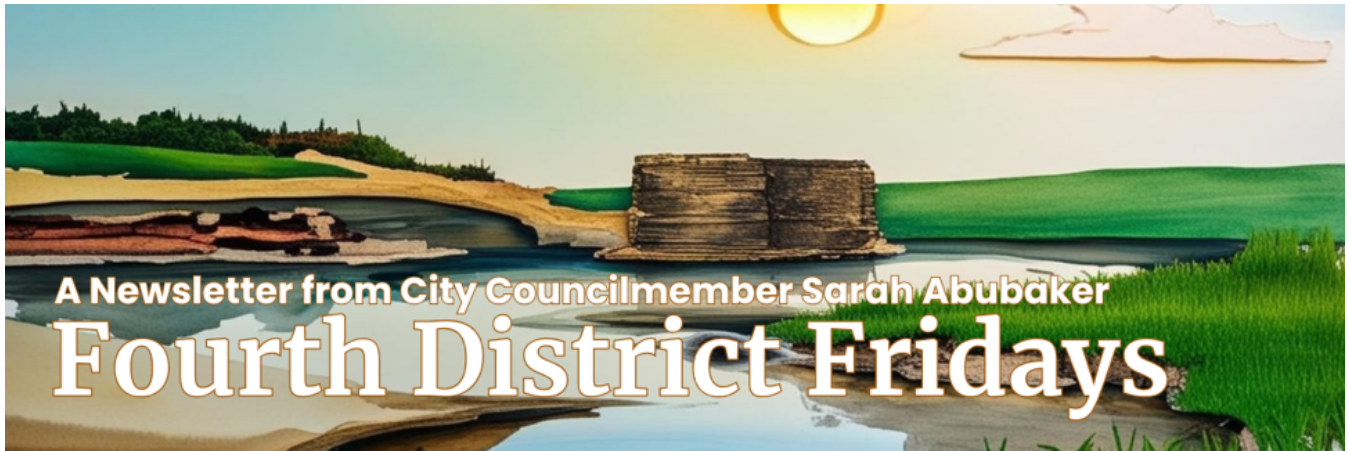


From: Councilmember Sarah Abubaker sarah@rvacitycouncil.ccsend.com
Subject: Fourth District Fridays 3.27.2026
Date: Mar 27, 2026 at 1:37:15 PM
To: danielapple@me.com



March 27, 2026 | Issue 54



Dear Fourth District Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen — we have a new park in the 4th District.

Well... not quite a park. But something just as meaningful: a new community green space.

During my campaign, I had the opportunity to spend time with the residents of Cedarhurst. They welcomed me to their neighborhood gathering in 2024, and later to the memorial for their beloved neighbor, Karen Montgomery. Both gatherings took place in the open green space between DPU's water tower and pumping station on Jahnke Road.

It didn't take long to realize that this wasn't just an empty field — it was already a true community space. A place where neighbors come together, support one another, and build connection.

So when residents told me they wanted to see the space officially recognized and preserved for community use, we got to work.

Over the past several months, my office partnered with the Department of Public Utilities, Department of Parks,

In this issue:

- **Richmond's First-Ever Civic Hackathon!**
- **Project Facilitation Support Desk to Streamline Permitting Process**
- **Weekly FY27 Budget Meetings Recap**
- **Upcoming Events**
- **Ways to Stay Engaged**
- **City Resources**

Constituent Corner:

- Number of Constituent Emails Responded to Last Week: **95**
- Number of PUBLIC 311 tickets in the 4th District Last Week: **82**
- Top Issues from Constituents: **City budget, Mayor's severance proposal, DPU bills**

Quick Notes:

Click [here](#) to access the Fourth District Fridays Newsletter Library

There will be **no newsletter** next Friday, April 3 due to the City holiday.

Recreation and Community Facilities, and the City Attorney's Office to make that vision a reality. And on March 18, that work paid off: the City formalized a five-year agreement to designate roughly 1.5 acres of land for public green space (the public green space will be located within the red outline in the image below).

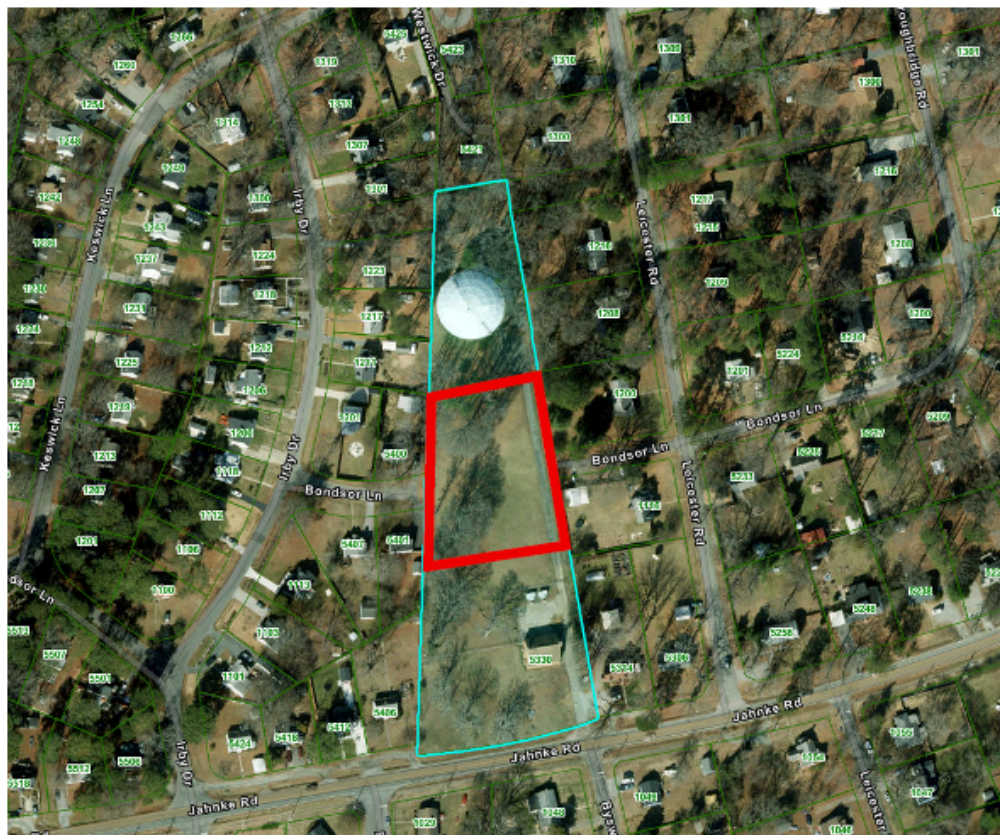
This won't be a heavily built-out park, and it won't be a dog park. But it will be a welcoming, intentional space — with plans for benches, a picnic table, and basic amenities — where neighbors can continue to gather.

For now, we're calling it the Cedarhurst Green Space, but in the coming months, we'll be working with the community to give it a name that reflects what it means to them.

I often joke that I aspire to be Leslie Knope from Parks and Recreation — but in this case, life really is imitating art. And more importantly, it's a great example of what can happen when a community speaks up and the City listens. My sincere gratitude to Director of Public Utilities Scott Morris and Parks Director Chris Frelke for their "start with yes" attitude and collaborative spirit.

With Fourth District Love,

Sarah



Did someone forward you this message? Subscribe for future updates below.

Sign Up for this Newsletter

Three Big Things

Trying to keep up with all that is happening in Richmond can be overwhelming. Every week, I will share the three most important things to know for the upcoming week.

1 - City: Richmond's First-Ever Civic Hackathon!

Hack for RVA, Richmond's first-ever civic hackathon, kicks off today! The event invites technologists, storytellers, nonprofit and civic leaders, and innovators to think creatively about solving some of our City's most complex challenges.

Over the past several weeks, Hack for RVA team members, along with City staff and community leaders, have narrowed down on distinct problem statements, and participants will focus their creative energy on developing actionable, community-centered solutions to these problem sets.

While the event will have already started by the time you receive this newsletter, there are activities all weekend, so there is still plenty of time to attend and be inspired by some of Richmond's sharpest and most creative minds! For additional details about the event, including the schedule, please visit the [Hack for RVA website](#).

After a year serving as your Councilmember, I can certainly attest to how challenging it is to come up with solutions to the City's and region's

#2 - City: Project Facilitation Support Desk to Streamline Permitting Process

As anybody who has applied for a City permit knows, the process can be **LONG** — even for the simplest permits. While Planning Director Kevin Vonck and his team have made considerable progress already, I'm pleased to share that the City has launched **TechDesk**, which is a pilot program to help commercial permit applicants navigate complex technical review questions which may arise during the permitting process. The structured consultation program will bring together representatives from reviewing departments and offices to provide coordinated guidance, clarify requirements, and identify next steps in resolving outstanding issues related to development and permitting review.

TechDesk is not a separate permitting process and does not replace standard permitting procedures. Rather, it is a mechanism through which commercial development applicants may escalate questions or concerns to ensure a coordinated response from all City-reviewing stakeholders. Insights gathered over the 90-180 day pilot will help the City identify high-impact opportunities for operational

most pressing problems. I'm incredibly grateful to the Hack for RVA team for putting on this event and for the many Richmonders who will show their commitment to civic participation through their work throughout this weekend.

improvement, which will be incorporated to the City's new permitting software platform, currently under review by the Planning Department.

To read the full press release about TechDesk, including more details about the six-step process, please click [here](#).

To learn more about the full Permits and Inspections process, including details on the new TechDesk pilot, please visit this [webpage](#).

#3 - City: Weekly FY27 Budget Meetings Recap (Finance, Administration, and Constitutional Offices Work Session; Public Hearing on Mayor's Proposed Budget; City Operations Work Session)

As I wrote in last week's newsletter, I will be sharing resources from each budget meeting held by Council through the end of budget season. The resources will generally be presented without commentary so you can develop your own conclusions and to give me ample time to absorb them prior to submitting my proposed budget amendments.

Monday, March 23 - Finance, Administration, and Constitutional Offices Work Session

Council held a work session on the City's Finance and Administration portfolios as well as the Constitutional Offices (Commonwealth's Attorney, City Clerk, City Sheriff, and City Treasurer). You can find the presentation [here](#), the work documents [here](#), and the recorded meeting [here](#).

Monday, March 23 - Public Hearing on Mayor's Proposed Budget

Council held a public hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget, which allowed the public to provide their feedback on the Mayor's proposal. This is an essential part of the budget process as it gave Council insight on the public's budget priorities as we prepare our proposed budget amendments. You can watch the meeting recording [here](#) (the budget public hearing starts at around the 14:00 mark).

Wednesday, March 25 - City Operations Work Session

Council held a work session on the City's Operations portfolio. You can find the session's work documents [here](#) and the meeting recording [here](#).

Looking ahead, we are taking a pause on budget meetings to give Councilmembers

time to dig into the Mayor's proposals and prepare our own amendments. We will be back with the next budget work session, which will be focused on Capital Improvement Projects and Human Services, on April 6.

Upcoming Events

March

Fri., Mar. 27, 7-8:30 p.m. Forest Hill Presbyterian Church Listening Session @ FHPC (4401 Forest Hill Ave)

April

Fri., Apr. 3 City Offices Closed for Spring Holiday

Mon., Apr. 6, 1-3 p.m. Council Budget Work Session (Capital Improvement Projects and Human Services) @ City Hall

Tues., Apr. 7, 6 p.m. Willow Oaks-Clevedon Civic Association Annual Meeting

Wed., Apr. 8, 7 p.m. WHNA Meeting @ Westover Hills United Methodist Church

Mon., Apr. 13, 1-3 p.m. Council Budget Work Session (Proposed Councilmember Amendments) @ City Hall

Mon., Apr. 13, 6 p.m. City Council Meeting (and public hearing on proposed Councilmember budget amendments) @ City Hall

Wed., Apr. 15, 1-3 p.m. Council Budget Work Session (Proposed Councilmember Amendments) @ City Hall

Sun., Apr. 19, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Friends of Forest Hill Park Spring Classic @ Forest Hill Park

Mon., Apr. 20, 1-3 p.m. Council Budget Work Session (Proposed Councilmember Amendments) @ City Hall

Tues., Apr. 21, 7 p.m. FHNA Meeting @ Forest Hill Presbyterian Church

Tues., Apr. 21, 7:15 P.M. SCA Meeting @ Southampton Recreation Association

Wed., Apr. 22, 1-3 p.m. Council Budget Work Session (Final Consensus Session) @ City Hall

Mon., Apr. 27, 6 p.m. City Council Meeting @
City Hall

Council Catch Up

This week:

March 23: Council held our second budget work session of the FY27 budget season, which focused on the budget proposals for the Finance, Administration, and Constitutional Offices portfolio. Full details can be found in Big Thing #3.

Council also held our regular meeting. Key papers that were adopted include an expansion of the City's homebuyer's assistance program, acceptance of certain grant funds, and several SUPs. We also held the public hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget. You can watch that recording [here](#).

March 24: The Public Safety Committee held our regular monthly meeting. Key papers recommended for approval include shifting medical 911 calls back to the Richmond Ambulance Authority and directing revenues from the Safety Camera Program to Vision Zero. You can watch that recording [here](#).

March 25: Council held our third budget work session of the FY27 budget season, which focused on the budget proposals for the City's Operations portfolio. Full details can be found in Big Thing #3.

Next week:

No scheduled meetings.

In the News

Here's a few news stories from the week to keep you informed:

[Watch the Council meeting from Mar. 23](#)

['We are managing so much': Mayor, experts discuss the path ahead for Richmond](#) (The Richmonder)

[In code refresh, proposal to allow small businesses in neighborhoods draws mixed neighborhoods](#) (The Richmonder)

[Mayor Avula wants departing senior executives to get up to 12 months salary as severance](#) (Richmond Times-Dispatch)

[Richmond police charge 11 people, impound 2 vehicles in weekend reckless driving crackdown](#) (WTVR)

Important Contact Information



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

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Get Updates Fast on Social Media

In fast-paced situations, I will post to my social media channels in real time as I learn new information. It's always a good idea to follow me on Facebook and Instagram and check my stories for quick information.



City Resources

WHO TO CONTACT?

EMERGENCY?

- Police
- Fire
- Medical

.....> **Call 9-1-1**

URGENT?

 DEPARTMENT OF
**CITIZEN SERVICE
AND RESPONSE**

- Power outage
- Live power wire



Dominion Energy
866-366-4357

- Natural gas and water leaks
- Sinkholes
- Raw sewage
- Downed streetlight



Public Utilities
804-646-4646
then press 1

- Tree blocking road
- Tree on power line
- Traffic signal out
- File a police report



Non Emergency Police
804-646-5100

- Homeless crisis



Continuum of Care
804-972-0813

PERMITS?

- Permits
- Inspections



Planning and Development
804-646-1628

UTILITIES?

- Utilities billing
- Utilities payments



Public Utilities
804-646-4646

SOMETHING ELSE?

- General information
- Social services
- Trash cans and litter
- Finance and tax questions
- Road, alley and sidewalk repairs
- Streetlight repairs



RVA 311
Call 3-1-1 or
804-646-7000



- Street sign repairs
- Storm water and storm drains
- Code enforcement issues
- Zoning issues
- Damaged tree assessments
- Parking issues

RVA311.com

RVA311 mobile app

Contact Citizen Service and Response with questions or concerns.



Richmond Public Schools

4th District School Board Member [Wesley Hedgepeth](#)



Richmond Public Library



Central Virginia Waste Management

Councilmember Sarah Abubaker | 900 E. Broad St Suite 300 | Richmond, VA 23219 US

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