



Richmond Free Press



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JUNE 20-22, 2019

'Grand Slam'

Arthur Ashe Boulevard

Politics, personalities merge in this historic moment honoring late hometown hero

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

Richmond is preparing to pull out all the stops to celebrate native son Arthur Ashe Jr. as it renames one its major streets in his honor.

Thousands of people from near and far are expected to participate in the main event 11 a.m. Saturday, June 22 — the unveiling of street signs bearing Mr. Ashe's name along the 2.5-mile thoroughfare that for generations has been known simply as the Boulevard.

However, even this big effort to mark the new Arthur Ashe Boulevard cannot escape the undertow of city and state politics.

For most people, that undertow will go unnoticed as they take part in the big salute at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture to an international hero who was forced to leave segregated Richmond to pursue his sport and then went on to extraordinary achievements in tennis, as an author and as a humanitarian before his death in 1993.

They will hear speeches about Mr. Ashe's legacy and the importance of this day from numerous people, including civil rights icon and Georgia Congressman John R. Lewis.

But behind the scenes, the undertow is highly visible.

Most obvious is the role of Dominion Energy as the major sponsor of the celebration and associated activities.

It hardly seems coincidental that the company is wrapping itself in this black history moment, given that is under fire for a pipeline development about 90 miles west of Richmond that could disrupt a rural African-American community.

Nor can it escape notice that the celebration is taking place as Dominion's top executive, Thomas F. Farrell II, seeks to get City Hall to move ahead with a \$1.4 billion project to replace the Richmond Coliseum that he and business friends are proposing.

The event also shines a light on the strained relations between Mayor Levar M. Stoney and some members of City Council.

While the city's program and list of speakers remained under wraps and had not been released by Free Press publication deadline Wednesday night, members of City Council apparently have been excluded from the list of local, state and national officials who are to deliver remarks during the 90-minute unveiling program.

That includes Councilwoman Kim B. Gray,



Regina H. Boone/Richmond Free Press

Photos of Richmond tennis star Arthur Ashe Jr. during his 1968 victory at the U.S. Open line the front sidewalk of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture at 428 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd. The installation, featuring rarely seen images of Mr. Ashe by LIFE magazine photographer John Zimmerman, is part of the celebration and dedication of Arthur Ashe Boulevard and will be on view until July 7. The installation was produced for the 2018 U.S. Open commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Mr. Ashe's historic win.

Please turn to A4

New Coliseum plan to launch Monday?

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

Will this be the City Council meeting at which Mayor Levar M. Stoney introduces ordinances on the Richmond Coliseum replacement plan?

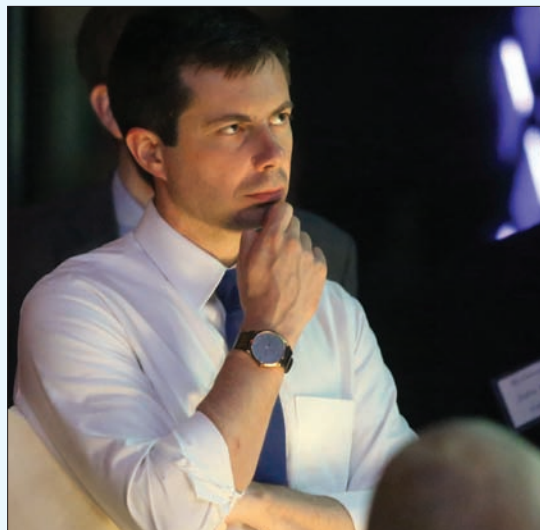
That has been the question since Mayor Stoney announced in November that he was negotiating a \$1.4 billion development deal involving a new arena with a private group led by Dominion Energy's top executive, Thomas F. Farrell II.

Ever since, one of the most important items at council meetings has been the list of introduction papers that the City Attorney's Office distributes.

Please turn to A4

Ambition, urgency at Democrats' gala

By George Copeland Jr.



Photos by Regina H. Boone/Richmond Free Press

Presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg waits in the wings to speak as his Democratic rival, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, addresses the crowd at the Blue Commonwealth Gala in Richmond last Saturday. The annual fundraising event, which drew nearly 1,800 people, is hosted by the Democratic Party of Virginia.

It was a night of big plans and high stakes last Saturday as nearly 1,800 Virginia and national Democrats, including two presidential hopefuls, gathered at Richmond's Main Street Station for the political party's annual Blue Commonwealth Gala fundraiser.

"We need to take back our country, and we need to make this the country that we have built, that we are so proud of, starting right here in the Commonwealth of Virginia," said U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. She headlined the event with fellow presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Ind.

Sen. Klobuchar and Mr. Buttigieg were among the high-profile speakers at the gala, a pep rally of sorts for Democrats leading into this fall's General Assembly elections and the 2020 presidential contest.

Speakers at the \$150-per-person dinner included U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine; Congresspersons A. Donald McEachin of Richmond, Abigail Spanberger

Please turn to A4

RPS officials fail to explain faulty, fluctuating graduation figures

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

There has been a sudden surge in the number of students graduating from Richmond Public Schools — and not just from Armstrong High School.

RPS officials this week are reporting that 963 seniors received their diplomas during recent graduation ceremonies from the city's nine high schools.

That's a 19 percent jump from the 810 students projected to graduate just a few weeks ago and a far rosier picture than what was released to the public in late May.

The new, but still incomplete, data on the Class of 2019 presented Monday night to the Richmond School Board suggests an "epic fail" in the ability of RPS Superintendent Jason Kamras and his cabinet to provide accurate information to the board, parents and the public on a basic yet key indicator of academic performance — earning a diploma.

In projections given to the School Board on May 20, RPS officials said only 810 seniors were on track to graduate this year. Officials said 280 seniors had failed to meet the requirements to graduate and were being told they must take one or more courses in summer school or return to class next school year in order to receive their diploma.

However, Monday night, RPS Chief Academic Officer Tracy Epp told the board no seniors are required to return to school next fall to complete requirements for graduation

— a huge change from the 118 she initially projected.

Dr. Epp did not say so, but essentially acknowledged the original estimates she presented to the School Board were bogus as she provided updated figures showing that 153 more students graduated than she first projected in May.

She also reported that only 92 seniors would need to attend summer school to complete diploma requirements, a drop of 70 students from the 162 students she



Dr. Epp



Mr. Kamras

originally reported.

Some examples of just how faulty the May 20 report was in misrepresenting RPS graduation numbers: Huguenot High awarded diplomas to 265 students, or 34 more than Dr. Epp initially projected; John Marshall High awarded 122 diplomas, or 24 more than first reported; and George Wythe awarded 145 diplomas or 18 more than Dr. Epp

Please turn to A4



Sandra Sellars/Richmond Free Press

The big reveal

Ahkar Jordan, 6, reacts to seeing how his face was painted by artist Kenita Wooten last Saturday during "Juneteenth: A Freedom Celebration" at Manchester Dock in South Side. The three-day festival featured a bevy of fun and educational events. Please see more photos, B2.



Aaron P. Bernstein/Reuters

Actor and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Danny Glover speaks during Wednesday's House Judiciary subcommittee hearing on reparations for slavery on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Lawmakers hear the case for reparations

Free Press wire report

WASHINGTON

The debate over reparations catapulted from the campaign trail to Congress on Wednesday as lawmakers heard impassioned testimony for and against the idea of providing compensation for America's history of slavery and racial discrimination.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, the sponsor of a resolution to study reparations, put a fine point on the discussion: "I just

simply ask: Why not and why not now?"

It was Congress' first hearing on reparations in more than a decade, and came amid a growing conversation both in the Democratic Party and the country at large about lingering racial disparities in the United States. Once considered a fringe topic mostly pushed aside in Congress, the possibility of reparations was treated with seriousness by the witnesses and lawmakers

Please turn to A4

Arthur Ashe Boulevard

Continued from A1

2nd District, who played a key role in getting the street renamed in Mr. Ashe's honor.

Ms. Gray, who is known to be miffed, declined comment, except to confirm that she had not been invited to speak.

Mayor Stoney, who appears to be gearing up for a re-election run next year, will be the most visible city official on the program even though his main role in the renaming was to support and co-patron the proposal that Ms. Gray introduced.

The Free Press confirmed that the mayor initially declined to get directly involved when David O. Harris Jr., a contractor and nephew of Mr. Ashe, met with the mayor about his plan to launch a new effort to change the Boulevard's name.

The mayor, who can introduce legislation, told Mr. Harris to work on the proposal with members of City Council, according to sources and documents.

Since Mr. Ashe's death, the council had twice rejected renaming the Boulevard for Mr. Ashe.

Ms. Gray, who is seen by some as a potential challenger to Mayor Stoney, took up the issue with Mr. Harris. She met with civic groups in the area, as well as with businesses and top officials at the major museums, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, which both were supportive.

She arranged for a public meeting to get comments and lobbied members of the council after learning that several had objections or wanted other roads to be considered, including the Downtown Expressway.

Ms. Gray persisted, despite a backlash from some residents

Ms. Gray said she went into the Feb. 11 City Council meeting unsure if the measure to rename the street would pass.

It did, on an 8-1 vote.

Now, despite all her work, Ms. Gray appears to be relegated to the audience.

Arthur Ashe celebration schedule

Thursday, June 20

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard Social Justice Forum**, 7 to 9 p.m., Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 Arthur Ashe Blvd. Program examines Mr. Ashe's legacy in social justice.

Friday, June 21

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard Tennis Under the Lights Event & Movies at the Park**, 6 to 9 p.m. Byrd Park Tennis Courts. Doubles tennis play for all on the courts, plus a showing of "The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part" at 8 p.m.

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard Kick-off Celebration & Bowling Party** — 7 p.m. to midnight, River City Roll, 939 Myers St. — Family bowling without charge, 7 to 9 p.m., and live music, 9 p.m. to midnight.

Saturday, June 22

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard Unveiling Ceremony**, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Virginia Museum of History & Culture, 428 Arthur Ashe Blvd.

• **Opening of exhibit "Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality,"** 12:30 to 5 p.m., Virginia Museum of History & Culture, free tour of new exhibition on the black experience in Virginia.

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard Community Celebration**, 1 to 5 p.m., Arthur Ashe Jr. Athletic Center, 3001 Arthur Ashe Blvd., community celebration with tennis clinics for youngsters and adults.

• **Town Hall Meeting**, "State of Black America" discussion hosted by Congressman A. Donald McEachin of Richmond, 2 p.m., Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Keynote speaker: U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Georgia. Panelists: Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, including chairwoman Rep. Karen Bass of California, Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott of Newport News, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, Rep. Barbara Lee of California and Rep. Steven Horsford of Nevada. Topics ranging from environmental justice to health care and housing to be covered.

• **Battery Park Salute to Mr. Ashe**, 1 to 5 p.m., Battery Park, Overbrook Road and Hawthorne Avenue, featuring tennis skill games, music and dedication of park tunnel murals featuring Mr. Ashe.

• **Arthur Ashe Boulevard After-Party**, 8 to 11 p.m., The Graduate Richmond, 301 W. Franklin St. No admission charge.

All events are free and open to the public.

RPS officials fail to explain faulty figures

Continued from A1

projected.

Dr. Epp also confirmed the Free Press report in the June 13-15 edition that 155 Armstrong High seniors received diplomas, or 47 more than first projected.

Increases in graduation numbers also were reported for Thomas Jefferson High and Richmond Alternative School.

The only initial graduation numbers that proved accurate were those for the three specialty high schools — Franklin Military Academy, Open High and Richmond Community High.

Dr. Epp offered no explanation to the board for the huge variance between the projections and the actual results.

She also didn't explain a change in the number of RPS seniors. Her May 20 report listed 1,092 seniors in the city's nine high schools. The new report listed 1,055 seniors.

The graduation numbers that Dr. Epp presented still represent an undercount of senior class graduates. The figures did not include graduating students who attended regional high schools, including Governor's Schools

or other programs, but who received RPS diplomas from their home high school.

Just as troubling, the numbers offer a cloudy and imprecise picture of the senior class that actually started out far larger four years ago. A look at state data on Huguenot's graduation numbers for 2017 and 2018 shows how limited Dr. Epp's information is.

In the 2016-17 school year, 270 Huguenot students completed high school out of the 357 who started ninth grade four years earlier in 2013.

In the 2017-18 school year, 281 Huguenot students completed high school out of the 417 who started ninth grade in 2014.

Put another way, 87 potential seniors had disappeared by the time the 2017 graduation ceremony was held, according to the state data, while 129 students who started out as ninth-graders in 2014 vanished by the time the 2018 graduation was held, with seven others still enrolled.

State data provide a similar picture of dwindling enrollment over the four years of high school in the city's four other comprehensive high schools as well as Richmond Alternative School.

However, RPS officials did not address

the Class of 2019's enrollment figures and examine what may have happened in the four years since the students were freshmen.

When School Board members sought more information Monday night about the Class of 2019, including information on dropouts, Dr. Epp declined to provide it. Mr. Kamras told the board to be patient. He said that a full report on the graduation, completion and dropouts would not be available until the Virginia Department of Education released its on-time graduation report in the fall.

The board members did not question Mr. Kamras' statement, even though RPS, like other school divisions, provides the information to the state that is used to create the graduation report.

Based on statements from Dr. Epp, RPS will have virtually complete data once students' final high school grades are entered into the computer system this month and enrollment for summer school, which started this week, is in hand. The summer school enrollment figures will show whether seniors needing to make up credits to graduate actually are taking classes.

Ashe celebration street closures and parking

Richmond Police issued the following traffic advisory for the Arthur Ashe Boulevard dedication ceremony and events:

Streets closing 9 a.m.

Saturday, June 22, reopening at 2 p.m.

- Kensington Avenue between Sheppard and Mulberry streets
- North Arthur Ashe Boulevard (both sides) between Patterson and Hanover avenues
- Colonial Avenue between Kensington and Patterson avenues
- Stuart Avenue between Arthur Ashe Boulevard and Mulberry Street
- Hanover Avenue between Arthur Ashe Boulevard and Mulberry Street

No Parking zones 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, June 22

Arthur Ashe Boulevard locations

- 400 block of North Arthur Ashe Boulevard (both sides) between Kensington and Stuart avenues
- 500 block of North Arthur Ashe Boulevard (west side only) between Patterson and Kensington avenues
- 2800-2900 block of Kensington Avenue (both sides) between North Arthur Ashe Boulevard and Sheppard Street

No Parking zones 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, June 22

Battery Park locations

- 2500 block of The Terrace (both sides) between Overbrook and Lancaster roads
- 2500 block of Montrose Avenue (both sides) between The Terrace and Lancaster Road
- 400 block of West Lancaster Road (both sides) between The Terrace and Montrose Avenue

Arthur Ashe Monument locations

- 900 block of Roseneath Road (west side only) between Monument and Wythe avenues

Ambition, urgency at Democrats' gala

Continued from A1

of Henrico County, Robert C. "Bobby" Scott of Newport News and Gerry Connolly of Fairfax County; former Gov. Terry McAuliffe; Richmond Mayor Levar M. Stoney; state Sen. Jennifer L. McClellan of Richmond; and leaders of the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate Democratic caucuses.

Broadcast nationwide on C-SPAN, the gala sold out on June 1, with more than \$425,000 raised, according to party officials. The crowd of 1,800 at the gala was nearly double the attendance in 2016, when the sponsoring Democratic Party of Virginia was working to fire up voters for that year's presidential election.

This success comes at a crucial point for the Democratic Party in Virginia, which is hoping to win control from Republicans of the General Assembly in November, when all 140 seats in the House and Senate will be up for grabs in the Nov. 5 general election.

It comes during a time of unease following revelations earlier this year that swept the state's top three office holders — all Democrats — into a backlash of controversy.

The imbroglio threatened to destroy the political career of Gov. Ralph S. Northam, whose 1984 medical school yearbook page contained a racist photo of a person in blackface and another in full Ku Klux Klan regalia; Lt. Gov. Justin E. Fairfax, who is battling sexual assault allegations levied by two women from 2000 and 2004; and Attorney General Mark R. Herring's admission that he wore blackface for a college party in 1980.

While all three were noticeably absent from the gala stage, Mr. Herring, who came to the gala as a guest, was an active presence at the event from the start, greeting guests as they entered

The promise of Democratic control of the General Assembly and the governor's office for the first time since 1993 was one of the common themes sounded by speakers Saturday

night. They also talked about the need for "common-sense gun safety legislation," raising the minimum wage, voting rights, climate change, criminal justice reform, LGBTQ rights and women's health care rights.

Speakers also touched on attempts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the mass shooting at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center on May 31 and the recent spate of curbs on abortion passed in states including Georgia, Alabama and Missouri. They also stressed the need to connect more with the public and Democratic voter base, and encouraged audience members to go out and show and build support for the party's platform for upcoming elections.

"You cannot be on the bench. You cannot sit on the sideline. We need all of you in the game, doing what needs to get done, in order for us to take the majority in 2019," said Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy of Prince William County.

While Sen. Klobuchar and Mr. Buttigieg echoed much of what other speakers said, they also outlined broader, more ambitious visions for the nation.

Sen. Klobuchar advocated for universal health care, against corporate influence in politics and stressed the need for racial justice and gender equality in America.

"Shared prosperity means tearing down barriers to success. These are barriers that this president does not care about. But these are barriers the Democratic Party will break down," Sen. Klobuchar said.

Speaking after Sen. Klobuchar, Mr. Buttigieg linked his support for gun safety and climate science with better protection of information and technology infrastructure and improved security in general.

He contrasted his position with the border protection policy of the Trump Administration that has left migrant families separated, in grueling states of confinement and several of the detained dead. He called for a more compassionate mindset towards immigration, marrying it to a viewpoint of

faith and tolerance.

"It is worth reflecting that pretty much every faith tradition we know of (tells) us to support the marginalized, to heal the sick, to lift up the poor, to welcome the immigrant and to do it with humility and decency" Mr. Buttigieg said.

While Mr. Buttigieg and Sen. Klobuchar earned big cheers, there was an unmistakable undercurrent of urgency in the many speeches warning of the social, economic and ecological costs of allowing Republicans to continue to shape the future of Virginia, America and the world. Many of the speakers

talked about their exhaustion with a status quo that repeatedly sees their legislative bills fail due to gridlock and lack of legislative authority despite greater public support. And they warned against going into future elections assuming their victories are assured because of their opponents' unpopularity.

"The riskiest thing we could do is try to play it safe. We have to show that we understand that there's no going back to normal, but the chaos of this moment makes us no better off, and our vision is a better vision for the future of America," Mr. Buttigieg said.

Lawmakers hear the case for reparations

Continued from A1

alike, although Republicans made clear their opposition.

One of the most striking moments came as writer Ta-Nehisi Coates, author of a widely read 2014 essay making the case for reparations, challenged Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's assertion that no one alive today is responsible for the past treatment of black Americans.

"It's impossible to imagine America without the inheritance of slavery," Mr. Coates told the House Judiciary panel.

"For a century after the Civil War, black people were subjected to a relentless campaign of terror," Mr. Coates said. "Victims of that plunder are very much alive today. I am sure they'd love a word with the majority leader."

Sen. McConnell, R-Ky., said Tuesday he doesn't think "reparations for something that happened 150 years ago, for whom none of us currently living are responsible, is a good idea."

Wednesday's hearing coincided with Juneteenth, a cultural holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States, and it attracted a crowd. More than a hundred people were lined up to try and get a seat in the hearing room. Those inside frequently reacted to testimony and comments from members of Congress with cheers and boos.

At one point, an audience member shouted, "You lie!" at Texas Republican Rep. Louie Gohmert when he urged that Americans know their history and "not punish people today for the sins of their predecessors in the Democratic Party."

Mr. Coates was among eight witnesses who testified for more than three hours on the topic of House Resolution 40, aimed

at creating a commission to study reparations. Actor and activist Danny Glover, a longtime advocate of reparations, urged passage of the resolution.

"A national reparations policy is a moral, democratic and economic imperative," said Mr. Glover, noting that his great-grandmother was a former slave he met as a young boy. "This hearing is yet another important step in the long and historic struggle of African-Americans to secure reparations for the damage that has been inflicted by slavery and Jim Crow."

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., a presidential contender, testified that the United States has "yet to truly acknowledge and grapple with the racism and white supremacy that tainted this country's founding and continues to cause persistent and deep racial disparities and inequality."

But another witness, Coleman Hughes, who at times testified over boos from the audience, said black people don't need "another apology," but safer neighborhoods, better schools, a less punitive criminal justice system and better health care.

"None of these things can be achieved through reparations for slavery," said Mr. Hughes, a writer and student at Columbia University who said he is the descendant of enslaved people at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello.

The Democratic legislation, which would set up a bipartisan commission to study the issue, spotlights a national conversation over the legacy of slavery. Several of the political party's presidential candidates have endorsed looking at the idea, although they have stopped short of endorsing direct payouts for African-Americans.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., on Wednesday called reparations

a "serious issue" and said he expects the resolution will see a vote in the House.

While the issue of reparations has been moving toward the mainstream of the Democratic Party, the idea remains far from wide acceptance. And the panelists themselves, mostly black, differed on what reparations should look like and who should benefit from them.

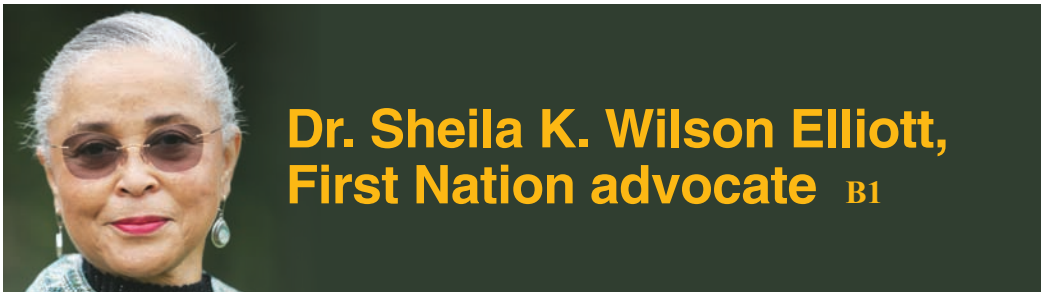
In a Point Taken-Marist poll conducted in 2016, 68 percent of Americans said the country should not pay cash reparations to African-American descendants of slaves to make up for the harm caused by slavery and racial discrimination. About 8 in 10 white Americans said they were opposed to reparations, while about 6 in 10 black Americans said they were in favor.

Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the top Republican on the panel, said he respects the beliefs of those who support reparations. He called America's history with slavery "regrettable and shameful."

But he said paying monetary reparations for the "sins of a small subset of Americans from many generations ago" would be unfair, difficult to carry out in practice and, in his view, likely unconstitutional.

The Republican witnesses for the hearing were Mr. Hughes and Burgess Owens, a former Oakland Raiders football player and Super Bowl champion, who recently wrote a Wall Street Journal editorial eschewing reparations.

The debate over reparations for black Americans began not long after the end of the Civil War. A resolution to study the issue was first proposed in 1989 by Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, who put it forward year after year until his retirement in 2017. His portrait hangs in the room where the hearing was held.



Dr. Sheila K. Wilson Elliott, First Nation advocate B1



Exonerated Five member stresses importance of knowing your rights A7

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City Council members angered by their colleagues' action on Coliseum replacement proposal

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

The divisions among City Council members over the Coliseum replacement plan appear to be hardening.

In a move reflecting that division, five members of City Council quietly decided to host public meetings to go over the details of the proposal to replace the Richmond Coliseum — without letting the four others participate in that decision.

The first of the nine meetings — all open to the public — is set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23, on the second floor of City Hall, according to a schedule 5th District Councilman Parker C. Agelasto released on Facebook.

The majority, led by Council President Cynthia I. Newbille, 7th District, made the decision Sept. 16 without informing the four other members who were out of the room and apparently unaware that the idea was being considered.

Before the decision, the nine members had moved into closed session on a separate matter in a separate room. When that ended, four of the members continued talking as the others resumed the public meeting, making no effort to get their colleagues to return.

Approval of the series of

Growing rift



public meetings came during the council's informal session that is held before the regular, publicly televised meeting. No mention was made of the meetings on Navy Hill's Coliseum replacement proposal during the regular session.

The council members left out of the decision were Council Vice President Chris A. Hilbert, 3rd District; Kim B. Gray, 2nd District; Kristen N. Larson, 4th District; and Reva M. Trammell, 8th District.

They were left fuming about the lack of courtesy by Dr. Newbille and the majority comprised of council members Andreas D. Addison, 1st District; Parker C. Agelasto, 5th District; Ellen F. Robertson, 6th District; and Michael J. Jones, 9th District.

The four are considered, at this point, likely opponents of the Coliseum replacement project. The proposal would require a super-majority of seven members to allow the sale of city property to make the project happen.

The decision to hold the series of public meetings through Dec. 9 came as the council also began advertising for an independent consultant to review the plan that could cost taxpayers \$600 million

Please turn to A4



Ms. Cuffee-Glenn

She's out

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

The No. 2 official at City Hall has lost her job.

Mayor Levar M. Stoney on Wednesday fired Selena Cuffee-Glenn, the city's chief administrative officer.

Please turn to A4

Race question muted, but not eliminated on marriage license application

By George Copeland Jr.

Virginia couples preparing for their wedding day no longer have to identify their race on their application for a marriage license, according to an opinion issued by Virginia Attorney General Mark R. Herring.

A revised state form for the licenses makes the formerly mandatory question one couples can opt out of answering.

"The statute plainly requires a question about race be asked," Mr. Herring wrote in a Sept. 13 memorandum to Janet Rainey, director and state registrar of the Virginia Division of Vital Records.

"But no provision of the statute expressly requires the couple to identify their race or says what happens if they decline to do so."

He said local circuit court clerks should



Mr. Herring

issue a marriage license regardless of whether an applicant answers the race question.

"Any statute requiring a governmental official to deny a marriage license to an applicant who declines to provide information about his or her race would raise serious constitutional questions," he wrote.

The state Division of Vital Records has revised the application so couples know they do not have to answer the question.

Three couples seeking marriage licenses in Arlington and Rockbridge County launched a federal lawsuit against circuit court clerks and Ms. Rainey on Sep. 5, objecting to the race requirement for a

Virginia marriage license, as well as the usage of "unscientific, highly controversial, misleading, useless and tainted categories," according to the suit.

"Fifty-two years after the Supreme Court struck down laws preventing the marriage of white and non-white persons," the lawsuit stated, "the Commonwealth of Virginia continues to require its residents, including plaintiffs, affirmatively to label themselves, against their will, according to categories rooted in a malignant statutory scheme working to the detriment of non-white persons."

Rockbridge County provided a couple that questioned the requirement with a list of more than 200 potential races that included "American," "Aryan," "Moor" and "Mulatto," according to the lawsuit.

Please turn to A4

4 city schools to get new names

By Ronald E. Carrington

The Richmond School Board has embraced renaming four city schools and approved, on an 8-1 vote Monday night, a process to make it happen.

The schools to get a new name by the end of the year are George Mason Elementary School in Church Hill, E.S.H. Greene Elementary School in South Side, Amelia Street School in the West End and the new middle school under construction in South Side.

The renaming plan was advanced by Superintendent Jason Kamras.

"At the end of the day ... changing a name is but a symbol. But symbols matter, especially today when so many Americans of so many backgrounds feel increasingly under attack," he said.

In June 2018, the School Board voted to rename J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School in North Side, which was named to honor the Confederate general, to Barack Obama Elementary School. New signs and logos were in place when the Fendall Avenue school opened that fall for the 2018-19 academic year.

New George Mason and Greene elementary schools also are under construction and are scheduled to open in the fall of 2020.

"What is absolutely necessary is to have these (new) school names by the end of the calendar year in order to have signage ready for the 2020 fall opening," Mr. Kamras told the board.

However it is George Mason's tie to slavery that is

Please turn to A4

Broken promises end legacy at 17th Street Farmers' Market



Regina H. Boone/Richmond Free Press

Sisters Evelyn Luceal Allen, left, and Rosa L. Fleming have been coming to the 17th Street Farmers' Market since they were youngsters. For more than 75 years, they have helped family members sell produce grown on the family farm in Hanover before they took over decades ago.

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

They have been fixtures at the 17th Street Farmers' Market in Shockoe Bottom for decades, just like their parents and grandparents before them.

Now, sisters Evelyn Luceal Allen, 84, and Rosa L. Fleming, 80, have closed their stand beside the market from which they daily sold greens, tomatoes, watermelons, potatoes and other produce grown on their land in Hanover County.

It's a big change for the market where they showed up seven days a week, winter as well as summer, to sell.

According to the sisters, a trail of broken City Hall promises and a disastrous makeover of the historic market have driven away even steady customers, leaving the sisters mostly whiling away eight hours daily without a sale.

After four years of trying to hang on, the sisters closed for the last time on Sunday at the stand at Franklin and 17th streets, just outside the market. They had been consigned to the space since

Please turn to A4



Sandra Sellars/Richmond Free Press

We won!

The Aryee siblings — from left, Caleb, 9; Othneil, 12; and Zari, 9 — celebrate after learning they won a bicycle in a raffle at the 6th Annual Brookland Park Community Celebration last Saturday in North Side. The event, sponsored by the Historic Brookland Park Collective, featured food, music and fellowship along West Brookland Park Boulevard that was closed to traffic. The youngsters used the no traffic zone to happily and freely road test their new bike.

Selena Cuffee-Glenn fired

Continued from A1

Her ouster followed the release of an internal inspector general's report alleging that Ms. Cuffee-Glenn had been involved in the city's hiring of at least one of her extended family members.

In a statement issued at 6:57 p.m., Mayor Stoney said he was "both concerned and deeply disappointed" by the findings of the inspector general.

He said "the conduct detailed in this report erodes the public trust, violates the spirit of good government and has diminished my confidence in the CAO to continue to serve in her role."

He said the city "has separated the CAO from employment" and that he appointed Lenora Reid, currently the city's chief financial officer, as interim CAO.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn was named CAO in April 2015 and con-

tinued after Mayor Stoney took office in January 2017.

Mayor Stoney stated that after learning in May that a relative of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn had gained employment with the City of Richmond, he said he went to the inspector general, then Lou Lassiter, who also is the city auditor, and "pledged my administration would fully cooperate in a review of the circumstances of the hiring and compensation."

The mayor was briefed about the report earlier this week by current inspector general James Osuna.

Along with her husband, Keith Glenn, who serves as a Richmond sheriff's deputy, the report disclosed that other family members on the city payroll include Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's daughter, a sister's child, two second cousins and the spouse of one of the second cousins.

The report turned up evidence that Ms. Cuffee-Glenn had aided in the hiring of the second cousin's spouse.



Mr. Kamras



Mr. Young

4 city schools to get new names

Continued from A1

prompting the new name. George Mason was the main author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 that proclaimed the inherent rights of men and later served as the basis for the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights, but he owned enslaved Africans.

"... (T)his disqualifies him (Mason) from the honor of having one of our schools named after him," Mr. Kamras stated in his weekly newsletter.

Greene Elementary and Thompson Middle, both former Chesterfield County schools, were named for Chesterfield educators or administrators.

Thompson was combined with Elkhardt Middle School four years ago. The new middle school, to replace Elkhardt-Thompson, is being constructed on the former Elkhardt site on Hull Street Road.

Amelia Street School adopted Thirteen Acres School earlier this year, and the school division is looking for a new name for the combined school.

The only School Board member to vote against the renaming plan was 4th District representative Jonathan Young.

During an interview Tuesday, Mr. Young expressed disappointment in his colleagues for not having an honest, candid conversation about reconciling the use of the names of the country's founding fathers but were hypocritical in their personal lives.

"It is hard to reconcile these men's original sin — slavery — all of these years later," Mr. Young said. "That is still part of who we are, especially Richmond, the (former) capital of the Confederacy."

But Mr. Kamras has a contrasting point of view.

"... (T)hose who argue that we're erasing history by changing a school name, I respectfully disagree," he wrote in his weekly newsletter. "School names are different from history textbooks. They're special honors that should inspire — not alienate — our students."

In outlining the renaming process, Shadae Harris, RPS chief engagement officer, said a "renaming team" will be selected for each of the four schools. Each team, to be comprised of students, family members, teachers, support staff, community stakeholders, a School Board member and administration representative, will be charged with reviewing names submitted by the public and selecting three names to submit to the RPS administration for consideration.

Renaming team members will attend community meetings and School Board public hearings in reviewing the names.

The public also can submit possible names through an online portal on the RPS website. All submissions will be posted on the RPS website.

The School Board scheduled two public hearings that will be live streamed on the RPS website. They will be held at 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 4, and Monday, Nov. 14, at City Hall, 17th floor.

The board is scheduled to vote on four new names at its Dec. 2 meeting.

Race question not eliminated on marriage license application

Continued from A1

"Anything that sets up the potential to lead to discrimination is probably not a good thing," said Edward F. Jewett, clerk of the Richmond Circuit Court Clerk, who learned of the revision last Friday.

The statute mandating the race question on marriage licenses was briefly removed in 2003 by the General Assembly, only to be reinstated two years later. Mr. Jewett noted that in both instances, the decisions were near unanimous, with legislators pointing to the "important statistical information" such information provided.

While the revised form allows couples to select "declined to answer" when selecting their race, it doesn't remove the question. Because of this, the couples are continuing their lawsuit in hopes of having the statute removed from Virginia law entirely.

Mr. Jewett noted that federal judges may rule the lawsuit is without merit because couples no longer have to answer the question. He further speculated that state lawmakers may beat the couples to the punch, adding, "I expect that it will be addressed in the General Assembly and maybe the question will disappear in the spring."

City Council members angered by their colleagues' action on Coliseum proposal

Continued from A1

over 30 years.

Council also is poised to appoint the final seven members of an advisory commission it created to review the Coliseum replacement proposal that could be accompanied by more than \$900 million in private investment in apartments, offices and retail operations on mostly city-owned property near City Hall.

The project, embraced by Mayor Levar M. Stoney, is the brainchild of the Navy Hill District Corp., which is led by the top executive at Dominion Energy, Thomas F. Farrell II. The development company and project are named after the African-American neighborhood that once occupied the area from the Coliseum to City Hall.

The decision to have the lengthy briefings from the administration has disappointed Ms. Gray, who believes Dr. Newbille and her council allies have another motivation.

"It appears that they are trying to undermine the (council) commission before it is even seated," Ms. Gray said.

She expressed concern that the five council members also approved increasing the amount allocated from the council's budget to hire an independent consultant from \$50,000 to \$190,000. That decision also took place during Monday's informal council session while the four members were out of the room. Ms. Gray said she learned about it when a council staff member casually mentioned it.

Ms. Gray said she would not attend the briefings and, in

an email she sent Monday to Dr. Newbille and other council members, urged the council president to "delay moving forward with this series of special meetings."

Ms. Gray asked for the delay "until it can be determined how much in additional council expenditures will be incurred" by tying up city staff for the extended meetings on the project and "until greater public participation can be encouraged."

In her email, Ms. Gray noted that all of the sessions on Navy Hill are to be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a time that she stated "is not conducive to public participation. The interests of transparency and accountability are not served when many citizens cannot take the time during the workday to attend the meetings."

Ms. Gray noted that "skepticism about the merits of the Navy Hill proposal will only be reinforced if it is believed that public opinion is not valued."

She also objected to Dr. Newbille's decision to move ahead on a motion to boost council spending for a consultant without all nine members weighing in.

"The public has a reasonable expectation that its duly elected representatives will have an opportunity to participate in all decisions" related to Navy Hill, Ms. Gray wrote. "Further, all taxpayers expect that significant increases in council expenditures should not be incurred without due consideration from each council member. To allow otherwise constitutes a breach of faith with those who elected us."

Dr. Newbille has not responded to a Free Press request for comment.

Broken promises end legacy at 17th Street Farmers' Market

Continued from A1

the city began in 2015 and went into full swing two years ago to overhaul the public marketplace that has been around for more than 280 years.

The result of the \$3.6 million taxpayer investment at the farmers' market: A large, vacant and unattractive concrete slab stretching from Main to Franklin streets, a far cry from the tree-shaded European-style plaza the city said it would create for events and other people-attracting programs that also were to benefit the adjacent restaurants.

"We haven't made any money since they started," said Ms. Fleming, who, like her sister started stocking and selling as children at the family stand in Shockoe Bottom and at the once thriving but long defunct 6th Street Farmers' Market.

"We've had to borrow money to keep going," Ms. Fleming said. "We kept getting promised that things would change, but nothing has happened. No one followed through. We just can't keep waiting for the city to keep its word. It's just not right what they've done."

"If we were white, they wouldn't have treated us this way," Ms. Fleming said. "That's how I feel."

As they closed up, the sisters submitted a letter to Leonard Sledge, city director of economic and community development, the department that oversaw the makeover. They demanded the city pay them \$36,000 each "to make this situation right."

For at least the past two years, as documented in email exchanges between an advocate for the sisters and city officials, Mayor Levar M. Stoney's administration kept promising to install new stands inside the market for the "legacy vendors," the two sisters and Timothy Christian, a fifth generation fruit and vegetable vendor who continues to operate on Main Street with hopes that customers might return.

City officials, including city architect Jeannie Welliver, who led the makeover project, have shown the legacy vendors various renderings of different kinds of stands the city was considering. But the space for the stands remains vacant, even after Mayor Stoney removed Enrichmond Foundation, a city-created nonprofit, from managing the market and put the City Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities in charge on July 1.

The only evidence of the city's commitment to provide new stands appears to be three large sheds now stored in a recreation department parking lot at 1209 Admiral St. in North Side.

In a statement Wednesday by parks department spokesperson Tamara Jenkins, the sisters' departure was described as "unfortunate."

"The City desires that they return and continue to operate at the market. We continue to work on the long-range solu-

tion that we have been in discussion with them on" that involves the providing them with a suitable vending cart with storage space, Ms. Jenkins stated.

According to Richard Tatnall, a community organizer who has been the foremost advocate for the sisters, the final straw for the sisters was an Aug. 27 meeting with Mr. Sledge.

According to Mr. Tatnall and the sisters, Mr. Sledge again made promises about the city's commitment to them, but then abruptly cut off further communication after the meeting and didn't respond to follow-up emails that included questions.

Mr. Sledge stated that he had provided written responses to the questions and also added that he, too, wants the sisters to return as the city continues to work with them on a long-range solution. Neither he nor DPRCF indicated a timeline for making the solution happen.

Ms. Fleming and Ms. Allen's departure ends a family selling dynasty that stretches back to at least the 1890s, when their grandfather, Thomas Carter Sr. and his wife, Lelia, began selling produce grown on their Hanover County land and elsewhere at the city's farmers' markets.

The sisters' parents, Thomas E. and Inell Carter, continued the practice and also worked for other county farms with their 15 children, including the two sisters, as well as a wave of 67 foster children whom the family cared for through the years, Ms. Fleming said.

"People who hired us knew the work would get done as promised," she said.

The family had stands at other locations, as have the sisters. Ms. Fleming said that she and her sister have sold produce and other items at the once popular Boulevard. For 60 years, she spent at least one day a week at Malvern Avenue and Cary Street, and she's considering returning there. Christmas wreaths were her most popular item there.

But the sisters have mostly spent their time at the 17th Street Farmers' Market. In addition to selling produce, the sisters also helped keep the place tidy. Ms. Fleming said they picked up litter and dog poop the city wouldn't clear away so customers would not get disgusted.

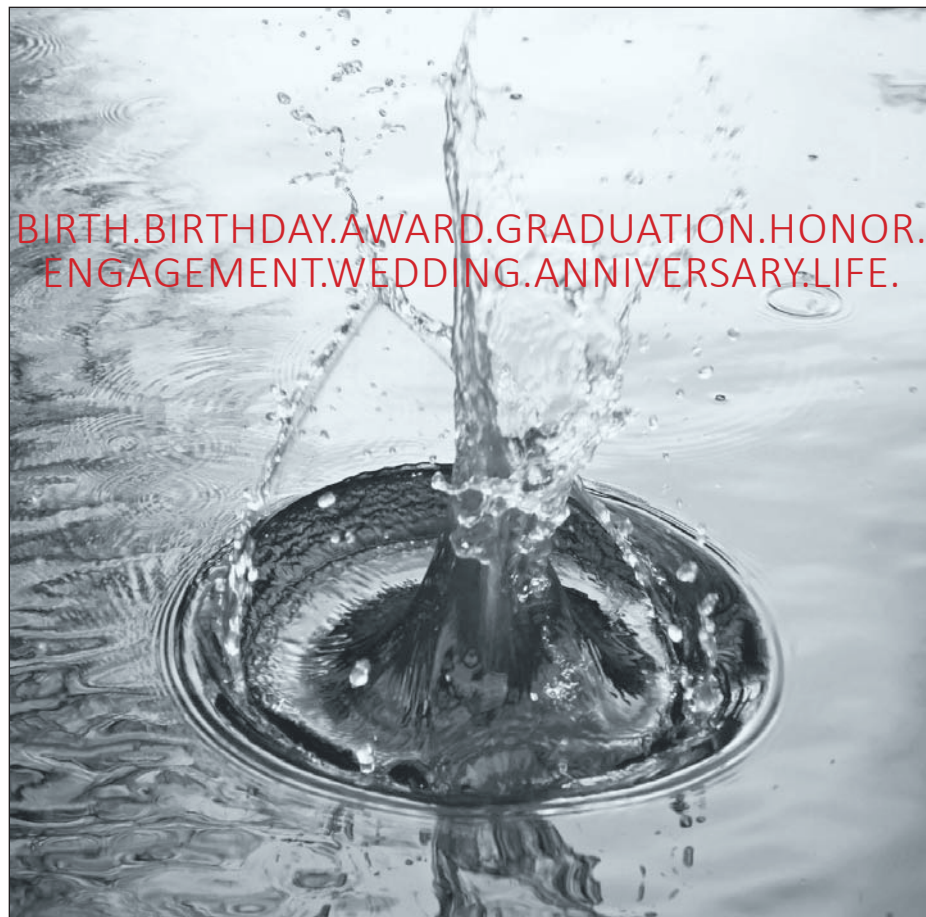
"It was the city's job, but we did it to keep the place looking nice," she said.

They also mothered the homeless who ended up sleeping in Shockoe Bottom, providing them with sandwiches, beverages and caring conversation.

While they work with Mr. Tatnall to press their claim for the \$72,000, Ms. Fleming said she and her sister plan to return to the market at least two days a week to visit with their "family," the many people they know, including a bread delivery driver who has been part of their feeding operation for years.

She said she and her sister also plan to distribute beverages and food to their homeless friends, and also could distribute the unsold produce that is still at Ms. Allen's farm.

"We won't be selling, but we want to come back to see people we know," she said. "We don't want to give up doing that."



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Billy Porter wins B2



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Family matters

Inspector general's report details how 5 relatives of former CAO Selena Cuffee-Glenn were hired, but finds no evidence she was involved directly in their hiring

By **Jeremy M. Lazarus**

Lenora Reid is officially in charge of Richmond city government — for now.

City Council voted 9-0 on Monday to confirm Mayor Levar M. Stoney's request that Ms. Reid, the city's chief financial officer, serve as interim chief administrative officer in the wake of her predecessor being fired because of nepotism.

Mayor Stoney fired CAO Selena Cuffee-Glenn on Sept. 18 following the release of an internal inspector general's report that found five of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's relatives, including her



Ms. Cuffee-Glenn

daughter, were on the payroll of departments reporting to her, a potential violation of city policy.

The mayor secured the unanimous vote backing Ms. Reid as a replacement despite earlier grousing from City Council about Ms. Reid's direct role in approving the hiring of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's daughter for a provisional job in the Department of Public Utilities at a 25 percent higher wage than most others in the same administrative support position make across city government.

Please turn to A4



Ms. Reid

VUU brings academic 'signing day' to Huguenot

By **Ronald E. Carrington**

Tuesday was a red-letter day for nine Huguenot High School ninth-graders.

The stage in a school assembly hall was set with red and white balloons and logos for Richmond Public Schools and Virginia Union University.

In a matter of moments, the nine students — five girls and four boys — would learn they were being awarded a full, four-year scholarship to VUU.

The surprise announcement was made by RPS Superintendent Jason Kamras along with Maurice Campbell, VUU's senior vice president of corporate and external affairs, and Mike Newsome, president of the VUU National Alumni Association.

The students, who were brought to the stage for the announcement, showed visible shock and excitement.

"My parents are going to be proud because I put in the hard work last summer writing three essays required to apply for the award," 14-year-old scholarship winner Mekhi Reavis

Please turn to A4



Ronald E. Carrington/Richmond Free Press

Ninth-graders at Huguenot High School are honored with four-year scholarships to Virginia Union University on Tuesday during a surprise ceremony with officials at the South Side school. Award winners and the officials are, from left, Maurice Campbell, VUU's senior vice president of corporate and external affairs; Richmond Public Schools Superintendent Jason Kamras; April Leveron; Ashley Duron; Asia Dudley; Huguenot Principal Robert J. Gilstrap; Demarc Oliver; Ingrid Reyes Rodas; Jordan Braxton; Mekhi Reavis; Shayla Saravia; and Mike Newsome, president of the VUU National Alumni Association. Award winner Justin Pair is not pictured.



Regina H. Boone/Richmond Free Press

Making a new friend

Kaya Wagner of Varina gives Pickles, the French bulldog, a friendly back scratch last Saturday at the Richmond Dog Festival in Chimborazo Park. The event, hosted by Enrichmond, was to generate donations to go to Friends of Chimborazo Park to help clean and maintain the dog park in Church Hill.

Lewis family relocates to new home

By **Jeremy M. Lazarus**

Celieta L. and Janice F. Lewis have finally found a place to call home.

The sisters, who have been living out of their vehicle since a mid-August kitchen fire left them homeless, signed a lease on Saturday and are preparing to move into a three-bedroom rental home on Red Oak Lane in South Side.

"We still have to wait until after Oct. 3 so we can move in," Celieta Lewis said Monday. "But at least we are moving closer to ending this ordeal."

Ms. Lewis is 63. Her sister, Janice, is 65. They also care for two grown grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

She said that her sister's grandson has friends who are ready to help move the furniture, appliances, clothing and other items from their former home on Flynn Road to their new home.

The Free Press spotlighted the plight of the Lewis family

Please turn to A4

Justice Center brings technology to inmates

By **Jeremy M. Lazarus**

Computer tablets are making it easier for families and inmates at the Richmond Justice Center to stay connected.

Inmates now can have video calls with spouses, children and others on their visitation list.

They also can take educational courses online, arrange medical appointments, file grievances and handle other internal communication with jail staff using a tablet available in their cellblock or pod — eliminating paper messages that could get lost.

"This has been great," said inmate Oro D. Louis, 40, who has two years to serve at the jail.

Currently, he is taking a course in micro-economics and looks forward to studying other online courses offered through the nonprofit Khan Academy, whose mission is to provide "a free education for anyone, anywhere."

Sheriff Antionette V. Irving, who previously added an online inmate search function for the public to use, introduced



Photos by Daryl D. Tyler/Richmond Sheriff's Office

Cpl. J. Barnes pulls one of the tablets from a charging station, also called a "pizza oven." Another tablet, right, sits in a docking station in a pod or cellblock at the Richmond Justice Center. Every inmate is assigned a user name and PIN to use the tablets.

the tablets in July as the latest technology innovation at the jail.

Since then, every inmate processed at the jail has been provided a unique user

Please turn to A4

City Council empanels Coliseum commission — with VUU president

By **Jeremy M. Lazarus**

The final seven members of a City Council commission to review the \$1.5 billion Coliseum replacement proposal have been seated — starting a 90-day clock for them to review the plan.

A divided governing body voted 5-4 Monday night to include Virginia Union University President Hakim J. Lucas on the commission, handing a victory to Mayor Levar M. Stoney and other supporters of the project.

Dr. Lucas is a publicly declared advocate of the Downtown project, despite City Council's initial desire to empanel an

impartial commission.

Dr. Lucas signed his name to an opinion piece published in December in Richmond's daily newspaper praising the massive development plan that calls for private development of apartments, offices and retail shops near City Hall to accompany construction of a new, larger \$225 million Coliseum for which taxpayers would foot the bill.

Before the vote, Dr. Lucas sent a letter to City Council members, assuring them he could put aside his bias and fairly review the project with the other members



Dr. Lucas

Please turn to A4

Inspector general's report details how 5 relatives of former CAO Selena Cuffee-Glenn were hired, but finds no evidence she was involved directly in their hiring

Continued from A1

Ahead of the meeting, Councilwoman Reva M. Trammell, 8th District, described the appointment of Ms. Reid as the equivalent of "hiring the fox to guard the hen house."

Others expressed concern that Ms. Reid commutes from Williamsburg daily and never feels the impact of decisions concerning Richmond residents.

Still, the council felt constrained to avoid further upheaval in city government.

That appears to be the case with the mayor. Along with promoting Ms. Reid, the mayor has shown no interest in removing two department heads, Director of Public Works Bobby Vincent and Director of Public Utilities Calvin Farr, who also were implicated in the inspector general's report in the hiring of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's relatives.

All five of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's relatives still work for the City of Richmond.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn denied doing anything unethical, and called the report "mere conjecture without foundation or basis."

Ms. Reid is a close associate of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn. When Ms. Cuffee-Glenn served as Suffolk's city manager before coming to Richmond in 2015, Ms. Reid was her top finance official.

After Mayor Dwight C. Jones named Ms. Cuffee-Glenn as CAO in Richmond, she quickly brought in Ms. Reid to take over the city's finance operations, which were in apparent disarray at the time. Ms. Reid, considered a no-nonsense official who has admirers and detractors among the rank and file, created a new leadership team, filled vacancies and is credited with getting financial operations back on track, although it took her and her staff three years to complete the audit on time.

The departure of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn comes at a busy time. Ms. Reid and her staff were in the process of completing the critical annual audit for the 2019 fiscal year that ended June 30 and were beginning to focus on preparation of the next budget that will be presented to City Council in March.

According to the inspector general's report, the city payroll includes Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's daughter, a niece, two second cousins and the spouse of one of the cousins.

Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's husband, a deputy with the Richmond Sheriff's Office, also receives a city check, but that office is independent and the office's employees do not fall under the CAO's authority.

Based on the City Code, the current nepotism rule does not cover second cousins.

According to the report, Ms. Reid, who also has denied violating any legal requirements, overruled the staff in the Human Resources Office and approved an hourly pay of \$26.44 for Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's daughter for the support position in which the average pay is \$20.86.

Mr. Farr insisted on the higher pay, the report stated, after telling Ms. Reid, who was then in charge of the Human Resources Department, that the applicant was Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's daughter. Mr. Farr later stated that Mr. Vincent had specified the pay level when Mr. Vincent sent him the daughter's résumé,

the report notes.

The inspector general did not find any evidence that Ms. Cuffee-Glenn was involved in the hiring, only that supervisors with hiring authority "felt obligated" to approve the higher salary because they knew she was the daughter of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn and not because of any special competency.

The report also found suspect hiring in the case of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's niece whom Mr. Farr hired as a provisional program manager at an annual salary of \$70,000.

During an interview with the inspector general, the niece said that Mr. Farr approached her in November 2018 while she worked at a clothing retail store to praise the customer service she provided to Mr. Farr's wife. She said he asked her to apply for a position, which she did. However, according to the niece's job application and résumé, she had not worked at the store since 2016.

According to the report, Ms. Reid also was aware that a second cousin was to be hired in the Finance Department and

spoke with him about his experience and willingness to work hard. However, the report did not indicate evidence of any communication between Ms. Reid and Ms. Cuffee-Glenn concerning that hire.

The report noted that two of Ms. Cuffee-Glenn's relatives have been hired to permanent positions, while Ms. Reid approved on July 10 an extension of the provisional appointments for three others.

Based on his investigation, Inspector General James Osuna found that departments are not following the city's personnel rules regarding the employment of provisional employees and recommended that "this process be reviewed" to ensure consistent application.

According to the rules Mr. Osuna cited, a department is entitled to hire a provisional employee temporarily only when there is no eligible list of potential applicants and/or to fill an essential position when the person holding that position is on extended leave.

VUU brings academic 'signing day' to Huguenot students

Continued from A1

said after the ceremony.

He said he felt good because his family will not have to pay for his college education.

Thanks to a partnership established between VUU and RPS in November 2018, 50 students in Richmond schools will receive a full ride for higher education.

The nine honored at Huguenot were just the first winners to be announced this year. All applied at the end of eighth grade by submitting essays by mid-June on topics they selected.

Those chosen must maintain their grades, graduate from high school and meet the minimum requirements to attend VUU. The private HBCU will assign each student a mentor to help them throughout

high school.

"This will give 50 (students) who applied an opportunity to go to Union for free — absolutely free," Mr. Kamras said. "This is a feeling of relief for the students and their families knowing college is paid."

"I am very excited that they will get to know Union through mentorships, campus visits, meeting professors as well as the students," he continued. "This will assist them in becoming leaders on campus."

The high cost of a college education is a major barrier that keeps many young people from attending. VUU wanted to use the program to change that and provide opportunity to RPS students who otherwise may not consider higher education.

The annual cost to attend VUU currently is about \$27,000, putting the scholarships' value around \$108,000.

Shayla Saravia, 14, did not want to go to college. But she heard winning the award would mean the cost would be paid for four years.

She said she decided then to apply for the scholarship, noting, "I have to go. I want to study business because I want to be a makeup artist and have my own salon," she said after the ceremony.

Shayla's family is from El Salvador. She said she has never been on the campus of an HBCU and is looking forward to the experience.

A reception and awards celebration will be held for the 50 scholarship winners and their families Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Claude G. Perkins Living and Learning Center on VUU's campus.

Richmond Justice Center brings technology to inmates

Continued from A1

name and a PIN that allows him or her to sign in to use the tablet.

"This is something I wanted to do even before I was elected," Sheriff Irving said during an interview last week with the Free Press.

During her time as a major with the Henrico County Sheriff's Office, she said she became aware of other jails across the country installing tablets to improve communications inside the jail as well as enabling inmates to have more connections outside.

After winning election to the office in 2017, she put that on her "to-do" list and made it a priority this year. Richmond now joins the Chesterfield County Jail in installing tablets; Henrico's jail has not.

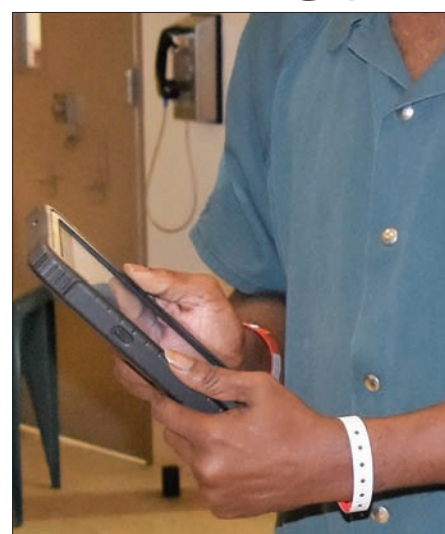
Maj. S.M. Bagby, who manages administration and information technology in the Richmond Sheriff's Office, led the effort to make it happen with GTL, the company that operates the inmate phone service.

Maj. Bagby said GTL installed 72 tablets and charging stations, known as "pizza ovens," in the jail's 29 pods.

She and Sheriff Irving believe the tables have reduced some of the potential for conflict among the 840 inmates that, on average, are housed at the city Justice Center.

Each pod has up to four telephones, and before the tablets arrived, inmates faced rationing and time limits on their use. With the tablets, there are more outlets for phone calls.

Because there are often fewer tablets



Daryl D. Tyler/Richmond Sheriff's Office

than the number of inmates in a pod, the inmates "have had to learn to share," Maj. Bagby said.

"That seems to be going well," Sheriff Irving said, noting that inmates look for the recipient of a call after a message for the recipient appears on the screen.

The tablets have not stopped personal visits. Each day, hundreds of people come to the jail to visit with inmates. They are separated during the visit by a clear divider.

The video call is pricey at 25 cents a minute, which is at least double the cost of a standard phone call.

Still, when the weather is bad, "families do not have to come down to the jail. They can still visit with a video call," Sheriff Irving said. And during holidays, families can still visit via video and carry on with other plans, she added.

The new service has worked well for

attorneys, who can talk with clients without having to travel to the jail, the sheriff said. While other calls are monitored, these are not, said Cpl. J. Barnes, who has the monitoring assignment. The jail also does not charge for legal business calls, she said.

Cpl. Barnes noted that, initially, some people took advantage of the video to do stripteases or provide racy pictures.

She and Maj. Bagby noted that such actions have dramatically diminished since the tablets were introduced and inmates were warned that transmission of such photos could cost them use of the tablets.

Sheriff Irving said the tablets are still in a test mode.

"We're going slowly," she said, to ensure a smooth operation with all the potential glitches identified and removed.

However, down the road, she said she hopes to add inmate access to movies and TV shows, which can easily be added. She also is considering allowing inmates to rent a tablet so they would not have to share one of the jail's tablets.

She also said she and her staff are looking for ways to expand uses for tablets, possibly including linking with GED programs, the community college system or other schools to provide credit courses.

Sheriff Irving said the jail also plans to beef up its career readiness and preparation programs and is looking to use the tablets so that inmates can take the necessary classroom courses online and be ready to seek jobs after their release.

"We're just at the beginning of figuring out ways to use this technology," she said.



Regina H. Boone/Richmond Free Press

Janice F. Lewis, left, and her sister, Celieto L. Lewis

Lewis family relocates to new home

Continued from A1

in the Sept. 12-14 edition, and several Free Press readers responded with contributions.

The story related the Lewises' experience as an example of the troubles faced by many people in the community who have no savings and face real challenges after an unexpected emergency, illness or injury occurs.

For the sisters, the kitchen fire on Aug. 13 ruined a stove and led to the condemnation of the house the sisters had rented for 12 years after faulty wiring was discovered.

The owner has not made repairs or notified the sisters when he would, leaving them to live out of their 2002 Chrysler SUV while hunting for an affordable place to live.

City Council empanels Coliseum commission — with VUU president

Continued from A1

of the commission.

The vote for Dr. Lucas and the other new members came on a night when the council also essentially granted the administration permission to again use the Annie Giles Community Resource Center across from the Richmond Justice Center as the cold-weather overflow shelter for the homeless. But the council moved to limit the use of the Giles Center as a homeless center only for the coming winter and to block the mayor's request to make it permanent.

The council also voted to name Haskell C. Brown III as interim city attorney to take over City Hall's legal office on Nov. 1, following the retirement of Allen L. Jackson.

Councilman Michael J. Jones, 9th District, who led the support

for Dr. Lucas, made skin color the sole test.

He argued that the three African-Americans previously proposed for the commission were not enough and supported Dr. Lucas.

Councilman Chris A. Hilbert, 3rd District, cast the decisive vote for Dr. Lucas, who holds a MBA and has spent much of his career raising money for the colleges and universities where he has worked.

Mr. Hilbert said that VUU too often is excluded from participating in city decisions. He said Dr. Lucas' appointment would cure that, although there is no document or other evidence in the proposal indicating that VUU would benefit from the redevelopment project.

That claim was quickly undermined by council's decision to include on the commission Dr. Corey D. B. Booker,

the former dean of VUU's seminary who currently is a professor at the University of Richmond.

Others voting for Dr. Lucas' appointment were Council President Cynthia I. Newbille, 7th District; Andreas D. Addison, 1st District; and Ellen F. Robertson, 6th District.

Opposing Dr. Lucas' appointment were Council members Kim B. Gray, 2nd District; Kristen N. Larson, 4th District; Parker C. Agelasto, 5th District; and Reva M. Trammell, 8th District.

Seating Dr. Lucas required the removal of Richard Crom, a program and management analyst for the Internal Revenue Service, from the original proposed slate.

As now constituted, the commission members include former state Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer, entertainment business consultant John Gerner, former Richmond hospital

executive Mark Gordon, deputy state Secretary of Administration Grindly Johnson, development attorney Suzanne Long, architect Mary Sadler and attorney and business executive Michael Schewel.

However, the council has yet to hire an independent consultant to review the project despite voting to set aside \$190,000 from the council's budget for that purpose.

The commission was seated even as the council continues its own education on the project with a series of nine, four-hour meetings extending into December to receive briefings on Navy Hill.

The first session, held earlier Monday before the council meeting, started a half-hour late and ultimately drew only five members, according to Ms. Gray.

Mr. Hilbert, one of those who missed

the briefing, said his work schedule would never allow him to attend.

During the informal council session ahead of the regular meeting, Ms. Gray raised concern that the session tied up two dozen city directors, council staff and other city employees, taking them away from their primary city work.

Mr. Agelasto, who arrived after 1 p.m. only to find the briefing session had ended, questioned the need to tie up staff to brief the council and also then testify before the commission. "It's an unneeded redundancy," he said.

However, Dr. Newbille said that given the size and potential impact of the project, "the more redundancy the better." She said that council needs to be as conversant as possible with the details and also needs to hear from a variety of voices, including the commission and the public, to make an informed decision.