

Minutes:

Falls of the James State Scenic River Advisory Committee

Meeting: August 18, 2016 - 5th floor Conference Room, Richmond City Hall.

Leighton Powell – Vice Chair Presiding

Meeting called to order: 12:06pm

Attendance:

Falls Members: Ralph Hambrick, Tricia Pearsall, John Thompson, Leighton Powell, Jane Myers, Anne Wright

Falls Members Not Present: Greg Velzy, Alex Dahm, Ralph White, Justin Doyle, John Moeser, John Heerwald

Minutes: July 21, 2016 Meeting. Motion to approve by John Thompson. Seconded by Anne Wright. Minutes approved.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Plan: Hargreaves and Associates' Design Concepts for Intermediate Terminal/Sugar Pad/Stone Brewery Site of the Downriver Portion of the Riverfront Development Plan.**

(On Thursday, July 28, 2016, members met at the site under review to walk, discuss and take a firsthand look at the proposals. On August 3, 2016, Falls members attended the public presentation of the design concepts presented by Kirt Rieder of Hargreaves and met again on Thursday, August 4 with Mr. Reider, Mark Olinger, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review City of Richmond and Kathleen Onufer, Planner, City of Richmond and other stakeholders to listen to plans and concerns and to present views.)

The committee immediately began drafting a letter concerning the Falls Committee position, suggestions and recommendations regarding the design and purpose of this Downriver Riverfront Site. This letter to the Planning Department City of Richmond is due by August 31, 2016.

Parking: Parking for access to the river and the James River Park has long been a frustration. (Is there a 'parking' commitment made by the City to Stone Brewery regarding parking numbers?) Parking is a critical factor that needs to be addressed. We think additional parking needs to be explored for this site. It's noble to assume that biking and

the bus will be major transportation solutions, but the reality is that this will be a critical factor both for access to this area and as it affects the user base. No private entity should have exclusive parking rights. Is there designated parking for the public other than street parking and how does one access the riverfront from it? Development of this site will add to the already overwhelming parking problems at Great Shiplock.

RECOMMEND:

1. Fully adequate parking to make riverfront accessible by all.
2. A private entity should not exclusively have only riverfront access parking available like La Diff.

Location of Virginia Capital Trail: The committee discussed that A-1 given the three options was perhaps the best; however concept B going under the Intermediate Terminal Restaurant could provide options for bathrooms, water and shelter from rain, but this may not mesh with Stone's plan for this site, so

RECOMMEND: Route the Virginia Capital Trail off the riverfront at the Lehigh site and keep the trail in its existing location on the Intermediate Terminal site.

Gillies Creek Greenway: The committee discussed the future of this corridor and would like more information on the proposed CSO project for this site and how it might interact with this plan. We would like to see a herring run re-established in this creek.

RECOMMEND: Option 2 of the proposed concepts.

Shaded Open Spaces: The Committee was in favor of shaded green spaces that are versatily adaptable and are near to drinking water and restrooms. We are opposed to a designated playground, but suggest a splash pad, misting area or other creative and safe water feature.

RECOMMEND: Areas or swaths of green shaded spaces that can be adapted versitily according to user demands to include a splash pad or creative water feature.

Vendors: Ralph suggested (in absentia) that there should be a designated vendor selling local RVA items. We also discussed single vendor location. The main concern is impact on the land (as it's not spacious) and trash.

RECOMMEND: Vendors be local, considered and placed very carefully as not to impose on usable land space.

Fishing: Yes. Fishing should be allowed and promoted along this entire riverfront access with cleaning stations and other amenities to engage users.

RECOMMEND: Make fishing access including cleaning stations along the entire riverfront length of this site

River Access: Keep terraces at a clustered area perhaps around Gillies Creek as in Concept 2 and promote opening cut-ways through the vegetation to the west, but not clear vegetation (need shade). Demolish the Sugar Pad but do not build a performance space. Consider using the Ash Street ramp as a put-in for paddleboards, etc.

RECOMMEND: Terraces, yes, but keep vegetation and create openings to the river.

Historic and Educational Interpretation: Need historic interpretation. Keep the message that explains the site as it was originally (ropewalks, sail makers, shipyards). Make this information simple and interesting and (if possible) conform to other river interpretive information (as is now, there are all sorts of signs all over the place), perhaps even using public art as a vehicle for interpretation and for education about such things as watershed. Key is brevity and involvement.

RECOMMEND: Create effective and informative historical and educational interpretation dignifying the site as it was during Richmond's Port preeminence and perhaps using public art or other features to focus on river educational such as watershed understanding.

There was also discussion regarding this area and its eventually becoming part of the Conservation Easement. We should remind the City that this region should not add unnecessarily to the impervious surface problems for the rest of the James River Park (5%). Leighton also brought up the hope that the entire riverfront area could one day be part of a Riverfront Conservancy

No further issues or new business was discussed.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 1:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tricia Pearsall