

Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes for September 11, 2003

Attendees:

Board Members:

Chairman Ralph Hambrick, Vice Chairman Sue Cecil, John Pearsall, Greg Velzy and Jonathan Young.

Others:

Edward Alleyne (DPU), Randy Brown (DPU), Gary DuVal (DPU), Buzz Kraft (Richmond Raft), William Judy (Greeley and Hanson), Lyn Lanier (Friends of James River Parks), Bill Trout (Virginia Canal Society), Ralph White (James River Parks) and R. B. Young (Emeritus Board Member).

Chairman Hambrick called the meeting to order and initiated a review of the minutes from the June meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The City's Department of Public Works provided a presentation regarding a proposed access enhancement at the McCloy Pump Station. DPU advised that the current access road is insufficient and introduces a significant amount of noise to the surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed road would be utilized as the primary access way though the existing road would be retained in order to complement the new route. The proposal would include either a permanent bridge or a temporary causeway. DPU indicated that while the causeway would impede canal traffic, numerous other impediments currently exist. The principal advantage associated with the causeway concerns costs and the substantial savings that a causeway would provide in lieu of a bridge.

There was some discussion in regards to any auxiliary benefits that could be derived from the proposed access road including emergency access to the James River at the very point where the rapids begin. DPU communicated a willingness to review auxiliary access.

Buzz Kraft briefed the Committee on the status of Richmond Raft and communicated an alarming concern. Kraft indicated that the City's reluctance to agree to a long-term contract could preclude his business or others from continuing to offer rafting on the James.

The Committee and other attendees engaged in discourse concerning the prudence of operating commercial craft in the James River above a river height of 9 feet.

DPU and Greeley and Hanson updated the Committee on the status of the Huguenot Water Main Project. The Committee was advised that the river crossing should be completed by January.

The Committee discussed the status of Riverside Drive and what Ralph White referred to as the worsening condition of the bank. R. B. Young requested that the Committee send a letter to the City communicating the need for a short-term stopgap. Young requested that the letter additionally include references regarding new clear cutting incidents and debris left along the riverbank.

Other topics of discussion included; the Committee agreed to convene its October meeting at the Pump House in lieu of the regularly scheduled City Hall conference room, John Pearsall encouraged Ralph Hambrick to send Joe Maroon a letter regarding ex officio committee members, the Committee agreed to Hambrick's recommendation to send Mayor McCollum a letter again endorsing the whitewater takeout, Ralph White encouraged the Committee to persuade the Convention Center to provide more James River and Belle Island brochures and Ralph White communicated the recent difficulty in working with Ethyl.

The Committee adjourned at 2:15.