

Focus on Bryan Park

Dec. 2015 -Jan. 2016



The Newsletter of The Friends of Bryan Park - Dedicated to the Preservation and Improvement of Bryan Park

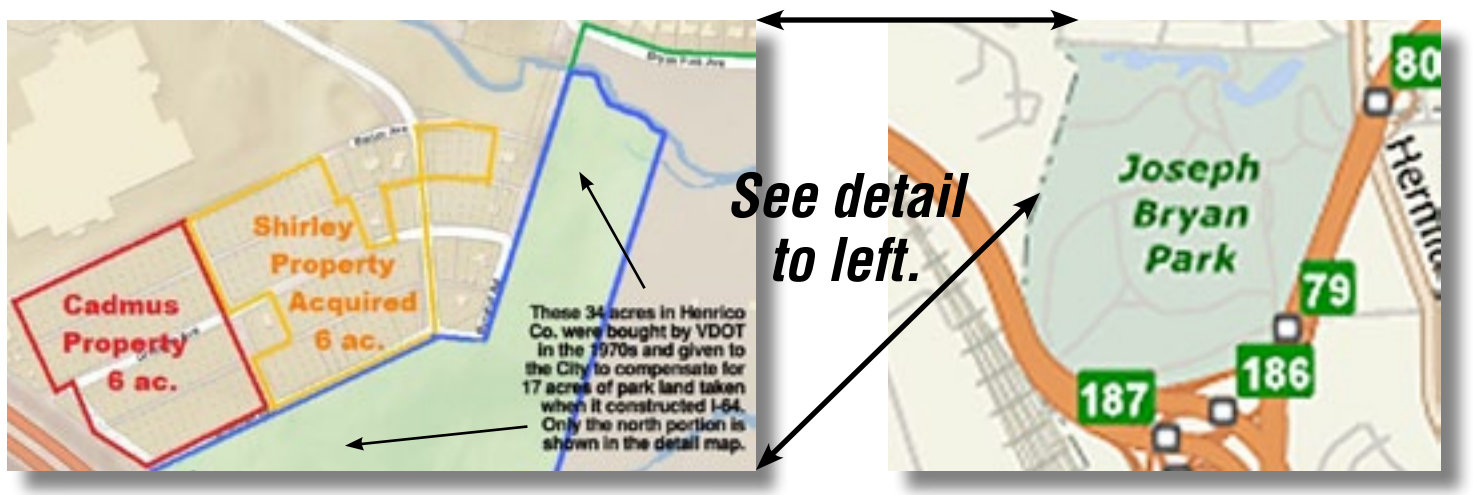
Friends of Bryan Park Buy Shirley Subdivision !

After three years of discussions, internal maneuvering, and fundraising several Friends of Bryan Park have bought the Shirley subdivision property adjacent to the western edge of Bryan Park. In 2012, auctioneer Mark Motley proposed building 34 pre-fabricated homes on the wooded 6.5 acre site. FoBP felt that this dense residential development would be detrimental to the Nature Center (then under renovation), clear-cut the mature trees, and the wildness and tranquility of the Nature Preserve area (established in the mid-1990s by a generous gift from Nancy Baker's mother).

The purchase was completed in early 2015. Friends of Bryan Park plan to place a conservation easement on the property in 2016, to ensure that it is maintained in a wild state, and ensure that it becomes permanent forested buffer for the park. The property will probably be donated to the Enrichmond Foundation (formerly the Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation), which will partner with the Capital Region Land Conservancy to facilitate its transfer to the City's Parks and Recreation Department and its eventual incorporation into Joseph Bryan Park.

In this rare case, park space and wooded habitat win out over development !

Watch for more news in the Spring and an ice-cream celebration!



Henrico Proposes Massive Upham Brook Trunk Sewer Project through Bryan Park

Please See Map On Page 2

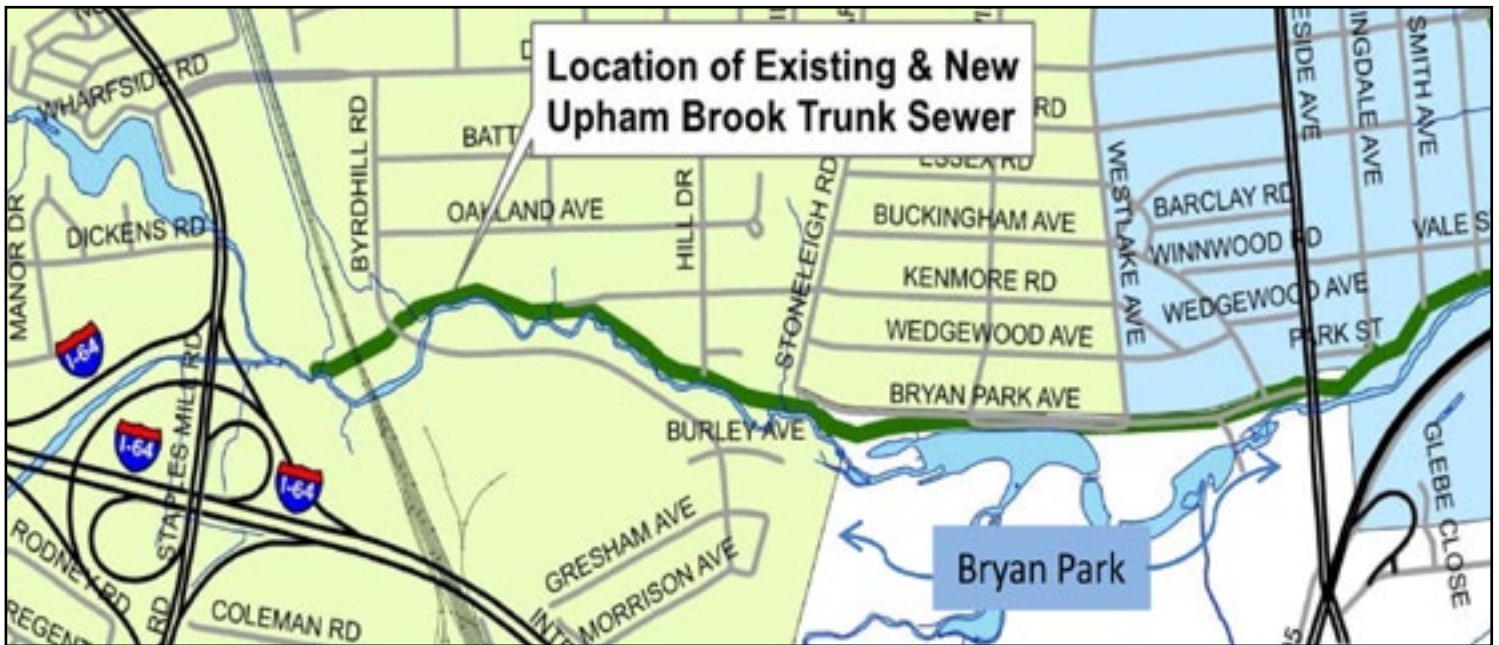
In the summer of 2015, Henrico County officials announced they will undertake a major trunk sewer line expansion project which will impact County residents in the Dumbarton neighborhood, homes along Bryan Park Avenue, and the northern side of Bryan Park. The \$17 million project will start west of the CSX Yards and follow Upham Brook to Dumbarton Road. Work is scheduled to start in the summer of 2016, and will be completed by the end of 2018.

A sewer trunk line connects region to region, like an expressway. Trunk lines use gravity to get sewage to a treatment plant, so they follow valleys, creeks and streams. In this project, new 4 and 5 ft. pipes will be buried parallel to an existing sewer line through the wetlands and floodplain of Upham Brook, beside western Kenmore Rd and Hill Dr; then run into Bryan Park below Bryan Park Ave, jog into the center median, back into the street and the northern edge of the park, and then tunnel underneath Lakeside Ave. to continue east. Contractors will bury the new pipes 15-20 feet deep and the construction work area requires a width of 20 to 30 feet.

At the public meeting at Lakeside Elementary on May 6th, County Officials explained most of the project. It will require dynamite blasting where bedrock is problematic; the project will eliminate approximately 61 large mature trees in Bryan Park; and the work, in 3 phases, will require periodic street closings during the 30 month project period .

To compensate the City for the loss of the trees, a funding formula was developed with the City's Urban Forestry Division. Henrico County has

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offered \$185,856 to the City to compensate for these lost trees; the funds are to be deposited with the Enrichmond Foundation for tree plantings and canopy replacement.

Residents in the project vicinity were very concerned about blasting, street closings, access to their homes, air pollution (dust and heavy machinery exhaust); loud noise and vibrations, dirt and debris.

The County said it would work to control these impacts. The County said that their contractors will be executing various parts of the project, so they urged the public to watch them closely and monitor their compliance with environmental, health and safety regulations. Several residents spoke of poor contractor compliance in the recent past, and damages caused near Kenmore Rd and Hill Dr, and in Upham Brook and its floodplain. In some cases, violations were so bad that the contractors had to be stopped by County inspectors and remediation was required. The County acknowledged these problems, but assured that they would not reoccur.

Friends of Bryan Park acknowledged the need for expanding Henrico County sewer lines, but were displeased with the route selection. Access to the park will be disrupted along the northern boundary of the park; at the lower Young's Pond dam/walkway; and at the spillway between the upper and lower ponds.

FoBP is very concerned about the new sewer line being located in the streambed and floodplain of Upham Brook (between Byrdhill Rd and Stoneleigh), since blasting, land-disturbances, and deep-trench excavations in these areas (comprised mostly of sand and highly-erodible soils) could cause extensive erosion, and transport large quantities of sediment into Bryan Park's two ponds. Construction near upper Young's Pond could be flooded by a 100 year flood -- since our region is having such storms and floods every few years now.

Unfinished Business ...the Cenvéo Property adjacent to Shirley

The 6 acre property adjacent to the Shirley Subdivision is owned by Cenvéo, the Connecticut-based printing multi-national corporation that bought Cadmus. In 2012 and 2013, our efforts to appeal to Cenvéo's declared corporate commitment to environmental stewardship, forest-protection, and community philanthropy were disregarded.

Friends of Bryan Park asked several developers to help us value the property. Their unofficial estimations were in the \$50,000 range, since half of the property stays wet, it is immediately adjacent to the always-busy and noisy I-64; access and visibility are poor, and Byrdhill Road essentially dead-ends where I-64 and Bryan Park about one another. The property is zoned light industrial, and almost any type of development would necessitate considerable infrastructure and utility upgrades.

The Friends have managed to raise most of the early target price; during the summer we offered Cenvéo \$40,000 for the property, which it rejected as being too small. Cenvéo hopes to sell the property as commercial and/or industrial property for more, even though its location is poor and its suitability for development very poor. In May, the Friends had the property appraised by a certified appraiser who determined its value to be \$71,200. We are getting closer...

Does anyone want to step forward to help the Friends acquire this parcel for future incorporation into Bryan Park? Your donations, large and small, are fully tax-deductable, and you could help us enlarge AND permanently protect the western side of Joseph Bryan Park. Wouldn't that be a great legacy for future generations?

You may be surprised to learn that a couple of larger donations and a host of smaller ones will help us meet our fundraising target and put the property within our reach! Please contact FoBP President John Zeugner for more information at 804-288-5005 -- and do it soon -- before it is sold for an unwelcome or detrimental use.

In closing, the Friends of Bryan Park stepped up and made 'The Big Buy' on the Shirley . Subdivision. Now, this is your opportunity to help make a tangible, enduring contribution to protect and improve our beloved Bryan Park.....

FoBP also asked whether more large trees could be saved. County officials said that the route avoided as many as possible, and they thought that more smaller trees would offset these losses. In fact, mature trees offer much more than smaller ones: shade, shelter and habitat, stormwater management and erosion control, oxygen, beauty, and a sense of permanence to the landscape.

Many other concerns were raised and questions asked. Henrico County responded to these in writing; these are posted on the FoBP website. Please see the tab "Upham Brook Trunk Sewer Project"; it shows the Public Meeting Questions PDF.

Henrico County has set up a project website: <http://henrico.us/projects/upham-brook-trunk-sewer/> which is, to be frank, not very informative. However, the project consultants prepared a presentation for the meeting, which can be accessed on the web:

<http://henrico.us/assets/Website-Upham-Brook-Trunk-Sewer-Presentation-2.pdf>

For your information, the main contact with the County is Arthur (Art) Petrini, Director of Public Utilities at 501- 4516. Also, page 13 of the Public Meeting Questions PDF has a complete list of contacts. Note: the December 2014 construction blueprints for the project can be seen at the Bryan Park Keepers House during most work hours; please contact Parks and Recreation at 646-0194 prior to your visit.

Friends expect that Henrico County will endeavor to minimize the impacts from this extensive project, but Mother Nature is always the wild card in the hand. Good work practices should be supported and/or praised, and questionable or unsatisfactory work or poor site management should be reported immediately. And keep an eye on our website for updates...

Goats Dine on Invasive Plants in Bryan Park

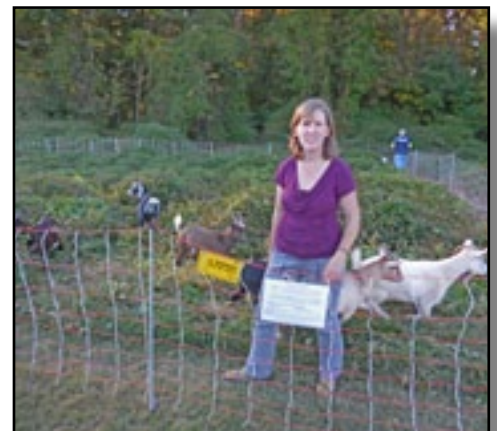
As many of you know, our region has been invaded by non-native species of plants, insects, mammals and aquatic life. Invasives tend to crowd out native species, disrupting habitat; growing, feeding and reproduction cycles, often outcompeting, killing and expanding unchecked.

For more than a decade, Friends of Bryan Park have been fighting invasive plants, mainly Japanese Knotweed, English Ivy, Japanese Hops, Porcelain Berry, and others, using physical labor to cut and/or uproot them, smother them with black plastic, and even use chemicals (partnering with City Gardeners, who are licensed to spray).

This year, Sally and Sue investigated the feasibility of using goats to eat the invasives. They talked with Kristi Orcutt, an environmental educator with Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, who has an unusual approach. She has a farm in Chesterfield, Bright Hope Farm, where she keeps a flock of 20 dwarf and pigmy Nigerian goats who are especially good at gobbling up the vines and weeds that we want removed from the park. Yes, they even eat poison ivy -- and leave the grass undisturbed.

FoBP hired them to clear a test patch of thick weeds and vines back behind the Nature Center, and they ate an acre of the bad stuff in about ten days (before it had a chance to seed). Friends were so pleased with the effort, the goats were moved to devour the overgrown areas just west of the soccer fields -- and again, they did great.

We thought goats would be smelly and unmanageable, but I was wrong! They are so cute, clean and gentle, and each one has a different personality (and name)! I came by the park several times, initially to help with the movable fence which keeps them in a contained area, but kept coming back to watch them, and see the flocks of children and parents who had heard about their use in the park and came to interact with them. They were amazing. FoBP hopes to have them back in the Spring!



FALL AND WINTER AZALEA CARE -- Marilyn Erickson

September, October

- Water every other week if rainfall is inadequate.
- Fertilize with Holly-tone (1/2 cup per shrub).
- Put down 3 inches of mulch for winter protection of roots.

November through March

- Remove tree leaves and tree branches from the tops of shrubs.

DO NOT PRUNE AZALEA SHRUBS ANYTIME EXCEPT THE FIRST FEW WEEKS AFTER BLOOMING.

You can remove dead azalea branches at any time.

A Note from The President -- John Zeugner

It has been a busy year for the Friends of Bryan Park, although most of the activity has been beneath the radar -- finalizing the acquisition of the Shirley subdivision, investigating conservation easement issues, and evaluating and appraising the 6-acre property next to Shirley owned by Cenveo, a national printing conglomerate. Please see related note on page 1.

We also have been working with the Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE) a trail-bike organization that wants to develop more bike trails in Bryan Park. Marlie Smith, Parks Operations Manager, and the rest of us are trying to find a balance between protecting the parts of the park where the natural environment is relatively intact; and identifying an area or two where a bike trail could be improved to the Department's safety and erosion control standards. This will probably happen on the southern sections of the Jordans' Branch trail, but rules and signage must be developed to indicate user rights-of way (who yields to whom), good trail etiquette and user safety. This will be posted on signs, and all shall abide by these regulations, or face the consequences. We are also discussing how much more use can the park handle (its carrying capacity), but more on this topic in the next newsletter.

Other projects this year:

- investigating with DEQ the suspended sediment in Jordans' Branch coming from the developing Libbie Mill site;
- holding monthly clean-ups of the floodplains and ponds
- recruited and organized 50-plus volunteers for the Moonlight Ride and Half-Marathon water stations (serving 16,000 guests in August & November) !
- recruited 70 volunteers for the annual JRAC regional watershed clean-up in September. Thank you, Peter Francisco and the local Sierra Club for providing wonderful lunches!
- we continue work on the trail and native plant gardens at the Nature Center.
- we have are eradicating highly-invasive mimosas trees in the Jordans' Branch area,
- we helped with two Eagle Scout projects near the Nature Center --- Rex Crom and Abhishek Damle built a gravel pad and installed wood bench seating for an outdoor education area, along our Nature Trail. Great work, Gentlemen, and thank your friends for us too!
- Adolph, Sue and others diligently maintain our Purple Martin Colony by the lower pond.
- Sally and Ches Bay Foundation staff placed two floating wetlands (planted with natives) in the lower pond to improve water quality; and Sally lead the effort to thin and clean the Duck Island there.
- plus, working with Bright Hope Farm's goats, the Nature Center education programs, and developing an irrigation system plan for the Azalea Gardens. Whew!

In closing, I want to apologize to all the many Friends of Bryan Park for not getting a FoBP newsletter out in a more timely fashion this year. We usually print at least two per year, but in acquiring Shirley, timing the release of the information (you read it first here!) and keeping on top of the activities listed above, the newsletter kept being pushed back. Nevertheless, it has been a great year for Friends of Bryan Park, and I want to thank all the Board members and the many other Friends who help!

Please think of us when you consider your end of the year charitable donations !
Happy holidays, and hope to see you in Bryan Park soon!



Half-Marathon Volunteers



Intrepid Eagle Scouts!

Off-Leash Dogs a REAL Problem in Bryan Park

This past summer a woman with a small dog was attacked and bitten by an off-leash dog. The offender and its despicable owner disappeared, but the poor victim had to take the rabies shots regime. There was one other dog attack incident reported, and a number of other squabbles and violations reported.

City codes require that all dogs in Bryan Park be on a leash, and positively no dogs are allowed in the Azalea Gardens. Why spoil the wonderful experience of walking in the park with your best buddies and have to worry about unruly and dangerous dogs? Why risk a law suit or City fines? Be a good citizen and a good pet-owner and keep your furry friends on a leash.

Also, all pet owners must pick up after their pets. Not only is pet waste a health hazard, but it pollutes our waterways. We have doggie-bag stations in the park, and you can always bring your own bags!

If you love the park, keep it clean and keep it safe !

Nature Education Programs Finish Second Year Strong!

Since its opening in June, 2014, the Bryan Park Nature Center has offered more than 40 education programs and activities for children, families, students and adults, thanks to the leadership of Sue Ridd, the FoBP Naturalist. In 2014, 23 classes were offered and, in this year, 20 classes were offered, on subjects ranging from insects and birds, wetlands and tree identification, how to fish and how to make holiday wreaths. There were even a number of classes geared towards adults: Bike maintenance, environmental ethics, and more. Please watch our website for 2016 offerings.

These programs were supported in part by a very generous gift from the Helen H Hamilton and James C Hamilton Foundation, and by several loyal Friends in Westminster Canterbury. If you would like to help, or support our education programs, or wish to see a specific program on a subject of interest to you, please contact the Friends.

Also, when the weather warms, come see our native plant gardens, pollinator beds, and nature trail...



Late-Breaking News: More Volleyball In Bryan Park?

by John Zeugner

The City Dept of Parks and Recreation was recently approached by the Richmond Volleyball Club (RVC) regarding adding several more sand volleyball courts in Bryan Park. They propose to rebuild the existing sand volleyball court next to Shelter # 1 and add two more courts near the Shelter # 1 tennis courts.

Friends of Bryan Park is concerned for several reasons. First, we think the location is wrong. The Shelter # 1 area is already used intensively. On weekends, soccer activity overwhelms all the Park's central parking areas, so cars park in the approach streets, on grassy areas, and where ever they can. The demand for parking significantly exceeds the park's carrying capacity (carrying capacity is the number of people, or cars, or bikes, that an area can support without resource degradation and/or environmental deterioration).

The following groups are already competing to use the same parking area: disc golf players, tennis players, Nature Center users, playground users, dog-walkers, bicyclers, joggers, and walkers. This doesn't include the groups that rent Shelter # 1 and need to have parking available, nor ad hoc special events that would attract more cars (fund-raising events, race training, SEALS work-out teams, etc.)

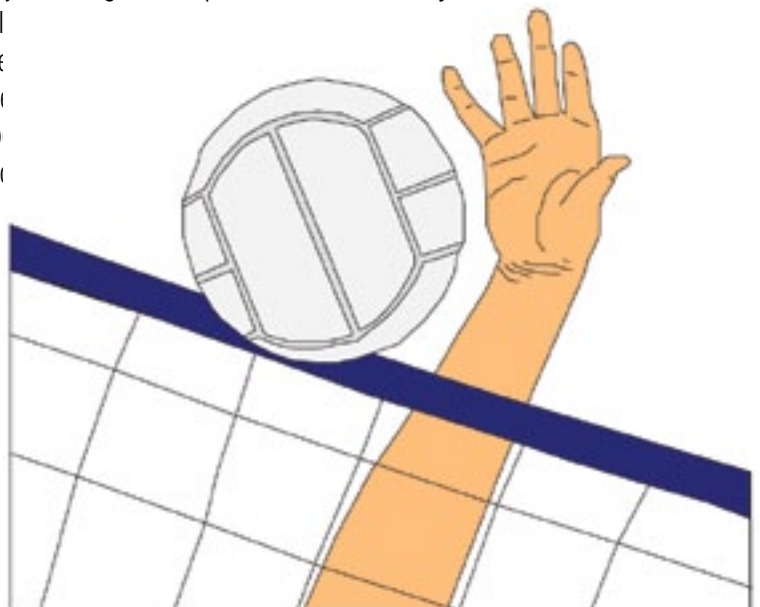
The RVC claims to want to reach out and engage city children in this sport. But we feel they should be asking for Parks and Recreation properties more centrally located, not in the City's northern tip. Parks and Recreation can evaluate other more accessible and underutilized properties, such as Pine Camp or Gillies Creek, or properties belonging to other City Departments such as Public Works or Public Utilities.

According to the RVC website, they have additional space available at their 1907 Westmoreland Street location (in Henrico County). The vicinity appears underutilized, there seems to be plenty of parking nearby, and it is easily accessible by car, bike and bus -- plus, its half a block off of Broad Street. Why not expand sand volleyball activities there, create jobs, and generate spin-off economic activity for the area?

If the RVC wants to expand with sand volleyball courts at its Brydhill building, also in Henrico County) there is enough extra space for three the site. The RVC also owns a 3.24 acre undeveloped parcel of property Byrdhill Road, which is relatively flat and could apparently accommodate fifteen sand volleyball courts, which would be just a 100 yard walk from courts, bathrooms, showers, etc. We encourage them to develop the Byrdhill sites first, and continue to work with Parks and Recreation to find good, central locations where the City's youth can learn to play volleyball, the RVC members can use (and pay Parks and Recreation), and help maintain the facilities.

Please don't overburden Bryan Park. If you agree with us, contact the Department's Director, Dr Norman Merrifield at 646-5717, or Councilman Chris Hilbert, at 646-5400. Feel free to let us know how you feel too, by using the contact form on our website, or by joining the Friends of Bryan Park.

Thanks very much!



www.friendsofbryanpark.org
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Help support FoBP by becoming a Member:

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

\$25 Friend \$50-\$299 Benefactor

Phone: _____

\$300-\$999 Park Guardian

email address: _____

(email addresses will ONLY be used to alert you to upcoming events/Bryan Park issues which may interest you. We'll also alert you when the latest issue of this newsletter is published and downloadable on our site.)

Method of Payment: Check Pay Pal

Please list your areas of interest in Bryan Park: _____

Checks are payable to Friends of Bryan Park.

Please send to FOBP,

P.O. Box 15481,

Richmond, VA 23227-5481

*FoBP is an IRS-certified 501(c)3 non-profit.
All donations are fully tax-deductable!*

Would you like to Volunteer for events? _____

Friends of Bryan Park Board Members:

John Zeugner, President 288-5005 Rick Sinsabaugh Vice President 266-3183

Sarah Sinsabaugh, Treasurer Sue Ridd, Secretary

Sally Chamberlin Samantha 'Sam' Emswhiler Marilyn Erickson Tom Houff

Ed Knight Donna Lacy Mary Beth Mains Nancy Baker Bucci Zeugner

Please note: Our Board usually meets on the 4th Monday of each month, at the Keepers' House, at 7pm. The public is welcome to join us ...

Other Important Contacts:

Third District Councilman - Chris Hilbert, City Hall: 646-5400

Dr. Norman Merrifield Director of Parks, Rec. and Community Facilities - 646-5717

Barry Russell, Deputy Director, 646-5944 Marlie Smith, Parks Operations Mgr, 646-0199

Keepers house & Lost & Found 646-0194 Police Non- Emergency 646-5100

Police Liaison: Lt. KeShawn Manns: 646-4105 Animal Control, M-F, 8AM-4PM: 646-5573

For weekends or emergencies: 646-5123

Let Us Hear From You!

Your suggestions and comments about the Park are important to FoBP. Send comments to info@friendsofbryanpark.org. Use this email too if you'd like to be added to our server list. Also visit our website at:

www.friendsofbryanpark.org

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