



Division of Capitol Police News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 4, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joe Macenka, Public Information Officer

Division of Capitol Police

Office: 804-786-2522

Cell: 804-382-7447

Email: jmacenka@dcp.virginia.gov

Man gets jail term, fines for Capitol Square incident

RICHMOND – A man has been sentenced to more than three months behind bars for an incident last fall in which he drove around the grounds of Capitol Square at a high rate of speed and ignored officers' attempts to stop him.

John F. Landers, 30, of the 5800 block of Lee Avenue in Henrico County, was convicted and sentenced Oct. 22 as part of a plea agreement in Richmond General District Court.

Originally charged with felony assault on a law enforcement officer, Landers was convicted of misdemeanor attempted assault and battery and sentenced to 60 days in jail.

A felony charge of failure to appear was reduced to misdemeanor failure to appear, resulting in an additional 30 days behind bars.

A charge of driving while intoxicated was reduced to reckless driving, resulting in another 10 days of incarceration.

Landers also was convicted on single counts of driving a motor vehicle on a revoked or suspended license and carrying an open container of alcohol, but no additional jail time was imposed. Prosecutors elected against pursuing the final charge, possession of drug paraphernalia.

In addition to the 100 days behind bars, Landers was assessed fines and court costs of more than \$1,200.

“I am grateful for the fast response of our officers to get the individual in custody following this reckless act,” said Col. Anthony S. Pike, chief of the Capitol Police. “There are plenty of employees and visitors walking around Capitol Square most days, and this individual’s act carried a high potential for injuries to others.”

Security camera footage indicated Landers was taken into custody within two minutes after he entered the grounds of Capitol Square on the afternoon of Nov. 27, 2018. Landers, alone in a 2001 gray Honda Accord sedan, drove onto the grounds of Capitol Square at the main entrance at Ninth and Grace streets and sped past the manned Capitol Police guardhouse on North Drive, where he ignored an officer’s directions to stop.

Landers proceeded eastbound on North Drive at a high rate of speed to the closed gate at the Executive Mansion, where another Capitol Police officer approached his vehicle on foot and attempted to get him to stop. The officer jumped onto the curb to avoid being struck by Landers as he turned his car around and headed back westbound on North Drive, once again at a high rate of speed, before turning left onto a paved pedestrian path at the west end of the Capitol and following the path to the South Portico.

Landers stopped his car on the South Portico, jumped out and ran down the hill toward the south end of Capitol Square. He left the grounds of Capitol Square and ran across Bank Street, where he was placed in custody by Capitol Police on the sidewalk near the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals building.

Note: Capitol Police do not have a booking photo of Landers, who was taken to the city jail for processing. Please contact the jail for the photo.

###