

Minutes:

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
5th Floor Conference Room
City Hall – Richmond VA**

Meeting: October 17, 2019

Leighton Powell: Vice Chair– Presiding

Call to Order: 12:004 PM

Attending: Committee members: John Heerwald, Leighton Powell, Jim Hill, Tricia Pearsall, Justin Doyle, Guests—Bryce Wilk, Superintendant James River Park

Minutes - Minutes of September 19, 2019 unanimously approved on a motion by John Heerwald, 2nd by Justin Doyle.

Current Issues:

- **2020 Budget:** L. Powell attended Council's Finance Committee meeting. Amendments approved concerning using Budget 2019 overage for Access Ramp at Huguenot Flatwater as well as Tredegar Street project. Bryce Wilk stated that he had met with Timmons and once funds are released construction can begin.
- **Report Planning and Development Review:** Mark Olinger was not present. It was also suggested that a Planning Department person be designated to attend Falls Committee meetings. Perhaps Marianne Pitts or Joshua Son.
- **Missing Link:** Bryce Wilk reported a bit on the Missing Link options as presented by Kirt Rieder with Hargreaves, Associates. He stated that of those presented only three were viable considering placement and cost. He presented the high water options as: an 8' to 10' path alongside the railroad which would require a huge buildup, a viaduct 50' above the water connecting to the Belle Isle access bridge, or a suspended bridge that would run to 21st Street above the railroad which would not give a full water experience and would drop down around the Lee Bridge. The last seemed to be the simplest option, but none are easy. Kirt Rieder will soon make a public presentation of the options. The Committee discussed talking directly to Norfolk and Southern about rail use in that area, since IF a rail line could be designated as a trail, Rail-to-Trail funds could be used for its development. Some sort of dialogue with the railroad needs to happen. John Heerwald agreed to reach out to Bruce Wingo, a former rail lobbyist to see if he had suggestions how best to make this happen.
- **Downriver Updates:**
 - Following Stone's retreat from the Intermediate Terminal development, members suggested that the new Whitewater Center might be placed in this site and at the very least the property should be returned to the City. Stone has the option on this site until December 21, 2021.
 - Justin Doyle announced that the VIMS new research vessel will be docked at the Intermediate Terminal November 11, 12, 13, 2019.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50th Anniversary:**
 - The committee discussed the possibility of putting a Scenic River sign on the I-95 James River Bridge. Cost and lengthy procedural process seemed to stymie that idea, but Jim Hill proposed that a bill be introduced in the General Assembly to allow small Scenic River designation signs to be placed under the sign saying, for example, James River. This would make it possible to have a small sign under the named river or creek sign and make it easier for VDOT to process.
 - Lynn Crump has been evaluating many river segments for designation in 2020 including the Middle James, Grays Creek and the Maury.
 - Tricia suggested that the JRP conduct all inclusive (history/geology/etc) raft trips down the scenic portion of the James River for Richmond residents in honor of the 50th Anniversary.

- **James River Park Update:** Bryce Wilk
 - Belle Isle Parking: CSX has closed the space under the railroad tracks to parking. The blacktop parking lot owned by Venture Richmond is still open at this time.
 - Work will be conducted under the Boulevard Bridge this winter. Concern arose about debris in the river and Bryce said he would relay that concern.
 - BeWet Program is going well. It's slated for all Richmond Public School 6th graders.
 - Biking & Fishing Programs are continuing M-Th and plans are being drawn up for Winter and Spring Break camps.
 - There has been damage to the ramp at the Pumphouse from fallen tree. Repair underway.
 - Friends of the Pumphouse are conducting Halloween Tours as well as Abandon Virginia events
 - Full time staff addition: Operations Manager for JRP as Josh Feola now Superintendent for Forest Hills Park. Also hoping to add another programs staff as well as a Natural Resources Manager.

New Business: The Committee was tasked with submitting names of likely candidates for Falls Committee vacancies.

Reports:

James River Park System – see above
JRA - State of the James annual report is out and online. READ!
JRAC - Boat Parade - Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019
JROC - 14th Street Takeout Cleanup, Saturday October 26, 2019
FoJRP – no report

Open discussion:

Adjourn: 1:10PM

Next Public Meeting: November 21, 2019

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall. 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