

**Minutes:**

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, City Hall  
Richmond VA**

**Meeting:** December 15, 2022

Greg Velzy: Chair – Presiding

**Call to Order:** 12:05 PM

**Attending Committee Members:** Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Anne Wright, Lyn Crump, Jim Hill, Justin Doyle **Community members present:** Josh Stutz, Executive Director-Friends of the James River Park, Shawna Shade. Office Administrator-Friends of the James River Park.

**Minutes:** Minutes of November 17, 2022 - Leighton Powell motion to approve, Greg Velzy seconded. Approved.

**Current Issues:**

- **Riverfront Development Plan Updates:** *Kevin Vonck, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review, City Of Richmond* – not present
  - Update on development in Manchester at Mayo Bridge area – Greg Velzy asked that we arrange a presentation on the new Mayo Bridge + CRLC presentation concerning the purchase of Mayo Island for the February 2023 meeting.
  - Any progress on Diversity Park improvement or plans for a Manchester Canal walk – NO. Greg suggested that we ask Grace LeRose about who is responsible for maintenance of the Floodwall Walk. The asphalt portion between the Manchester Canal Bridge and Hull Street is buckling badly and the 'Welcome to the James River Park sign' is hidden behind vine overgrown chain-link fencing.
  - Missing Link design update – put on back burner
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto not present but the HUGE news is the contract on Mayo Island by CRLC: <https://richmondbizsense.com/2022/12/12/mayo-island-under-contract-to-conservation-group-director-says/>
- **Virginia Scenic Rivers:** Samantha Wangsgard – (not present).
  - Lynn Crump was present and announced an initiative which was spawned in Southwest Virginia concerning a coalition of Scenic River folks around the state (not related to DCR) that are or have worked with Scenic Rivers. This would be a group sharing information as well as assisting local groups with grass roots organization. Perhaps long range, this could be a genesis to reinstating the Virginia Scenic River Board (DCR) which was abolished in 2012 during the McDonnell administration.
  - Lynn also reported that she has been working closely with VCU River Management Program teaching/training students to perform Scenic River field evaluations. Last spring, she worked with them evaluating the middle Chickahominy River.
- **Scenic Virginia:**
  - Leighton Powell – Working with Lynn Crump, Scenic Virginia is looking to I.D. viewsheds locally throughout the state, then to make local officials aware of what viewsheds in their localities are significant. This would hopefully stave off any 'fights' or disagreements over developments which no one really wants.
  - Leighton also added that Virginia Delegate Ronnie Campbell (R) has died. She had commended him on giving one of the best descriptions of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program when he sponsored the extension of the Maury River last year.
- **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle

- River Center Project is going ahead full steam. Currently working on securing their stormwater permit and construction should begin the first part of 2023. Also working with Bill Shanabruch · Owner, Reedy Creek Environmental, to determine which plants to landscape.
  - Justin was not certain exactly when the deed would be transferred to the City, but that it was in progress.
  - Also, there have been discussions as to when/how it will be incorporated into the James River Park. The process is a bit messy as with added acreage and responsibility should come added funds.
  - Also talking with the City to co-operatively share the dredging expenses and tasks between their dock and Ancarrows ramp. Cost would be about \$300,000.
- **James River Park:** Giles Garrison, Superintendent, James River Park. (not present) If she shares her report, I will email to everyone.
- **DPU:** Grace LeRose (not present).
    - Justin did add that \$100 million had been included in the Governor's budget for Richmond's CSO funding.
    - Leighton also added that she was on the DPU – CSO Task Force and had been particularly impressed with how seriously Task Force members took their responsibilities and their investment. They had a presentation last week discussing options of underground holding basins that could be positioned throughout the city and other available options.
- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Josh Stutz, Executive Director, Friends of the James River Park – Report:
    - Texas Beach tower – no real progress. Design and position still under discussion
    - CSO improvement in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Tower area will require a trail reroute once construction has begun.
    - Discussion is underway about adding a Natural Resources manager at the Crew Chief position. (There was discussion concerning the importance of this position, which should be at superintendent level or above, being hired at such a low job level).
    - Stickers and T-shirts available for sale with retro-image of Ralph White's first JRP T-shirt
    - Shawna erected a JRP Christmas Tree at Main Street Station accepting donations for the park.
    - Reedy Creek reroute is being reviewed by Norfolk-Southern and should be built soon (\$50,000 from FoJRP)
    - New way-finding signs (similar to those along the Capital Trail) are being erected.
    - Architectural plans for improvements and use of the Pumphouse are moving forward. Josh is very impressed with the plans for access and usage of the dance floor and surrounds.
    - CRLC's plans for Mayo Island are very exciting and FoJRP will be there to help financially
    - Belle Isle bathrooms are a priority which are being discussed – whether to keep in the wedge building or tear down and build a more suitable structure.
    - The Ranger Program will launch in March 2023, hiring two positions to be monitors and ambassadors in the park.
    - FoJRP has purchased time on Channel 8 (WRIC) to initiate River Watch starting in April to promote River Safety. There will be 14 minutes of time throughout the days - Thursday-Sunday - dedicated to giving and explaining river levels on the James with a river cam below the T-Pott Bridge. Greg suggested that they work toward conveying river volumes like they do in WV, rather than levels.
    - Penelope Davenport's group has proposed a program where every 2<sup>nd</sup> Grader in the Richmond Public Schools is taught drown proofing.
    - The Wood River Run will be held again this year in the spring.
    - Josh also announced a few results of a study FoJRP purchased obtaining Visitor Use Statistics data from the cell phones of JRP users. This is similar to a study used by the National Park System. Some statistics it has revealed that over 2700 zip codes are recorded and from all 50 states. This data can trace where park visitors are coming from and how many times they visit. Josh will provide more research data as they decipher the numbers.
- **BridgePark Update:** Jim Hill – no information

**New Business:** Greg Velzy: A follow-up to the regional safety committee's work. Safety signs are going up at Watkins Landing and other river entry places in Chesterfield County. Also Portage and Dam Warning signs are going up on private property and CCV property near and around Boshers Dam

**Reports:**

**JROC:** JROC work project clearing railroad tie debris left by park employees some years ago – 9:00am, Saturday, December 17, 2022. KOTJ raised \$20,000.

**Open discussion: Happy Holidays**

**Adjourn:** 1:25 pm

**Next Public Meeting: January 19, 2023**

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Richmond City Hall and/or conducted via Zoom. 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](mailto:velzyg@verizon.net). If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary