

Minutes:

Falls of the James State Scenic River Advisory Committee

Meeting: December 15, 2016 – Legends Brewery

Greg Velzy – Chair presiding

Meeting called to order: 12:15 pm

Attendance:

Falls Members: Tricia Pearsall, Anne Wright, John Heerwald, John Thompson, Greg Velzy, Ralph White, John Moeser, Ralph Hambrick and Parker Agelasto — Executive Director Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC)

Falls Members Not Present: Justin Doyle, Leighton Powell, Alex Dahm, Jane Myers

Minutes: November 17, 2016 Minutes approved with revisions

Current Issues:

Riverfront Development Plan Update:

- **T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge Update:**
 - The Bridge is open and it is fantastic! The Opening on Friday, December 2, 2016 was massively attended, and the bridge has been used by crowds ever since.
 - Replacement of the JROC climber-access stairs has become an even more important issue, as they are the first thing visitors see as a route to the top of the overlook and are being used by many visitors. City Planning was alerted to this situation before plans for the bridge were completed and did not include funding in the overall project. Now, since the cost for replacing these wooden steps with metal stairs is approximately \$130,000, City Planning has no plans to replace them. JRP has put up signage and spring-loaded gates at the entrance, but replacement is needed. JROC has mounted a letter-to council members campaign to make them aware.
 - Parker Agelasto asked that the stairs underneath the Lee Bridge connecting Oregon Hill to Northbank be cited for replacement as well. They are both unsafe and not engineered to avoid head bumping on tall people.
 - Greg voiced concern by many that if the JROC stairs are declared unsafe, they may simply be removed. This would be a slam to the climbing community, which is a vital part of the active signature lifestyle promoted by the Downtown Master Plan(2010), the City of Richmond and the JRPS.
- **Missing Link Trail:** This is the essential connection that now must be addressed – the connection along the riverside between Belle Isle and the new T.Pott Bridge. The current so-called trail is suitable only for scrambling and another solution needs to be developed. That means working with Norfolk-Southern and others to effect an engineering design which could be anything from a cantilevered walkway to a path over the river.

- The Falls Committee recommended sending a letter to Planning stating the importance of this Trail and urging its implementation as the next phase of the Riverfront Development Plan. John Thompson offered to author the letter.
 - The Committee also suggested that perhaps the VCU Engineering Department could involve students or a class project in the trail design. Anne Wright will look into this possibility.
- **Downriver Riverfront Study Update:** Mark Olinger, Director of Planning, Dept. of Planning & Development Review sent notes from Hargreaves Associates summarizing the November 22, 2016 meeting with Hargreaves and city department heads and stakeholders. The Notes are attached to the back of the Minutes.

EnRichmond: Leighton Powell – Leighton was absent, but Parker Agelasto brought us up to date on the status of the transfer of Vauxhall Island to the City. Sarah Richardson, DCR Office of Land Conservation, has told the city that they may have another year to use the grant (\$75,000 to Richmond for the conservation of the 2.82-acre Vauxhall Island from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation). The grant then expires. The difficulty seems to be between EnRichmond and the City concerning restrictions regarding the conservation easement. Parker thinks the Island should be protected or put under easement, then given to the City. It is not certain that EnRichmond wants to give it to the City and have them declare the easement. Either way, there seems to be an issue of the billboard, which the Falls Committee agreed must come down.

Capital Region Land Conservancy: Parker Agelasto restated what had been reported at the November meeting that the park is currently working to bring Vauxhall Island into the easement along with other islands to make up an additional 141 acres to add to the JRP. These negotiations are still underway.

New Business:

New Mayor – Levar Stoney – The Falls Committee restated that they would like to give the Mayor the long history of this State committee and its relationship with the City. We would also like to encourage him to come directly to us regarding all questions regarding the James River. It was decided to try to host him at the March 2017 meeting and to ask Justin Doyle to act as liaison.

James River Park Master Plan – Preparation for Funding is still ongoing: FOJRP

Nomination of Jim Hill – New Falls member: Jim's CV were circulated (synopsis attached). It was agreed to nominate him as a member and to ask DCR to appoint. Greg will forward his information and get the process into action.

Reports:

James River Park – Nathan Burrell not in attendance. It was reported that the Director of Recreation and Parks, Dr. Norman C. Merrifield and his assistant had stepped down and that Deborah Morton was the acting head.

JRAC - Parade of Lights was a huge success particularly following the Fire at the Richmond Yacht Basin.

JROC - Project this weekend to make safe and secure the Belle Isle Climbing Access (over the quarry).

FoJRP - (see above)

Open discussion -

- Parker introduced the effort to secure donors for easement declaration of private lands into the James River Park Conservation Easement. He cited the recent easement declaration on private lands along Riverside Drive. His goal is to make direct contact with landowners that touch the JRP. He also brought up the possibilities of Willow Oaks Country Club and small pieces west of Willow Oaks and a small piece near Huguenot Flatwater. CRLC plans to go public with this initiative soon.
- Since Park parking is such an issue, the return of the parking places designated for 201 Hull Street – Warehouse 201 - need to be returned to public parking in the Floodwall Parking Lot, Southside 14th Street Bridge. They're always empty and the Parking lot is often full.
- Tricia brought up the point that whatever happens with land swaps and acquisition of lands into the JRP needs to be accompanied with maintenance and services funding.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 1:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tricia Pearsall

Attachments:

Jim Hill Bio:

James Hill received his B.A. from the College of William and Mary in English with a minor in Music and his Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Virginia. He worked for eleven years with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources where he served as the National Register Coordinator in the Survey and Register Division, and in the Division of Project Review.

In 2002, Mr. Hill joined the City of Richmond's Planning Department, first as a Neighborhood Planner and as Secretary to the Commission of Architectural Review, and ultimately as the Principal Planner for the Division of Planning and Preservation. He participated in the development, adoption, and implementation of numerous Master Plan documents, including the Downtown Plan, the Riverfront Plan, and the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan.

In 2015, Mr. Hill joined Sadler & Whitehead Architects as Senior Project Manager where he enjoys employing his experience with the criteria for eligibility and listing of historic resources, the application and interpretation of the Secretary's Standards, and his liberal arts-based writing skills.

Mr. Hill believes communities that have successfully preserved their neighborhoods that pre-date the automobile offer the best model for sustainable and walkable development. He also holds that the energy and materials embodied in existing built resources offer the greenest alternative for economic development and for bringing revitalization to Virginia's communities.

Mr. Hill holds a professional license to practice Landscape Architecture in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Hargreaves Meeting Notes:

Meeting Notes

Date:

22 November 2016

To:

Mark Olinger
Director of Planning
Dept. of Planning & Development Review
City of Richmond
900 E. Broad Street, Room 511
Richmond, VA 23219

From:

Kirt Rieder, Hargreaves Associates

Project:

RVA Downriver

Our Project Number:

RVA 1501

Subject:

15 November 2016 Notes

HARGREAVES
ASSOCIATES

Site Furnishings

- Trash & recycling receptacle use is under-utilized, and under-maintained.
- Fish cleaning stations may be smelly ... discussion resolved to include two, one on each parcel.
- Guardrails were discussed, pro/con, with consensus that guardrails were not wanted. City Risk Management and/or Legal to weigh in on this topic. Add ladders/life rings for life safety.

Utilities & Logistics

- Backflow preventers for potable water are planned for proposed restrooms, but still require full recovery cleanout post-flood.
- Intermediate Dock will have sanitation pump out, and potable water source hookups.
- Stone Brewing load-in @ E Main St not yet clarified.
- Water trucks may be the preferred method of post-flood hosing off of the site, back into the river. Full recovery may take weeks.

Site History

- Intermediate Wharf plans to have a marker, coordinated with Slave Trail Commission.
- Historic flood levels could/should be physically marked on one or both sites for interpretive purposes.

Context

- Atlantic sturgeon is resurgent, but does not physically impact site development at this stage, though likely posted signs will be needed to encourage catch and release.

Alignment & Access

- Cap Trail will eventually have a realignment along the river edge of USP, and will need to accommodate this re-alignment @ Ash St.
- Accessible pavement will be necessary, connecting HC parking with the wharf concrete, as cobbles are expressly not accessible.

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- An accessible pedestrian sidewalk will be a necessity, providing universal access from Historic Fulton along Nicholson, and from along E Main St, down to Intermediate.
- Water taxi access connection to Ancarrow's Landing is a JRPS priority, and even if not a first phase improvement, needs to remain on the agenda for full build out.
- On-street parking along E Main St to provide parking access for vehicles bringing non-motorize water craft to Lehigh.

Next Steps

- In schematic, will want the E Main St project CAD inserted into the site survey by City to ensure proper rectification of proposed work, particularly since the grades will be higher.
- Existing stair in Ash St vicinity will necessarily be removed, and reconstructed as part of the East Riverfront Transportation Improvement Project, as street grade will necessarily be raised.
- Operations: Park & Rec by default will take ownership, triggering questions of adequate budget for operations and maintenance. This raises further questions re: who an alternate operator might be, and how the 600 ac JRPS fits into that equation.
- Questions re: operations and limitations for events and alcohol control related to Commonwealth regs and agreement between City & Stone.
- Amend Riverfront Plan

These notes are submitted by Hargreaves Associates. Please contact Hargreaves Associates with any corrections or additions. If no corrections or additions are received within (10) working days of distribution, the content will be assumed to be agreed upon by all parties.

END OF NOTES