

4th District Update



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May 2010

Dear Neighbors,

We are well into the budget cycle for the next year, and it is clear now that we will not have a real estate tax rate increase. For most people, the tax bill will actually be slightly lower since assessments around the city were generally lower. Our property values did hold well though, compared to some of our neighbors, so we were able to avoid the worse of the short-falls in lower revenues.

Mayor Jones has presented a budget that avoids numerous layoffs and furloughs while maintaining essential city services.

The budget also includes small rate increases for water and sewer rates. These are required as part of our continuing efforts to meet state and federal water standards and environmental quality mandates.

On May 1st, there is scheduled a really interesting event at Southampton Elementary School. Volunteers from Richmond Audubon Society and the Southampton Citizens Association have been working since the start of school to develop a learning garden at the school.

The garden is developed to match the Standards of Learning for each of the school grades involved and is designed to help beautify the Southampton neighborhood as well. On May 1st, the garden and the school will be open to neighbors and friends who come to admire the results. Everyone is to be commended for their volunteer spirit.

As Memorial Day approaches, we are also working with the Police Department and the Parks Department to manage crowds at Pony Pasture and along Riverside Drive. Traffic control measures implemented last year appear to have been successful in keeping Riverside Drive safe for motorists and muscle powered traffic alike. Police cooperation has been excellent.

Our next district meeting is scheduled for May 12. I anticipate we will have presentations from the Police Department, the Stormwater Management team and the city's new Sustainability Manager.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy".

Councilwoman Graziano



MARK YOUR CALENDAR NEXT DISTRICT MEETING

May 12, 7:00 pm
St Luke Lutheran Church
7757 Chippenham Pkwy.

Please see back cover for more information.

Call 311 For all requests for city services such as yard debris, leaf and solid waste pickup, and questions about real estate, personal property taxes and other city services.

Call 911 For police, fire or emergency/medical needs and speak to an emergency dispatcher.

Map of Fourth District



WE'LL MEET YOU AT THE LAKE AT FOREST HILL PARK

From boat races to memorial services, May 22nd is going to be a big day at the **LAKE AT FOREST HILL PARK**.

The Richmond Department of Parks is planning a ceremony and a series of fun events to introduce the renovated lake to the community formally. The Department spent about \$1.7 million last year to restore the lake to its historic boundaries, replant new vegetation in and around the lake, replace the lights that stand around the perimeter of the lake, and to replace trash cans and park benches.

A pedestrian bridge across Reedy Creek at the lake will also be named in honor of the Harvey Family who were killed January 1, 2006. The plaque commemorating the Harveys and all Richmond families was paid for by private contributions from friends and the nearby neighborhood associations.

The Forest Hill Neighborhood Association is also planning the first annual Forest Hill Yacht Club Regatta at the lake with events to include kayak and canoe races, dog swimming races (and probably wet children).

All events are free for the public.

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE DAY'S EVENTS

2:30 - Welcome from FHNA President Grace LeRose and introduction of the Honorable Kathy C. Graziano, President, Richmond City Council. Mrs. Graziano will introduce the Mayor.

2:40 - Remarks from the Honorable Dwight C. Jones, Mayor; and J. R. Pope, Director, Richmond Department of Parks and Recreation

2:50 - Ribbon Cutting

3:10 - Harvey Family Memorial Bridge Dedication, Friends of Forest Hill Park

3:30 - First Heat of the Regatta – Solo kayak or canoe (16' or less)

3:40 – Dual kayak or canoe

3:50 - Youth Heat (17 or younger)

4:05 - Dog Swim

4:15 – Voting Continues for Best Decorated Boat Contest (vote by placing \$1 in the jar by the best decorated yacht)

4:20 - Electric Remote Control Model Boats

4:35 - Neighborhood Competition (canoes with no paddles – six per boat)

4:50 - Award Ceremony including the presentation of the prestigious and coveted Boscobel Cup

Don't miss this exciting day!!!

Contact Information: FHNA Park Committee Chairman, Robley Jones, (robleyj@verizon.net), (804) 233-3748.

SOUTH OF THE JAMES MARKET OPENS MAY 1

May 1st will mark the start of the **THIRD ANNUAL SOUTH OF THE JAMES MARKET**. The market, located at the shelters in Forest Hill Park, has quickly become one of the most successful in the area. Averaging more than 65 vendors per week, the Market is one of the biggest attractions to the historic Forest Hill Park.

This year there have been some significant upgrades. Electrical service in the shelters has been improved, so there will be less need for generators. Several dedicated handicap parking spaces have been added to the left of the entrance. We also anticipate that additional 50 parking spaces will be available. All parking is free, but visitors should observe the parking rules to maximize our space.



Opening Day 2009

We expect that produce vendors will have an early crop of greens, cabbages, radishes, kale, and flowers. Several organic meat producers will be at the market selling lamb, beef, pork and poultry products. For the gardeners there will be lots of tomato and herb plants.

The market is located at 42nd Street and New Kent Road, inside Forest Hill Park, and will run through the end of November.

EASING THE TAX BITE

Mayor Dwight C. Jones is proposing to change the tax payment schedule to a biennial system in which taxes are paid twice a year rather than annually.

For homeowners who pay taxes through a mortgage, the change will make no difference.

For homeowners who pay real estate taxes directly, there is a little-known plan to ease the large annual tax bite. Property owners can contact the city Finance Department and sign up for the **Tax Escrow Payment Plan**.

Under this plan, the City will establish a budget payment schedule designed to help you set aside enough money for each month to cover next year's tax bill. The money you voluntarily pay into this tax escrow account will earn interest using a fixed market investment rate. This interest and the amount you paid will be applied to your taxes on the due date each tax year. The City will send you a statement which shows what your taxes for the year are and how much you have paid through the program.

Your payments into the program are completely voluntary. You may pay more or less than the budgeted amount, but you will be billed for any balance due. Any balance due must be paid by the due date to avoid penalty and interest.

Should you sell your home, or other listed properties, the money you have paid into your account will be refunded to you upon application.

The plan is not for the current year's taxes. Current taxes must be paid according to the schedule of the Finance Department. You may then sign up for the escrow program for next year. All prior years' taxes must be paid in full before you can participate in the Tax Escrow Payment Plan.

Go to <http://www.richmondgov.com/Finance/index.aspx> and select the "Forms" link or call 646-5690.

MAY 12 DISTRICT MEETING

Richmond Police Sector Lieutenants will report on the public safety picture for our community and also discuss plans for park policing this year.

Representatives of the stormwater management program are scheduled to outline the activities of the stormwater utility and report on projects completed and in the works.

The Fourth District will also hear for the first time a report on a new initiative of Mayor Jones with a discussion by the city's new Sustainability Manager. Alicia Zatcoff will outline efforts to improve the city's "green" performance and to make our community more environmentally sustainable.

The meeting is scheduled for
Wednesday, May 12, 2010
7:00 pm
St. Luke Lutheran Church,
7757 Chippenham Parkway

For information please call the office of Kathy Graziano at 320-2454.

Councilwoman Kathy Graziano
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