

Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Approved Minutes for March 11, 2004

Attendees:

Committee Members:

Ralph Hambrick, Sue Cecil, Catherine Harold, Lynn Newcomb, John Pearsall, Greg Velzy and Jonathan Young.

Others:

Louise Burke (Emeritus Committee Member), Debra Byrd (City of Richmond), Lyn Crump (Dept. of Conservation and Recreation), Brooke Hardin (City of Richmond), Bob Steidel (City of Richmond), Bill Trout (Va. Canal Society), Ralph White (James River Parks), R. B. Young (Emeritus Committee Member).

The Committee convened with the introduction of Ms. Debbie Byrd. Byrd is responsible for the City's administration of the Chesapeake Bay Act. Byrd informed the Committee that the City's Chesapeake Bay Act regulations are currently being litigated and as a result are stayed until resolved. The litigation more specifically concerns the parcel of land located behind the commercial construction at Forest Hill and Chippenham. The City has appealed lower court losses to the Va. Supreme Court. Further, new regulations proposed by staff are contingent on the litigation and on the approval by City Council. Said regulations could adopt one of two approaches including either the management of solely those streams on U.S. GS maps or a more comprehensive approach.

Byrd indicated that the staff had reviewed the tree cutting along Riverside Drive that the Falls Committee had reported and concluded that it was a violation of the City ordinance implementing the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. She indicated that a letter would be sent to the property owner about the violation. Byrd concluded by addressing a question from Ralph Hambrick pertaining to enforcement. Byrd said, "Enforcement is not a focus of the City".

The meeting proceeded with the brief introduction of Mr. Bob Steidel. Steidel's responsibilities at the City include the CSO project. Jonathan Young inquired of Steidel how long taxpayers would have to continue to pay the CSO monthly charges. Steidel responded, "forever".

Next, Brooke Hardin updated the Committee on the status of the draft downtown master plan. Members of the Committee volunteered numerous suggestions. The Committee reviewed the draft of a letter providing suggested additions to the plan and

agreed to send the letter to Mr. Hardin with a copy to the Mayor, Members of Council and others.

Greg Velzy reported that a variety of documents regarding riparian buffers and riparian best practices had been collected in preparation for developing a letter to riparian owners in Richmond.

Lynn Crump advised the committee that a number of view-shed studies have been done in other locations, including the New River, that might serve as a model for a similar study of the James River in Richmond.

Hambrick reported that the Riverside Drive Stabilization project is still under environmental review required before funding can be approved.

R.B. Young, Sue Cecil, and Catherine Harold agreed to develop suggestions for persons who might be suggested as new members for the Falls Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00.