

Minutes:

Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Meeting: - October 19, 2017, 5th Floor Conference Room – City Hall – Richmond, VA

Greg Velzy – Chair Presiding

Call to Order: 12:10

Minutes - September 21, 2017 minutes - approved

Attending: Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Ralph Hambrick, John Moeser, John Heerwald, Anne Wright, Leighton Powell, Grace LeRose – DPU - TMDL Coordinator at City of Richmond.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Plan:**
 - **Potterfield Bridge** – Updates: The bridge is still a major Richmond destination, but it still has loose rubber gaskets hanging below where insulator strips are falling off and decking is still warping. Nathan Burrell is aware of this. It's hoped that this is part of some sort of construction warranty.
 - **Missing Link Phase** – No report.
- **EnRichmond – Vauxhall Island** - Cede to City of Richmond Update. No information. Leighton will check up on this. Leighton reports: "He emailed me yesterday afternoon (10.24.17). He said the transfer is nearing completion but not done yet. Just a couple more loose ends." Still a possibility for a JROC cleanup.
- **Falls Committee's meeting with Mayor Levar Stoney** – Leighton Powell: No report
- **Capital Region Land Conservancy** - No Update
- **James River Park Relationship with City Department of Parks and Recreation** – A letter went out from the Falls Committee (see attached) in support of positioning the James River Park System as an autonomous entity reporting directly to the new Parks and Recreation Director. Nathan had a meeting with Mayor Stoney concerning this and other JRPS related subjects that, according to Greg, went very well. Nathan is supposed to have met with the new Director yesterday. The Mayor also indicated that he looked forward to a conversation about the feasibility of a private/public partnership concerning JRPS governance and management. (such as a conservancy, foundation or the like). Also it is understood that the Mayor supports the JRPS MasterPlan (don't know if that involves any funding). Grace LeRose just raised the expected concerns of the City in drafting such an entity and to make us mindful of what all must be considered. It was suggested that we look into the Central Park Conservancy. John Heerwald suggested that Nathan needs to spend time with the new Director in the JRPS.
- **Master Plan Proposals** – No Update.

New Business:

- **RVAH20** – Grace LeRose made a presentation regarding DPU's role in all matters concerning the use of water from/in the James River. She stated that DPU's new mandate is to handle all water issues from storm water to drinking water, from Programs to permits = ALL water entities as it relates to the City of Richmond's water. Goals

and strategies include reducing CSO events, improving water quality and the water quality of all tributaries, and upgrading wastewater and all pollutants (to rid 90% of nitrates and phosphorous). Next they want to treat more storm water. At the moment they have the highest functioning treatment plant on the River. They are now looking to improving the CSO such that the overflow water and residues are reduced before they even hit the CSO pipes. It is noted that now they get credit (equaling funding) for green infrastructure before the materials get to the pipes.

Update RVAH2O – they are beginning the implementation phase of working on the most needed watersheds: Gillies Creek, Shockoe and Manchester...AND they are trying to piggyback on to ongoing infrastructure that is improving areas. They are also working directly with neighborhoods and local communities. Grace suggested that we go online and look at Atlanta's 4th Ward Park Project.

Stream Restoration: She stated that we should be alert for an upcoming announcement of a major partnering with an organization to make a real difference in a Richmond neighborhood. She also added that the stream restoration in Maury Cemetery was complete and they were getting ready to launch in Rattlesnake Creek and Pocoshock Creek.

- **Richmond as a Biophilic City:** Anne Wright reported that she, Nathan and Justin had attended the conversation concerning Richmond becoming a Biophilic City, which promotes how the city and residents connect to nature. It promotes that all city project work with an understanding of nature in mind. She said it was well received and a steering committee put in place. – Biophilic Cities: <http://biophiliccities.org>

Reports -

James River Park System – No report

JRA -

JRAC -

JROC - King of the James (James River type triathlon) to be held October 22, 2017.

FoJRP - Ralph White River Hero Awards awarded to Joey Parent, Margaret Maslak, Laura Greenleaf and Warren Foster

Open discussion:

- **Canal Rewatering:** Grace said she would find out the status.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:56pm

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

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.



Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

The Honorable Levar Stoney
Mayor
City of Richmond
900 East Broad St.
Richmond VA 23219

October 8, 2017

Dear Mayor Stoney,

The Falls of the James State Scenic River Advisory Committee is writing to urge you to institutionalize a structure whereby the James River Park System, as an autonomous and independent structure, reports directly to the Director of City Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities. This important revision of structure was cited in the 2012 adopted Riverfront Development Plan as being an essential priority for its success in order to assure coordinated governance for implementation and efficient management of the riverfront

Over the years, the James River Park System has occasionally operated essentially in this manner, but then the bureaucratic structure re-emerges and with that, procedural priorities become a cumbersome emphasis, at which time the staff cannot fully focus on management and maintenance of the Park.

Historically, management the James River Park System was a bit like administering an overwhelming behemoth, understaffed, but happily left to the love and dedication of volunteers. It seems that now, since the James River Park System is finally being recognized for the adulation and commendation it has brought to the City, and acknowledged as the single biggest attraction for the City and the Metro-region, the park staff is able to be properly allocated. Now more than ever, when at last management can finally focus on effective and wise strategy, and look toward funding and establishing a vision and Master Plan, this park should be formally allowed to operate as an autonomous entity.

Nowhere in the nation is there such an urban wilderness park that garners more visitation than any other facility in the city and region. Let's celebrate and give this institution its proper recognition in the City government hierarchy, so it can be allowed to flourish.

The Falls of the James State Scenic River Advisory Committee is a State appointed committee of local riverine experts and advocates that has been continually active for over 40 years advising on all matters concerning the James River from Boshers Dam downriver to Orleans Street.

Sincerely,



Committee Members:

Gregory J. Velzy

Chair

Outdoor Recreation Programmer, Board member - JROC, JRAC, and Friends of James River Park

Leighton Powell

Vice Chair

Director-Scenic Virginia

Tricia Pearsall

Secretary

James River advocate

Alex Dahm

Program Manager-Venture Richmond

Justin Doyle

Community Conservation Manager-James River Association

Ralph Hambrick

Professor VCU Public Policy-retired

John F. Heerwald

Program Manager-DCR-retired

James Christian Hill

Senior Project Manager-Sadler & Whitehead, PLC

John V. Moeser

Senior Fellow-Bonner Center-UR-retired

Jane Myers

Land Conservation Manager-Capital Region Land Conservancy

John B. Thompson

Attorney-ThompsonMcMullan-retired

Ralph White

James River Park Manager-retired

Anne Wright

Ass. Professor-VCU Life Sciences