

Minutes:

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

Meeting: - May 16, 2019

Greg Velzy, Chair– Presiding

Call to Order: 12:04 PM

Attending: Committee members: John Heerwald, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, Leighton Powell, John Thompson, Jim Hill, and The Honorable Kimberly B. Gray, Councilwoman, Richmond.

Minutes - April 18, 2019 minutes – G. Velzy moved to approve. L. Powell seconded. Unanimously approved.

Current Issues:

- **Mayor Storey's 2020 Budget and Appropriations for James River Park and Projects:** The Budget for 2020 has been passed by Richmond City Council but as of this meeting, details not released yet, so it's unclear the status of funding for James River park and James River related projects. (I looked through the 2020 Budget after it was put online. The James River Park is funded 806,441 for 2019 and 937,345 for 2020. I called Bryce Wilk to ask how this was to be distributed and he said that Chris Frelke, Director of Parks and Recreation was the money manager along with Nathan Burrell and he had no information as yet as to how the money was to be distributed. He also stated that he had no information about the final funding amount for the Huguenot Flatwater access. In the budget it is lumped together under Economic Development Projects.)
- **Riverfront Development Plan - Planning Department Updates:** Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, City of Richmond was not present.
 - **Riverfront Development Plan -Downriver Updates:** Leighton Powell had none and apologized. Said she would try to find out what Stone's plans were as her contact is no longer with the company.
 - **Missing Link** – no information – no funding in the Mayor's Budget
- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50th Anniversary:**
 - John Heerwald: 50th Anniversary Meeting was held at Covenant Woods May 7, 2019. There was discussion of publishing an informational piece on the existing rivers (much like JRA's State of the James) as well as updating the current brochure about the Scenic Rivers Program, but there is no budget or funding from DCR, so not certain what, if anything, will happen. Leighton suggested putting all this information online and simply printing a card with the website info on it.
 - There was also discussion concerning the Falls Committee participating at a table at the 10th Anniversary of the Conservation Easement Celebration on June 5th. There was concern that an easement might be construed as a next step or a requirement of Scenic River status.
 - June 10th is an informational session in Charlottesville at which Lynn Crump needs volunteers to help talk about the program. If interested contact Lynn.
- **Virginia Scenic James River Designation Extension:**
 - John Moeser received a reply from John Vithoukas that Dr. Joseph P. Casey, Chesterfield County administrator was not interested and thus neither were they (Henrico County). John Heerwald suggested that it probably needed grass roots support. After some discussion concerning the benefits of the program, particularly economic, it was suggested that we write an Opinion Piece for the R T-D. Leighton said that she could take the lead on this. Tricia offered to help outline and gather information. It was also decided that we write a piece now about the benefits of the program and then perhaps get Rex Springston to do a piece on the 50th Anniversary of the State Scenic Rivers Program.

- **James River Park MasterPlan:** The first steering committee meeting was held May 14, 2019 to begin the discussion concerning the results/information gathered from the over 2300 surveys and to begin the process of taking those results and crafting a MasterPlan. Tricia reported that the meeting was very well done, led by Chris from VHB and Kirk from Hargreaves, Associates. The steering committee first discussed the mission and guidance, reworking the 7/8 target points listed and more carefully honed/clarified the objectives. The results more or less validated concerns and ongoing issues in the JRP with no new surprises. 58% of the results were from land users with 22% from James River users. The leading concern is how to maintain quality of wilderness/solitude/natural experience in the face of increased usage/traffic. The steering committee addressed the first of many hot topics: restrooms, before adjourning. They will meet again on June 3rd, 2019.
- **CRLC – Updates:** Parker Agelasto/Jane Myers not present.
 - Greg summarized the 2018 Annual JRP Inspection Report. Floods have caused damage and rerouting of trail and other surfaces causing changes to the impervious surfaces. Plans are in place to add to easement real estate within the JRP. Summary findings were listed for each JRP area documenting conditions, problems concerning erosion or invasive plant improvement, vandalism, increased impervious surface additions and other conservation easement alterations or concerns.
 - There will be a 10th Anniversary celebration of the Conservation Easement Wednesday, June 5 at Noon in the Pony Pasture Park.
- **DPU updates:** Grace LeRose was not present. There is a new DPU outreach coordinator – Jen Clarke

New Business: The Honorable Kimberley Grey noted that the JRP and river related projects were kept in the new budget and not cut significantly. She warned not to let money sit and to use prudently as soon as possible.

Reports:

James River Park System – Bryce Wilk not present but it was reported that JRPS Has opened 22nd Street and 42nd Street parking lots funding opening/closing and some security. Open M-Fri 9-5 and weekends.

JRA - Justin and wife have a new baby boy – Jasper!

JRAC - James River Cleanup - September 2019 – 2nd weekend.

JROC – Working in June to build dumpster blinds for Pony Pasture

FoJRP - Master Plan for JRPS. Steering Committee meeting – June 3, 2019

Open Discussion: None

Meeting Adjourned: 12:53 pm

Tricia Pearsall - Secretary

Next Public Meeting: - June 20, 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.