

Agenda for  
*Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee*

**January 19, 2017**

**Call to Order:**

**Minutes** - December 15, 2016

**Current Issues:**

- Riverfront Development Plan:
  - Downriver Riverfront Presentation January 11, 2017 and Proposed Schedule of Completion
  - Notes from Meeting with Lynn Crump regarding importance of Scenic River Designation and inclusion in all Riverfront related documents and presentations (see below).
    - a. Historic Review: JROC website/ Richmondoutside.com  
(<http://www.richmondoutside.com/2017/01/when-pony-pasture-almost-became-an-expressway/>)
    - b. Meeting with Levar Stoney
      - T. Potterfield Bridge – Numbers and Dogs
      - Missing Link Phase
- EnRichmond – Leighton Powell
- Capital Region Land Conservancy Acquisition and JRP Buffer Easement Update

**New Business: -**

- Falls Committee's meeting Spring outing with Mayor Levar Stoney
- James River Park Master Plan Funding and Preparation – FOJRP

**Reports -**

James River Park System – Nathan Burrell

JRAC -

JROC -

FoJRP -

**Open discussion -**

**Next Public Meeting: - February 16, 2017**

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

**Notes on Meeting – Monday, Jan 2, 2017** - Lynn Crump, Greg Velzy, Jim Hill, Leighton Powell and Tricia Pearsall

Quote of the Day – Jim Hill, we want projects that stop consuming resources and start contributing resources” or something like that!

Falls Committees needs a new name so people don't fall asleep while we're telling them who we are– RVA State Scenic James River or the The James State Scenic River at the Falls???

Reason we met was Lynn noticed that nowhere in the Downriver Plan was there a mention of the James in Richmond as a State Scenic River. After discussion we decided to take action on the following fronts:

1. At the **January 11, 2017 – 6:00pm - Presentation of the Downriver Plan**: we need to address Hargreaves and Planning:

**Greg Velzy** should make the presentation:

It might go something like this: As chair of the Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee, we noticed that no where in the Downriver Plan was there mention of the James as a State Scenic River (the first in Virginia). It was this designation in 1972 that set the stage for the establishment of the James River Park and eventually the snowball surge of park and river protection/appreciation volunteer efforts that followed. In case you don't remember - In 1970, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act. The Richmond Scenic James Council, which had been formed in 1966 to halt construction of the proposed four-lane Riverside Parkway as a leg of the Downtown Expressway (It would have extended into the River on Southside and resulted in removal of part of Williams Island), worked with the City to draft legislation introduced as the Historic Falls of the James Act. It was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly and signed into legislation by Governor Linwood Holton in 1972.

It is this designation that paved the way or set the table for James River Park and for the resurgence of the river and banks as an urban wilderness oasis. The Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee, which grew out of the Richmond Scenic James Council, has acted as state and city appointed river stewards since that time. Over the years the Advisory Committee has been involved in advocating for repositioning of the Lee Bridge, breaching dams for fish passages, consulting on the CSO, and more recently on matters concerning the Riverfront Development and Downriver Plan.

The James in Richmond was Virginia's FIRST State Scenic River now up to 33 State Scenic Rivers. Please honor the James River and this designation by adding this to the plan and include in all other plans for the James River shores.

2. **Leighton Powell** makes an appointment for several members to meet with **Levar Stoney – the new Mayor**. This should happen (if possible) between January 11 and January 19, 2017 (our January meeting)

Things to tell Levar Stoney – Mayor (much the same as above)

a. The primary reason we have the James River that we all now love so dearly, is that in 1972, the James River from Boshers' Dam to Orleans Street was declared a Virginia Scenic River.

b. This designation paved the way or set the table for James River Park, for the resurgence of the river and banks as an urban wilderness oasis, as well as for all of the efforts of volunteer and support groups that now so love the James and the Park culminating in Richmond being named The Top River Town in America by Outside magazine.

c. History: In 1970, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act as a result of the 1965 Virginia's Common Wealth, the first comprehensive outdoor recreation and land conservation plan in the state, which recommended that the assets of Virginia's Rivers be taken into account in future planning. The Richmond Scenic James Council, which had been formed in 1966 to halt construction of the proposed four-lane Riverside Parkway as a leg of the Downtown Expressway (It would have extended into the River on Southside and resulted in removal of part of Williams Island), worked with the City to draft legislation introduced as the Historic Falls of the James Act. It was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly and signed into legislation by Governor Linwood Holton in 1972. In 1970, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act. The Richmond Scenic James Council, which had been formed in 1966 to halt construction of the proposed four-lane Riverside Parkway as a leg of the Downtown Expressway (It would have extended into the River on Southside and resulted in removal of part of Williams Island), worked with the City to draft legislation introduced as the Historic Falls of the James Act. It was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly and signed into legislation by Governor Linwood Holton in 1972.

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d. As State appointed stewards for the James River, the Falls Committee has:

#### **James River Park**

The Advisory Board has supported additions and appropriate development of the James River Park System over the years, including

- The enhancement of the first section of the park (21st to 42 Streets) and acquisition of Pony Pasture River Park, Huguenot Woods Park, North Park, Great Ship Lock Park, Three Mile Locks Park, and Belle Isle.
- The Board worked extensively with Stanley and Carlton Abbott, nationally known landscape architects, in planning James River Park facilities. Additionally, the Board has supported
- The creation of the James River Park Manager/Naturalist position
- Environmental education programs, materials, and clean-up projects in the James River Parks

#### **Lee Bridge**

- The Falls Board successfully proposed re-locating the new Lee Bridge to a more environmentally sound location and
- Proposed a pedestrian, bicycle, and handicapped accessible bridge from the north shore to Belle Isle suspended underneath the new Lee Bridge, later agreed to by the City and promoted by the Richmond Riverfront Corporation under the leadership of its chairman Brenton Halsey.

#### **Fish Passage**

- Worked with City, State, and Federal agencies to promote the breaching of the Manchester, Brown's Island, and Williams Dams to allow for the passage of anadromous fish during the spawning and re-entry process
- Assisted the James River Association which, along with the City, State, and Federal governments as well as Richmond area corporations and foundations, took the leadership role in promoting the fish passage at Boshers Dam

#### **Combined Sewer Overflow**

- Provided ongoing review and advice to the city and its engineering consultants, primarily Greeley & Hansen, in the development of the ever expanding Combined Sewer Overflow abatement project
- Provided recommendations regarding the design and placement of major water and sewer lines

#### **Canals**

- Worked with Bill Trout and the Virginia Canal & Navigation Society to protect and preserve important components of the James River & Kanawha Canal, the Haxall Canal, and the Manchester Canal.
- Focused attention on the Three Mile Lock System and its associated historic Pump House.

- Instigated the innovative coordination of the canal system restoration with the location of CSO interceptors underneath and along the same right-of-way for both environmental and economic advantages

#### **Floodwall**

- Supported Historic Richmond Foundation in successfully persuading the Corps of Engineers to penetrate the floodwall with a canal gate, without which the canal would have been obstructed, so boats can navigate that area now.

#### **Historic Preservation**

- Worked actively to preserve certain historic sites along the river – Kanawha Canal sites, Great Ship Lock, Downtown Locks on Reynolds property, Three Mile – and Five Mile Locks, Confederate Boat Yard, Slave Dock and Trail, Foushee Mill, and Ballendines Foundry

#### **Viewshed Protection**

- Worked with representatives of Dominion Power to preserve as much as possible of the scenic river viewshed in the planning of their new buildings along the riverbank.

#### **Downtown Riverfront Development Plan**

- Worked to make recommendations concerning all aspects of the plan and its ongoing implementation from the T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge to the new Stone Downriver Plan.

e. The Falls Committee would like to work with the City to be consulted on and assist with all river-related projects and events in advance of development and permitting processes (rather than only being advised during the comment phase). With our depth of expertise in all river aspects, we can often offer slight recommendations which can save money and avoid retrofit or other oversight (Steps up Manchester Bridge at T Pott Bridge Project).

f. We would like for the Mayor to appoint a liaison or a representative to sit on our Committee – to inform and work with us.

g. We would like very much to take the mayor down the river on a raft with some of us and other members of his staff. AT this time we could bring up the viewshed river vista corridor as mapped from the middle of the River. This is the Committee's mandate.

