



Heritage Park Resident Meeting Notes - April 29, 2024

Heritage Park residents attended a “Meet and Greet” to introduce the new Resident Council President and community partners and for an initial introduction to the Section 18 application process as well as RHA’s relocation planning. [Presentation slides can be found here.](#)

Sonia Anderson, Director of Housing Operations, gave updates on Heritage Park. Ms. Anderson announced that her department has merged with maintenance to create a direct line to property managers, providing improved customer service for residents. Kiara Wardrick started recently as the Office Assistant at Heritage Park and was introduced to residents. A new property manager will be starting in about 2 weeks, around May 15. Residents are encouraged to stop by and say hello once she starts.

LeKasha Johnson was introduced as the new Resident Council President. She is excited to be working for the residents and with RHA in her new capacity. She decided to run for president because of concerning issues she saw in the neighborhood. Her mother worked for RHA in resident services, and Ms. Johnson finds she is missing the closeness between neighbors and the activities that RHA and service providers used to offer to the residents. She wants children to be able to play outside together more and for neighbors to be more of a community.

The Raleigh Police representatives were not able to attend the meeting. Residents are reminded to call 911 to report active crimes, emergencies, or on-going incidences. For non-emergencies, call the Non-Emergency Police Response line at **919-829-1911**. You can also [go online to report a crime](#) or send a tip.

Third Eye Security owners and employees introduced themselves to the resident group. Their services and new cameras throughout Heritage Park have been added to alleviate security and crime concerns expressed by the residents. They hope that their presence in the neighborhood has made it more calm and safer in Heritage Park. Residents are encouraged to approach and talk to security personnel when they are onsite. They want to know if there are any problems needing to be addressed. Third Eye stresses that their team is there to secure and help, not to “police” the neighborhood. Residents commented that drones are too close to living spaces and make them feel uncomfortable. Third Eye Security clarified that their drones were used only one night for purposes of identifying the area for lighting and security, not as ongoing surveillance. Residents may have seen a drone belonging to someone other than RHA or Third Eye Security. Comments were also made about lack of lighting in some areas of the neighborhood. Residents were encouraged to put in a work order for any lights that are not working. Bus stop lighting concerns should be directed to the City of Raleigh.

Residents expressed concerns about the boarded windows in the neighborhood. Third Eye Security asked RHA maintenance to cover windows because of the need to protect the property from vandalism, discourage illicit activities such as drugs, and to deter unauthorized persons from entering and taking shelter in the apartments. RHA has looked into painting murals on the boards, and the staff will investigate fiberglass boarding rather than the wood.



Residents are also looking for programs for the youth in the area. All are encouraged to reach out to Suzanne Sands, Resident Services Coordinator, if you need a service or want to have an activity for the youth. Resident information and input are crucial for RHA to know what the needs are. Resident participation is needed for successful programming.

Kenton Jones with Triangle Family Services was introduced. He explained the Ready to Rent program which is currently offered at Heritage Park. The 5-week course teaches you how to get prepared for housing rental or ownership. Individuals who take the course will learn how to plan for their budget, improve their credit, and be eligible for renting any properties. Their holistic approach helps families identify free programs at agencies around the city who offer financial advice and guidance. Every person can benefit from the workshop or a one-on-one session with Mr. Jones to get their finances in order. Other subjects covered include information for first-time homebuyers, issues with renting, application obstacles, and help with identifying solutions.

Ship Outreach was not able to attend the meeting. A reminder that they will continue to bring food every Monday to Heritage Park.

Communities in Schools Wake County Executive Director LaToya Montague talked about the academic programs offered daily at Heritage Park. CIS had invested more than \$60,000 into the program here to employ full-time certified teachers. Attendance had been low, and they have adjusted accordingly, but there is room for many more kids. Even students who are advanced academically can enjoy STEM programming and career development through CIS partnerships. CIS also has connections with Wake Tech. Ms. Montague has a long relationship with the Heritage Park community and wants to find ways to work with families, strengthen relationships and improve connections with children and parents. RHA will issue a survey or host a meeting to assess what the need is with the community residents.

Heritage Park updates were provided by the RHA Real Estate Development Team led by Kenya Pleasant, Chief Real Estate Development Officer, including introduction of new staff. Rachel Agunbiade and Chris Whitenhill are project managers that will be serving Heritage Park. Thank you to those who have been attending and involved in redevelopment meetings for the neighborhood so far. It is important to share with RHA to ensure we hear all voices. Ms. Pleasant informed residents that there will be upcoming resident meetings and let residents know that RHA would be applying for a Section 18 application within the next three months. One of the purposes of this meeting was to provide a preview of Section 18 and relocation, but the upcoming meetings would explore these topics in greater detail. With Section 18 approval, RHA will still own Heritage Park. Section 18 approval allows RHA to go after other funds that can be invested into the redevelopment. Tenant rents will continue to be based on household income. Lease compliance will be necessary to stay in housing. The upcoming May 20 resident meeting will have raffles, prizes, and food. Residents are highly encouraged to attend meetings so that they are informed and able to plan for the move.

Laura McCann, Special Assistant to the RHA CEO, was introduced as the one heading up the relocation efforts for RHA, including for Heritage Park. She plans to hire new staff members who will be onsite to serve residents. They will also get information to each resident individually, serving as case managers and



will go door-to-door, ensuring all residents are receiving assistance in all steps of the process. If residents have lease compliance issues, please contact the property management staff at Heritage Park. RHA staff will create a customized, detailed plan for reach resident that meets their individual needs.

The RHA team has already been in talks with local landlords for the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program to hold apartments for Heritage Park residents. Some properties are brand new and will have 40-45 units available in the next two or three months. Heritage Park residents will get the highest preference for these units. We will work with individual families to remove barriers and help as best as we can. Residents will be notified when the Section 8 waiting lists will open for Heritage Park residents. RHA is working to have applications available online, and staff will assist with filling out the application. RHA staff will also help with RentCafe registration. Residents have a right to return following construction.

Residents are advised not to start moving from Heritage Park until they receive assistance and information from the relocation team as part of the redevelopment-related relocation efforts. If they move without working with RHA relocation case management assistance, they will not be eligible for relocation benefits. **DO NOT MOVE YET.**

Heritage Park residents are highly encouraged to attend the upcoming May 20 meeting in person. Residents can attend any one of or all three of the meetings. They will be recorded and posted to our website. RHA is looking into having residents serve as “Community Ambassadors” who may receive a stipend for helping with beautification of the neighborhood or sharing communications to apartments. More information to come.

Over the next few weeks, we will hold resident meetings to discuss in detail the Section 18 application process, tenant relocation, and the redevelopment plan status. There will also be efforts to communicate with residents via flyers, email, and other ways. It is important to be on the alert for redevelopment events and information and participate.

Please mark your calendars:

- **Monday, May 20 at 6:30pm (In-person, HP Learning Center)**
- Tuesday, May 21 at 6:30pm (Virtual via Zoom)
- Wednesday, May 22 at 12pm (Virtual via Zoom)

We are also planning a June meeting, date TBD (In-person)

Additional information can be found on the presentation slides, linked here:

www.rhaonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Heritage-Park-Resident-Meeting-PPT-4-29-2024.pdf

Questions? Contact the Heritage Park Property Manager:

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Come for food & prizes!