

Greater Oxford Civic Association Annual Board Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2024 – 7pm

Held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Board members present: Anthony Corcoran, Trip Cash, Michelle Emrich, Courtney Tolmie, John Cardwell, Linda Martin, Niki Sabbath, Evelyn Klumb, Sharon Shaw, Mike Martin, Rachel Wingeier (resident and upcoming board member)

Absent: None

Welcome

- Meeting called to order and facilitated by Anthony Corcoran

Upcoming Events

- Community Yard Sale & Bake Sale
 - Saturday, April 27th – 8am-12pm, rain or shine
 - Bake sale location: 8342 Charlise Rd
 - Yard sale will be advertised in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* and directional signs will be posted
- Donut Fest
 - Saturday, May 4th – 9am-11am, rain or shine
 - Location: Barningham Strip
 - Giveaway: Every 5th person will receive a free dozen to take home! Five dozen to give away!
- 2024 Neighborhood Clean-Up
 - June 22 and October 19 for our zone (13)
 - For more information, visit: <https://www.rva.gov/public-works/neighborhoodcleanups>
 - Email: AskPublicWorks@rva.gov
 - Call: (804) 646-8325
- President Nye's Annual Ice Cream Social for the 4th District Community
 - Sunday, June 9 – 2pm-4pm
 - Forest Hill Park – in the stone house
 - A flyer will be circulated shortly
 - Gelati Celeste will be served!
- 2024 National Night Out
 - August 6
 - For more information, visit: <https://www.rva.gov/police/national-night-out>
- Southside Mayoral Forum
 - September 17th – 7pm

- Other Events w/ Dates TBD:
 - Oxtoberfest
 - Yard of the Month
 - Holiday Door & Yard Contest

County and City Updates:

Kristen Nye, 4th District Councilwoman

- Ph: (804) 646-5646
- Department of Public Works:
 - Potholes are being fixed
 - For a list of roads being repaved, visit: <https://www.rva.gov/public-works/paving>
 - Timmy Siverd, 4th District Liaison, will share more information in the upcoming newsletter
- Department of Public Utilities:
 - New vendor for online utility payments: “MyHQ”
 - Benefits:
 - No longer a fee for paying bill online
 - Residents can view/download their bills going back 36 months
 - **Residents must re-register w/ new provider**
 - For more information, visit:
 - <https://www.rva.gov/public-utilities/billing>
 - <https://www.rva.gov/press-releases-and-announcements/news?page=1>
- Huguenot Flatwater:
 - More security is being implemented (e.g., more lights, new gate, regular checks)
 - There are currently 2 Rangers – Rick and Amy – w/ 3 more to be hired in 2024
 - Park Rangers report through the City’s Department of Parks & Recreation are responsible for patrolling park property on a regular basis, responding to calls for service, proactively engaging with park users, provide park visitors with resources and information, help resolve park user conflicts, and educate the public about Park codes, rules, and regulations
 - Park Rangers do not carry weapons
 - As always, if you see something suspicious, call 9-1-1

Questions & Answers w/ Kristen Nye:

Q: What is going to be done about the invasive kudzu along Chippenham?

A: The Department of Public Works maintains Chippenham with state funding. About the kudzu issue specifically, that’s probably better addressed by tonight’s guest speaker, arborist Michael Webb.

Q: How do I request a speed bump for my street?

A: Submit a request via RVA 311 (<https://www.rva311.com/rvaone#/>) and reach out to Timmy Siverd, 4th District Liaison (Ph: 804-646-5646).

Q: What is being done about all of the litter that collects on the on-ramps and off-ramps to/from Chippenham and Forest Hill Avenue?

A: Exit ramps are difficult to patrol. The Central Virginia Transit Authority handles the clean-ups along the on/off-ramps.

Q: What is going on with the water leak on Forest Hill Avenue and Hathaway near Food Lion heading East?

A: The sewer collapsed. It should take 4-to-6 weeks to repair. There’s more information on the website [<https://www.rva.gov/press-releases-and-announcements-public-utilities/news/forest-hill-avenue-emergency-sewer-0>].

Q: What is being done – or can be done – about the drag racing that is happening so frequently on Huguenot and Chippenham these past months?

A: While it is happening, call 9-1-1. Do not call the non-emergency line. Call 9-1-1 every time it happens – that will help the police build a record of it.

Sarah Abubaker, candidate for 4th District City Council

- Sarah is running for Kristen Nye’s seat in November
- She grew up in Richmond and has lived in the 4th district since 2011
- Sarah is currently the Director of Strategic Communications at the Collegiate School
- For more information, visit: <https://sarahabubaker.com/>

Mark S. Miller, Ph.D., LPC, CSAC, Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, Midlothian District

- Cell Phone: (804) 301-4680
- Email: MillerMark@chesterfield.gov
- For more information about Mark, visit: <https://www.mark4midlo.com/>
- For more County news, visit: <https://www.chesterfield.gov/>
- The new budget is being voted on tonight
 - Good news: Home values have gone up
 - Bad news: Property taxes will go up
 - Good news: The County is looking to reduce the tax on personal automobiles
- 1870 Restaurant is opening in the oldest commercial property in Midlothian
 - Soft opening: April 15-20
 - Full opening: April 23

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- Website: <https://www.1870restaurant.com/>
- 39 Chesterfield County restaurants are participating in Richmond Restaurant Week (RRW)
 - RRW runs April 22-April 28
 - Remember: No meals tax when dining at restaurants in Chesterfield County!
 - For more information, visit: <https://www.rweek.com/> and <https://feedmore.org/events/richmond-restaurant-week-spring-2024/>
- Springline (District 60) – new walking bridge to connect Gateway to Chesterfield:
 - The hope is to help people safely cross Midlothian Turnpike. Mark is working with Chesterfield's Economic Development Authority (EDA) to find funding to create a stone bridge across the road
 - Anticipating some pushback from VDOT since they are worried that pedestrians might throw something off the bridge, but Mark will be sure to address that concern
- Misc News:
 - Police Chief Katz is retiring. His replacement will be hired within the next 5 months
 - A.M. Davis Elementary is being rebuilt and will reopen in 2025
 - The Midlothian Middle School building is over 100 years old. The board is looking into options on what to do next. One option includes moving the school to another location. No decisions have been made yet. If the school is moved, we will be looking to re-visioning the Village to be more quaint
 - Mark is working to reinstate County-funded recycling
 - Development in Midlothian has been robust. Thousands of permits have been approved by his predecessor, though have yet to be built. Mark has approved just 2 permits so far – a property owned by Sauers Spice Company and 20 townhomes off Winterfield
 - Chesterfield does not own its roads – VDOT does
 - Chesterfield County has lost 2 youths to suicide since January. Chesterfield is looking to implement a program like Henrico's "Henrico Cares"

Bonus Information: Did you know?

Midlothian Turnpike is the middle point between the northernmost part of Maine and Miami

Questions & Answers w/ Mark S. Miller:

Q: How is transit being addressed for all the new development planned in the county?

A: Transportation takes all forms. With all the new construction, roads will need to be adapted to accommodate all the new residents. Chesterfield County roads are under the purview of VDOT. Mark is looking into ways people can safely move around Chesterfield via multi-use trails that allow for running, biking, and walking.

Betsy Carr, Representative for Virginia House of Delegates 69th District

- Ph: (804) 986-6852
- Email: delegate.carr@betsycarr.com

- For more information, visit: <https://www.betsycarr.org/>
- Introduced herself only

Guest Speaker:

- **Michael Webb, Urban Forester for City of Richmond**
 - Contact Info: (804) 646-0480
 - Email: michael.webb@rva.gov
 - Information: <https://www.rva.gov/public-works/urban-forestry>
 - Michael is in charge of the “Gateway Beautification Project” for the City of Richmond
 - Background:
 - Grew up in Salem, VA
 - Worked for Apple in California
 - Returned to Richmond to work for the City (<https://www.rva.gov/press-releases-and-announcements-public-works/news/city-hires-urban-forester>)
 - The Urban Forest Commission has been reinstated and currently has two arborists and one superintendent
 - Since returning to RVA, Michael has worked on the strategic urban reforestation plan
 - The program’s goal is to restore 60% tree canopy to the City of Richmond by 2037
 - Today’s canopy is estimated to be only 30%
 - The first two years of the program will be spent:
 - Inventorying trees in the public Right of Way
 - Doing a GIS analysis
 - In 2029 or so, a formal report on findings will be published
 - Important: We need to slow the removal of the trees we already have

Questions & Answers w/ Michael Webb:

Q: How do residents deal with invasive kudzu in their areas?

A: Kudzu cannot be killed but only contained by using a spray. It can grow up to one foot each day.

Q: Are permits required to cut down trees?

A: Permits are only required in Public Right of Way areas.

Q: Where can Oxford residents learn about what needs to be done and how to do it?

A: Get involved. Send emails and show up to meetings and share what you need and want to see.

Q: How can residents know who is a qualified arborist when hiring professional help?

A: Visit the International Society of Arboriculture’s website: <https://www.isa-arbor.com/>.

And remember, a city arborist will inspect your trees for free. Request this via RVA 311.

Bonus Information: Did you know?

English Ivy, while pretty, is bad for trees. It damages the trunk by trapping moisture behind it and it strangles the tree as it grows and encircles the trunk.

- What **not** to do:
 - Do not remove this invasive foe with a chainsaw! Doing so can damage the bark, especially of thinly-barked maples or birch, inviting disease and pests to infiltrate the trunk
 - Also avoid using Round-Up products, most of which contain glyphosate and acutely toxic surfactants which are harmful to all plants, wildlife, and our local water sources
 - Do not throw away ivy into your compost pile or green spaces
- What to do instead:
 - To properly remove the ivy, cut its vines as close to its base as possible
 - Another option is to pull the ivy out of the ground by its root, though this may not work with more established (i.e., thicker) vines
 - Allow the ivy to completely dry out and die before pulling the vines away from the tree trunk
 - Dispose of the dead ivy in the recycling bin supplied by your waste management provider

If you like the look of ivy, you can plant Virginia Creeper, a similar-looking native vine that will not damage your tree and is not invasive

Resident Input/Announcements:

- Pete Bell
 - Pete maintains the lovely foliage around the Oxford sign at Cherokee & Huguenot roads and will be taking care of the roses soon
- Board Member Evelyn Klump
 - The Oxford Garden Club will hold their annual plant sale at the Masonic Lodge (6787 Forest Hill Ave) on Saturday May 4 – 8:30am-4pm, rain or shine
 - For more information, visit the club's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/Theoxfordgardenclub/>
 - For information about Ikebana of Richmond, visit: <https://www.ikebanaofrichmondva.org/>
 - The annual Oxford Garden Club meeting will be held May 9th at The Dominion Club

Election of 2024-2027 Board Members:

- Rachel Wingeier
- Debbie Mangolas

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- Brad Cundiff

Election of 2024-2027 Executive Board Members:

- Michelle Emrich – President
- Linda Martin – Vice President
- Rachel Wingeier – Secretary
- Courtney Tolmie – Treasurer

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Wingeier, Secretary