

Minutes:

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

Meeting: June 16, 2022

Greg Velzy: Chair – Presiding

Call to Order: 12:03 PM

Attending Committee Members: Ralph Hambrick (Zoom), Leighton Powell (Zoom), Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Anne Wright, John Heerwald, Justin Doyle (Zoom). Community members present: Parker Agelasto (Executive Director CRLC), Giles Garrison (Superintendent, James River Park System), Josh Stutz (Director, Friends of the James River Park), Shawna Shade, Assistant to Director, Friends of the James River Park, Kevin Vonck (Director Planning and Review, City of Richmond)

Minutes: Minutes of April 21, 2022 and May 19, 2022 - Greg Velzy Motion to approve, John Heerwald second. Approved.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Updates:** Kevin Vonck, Director Department of Planning & Review, City of Richmond. (This report took place in the middle of the CRLC Updates below)
 - Manchester & Mayo Bridge area: Still chasing down information on where all of these projects stand. He's having one more meeting with budget next week to implement plans. He feels good about this integration of projects and departments and also align with Richmond-300 such that capitol or private projects which impact the same area could occur at the same time using similar resources (closing streets, etc.)
 - Missing Link: Hopeful that the Missing Link designs can come up for scrutiny by UDC soon. The UDC secretary has been moved to CAR so that position is vacant at the moment. Giles Garrison stated that when this happens, she or her operations staff would like to be involved so that construction problems which JRPS has experienced on the Tyler Potterfield Bridge can be avoided.
 - East Riverfront-Intermediate Terminal: Giles Garrison spoke that she would like to see this area added to the James River Park for maintenance, etc.
 - Diversity Park: Total disconnect between JRPS and Construction Crew. Must be resolved as this access road will continue to be used by construction crews over the next few years.
 - Kevin Vonck also reported that DOD for the proposed development on the Canal at Byrd Street was going ahead: (https://richmond.com/business/10-story-hyatt-place-hotel-planned-for-canal-walk-in-downtown-richmond/article_0115b4dc-06ef-510d-9524-e1b20e2afa0b.html). Tricia asked about complete access to Locks 4 & 5 of the Tidewater Connection. Vonck assured that all of that area would remain accessible to the public.
 - Another riverfront project is the new building being planned at the CoStar Plaza. (<https://www.costar.com/article/508382584/costar-group-plans-460-million-campus-expansion-in-richmond>)
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto:
 - Meeting with Giles Garrison tomorrow to bring her up to date with title and easement issues involving islands and lands in James River Park.
 - Parker also stated that there is much survey and deed work to be done. He went on to explain that he needed to conduct drone and survey work for an up-to-date map of James and islands. Then extensive title and research work needs to be conducted to go back (further than the City research has gone) to study mills/dams/riparian rights, etc. He said the process gets very complicated and would require at least \$50,000 for 7 islands. One of the untitled islands is near Reedy Creek Hdqtrs. Josh Stutz stated that perhaps FOJRP could be helpful. (break to accommodate Kevin Vonck's report)

- Parker went on to state that students from the College of William and Mark were helping with title research of islands in the James River.
 - Parker also stated that he is trying to bring into easement which places can be added now instead of waiting for all islands and new land areas to be added.
 - Parker also brought up 2 new projects that he is working on to add to the JRP under procurement and easement.
 - Brander Street property just under and east of I-95 which encompasses the current Slave Trail. This land is owned by Norfolk-Southern RR and is not part of the JRPS legally. CRLC is now working with Norfolk-Southern to acquire this property. A compromise agreement which would allow a 20 ft. easement on either side of the rail is under review. CRLC has applied for grants for survey of Brander Street.
 - 3.5 acres belonging to Josh & Carrie Rodgers is under consideration West of the Boulevard. This area is currently under a trail easement, but would like to add this entire area to the park and hope this will establish a precedent for a 'subdivision' such that other landowners to deed or sell land to the JRP/City along the West of Boulevard trail route.
 - There has been no movement on the CSX property on the Northside Dock Street area. Also, CRLC still has a bit of a gap on the Dock Street property, but only now a couple of hundred thousand. They are working on completing transfer to city by the end of 2022.
 - Another property coming to City Council soon is the facilitation of a swap along Goode's Creek and Commerce Road. If this goes through, the City would pick up 12 to 13 acres back side of Broad Rock Creek Park. This would add to the linear trail connection from Bellemeade and possibly incorporate a historically significant area into the James River Park.
- **Virginia Scenic Rivers:** Samantha Wangsgard, Chief Environmental Planner, DCR emailed that they had not received any requests at this time for field evaluations. "We have received one request from a Moormans group to create a Scenic River Advisory committee for that river." She did not indicate that DCR was working to encourage various locales to submit rivers for field evaluations.
 - **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle was present, but had to leave for a 1:00pm meeting. He sent a note saying that the James River Center was moving along and would have a more detailed report at next meeting.
 - **James River Park:** Giles Garrison, Superintendent, James River Park.
 - Giles announced that Ancarrows would be closed all weekend because of the Juneteenth Celebration. Notices had gone out this morning to various groups. We suggested that she perhaps contact the City's Office of Multicultural Affairs on ways to get the word out to the Latino populations that heavily use this area.
 - She also reported that Hammer & Ales (Richmond Toolbank) had built a huge number of trash bins and benches recently to assist the JRP.
 - She reported on the use of the Outdoor Classroom built next to Park Hdqtrs.
 - The Park has been successful in being allowed to move the fence 8' toward the RR tracks at the 21st Street Highline Trail (for about 100yds). This work will be funded by FOJRP and greatly widens the present trail around an unstable area in danger of collapse.
 - Huguenot Flatwater Access Ramp is scheduled to be formally opened on July 20th at 2:30pm.
 - The JRP is hoping for surplus funding to change the plating clips for the Tyler Potterfield Bridge flooring which keeps popping up.
 - Safety Conversation: New signs have gone up at access points along the river (a project funded by JROC). Tricia asked that there be a static interpretive sign placed nearby such that tubers and other know that above 6', for example, is not safe for tubing, etc. Also, there be some sort of information which would lead people to checking river levels. A Ranger Program may be instituted After July 1st. It's not clear exactly what that program entails.
 - **DPU updates:** Jenn Clarke, Grace LeRose not present. Parker did state that Team HDL goals: VCAP- Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) monies are helping soil & water conservation districts with implementation of projects for private landowners. Approximately \$4 million is available for projects such as tearing up asphalt. Once

this program is established, DPU can promote it in its bills.

- **Friends of James River Park:** Josh Stutz
 - He stated that ½ million budget had been establish for stream stabilizations and geolifts.
 - Friends of the Pumphouse will join FOJRP and hopefully the funds that have been raised by the Friends of Pumphouse and deposited in EnRichmond will be transferred to be used for restoration of the Pumphouse. There is fear that funds will not be transferred.

New Business: None

Reports:

JRAC: none

JROC: June project is restablizing and improving the parking lot at Huguenot Flatwater.

Open discussion: None

Adjourn: 1:33pm

Next Public Meeting: July 21, 2022

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall and 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. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary