

Minutes:

Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Meeting: - December 21, 2017, 5th Floor Conference Room – City Hall – Richmond, VA

Greg Velzy – Chair Presiding

Call to Order: 12:11

Minutes - November 16, 2017 minutes – approved with addition of adjourn time.

Attending: Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Jim Hill, Ralph White, Leighton Powell, Anne Wright, Grace LeRose – DPU - TMDL Coordinator at City of Richmond.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Plan:**

- **Potterfield Bridge** – Updates: Jim Hill reported that the lights on the Bridge, particularly on the Southside, are off some evenings. Greg reported that construction crews have been seen working on the flooring, but that the rubber-like strips are still falling below the bridge. Jim Hill added that there is no one at City Department of Planning to talk to about this other than the Director, Mark Olinger. Previous contacts have either been reassigned or have left the department. The Bridge has in essence been turned over to JRP system. Visitor counts for the Bridge are now equal to or better than visitor counts to Belle Isle.

Ralph White went to ask Mark Olinger about the interpretive signage promised for the Bridge. He returned with proposed drawings for 4 signs which were not interpretive signage but more directional information. Very disappointed. Grace LeRose (DPU) added that DPU is tasked with providing interpretive DPU infrastructure signage before the upcoming Festival of the River

- **Downriver Updates** – No news. Leighton said she would talk to representatives from Stone Brewing to see where things stand regarding the restaurant and beer garden.

Still concern about safety at the three crossings. This is quite a hazard given the foot traffic to get to the river.

There was also discussion about recommending a bike share location at the head to the Virginia Capital Trail and/if that would be too much competition for Kick Stand.

- **Missing Link Phase** – Nothing

- **JRP Master Plan Funding Statement Summary and Presentation:** Katherine Godin Mitchell, vice president FOJRP could not be present. Greg passed out the Master Plan Summary Statement. The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the Statement as presented, the ramifications of this Plan and its intent as well as the parameters of Plan enforcement and private/public monies-usage and ownership of Plan.

Items discussed included:

- Need for Master Plan implementation, enforcement, ownership, effective range (10 yr-20yr), what happens if feedback from city-wide focus groups is totally in opposition to current management guidelines of JRPS

- This initial statement must state the essence of the JRP or give a statement of what the JRP is.
- No statement to the effect of preserving the natural assets in the JRP, prioritizing natural resources - keeping it wild.
- Does City Council need to set forth a statement of guidance for the JRP?
- Regarding City buy-in and ownership, how does that work regarding private funding and a public/private Master Plan, then public Implementation – This needs to be clarified and stated clearly in the summary before funds are sought and allocated.
- Nowhere is Regional Cooperation or that element of growth mentioned, as regional use is a given and will probably be a focus in the raising of funds.
- The challenge is maintaining natural habitat in the face of increased human use. That is not clearly stated. The Committee was also concerned that the challenge be set forth that it is the importance of the quality of visitation in the natural setting and not the quantity of visitors.
- The Master Plan will: first line item is stated 'Prioritize park development' – Committee considered that a serious flaw. Should be Preservation of natural features.
- A separate account must be established for Master Plan monies.
- The Falls Committee seeks a primary role in the making and development of the Plan.

It was decided that though the Falls Committee in general approves of a JRP Master Plan, we have serious concerns over the focus of the statement summary and wish to have a meeting with Katherine Godin-Mitchell and Nathan Burrell before the next Falls Meeting in January.

- **January Falls Meeting with Catoctin and Goose Creek State Scenic River Committee representatives – Noon – January 18, 2018 - JRP Headquarters** - Greg and Tricia are to meet with Lynn Crump to determine agenda for this meeting.
- **EnRichmond – Vauxhall Island** - Cede to City of Richmond Update – Nothing. JROC conducted a cleanup last weekend – made only a small dent: <https://jroc.net/news/2017/vauxhall-island-cleanup/>
- **Falls Committee's meeting with Mayor Levar Stoney** – Leighton Powell: No report
- **Capital Region Land Conservancy** – Greg reported that 2 islands upstream near Williams Island may have to be ceded to Historic Greenbelt Corporation for easements before being given to the City.

New Business:

- **James River & Kanawah Canal** – Venture Richmond not present.
- **DPU – RVAH20: Grace LeRose:**
Grace announced that DPU is partnering with University of Richmond and RES to restore Tuckahoe stream from U of R Lake to the James River to include a trail and citizen stream monitoring. Bob Siegfried of RES, LLC is greatly involved in this collaborative project with DPU.

Grace also brought up DPU's involvement with the Festival of the River, three days, one day = food day (world's biggest picnic; another day focused on the arts with InLight (1708 Gallery) on the Floodwall and storm-drain painting and another day on environmental science to talk about the James.

Reports:

James River Park System – Nathan Burrell – not present.
JRA - Justin Doyle not present.

JRAC - 25th Annual Parade of Lights rescheduled for July

JROC - Projects for 2018 include rebuilding bridge on Sawmill Island and working to improve trails and pedestrian access at Huguenot Flatwater.

FoJRP - in addition to the Master Plan fundraising, they will hold a Winter Solstice celebration on Belle Isle at 5:00, December 21, 2017. They have also refunded the Osprey Cam.

Open Discussion:

Meeting Adjourned: 1:38 pm

******Next Public Meeting: - January 18, 2018******

This meetings begins at 12:00 noon and will be held at James River Park Headquarters – Reedy Creek. 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.