

Minutes:

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
On-Site Meeting - Manchester Canal at Southern States Silos
Richmond VA**

Meeting: July 16, 2020

Greg Velzy: Chair– Presiding

Call to Order: 12:08 PM

Attending: Committee members: Jim Hill, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, Ralph Hambrick, John Heerwald, Parker Agelasto – Executive Director, Capital Region Land Conservancy, Max Hepp-Buchanan - Director of Riverfront and Downtown Placemaking, Venture Richmond, Bryce Wilk - James River Park Superintendent, Shawna Shade – Friends of the James River Park

Minutes - Minutes of June 18 , 2020 approved

Current Issues:

• **Riverfront – Planning and Development Issues:**

- **Manchester Canal/Walker Creek Public Improvements:** Mark Olinger, Department of Planning and Development Review. Mark could not be present. Greg Velzy gave a quick overview of the project: The Hydro is a complex being constructed at the northern end of Decatur Street. This building will house 212 units. A bridge over the Canal (for emergency vehicles) near the existing hydroplant will connect with Manchester Road which will be paved from Hull Street for a couple of blocks east then continue as a gravel road. It is hoped that a proposed pedestrian walkway or path which would be included as a public right-of-way through the Hydro development would connect with the existing Floodwall walk. In addition, a path would run along both the north bank of the Canal and Walker Creek as well. Given the historic nature of the hydro plant site (Byrd's/Mayo's Mill, the mill race, pond and hydro drop to Walker Creek – ***see 1809, 1835 and 1876 map sections as addendum to the minutes), the Committee felt it was important to both protect this site and interpret it with a public path access along both sides of the Canal. Parker Agelasto stated that a series of improvements along the Manchester Canal were already in place in the Riverfront Plan.
- **Sale of Southern States silos and parking for Floodwall and Fishing:** It was stressed that with the construction of the Hydro and the propose sale and development of the Silos' property, public parking would be at a premium. Mark Olinger had stated that when the Floodwall Parking Lot reopened on the west side of Hull Street, 22 spaces would be available. This is a concern as this area is used heavily by fishermen as well as takeout for paddlers. The increase in residential density in this small area makes parking problematic. It was also mentioned to Bryce Wilk that cars/trucks had been driving down on the river side of the floodwall at the 14th Street Bridge during fishing season. He indicated that a boulder would be strategically positioned.
- **Libby Hill Viewshed Update:** No update
- **Richmond 300 Survey update:** Mark was not present, but Max Hepp-Buchanan updated us on various elements of the survey. The public comment period is over, for most summits: <http://www.richmond300.com/marketingMasterPlan/draft> but on Monday three alternatives were proposed for the Coliseum and area. At this writing, the presentation had not been posted on line: <http://www.richmond300.com/marketingMasterPlan/relatedplans> The Coliseum Framework Plan Survey is open until July 27, 2020.
- **Brown's Island Improvement Plan – Venture Richmond:** Max Hepp-Buchanan. The Brown's Island survey is not closed as Venture Richmond is targeting more diverse groups for input. To date, 735 responses have been received. They have gotten good feedback, and Max will gladly share the AV presentation with us showing the results, probably at the Falls' September meeting. Although the survey is not finalized, he did say that results indicate that it is important that Brown's Island have a natural feel rather than concrete, and that natural trails, paths and access to river views were imperative. He also shared that if the terraces were to be constructed, they would not necessarily

connect to the river proper. Look forward to the entire presentation.

- **CRLC – Riverfront Updates:** Parker Agelasto announced that the easement for the Main Street property will be recorded in August.
- **James River Park Update:** Bryce Wilk
 - There were 100,000 more JRPS users in June 2020 than in 2019 even with Covid restrictions
 - All JRPS education programs are virtual this year. The Park is working with RPS to assist with virtual education programming in the Fall.
 - Approximately \$900,000 of unused funds have been discovered in the Slave Trail Commission. Bryce is working toward using those funds for significant entrances to the Slave Trail both at Ancarrow's and underneath the I-95 bridge.
 - Bryce is meeting with Chris Frelke to discuss Masterplan Implementation Strategy. There will be an Implementation Team as well as committees to tackle the 60+ items on the Action Plan such as: blueways, greenways, park expansion, safety, etc.
 - One more fulltime operations staff will be added immediately. Notices are going out. That will make 3 permanent staff positions.
 - Huguenot Flatwater Boat Ramp should begin after November 16, 2020 after all spawning seasons for migratory fish.
 - Volunteer participation is picking up. Groups are announced for specific areas – Texas Beach, Dry Rocks and Ancarrow's. Trash is a huge problem. Installed blue grocery bag receptacles to encourage people to pick up additional garbage.
 - Park Monitors have been great but are now going back to their old jobs. A few have volunteered to come back and collect trash and advise JRP users.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50th Anniversary:**
 - Lynn wrote that she was able to now do field evaluations of proposed rivers for designation.
 - There's a virtual meeting of the committee on August 4, 2020
 - No news on any other 50th celebration events.
 - As of July 1, 2020, six more Rivers were added to the Program: Staunton, Pound, Middle James, Maury, Clinch and Grey's Creek.
- **CRLC:** Parker Agelasto
 - Parker is attending meetings about Mayo's Island – baby steps
 - An exciting conservation easement of private property along the Northbank Trail. This is a sizeable parcel which will not allow development so there is potential for Park extension in the future.
 - Facilitating easement on land – 13 acres along Rendell (?) Creek and other easements with waterfront which could potentially improve possibility for Southside greenways.
 - Parker asked everyone to reach out to Rep. Donald McEachin or to their House Representative to **VOTE YES** on July 23rd to support the Great American Outdoors Act which would provide (copied from CRLC)
 - Last month, the U.S. Senate passed the bi-partisan [Great American Outdoors Act \(S. 3422\)](#), which permanently and fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Thank you Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine for voting yes.

The House of Representatives is now poised to taking up a final vote on the bill ([H.R.7092](#)) as early as this upcoming Wednesday. Advocates for land conservation are encouraged to reach out to their member in Congress ASAP to urge them to support this legislation as a clean bill with no amendments. **For the Richmond region**, that means [Donald McEachin](#), [Abigail Spanberger](#), or [Robert Wittman](#). Representatives McEachin and Spanberger are cosponsors of the legislation so please be sure to also thank them for the leadership on this critical source of conservation funding. Specifically, the Great American Outdoors Act would:

 - 1) Direct non-taxpayer funds already being deposited in the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) – including \$900 million in annual offshore energy receipts that routinely have been diverted from the fund for decades – to be spent only and fully on their intended purpose. Specific language protects congressional oversight of LWCF spending through the appropriations process, including the assessment of annual needs and adjustment of allocations according to changing opportunities and submissions from state and community partners.

- 2) Establish the [National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Fund](#), which would direct up to \$9.5 billion in non-taxpayer monies (unobligated mineral receipts) over five years to address priority repairs in national parks and on other public lands. The National Park Service would receive 70% of Fund proceeds; the U.S. Forest Service would receive 15%; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Education schools would each receive 5%.
 - CRLC has applied for a grant to identify undeveloped prime soils in the City Of Richmond
 - Launched a Virtual Nature Narrative initiative - a virtual discussion group focused on environmental narratives. If interested reach out to CRLC Community Engagement Manager, John Schengber, at john@capitalregionland.org.
- **Tredegar Street Improvements:** Greg asked Max if he had any information on improvements of a sidewalk along Tredegar Street. He did not, but that this was a City Improvement directive.
- BridgePark into Riverfront Plan update: Jim Hill. The first Advisory meeting will be held next Monday. He will repost at August Meeting.
- **DPU Updates:** Grace LeRose not present.

New Business: None

Reports:

James River Park System: Bryce presented above.

JRA: Justin not present but Greg reported they were working at Turkey Island

JRAC: Virtual meeting next week re: Cleanup

JROC: Establishment of River Safety Committee. Planning to devise river maps marking hazards

FoJRP: Shawna Shade reported work was ongoing on a new logo and on the Masterplan Strategy team

Open discussion: There was discussion concerning the City's change in zoning of properties along the river. Work had been done previously to put zoning in place to protect the river and riverfront properties and it seems that zoning is being negated or set aside particularly regarding Manchester's property.

Adjourn: 1:20PM

Next Public Meeting: August, July 20, 2020 at Silos Parking Lot off Manchester Road

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall or on Zoom. The July 16, 2020 Meeting will take place on Manchester Road east of Hull Street. Meetings are scheduled for the THIRD Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to the public. If you are not now receiving e-mail meeting notices and wish to receive them, please provide your name and e-mail address to velzyg@verizon.net. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary

***Addendum: Historic Maps showing the Manchester Canal and 'Hydro' area:

From the 1809 Young Map of Richmond – Mayo (probably John Mayo. The Mayo family more or less built Richmond as commissioned first by William Byrd II. William Mayo served as surveyor and cartographer with Byrd along the ‘dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina’ and drew the map for layout of the City of Richmond.) had mills at the ‘Hydro’ area. He also built the first bridge Mayo in 1788.



From the 1835 Macajah Bates map of Richmond. Probably John Mayo Jr. Mills. Also shows a Forge.



And the 1876 Beers Map shows corn mills, ironworks plus a bridge and cotton mills.

