

ATLANTA – December 18, 2008 – The Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. (“VHCA”), is proud to announce the recent acquisition of property for a new park in the heart of our neighborhood.

VHCA Purchases Former Library Lots for Neighborhood Park

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association Inc. closed on the purchase of two lots adjacent to N. Highland Avenue at 1076 and 1082 St. Charles Place. These two lots are currently vacant (they are the site of the former public library), and the VHCA neighborhood association will turn this property into green space to benefit the entire community.

Financing for the property came through the Georgia Land Conservation Revolving Loan fund. Due to a recent change in this loan program (passed by the Georgia Legislature, effective July 1, 2008), non-governmental (non-profit) entities are now eligible for this low-cost financing. The Virginia-Highland Civic Association, Inc. is the first non-profit in Georgia to be approved for funding under this program. The interest rate is 3%, and the loan term will be for a 15-year period.

The VHCA will develop the space for a passive park and “rain garden,” to support recreation, walking, community gathering and educational programs for the residents of Virginia-Highland. The property is in the heart of the Atkins Park residential neighborhood, and it will also lend value to the many nearby businesses.

“These lots are literally the only potential green space still available in our in-town Virginia-Highland neighborhood. The future park will provide not only a respite from asphalt and noise, but it will serve as an important citywide demonstration project for storm water management. We are all thrilled that the Virginia-Highland Civic Association was able to acquire this land,” said Paul Burks, VHCA Board Member and chair of the purchase initiative.

“These residentially-zoned lots (now subject to a conservation easement) on N. Highland at St. Charles Place have remained vacant for years, yet the land is in the heart of our community. The VHCA will fund the loan, for which we are very grateful to the Georgia Land Conservation Program. We look forward to significant community support to pay off the debt, and I am confident that our community will rise to the task,” said Pamela Papner, president of the VHCA. “Our neighborhood community has always been an involved one, and I am confident that through community events and participation to raise funds, we will become the ‘success story’ contemplated by the Georgia Land Conservation Program, which recently extended loan funds to local communities to achieve the sort of project we have envisioned.”

Specifically, the rain garden would be known as a “Bio-retention Demonstration Project.” Storm water will be captured on-site, keeping it away from the storm drains. A rain garden will be built on the center of the site, and native Georgia plants will be planted. Similar successful green infrastructure projects have been completed in the cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, Seattle, Portland, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia.

A ceremony to celebrate the purchase of the new park (ribbon cutting) will be held at the site on Saturday, January 10, 2009, at noon. Anyone wishing to donate to the new park can “Buy a Brick” or otherwise contribute. Please see: www.vahi.org/new_park.html

About the Virginia-Highland Civic Association

The Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that helps maintain Virginia-Highland as one of the most livable urban communities in America. The VHCA leads and supports zoning initiatives and other neighborhood improvements such as maintaining and improving local parks, sidewalks, safety, lighting, and crime prevention programs. The VHCA also provides financial support to schools, the public library and other organizations serving Virginia-Highland residents.

Virginia-Highland is the area within the Atlanta city limits bounded on the north by Amsterdam Avenue, on the south by Ponce de Leon Avenue, on the east by Briarcliff Road, and on the west by the Southern Railroad Line.

CONTACT: Pamela Papner
VHCA President
404-873-4680
ppapner@earthlink.net

Paul Burks
VHCA Park Initiative
[pburks1212 @hotmail.com](mailto:pburks1212@hotmail.com)