

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Say NO to 3600 Grove SUP  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:24:02 AM

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To whom it may concern:

I moved to Richmond to escape the overcrowded, noisy, characterless neighborhoods of northern Virginia. I took a lot of time and care choosing where I would live. I chose the Museum District on Florida Avenue. I was absolutely horrified and to be honest confused that there's even a discussion about that ridiculous building. It is clear it is a bad fit. It would completely change traffic, the look and feel of the entire neighborhood. I love the fact that so many things in Richmond go against the "build as fast as you can and squeeze as many in as you can" principal. The general vibe of the Museum District is 100% why I live here. If even a version of that building goes up, there's no doubt in my mind that I'll be moving away from it.

Angry and concerned,

Michelle O'Brien  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [William Swyers](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** 3600 Grove  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 10:31:21 AM

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I do have an issue. traffic! We live on Grove Ave. Traffic commonly backs up when waiting for the light on Belmont. This development will add more cars and the pollution created. I strongly reject this plan. William Swyers  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Jim Behne](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Opposed to SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:32:27 AM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

As Museum District residents, we are writing in opposition to the SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue. We live in the Museum District because it provides city living on a human scale. Historic homes and apartments, close together but not crowded. Buildings two and three stories tall, many dwarfed by mature trees. An environment designed for neighborliness, whether calling to friends from front porches or speaking to strangers on the sidewalk. A community where residential and small retail and restaurants live side-by-side.

The SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue threatens to upend the quality of life in our neighborhood. With six stories and more than 250 units, the development threatens to overwhelm its surroundings. It is much larger than its neighbors, with no step-downs to bring it in line with adjacent buildings. It would be built at an intersection that is deemed marginal and is already more congested than most in the neighborhood. The addition of some 500 people and cars - with their attendant comings and goings and deliveries - at an already stressed intersection is a threat to the safety of all of us.

A further consideration is the precedent this SUP would set. In the long term, a thoughtful set of requirements for such projects with hard boundaries should be implemented, so that everyone (residents and developers alike) knows what is acceptable. In the short term, this project should be opposed.

A smaller, more thoughtfully designed development - say half the height and half the number of apartments - could be a welcome addition to our beloved neighborhood, helping to revitalize the city's tax base without compromising the integrity of the Museum District. In its current form, however, we strongly oppose the SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue, and we have encountered no community support for it. We urge you join the citizens you represent in opposing it.

Thank you.

Jim and Julie Behne



**From:** [Bobby McIntosh](#)  
**To:** [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Jones, Michael J. - City Council](#); [City Clerk's Office](#); [Mayor Levar Stoney](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Stokes, Kiya A. - City Council](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Stell, Kristen M. - HCD](#); [Hampton, Sherrill A. - HCD](#); [Peters, Michelle B. - HCD](#); [Malone, Merrick T. - HCD](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing Crisis  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 6:13:09 AM

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Good morning

I would like to take this time to update all on the continuous financial disparities we are facing in regard to the Affordable Housing Crisis. Listed below are **80 current or potential Affordable Rental Apartments** that are in financial distress based on our inability to finance the renovation of these vacant units. 90% of these units are vacate do to tenants receiving funding (Rent Relief), Housing Vouchers, or tenants unable to maintain their utilities so they decided to just abandon their apartments.

TJC Realty has submitted applications to Housing and Community Development for the following programs. Currently these applications are still under review.

- 1) 2nd Tranche ARPA/AHTF funding for Affordable Housing Development and Preservation
- 2) FY24 Federal Entitlement Funds (13 NOFA Applications)

We are dealing with daily hu phone calls from numerous organizations regarding the future of these properties. We absolutely do not want to sell these properties. Please review the list below.

**Fannie Mae - On April 17, 2023 their Asset Management Team conducted property inspections for both these properties list below. Once they view the number of vacancies we have, they will call the banks Asset Management Team and begin the liquidation process to limit the banks loses. Or they will request that the debt on this mortgage be paid in full. Which we do not have the funds to pay off this mortgage in full. We are not behind in our mortgage payments. We collect whatever money we can from the remaining tenants, that are paying and then contribute personal funds to the balance which is on average 80 percent of the debt.**

\* 401 E. Brookland Park Blvd – 26 Units

\* 4301-4313 North Ave – 28 Units

**The Banks holding these loans doesn't want to renew these loans because we**

**have 50% vacancies.**

\* 1600 – 1612 Pollock Ave – 6 Units

\* 3206 Chamberlayne Ave – 4 Units

\* 3006 / 3200 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave – 4 Units

**The banks won't refinance these loans and we are unable to rehabilitate them at this time due to the lack of rental income. We aren't showing positive cash flow.**

1111-1113 North 33<sup>rd</sup> St – 8 Units

3126 Woodcliff – 2 Units

3104 Utah Ave – 2 Units

In conclusion we are in jeopardy of losing Public Utilities on 401 E. Brookland Park, 4301-4313 North Ave, and 3206 A Chamberlayne Ave. because we cannot maintain the payment plans. We also have a tax payment plan on 1111-1113 North 33rd that was scheduled to be auctioned by the Richmond City Attorney. We are current on these payments yet struggling from month to month. Now that a Housing Crisis has been declared what do we do next. We are on the verge of losing these units if we don't take action as soon as possible! I would appreciate it if anyone from this email would assist me with maintaining these units for Affordable Rental Apartments.

Bobby McIntosh  
Property Manager



**From:** [Dan Taylor](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Fund Our Schools!  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:01:37 AM

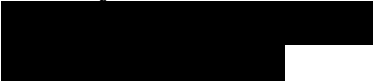
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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Our schools, our students and our school employees very much need our support right now. It is essential to make sure Richmond remains a livable city for working families. Now is not the time to make cuts to schools, we must invest to have success. City council should make no cuts to the RPS FY24 budget.

--

Dan Taylor



**From:** [Coggin, Lara](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** [Possible Scam Fraud]proposed RPS FY24 Budget  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:20:38 AM

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**WARNING:** Your email security system has determined the message below may be a potential threat.

It may pose as a legitimate company proposing a risk-free transaction, but requests money from the victim to complete a business deal.

If you do not know the sender or cannot verify the integrity of the message, please do not respond or click on links in the message. Depending on the security settings, clickable URLs may have been modified to provide additional security.

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Good morning,

I write to protest anything less than full funding of our pre-K-12 public schools. I am a full-time teacher leading a pilot program to help students graduate from George Wythe High School, and I see first-hand, every day, the devastation that underfunding causes in our community.

Do you know who bought my teaching materials this year for English Learners? Not our school district, although that would be the obvious answer. It was a professor from University of Richmond who saved some extra funds from her course and donated them to our class. Do you know how many materials I would have if not for her donation? None. That's right, zero. No books, flashcards, games, or puzzles.

So we know that it's on us to make up our own materials, reproduce them, and distribute them. Do you know how many times my department has run out of paper since August? At least six. Who buys the paper while we're waiting for the next order to arrive? Teachers. Who buys glue, tape, brooms, wipes, masks, vacuum cleaners, rugs, pillows, blankets, books for a reading area, paper clips, tacks, post-its, and charging strips? Teachers.

Do you know what is the ideal ratio, based on my 15 years of professional experience, for small-group instruction? Five students per instructor. Small group works for our students. They are seen, heard, and supported through all the challenges that come with living in a racist, impoverished, un-safe city. If we were funded to the levels that we need to be successful, we could turn around SOL pass rates, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.

Our human resources, both in faculty and in the student body, are impressive. But we are

being starved, year after year.

To fully fund education is a fiscally sound, ethical, and common sense move. Be responsible leaders. We are out here carrying water for this city: breaking up fights, finding housing for homeless students, making home visits, and digging out of our pockets to fund college visits and enrichment experiences. Now it's your turn to step up and do what you have been elected to do: provide leadership. A leader makes sound, mature decisions. This is an opportunity. Seize it.

In solidarity with my community,  
Lara Coggin

--

Lara dos Passos Coggin, Ph.D.  
ESOL Teacher



*eres mi otro yo/You are my other me*

**From:** [Richard Hankins](#)  
**To:** [Jones, Michael J. - City Council](#); [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Cc:** [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Faith Walker](#)  
**Subject:** Ordinance 2023-101 – Support RVA Rapid Transit  
**Date:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 1:02:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [RVA Rapid Transit - Ord. 2023-101.pdf](#)

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Council Present Jones,

Attached is a letter of support from RVA Rapid Transit in favor of Ordinance 2023-101 - eliminating parking minimums in Richmond.

Best,  
Richard Hankins  
Programs & Communications Manager  
RVA Rapid Transit

--

Richard Hankins  
Programs & Communications Manager  
RVA Rapid Transit





**Executive Director**  
Faith Walker

**Communications & Programs  
Manager**  
Richard Hankins

**Board Of Directors**  
Joh Gehlbach, **President**  
Kendra Norrell, **Vice President**  
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Brantley Tyndall  
Chaya Braxton  
Barry Greene, Jr  
Frank Thornton, Jr  
Sheryl Johnson  
Suzanne Hall  
Benjamin Campbell  
Thomas Ruff  
Laura Schewell

2209 E. Grace Street, Suite 20  
Richmond, VA 23223  
info@rvarapidtransit.org

Council President Jones,

On behalf of RVA Rapid Transit, I would like to express our organization's strong support for Ord. 2023-101, eliminating parking minimums in Richmond. This change will benefit our city by encouraging investment in sustainable transportation and improving equitable outcomes for our residents.

Mandating parking has detrimental effects on future investments in public transit. First, the over proliferation of parking incentivizes driving and leads to increased vehicle miles traveled. As you know, this forces local governments to spend additional money on paving and road maintenance. The end result is that this money cannot be spent on other budget priorities, including much-needed transit improvements and expansion.

Furthermore, residential density lost to mandated parking makes it harder for local government officials and advocates to justify increased investment in public transit. Eliminating parking minimums helps promote residential density, providing a stronger case for enhanced public transit investments.

Moreover, we need to recognize the demographic shifts in driving habits. Younger generations are obtaining drivers licenses at significantly lower rates than previous generations, which indicates a decreasing demand for parking in the long term. It's essential that we adapt our city planning to reflect these changes.

Importantly, removing parking minimums does not mean eliminating parking altogether. Developers who wish to include parking in their projects will still have the option to do so. Rather, this policy change allows for a more flexible, market-driven approach to determining parking needs.

We at RVA Rapid Transit firmly believe that eliminating parking minimums will contribute to a more vibrant and resilient Richmond, with benefits ranging from increased investment in transit to reduced carbon emissions. We encourage councilmembers to support this policy change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Faith Walker".

Faith Walker  
Executive Director  
RVA Rapid Transit

CC:  
Councilman Andreas Addison  
Councilwoman Katherine Jordan  
Councilwoman Ann-Frances  
Lambert  
Council Vice President Kristen  
Nye  
Councilwoman Stephanie Lynch  
Councilwoman Ellen Robertson  
Councilwoman Cynthia Newbille  
Councilwoman Reva Trammell

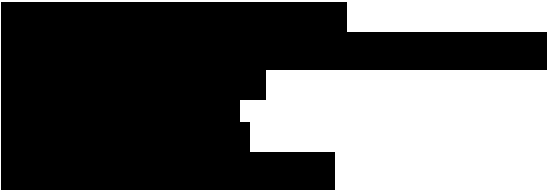
**From:** [Powell, Brandon](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Support of ORD 2021-101 Elimination of Parking Minimums  
**Date:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 1:40:07 PM

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By way of this email, I would like to express my support of ORD 2021-101 Elimination of Parking Minimums. This policy change aligns with the Richmond 300 plan and will increase investment in our communities. I personally live in the Church Hill and fully support more density in my neighborhood.

Thanks,  
**Brandon Powell**  
**Project Manager**



**From:** [Sam Brinton](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** RES. 2021-R027 Eliminate Parking Space Minimums  
**Date:** Friday, April 21, 2023 11:57:44 AM

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Good morning,

I wanted to write in to express my support, as a 5th District resident and homeowner, for the City Council to vote to pass RES. 2021-R027 to eliminate parking space minimums.

Eliminating parking space minimums will be critical to Richmond implementing denser and more-walkable neighborhoods. We cannot expect to make any progress on climate change until we begin to move our infrastructure away from car-centric uses. Parking minimums are certainly not the only tool in our toolbox, but they are an important part in reducing the environmental impact during the construction phase by reducing materials and labor spent building parking infrastructure. Additionally, it will reduce the life-cycle environmental impact of buildings by reducing car trips and reducing maintenance of parking facilities.

We need to continue to push back on the assumption that every homeowner, renter, and worker needs to use a car for commuting, errands, and leisure activities. This push will require changes to behaviors that are much larger than the scope of the Richmond government, but eliminating parking minimums will signal a commitment from the City to moving the needle towards a greener future.

Thank you,  
Sam Brinton

**From:** [SanDee Gammon](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Vote NO to current design 3600 SUP  
**Date:** Saturday, April 22, 2023 1:22:21 PM

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

As a Museum District resident, I am writing in opposition to the SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue. We live in the Museum District because it provides city living on a human scale. Historic homes and apartments, close together but not crowded. Buildings two and three stories tall, many dwarfed by mature trees. An environment designed for neighborliness, whether calling to friends from front porches or speaking to strangers on the sidewalk. A community where residential and small retail and restaurants live side-by-side. The SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue threatens to upend the quality of life in our neighborhood. With six stories and more than 450 units, the development threatens to overwhelm its surroundings. It is much larger than its neighbors, with no stepdowns to bring it in line with adjacent buildings. It would be built at an intersection that is deemed marginal and is already more congested than most in the neighborhood. The addition of more than 500 people and cars - with their attendant comings and goings and deliveries, at an already stressed intersection is a threat to the safety of all of us. A further consideration is the precedent this SUP would set. In the long term, a thoughtful set of requirements for such projects with hard boundaries should be implemented, so that everyone (residents and developers alike) know what is acceptable. In the short term, this project should be opposed. A smaller, more thoughtfully designed development - say half the height and half the number of apartments - could be a welcome addition to our beloved neighborhood, helping to revitalize the city's tax base without destroying the integrity of the Museum District. In its current form, however, we strongly oppose the SUP for 3600 Grove Avenue, and we urge you to do the same. Clearly the Planning Commission is NOT listening to the residents of the museum district. It is no secret that an overwhelming number of residents do not approve of this project in its current design. This will definitely affect all those responsible in the next election. I know I personally regret voting for a Councilman that doesn't listen to his constituents. Please don't make the same mistake.

Thank you,  
SanDee Gammon

**From:** [Warthen, Martha](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: ORD 2023-101  
**Date:** Sunday, April 23, 2023 7:50:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [PDR Parking Survey - Results 301960159 1.XLSX](#)

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of City Council and Members of the Planning Commission;

I write regarding Ordinance 2023-101 which, if passed, would abolish all requirements to provide parking for new developments throughout the City. I attended the 4/17 Planning Commission meeting where this Ordinance was approved and was concerned that Planning Commissioners were under the impression that the dozen or so people who spoke during the meeting were the only members of the public who had opinions or had provided any comments on this ordinance. I assure you this is not the case. As Mr. Vonck mentioned, there has been a lot of engagement with the community on this issue over the past eight months; however, at no point did any of the comments or questions submitted by the public seem to have any effect on the proposed ordinance.

I attended several in-person meetings and Zoom/Teams meetings where questions and concerns were raised on this proposal. At many points concerns were raised about the sweeping nature of the proposed ordinance and questions were raised about whether the restrictions could be eliminated in certain types of zoning categories but not others, or for certain types of developments but not others. These questions and comments were always answered with the explanation that this was an “all or nothing” proposal.

I also responded to two different surveys and submitted comments via email, as I know many others did. One survey was available from August 9 to September 9, 2022, and the results of that survey can be found at the bottom of the “PHASE 1: Initial Outreach” section at this link <https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review/zoning-changes>. I have also attached a spreadsheet of the responses to this survey that I have reviewed and color coded by viewpoint.

I have highlighted the responses that are in favor of **keeping parking minimums in green**.

I have highlighted the responses that are in favor of **eliminating parking minimums in red**.

The responses that **didn't seem to pick a side are highlighted in yellow**.

There were also a couple of responses that I found so odd or confusing that I didn't assign them a color at all.

By my count, the breakdown of responses is as follows:

Green (keep parking minimums): 266 (53%)

Yellow (no clear choice): 129 (26%)

Red (eliminate parking minimums): 109 (22%)

You will note that the questions were framed in such a way that it's not surprising that so many responses don't seem to pick a side.

Of the responses in favor of keeping the minimums, I found two recurring refrains: 1) many were concerned about the pressure this will put on neighborhoods that rely on on-street parking for resident parking and 2) many noted that the City's transportation infrastructure is not sufficient to support a car-free society, and the change in parking requirements shouldn't be made until the

necessary investment in transportation infrastructure is made.

1. Of the responses concerned about pressure on existing neighborhoods that rely on on-street parking for residents, Carver, Church Hill, the Fan, Jackson Ward, Libbie & Grove, Manchester and Scott's Addition were given as examples, some many times. For instance:

*“THE IMPACTS WILL DISPROPORTIONATELY HARM THE PORTION OF THE POPULATION LIVING IN DENSE NEIGHBORHOODS.”*

*“Where are residents and visitors supposed to park. Jackson Ward is ludicrous with increased density, parking removed to provide valet parking, and no place for residents or visitors to park. Not everyone travels by bike or public transit”*

*“The obvious one...overloaded neighborhood streets. With all the residential development you have allowed on Grove and Libbie, it's already overly crowded and we have MANY children who walk to and from neighborhood schools so it would become an even greater safety hazard”*

2. Some examples of comments about the City's transportation infrastructure:

*“You have to have the public transportation infrastructure in place first. This means all stops serviced every 10-15 min.”*

*“I understand the goal of going to a car-free environment, but our*

*infrastructure isn't ready for that yet."*

*"City planners/politicians should not be making decisions based on "perfect world scenarios" only on realistic data for current residents and space. Improve the infrastructure first."*

3. Some responses cite both of these concerns:

*"That it favours developers and tenants of high density buildings that don't want to pay for parking and not the real estate tax paying home owners in the areas that surround these buildings. Historic districts like St Johns/Church Hill buttress the lofts along the canal. These old homes were built before cars, therefore almost all of them are without off-street parking. Parking has become incredibly difficult as developers have continued to squeeze the area. Richmond and Virginia as a whole is still a commuter state. The public transport and infrastructure is not strong enough to adequately offer an alternative to vehicles for most people and especially not for people who are likely to be renting downtown. The wording alone suggests that there is more interest and favour towards developers which creates distrust "facilitate cost savings for DEVELOPERS of businesses and housing that MAY be passed on to the consumer". Developers won't stop building because they have to consider parking requirements, they simply want to save money and hassle. They should have to more effectively consider how to integrate parking and be accountable for the impacts it has on EVERYONE. This will not affect community dependence on transport but it will make it much more challenging for residents and homeowners. People treat streets like E Franklin and E Grace as long term parking when they go away. There are cars constantly being dumped in Church Hill or reported for being left for weeks. Eliminating the minimum will only make it harder especially for the elderly, disabled and families with small children to be able to park anywhere near their homes which is already a constant and serious problem."*

I have grave concerns about this ordinance and the effects it will have on the City's neighborhoods that rely on on-street parking for the residents who already live there. I was dismayed that the Planning Commission approved this ordinance after less than two hours of presentation, questions, statements and discussion, and after only hearing a dozen comments of the hundreds that residents of the City have submitted on this issue. This will be a drastic change for our City, and one that deserves more than the cursory attention that was paid to it in the Planning Commission.

Thank you for everything you do for this City.

Martha Warthen

2<sup>nd</sup> District Resident

**From:** [Monica Esparza](#)  
**To:** [Mayor Levar Stoney](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Robins, Amy E. - City Council Office](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Michael J. - City Council](#); [City Clerk's Office](#); [Frelke, Christopher E. - DPR](#)  
**Subject:** Hickory Hill Community Center - Letters of Opposition  
**Date:** Sunday, April 23, 2023 10:23:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [LetterS to Mayor Council and Parks.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Greetings,

Please find attached community letters (6) expressing opposition and alternatives to fire training at the Hickory Hill Community Center.

Thank you.

**Monica M. Esparza, Trustee**

Image Church - Renewal of Life Land Trust



*Confidentiality: This message, and all attachments, are intended for use only by the entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this in error, please contact the sender and destroy the material in its entirety.*

April 21, 2023

Mayor Levar M. Stoney  
Richmond City Council  
Richmond Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities Director Chris Frelke  
900 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

It was community people and their efforts as the heart and soul of the restoration of Hickory Hill School in years leading up to 1999 when the Hickory Hill Community Center was rededicated. The Hickory Hill Preservation Committee, in collaboration with the government restored the building and many of those volunteers, including the Hickory Hill Alumni Association remained in close support of the facility. Many committee members have passed on; but in their wisdom, two young people (Eric Hunter Sr. and Monica Esparza) were invited to carry forward the legacy and we remain; inviting the next generation to carry forward.

We have watched and actively engaged with a constantly rotating recreation and parks staff, who were largely unable to honor community wishes because "downtown told us not to do it." Unfortunately, we are in this space again; apparently banned from access to classroom spaces, the auditorium and recently restored library that are the heart of this historic facility. I also report that standing community activities have been shifted around and forced to share space to accommodate fire department occupancy. We continue to oppose the presence of the Fire Department at Hickory Hill Community Center for this as well as environmental challenges, health concerns and other matters addressed at recent Planning Commission and Urban Design Commission meetings.

Public safety is highly prioritized in all realms of government and even schools; and is essential to all city residents. However, Southside Richmond has been historically underserved, except by police and fire. This begs us to wonder if and how this aligns with why 34,500 of the city's youth are negatively engaged with the Juvenile Justice system. Though we tremendously respect the work and training initiatives of the Richmond Fire Department, we seek diversified education and training opportunities for youth and adults in this district. Fire and emergency training is valuable, but should not be the only options presented to youth in the 8<sup>th</sup> District.

The Hickory Hill Preservation Committee ensured that the Hickory Hill Community Center was spatially and technologically ready to meet education, business and workforce strategies by the installation of a computer lab (presently in dismal shape), as well as other complementary spaces. Educational programs were a prioritized interest to include "math, science and reading tutoring, exposure to engineering, law, medicine, urban planning, entrepreneur development, skill training in carpentry, welding, plumbing, electric, computer training and library to house archives of the Hickory Hill Center."

Diverse education and training opportunities provided by mentors and counselors in the community could motivate and inspire young adults, adults in dead-end jobs, individuals re-entering the community from incarceration, people seeking entrepreneurial opportunities and others seeking life changes. It is our desire to have city representatives and administration support the original vision for Hickory Hill and work with residents (not only corporate and/or public safety sponsors) to bring education as well as recreation services to fruition.

We have come aware of grant funds acquired for the benefit of vulnerable and underserved community sectors. Hopefully, those funds will be equitable allocated and include improvements to the Hickory Hill Community Center. Hopefully, this historically disenfranchised community will not be shut out from the facility that we helped to restore and cared for so much over the years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Monica M. Esparza

*Monica M. Esparza*

Eric Hunter Sr.

*Eric Hunter Sr.*

Hickory Hill Preservation Committee Members

# RIVER CITY KUNG FU

[www.RCKungFu.org](http://www.RCKungFu.org)

To: City of Richmond

From: Sifu Moses McClendon / River City Kung Fu

RE: Hickory Hill Community Center

Greeting,

My name is Moses C. McClendon II and I am the Sifu / Chief Instructor for River City Kung Fu. We are a martial arts school/society that has operated in the City of Richmond since 2006. We teach the Wing Chun (Ving Tsun) kung fu system. It is a southern Chinese Kung Fu style, rooted in Hong Kong, Head-Quartered in New York (IIMYVTF.org), and is still the only system invented by and traditionally best for women. We have taught hundreds in Virginia from workshops, seminars, women's defense classes, children's classes, and security teams since our inception in 2006.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> school location was at the Hickory Hill Community Center for 5 years. They took us in and under the management during that time, they embraced and supported us there. As the landscape changed so did the treatment toward us and our programming. We found it increasingly difficult to teach classes there. We were not able to obtain and secure a stable location inside the center. We moved almost weekly from place to place, were not able to secure our own equipment there and eventually had to make the difficult decision to exit from there and move to a better solution for our school.

We have grown since then and now in our 17<sup>th</sup> year we are hearing that there is interest in changing the Community Center identity. This is disappointing to hear. River City Kung Fu maintains the position that if we would have received a better solution and treatment at this location, we would likely continue to be there, servicing **our own** community as we strive to deliver some of the best in self-defense to **our children** on the southside.

Professionally,



Sifu Moses C. McClendon, II

Moy Mo`Xi



April 19, 2023

Honorable Mayor Levar Stoney  
City of Richmond  
City Hall, 900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Hickory Hill Community Center and Fire Training burn tower Project

Dear Mayor Stoney


Please consider information that has been revealed at the City's committee and commission hearings on this matter and that these members have independently voted against the Fire project.

Additionally, On April 17, 2023, the Nighty News at MSNBC with Lester Holt and Tom Costello reported "concerns over the rash of high- profile chemical fires." And that "communities and firefighters" are to be informed of "toxins" such as Hazmat Storage that are stored on sites.

The report goes on to warn that "even minimal exposure can do lasting damage; and that non-smoking cancer rates are rising in the United States."

This information is provided to oppose the Fire Training project at Hickory Hill and to ask the City of Richmond administration to use its resources to determine a less pollution driven and more suitable location for Fire Training, other than a functioning Community Center.

Respectfully



Delores Esparza, Deerbourne resident




April 8, 2023

**Mayor of Richmond**  
**City Council Members**  
City of Richmond - City Hall  
900 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear City Leaders:

WE DONOT APPROVE OF THE FIRE  
TRAINING UNIT BEING AT HICKORY HILL SCHOOL.  
REASONS: HEALTH - NOISE - AND LOST OF ALL NEIGHBOOD  
ACTIVES.  
AS A NEIGHBOOD WE HAVE TOO MUCH TO LOSE ,

Sincerely,

RUDOLPH TABB  
  
DEARBORNE RESIDENT

April 16, 2023

**Mayor of Richmond**  
**City Council Members**  
City of Richmond - City Hall  
900 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear City Leaders:

I am vehemently opposed to a fire training facility at Hickory Hill. I am a resident of Deerbourne. The fire department was not transparent when they canvassed the neighborhood. They did not disclose the Urban Design Committee rejected the proposed site.

I respectfully ask that our city leaders stand with the voice of the people. We gathered over 68% of signatures within Deerbourne that OPPOSED this facility. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Melissa /



Amelia E. Lightner



APRIL18,2023

To the Mayor, Lavar Stoney  
cc to all Council members, Richmond Virginia

Greetings.

Our concerns over the Fire Department's choice to build it's Training Center on the Hichory Hill Community site.

Our Communties are underserved and is in need of much. However, Our hope is more consideration be given to the need of the residents in this area of the Eight District.

The area in which has been identified for the Fire Training for it's Fire Fighter can be used to help the neighborhood that has no place for large meetings or other activities on the grounds of Hichory Hill. If consideration was given to these needs, they would be greatly acceptable.

According to the letter presented in your February meeting several location were mention, we would like to know the reasons for not choosing one these locations.

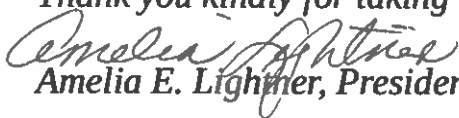
There are approximately 10 different neighborhoods utilizing Hichory Hill Community Center. To take away the ability to have less and not more is very unjust to these residents. The residents are in need of inside and outside space due to the growing population in the area.

It have been stated the South side is consider a highly crime place and it is to be a un-safe place live. We believe that this reputation could become proven untrue.

There are already too few green spaces in our South Richmond communities, especially in marginalized neighborhoods, and building a training facility does nothing to protect our green spaces and the health of our residents.

We are at the mercy of your viewing the Project, and deciding, would this be in the best interest of our neighborhood.

Thank you kindly for taking the time to read our plea.



Amelia E. Lightner, President, Upper Reservoir District

**From:** [Rosalyn Gibson](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Opposition to RFD at Hickory Hill Community Center.  
**Date:** Monday, April 24, 2023 1:38:43 AM

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Rosalyn Gibson

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Rosalyn Gibson [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Wed, Apr 12, 2023 at 11:40 PM  
**Subject:** Opposition to RFD at Hickory Hill Community Center.  
**To:** [REDACTED]

Greetings,

I am a resident of the City of Richmond. I have resided in the Cullenwood neighborhood for 30 years. I am strongly opposed to Richmond Fire Department (RFD) utilizing and constructing a building at Hickory Hill Community Center for a fire training facility.

RFD and our city council women, Reva Trammell, intentionally selected a small group of residents to inform about this project. They neglected to contact all of the neighborhood civic leaders and many residents who live near Hickory Hill and utilize the center.

When the civic leaders and community members became aware that RFD was moving ahead with using Hickory Hill. The civic groups came together to reject the injustice. After further civic group pressure, RFD decided to pass out fliers inviting the community to a meeting 2 days prior to a special call meeting on 03/21/2023. Two days prior to a meeting was short notice. Many residents were left out of the discussion and information process for this facility.

I would like for RFD to reconsider not using Hickory Hill as a training center and consider another location in the city. Some other locations could be the Richmond Technical Center, the abandoned Elkhardt Middle School, Ruffin Rd Elementary School, Norrell School Annex, RFD station located on Semmes Ave. or Forest Hill Ave. etc.

Hickory Hill was a former African American segregated public school. When I moved to Cullenwood it had become an abandoned school house.

Eventually, the alumni of Hickory Hill and nearby Cherry Garden and Cullenwood residents came together to renovate the abandoned school.

There are only a few community centers in the 8th district. We can not afford to lose any space from any of them. Hickory Hill is the closest community center for the E Belt Blvd,

Broad Rock, Richmond Highway and Terminal Ave corridor residents.

Hickory Hill serves many purposes. The soccer fields are highly utilized during the spring and summer. During the fall there is football. Hickory Hill also serves as a RPS bus stop hub and voting location, banquet hall etc.

Hickory Hill has a fitness center near Richmond Highway and Broad Rock Rd. communities. The center is used by our seniors. Currently, RFD is utilizing the facility and taking most of the parking space away for other community residents. Our elderly have to park further away. Our school buses have limited parking space.

You can ride by Hickory Hill when it is open., There are always cars in the parking lot and people inside.

To construct a concrete slab over the soccer field and the stacking of shipping storage containers on the lot would take away the playing field and green space that is so badly needed in the 8th district. We need more green spaces to breathe good quality air, especially in the 8th district. The 8th district is one the worst toxic polluted areas in Virginia. Why would the city agree to be a greener city and allow RFD take away green space.

Please reconsider not using the Hickory Hill location for training. I am for training new recruits and training our youth but there can be a better location more suited for the training.

Sincerely,

.

Rosalyn Gibson

Rosalyn Gibson

**From:** [Wyatt Gordon](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Please repeal parking minimums!  
**Date:** Monday, April 24, 2023 9:56:59 AM

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Hello,

I am a resident of the 6th district. Parking minimums have no place in Richmond as they force people to build more asphalt for cars instead of green space or homes for people. Please repeal this government overreach of a policy and let Richmonders build the amount of parking they find suitable for their homes and businesses

Thank you,  
Wyatt Gordon

**From:** [Austin Hobson](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** [Possible Scam Fraud]Written Comment in Support of Removing Parking Minimums  
**Date:** Monday, April 24, 2023 10:57:28 AM

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My name is Austin Hobson and I am a homeowner here in Richmond.

I am submitting this written comment to advocate for removing the parking minimums. I watched the planning commission meeting and what I saw was a well thought out plan that will bring opportunity and growth to our community while helping to mitigate the negative aspects like rising rent and displacement. As I know the city government is aware, the planners who worked on this are skilled professionals who need to be allowed to do their jobs instead of being stymied by community input that wants to "freeze neighborhoods in time".

To be frank, Richmond existed as a city before parking minimums existed and thrived as a carless (or at least "car-light") for a number of years. I do not think I am alone in the thought that I would love to see the density and walkability of that era recreated everywhere we can. We see remnants of this in places like The Fan and that is one of our most beloved neighborhoods after all. That is why it is insane to me that under our current regulations and zoning policies some of the denser places in North Side, The Fan, and Monroe Ward would be illegal to build. Removing parking minimums is one step along the way to getting back to that dense and walkable era.

I'd also like to mention the business opportunities this will create, think of all the old store fronts on Brookland Park Boulevard and Lombardy, and all over the city that could be used by interesting and unique small businesses but are prevented from doing so by the lack of required parking. Another example (albeit in the museum district) is places like Belmont Pizza that can not have dine in service despite having a building and customer base that can support it due to those same parking regulations.

My final point on the matter is just a plea to remember that this will be a citywide measure, and this will help bring density and business opportunities in places that have unfortunately been neglected in the past. Please don't vote against this due to the (often unsupported by data) fears of a few residents. As an aside, there are tons of people who are in support of removing the minimums as well, unfortunately the naysayers often have a louder voice than the people

in support. Removing the minimums has not been shown to make street parking significantly harder. It has been proven that most development and infill that stems from changes like this occurs on surface parking lots (of which we have far too many) and helps to densify the area. This is important because it provides a higher tax base as well as the required density for a more robust public transportation system (something we desperately need).

Thank you for your time, I urgently encourage the city councilmembers to vote for for removing the parking minimums and help usher in the city of Richmond to a brighter future that is both primed for growth and less dependent on cars.

Best Wishes,  
Austin Hobson