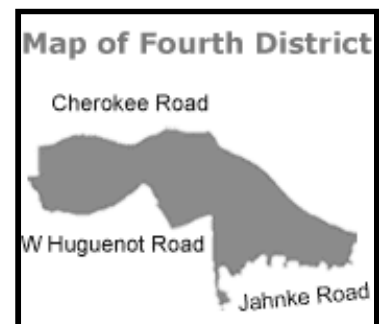
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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
NEXT DISTRICT MEETING**

**Featured Speaker
Mayor Dwight Jones**

**May 13, 7:00 pm
St Luke Lutheran Church
7757 Chippenham Pkwy.**

*Please see back cover for
more information.*



THE SCOTT RPS REPORT

Hello Fourth District,

Recently we've undergone some tumultuous times. However, due to stimulus funding our budget cuts were reduced by about 50% providing us with the opportunity to maintain critical core programming elements.

Our budgeting is a progressive process that will continue throughout the next couple of months. During this time the board is working diligently with our administration to produce a more comprehensive line-item budget that will provide the information necessary to ensure the best outcome for our students. I will keep you updated as this process moves forward.

On another note, you've made it clear that it is important for us to promote and market Richmond Public Schools. In response, RPS just launched a public relations campaign to encourage families to make Richmond Public Schools their schools of choice. In particular, the fourth district has strong schools that offer programs we can take pride in promoting.

Take note that the Franklin Military Leadership Academy is expanding its program to include a middle school component. The program carries over important components of the existing high school program and will stress leadership and service learning. Program information and applications should be available in our elementary schools immediately following Spring Break.

Thank you for your continued volunteer support in our schools, We continue to have a need for additional volunteers – and those of you with graphic and web development skills are also needed to help our schools improve their outreach efforts.

Important upcoming events for your participation can be found on our website at www.richmond.k12.va.us.

For questions and concerns regarding our fourth district schools or the system in general, please contact me at ascott4@richmond.k12.va.us.

Adria Graham Scott

2009 SOUTH OF THE JAMES MARKET

Sunrise on May 2nd can't come early enough. By 8 am, we expect to see you walking down the parking lot to the opening of the second year of the South of the James Market.

The hugely popular event kicks off with more than 40 vendors lined up. We can look forward again to some of the best organically grown products, wonderful prepared food, music, and great coffee. More than 25 produce and meat vendors, Cavanna's pasta and bakers will tempt every foodie south of the river.

Check the website at which the weeks' offerings will be highlighted (www.marketumbrella.com).

The Market will run through the first week in December at Shelter #2, New Kent Road and 42nd Street. Join us!

TEMPORARY STORAGE RULES

We have all seen them, the big storage boxes that are brought in and dropped in front of a house or in the driveway. Most stay a few hours or days and are taken away. Sometimes, it seems the box has moved in to live there permanently, often to the chagrin of the neighbors.

What are the rules? Does the city have a policy governing the use of the temporary storage containers?

William Davidson, zoning administrator for the city (646-6353) outlines a process. "We allow them for a temporary situation (moving, etc) not to exceed three days anywhere on the property. If a homeowner is considering a longer timeframe, the boxes cannot be in the front yard or front driveway (in front of the main building wall), and must meet underlying zoning setbacks."

The boxes can be placed in the street only with an encroachment permit, available through the Department of Public Works. The permit is subject to certain restrictions. Please contact DPW at 646-6430 for details.

THE CITY WANTS TO HELP YOU

It's not too late for seniors and the disabled to ask for help with real estate taxes. While the deadline for repeat filers has passed, the deadline for first time filers is June 15, 2009.

Qualifications are simple. Residents must be either permanently and totally disabled or be over the age of 65 and have a household income of less than \$50,000 a year. The resident must have assets, not counting the personal residence, of less than \$200,000.

The application is simple, less than two pages, and is available through the City Finance Department or through the Kathy Graziano district office at 320-2454.

As you take up those spring cleaning chores, you may not know there is a depository for those hard to dispose items such as paint, cleaners, chemicals, old oil and gas,

The Department of Public Works land fill on Government Road in the East End collects household hazardous waste from all residents. The project helps remove hazards from homes and garages, and helps keep our environment safe by providing an alternative to putting these products down the drain or down the gutter

For additional details, follow the link to the Department of Public Works webpage by going to www.richmondgov.com.

Do you have yard debris or tree trimmings and need to schedule a bulk pickup? Did the solid waste truck miss your house this week or the leaf crew skip your street? Do you have a question about real estate or personal property taxes?

CALL 311 For all requests for service. The city administration asks its citizens to use this number to contact the City Citizen Request for Service call center.

CALL 911 For police, fire or emergency\medial needs and speak to an emergency dispatcher.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Embedded in Mayor Jones' budget is the creation of a stormwater management utility, a new way to fund solutions to drainage and flooding issues.

The utility would charge every property owner in the city a fee based on the size of the impervious surface of each property. In other words, properties with large roofs or large paved areas would pay more than smaller properties.

All the money collected would be earmarked for stormwater management and would permit immediate drainage projects to be addressed in the short term, while permitting a long term strategy of borrowing for large stormwater projects. If approved by Council, Richmond would join several other Virginia cities and many cities nationally in using this method to pay for vitally needed drainage projects and would spread the cost of the work among every property owner in the city.

Currently projects are paid for by the general fund which generally is collected only from private property owners.

MAYOR DWIGHT JONES TO SPEAK AT DISTRICT MEETING

Mayor Dwight Jones will make his first official visit to the District since his election last fall. Mayor Jones can be expected to talk about his vision of the city, his plans for meeting the short and long term challenges posed by the economy, and this year's budget.

The meeting is scheduled for
Wednesday, Wednesday, May 13, 2009
7:00 pm
St. Luke Lutheran Church,
7757 Chippenham Parkway

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