

## Minutes for *Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee* meeting: July 20, 2017

### Call to Order: 12:06

**Minutes** - May 18, 2017 – Minutes approved after revisions concerning JRP Master Plan Funding and Preparation.

**Attending:** Tricia Pearsall, John Moeser, John Heerwald, John Thompson, Jim Hill, Alex Dahm, Anne Wright  
Guest: Jennifer Hatchett, DPU Stormwater/Wastewater Administrator

### Current Issues:

Tricia provided chocolate covered doughnuts in honor of Greg Velzy's birthday. Greg was not in attendance.

- Riverfront Development Plan:
  - Potterfield Bridge – Faulty Construction Updates:
    - § The bridge has a few issues: High usage and wracking has caused areas of the decking to warp up, creating uneven surfaces with the potential to cause tripping. The grass is dying at the seating area on the south end and has been replaced with stone dust. Some plants/trees on the south side may need to be replaced. The proximity of the RR tracks to the pedestrian pathway is still a cause for concern.
  - Downriver Updates – Sugar Pad Construction & Dock St. Relocation, Downriver Riverfront Plan public meeting, Wednesday, June 28, 2017:  
([http://www.richmondgov.com/PlanningAndDevelopmentReview/documents/PlansRiverfront/20170628\\_Public\\_Meeting\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.richmondgov.com/PlanningAndDevelopmentReview/documents/PlansRiverfront/20170628_Public_Meeting_Presentation.pdf)):
    - § No one from Falls attended. Jennifer Hatchett attended and weighed in: Not many changes, but lots of green infrastructure has been envisioned and suggested as development happens. Capitol Trail through the Lehigh section will probably be realigned closer to the road, not in the middle or closer to the riverfront.
  - Missing Link Phase – Grant Application Update and Mayor's Directive – Justin Doyle: No report
- EnRichmond – Vauxhall Island - Cede to City of Richmond Update. JROC Cleanup:
  - Tricia got a social media update from Capital Region Land Conservancy that the transfer to the City of Vauxhall Island was progressing. "Planned expansion of the [James River Park System](#)-- and its conservation easement-- are moving along as City Council approves an ordinance for the acceptance of grant funds that will allow for the transfer of downtown's 2.8 acre Vauxhall Island to city ownership, incorporation into the JRPS, and inclusion into the conservation easement co-held by [Capital Region Land Conservancy](#), [Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation](#), and [Enrichmond Foundation](#)." JROC stands ready to do an island cleanup of trash generated by the resident homeless and debris located under and around the billboard. It remains uncertain who will have responsibility for keeping the island clean once it transfers to the City.
- Falls Committee's meeting with Mayor Levar Stoney – Leighton Powell: No report
- Capital Region Land Conservancy Update –

- Current JRP Land Easement Acquisition Updates: CRLC has done an excellent job of reaching out and promoting their services to the public and to individuals, and business is booming (good), but their staff is scrambling to keep up and Jane Myers has said that she is unable to attend Falls meetings on a regular basis. “My plan is to attend based upon new or updated activity that CRLC is undertaking relevant to the River in our region. Since easements/projects take years to manifest, movement is often at a very slow pace. CRLC needs to put its resources towards paying my hours on issues more specifically related to our direct mission which is to conserve and protect the Richmond region as a whole (i.e. conservation easements). I will read the meeting minutes to keep abreast of the issues with which the committee is dealing. I will also provide email updates when there is something I think relevant to the committee's focus and attend in person when CRLC would like the committee's input OR the committee expresses a need for me to be there.” (not so good – we certainly value Jane’s contributions).
- Master Plan Proposals – VHB and Hargreaves and Associates Updates – Nathan Burrell: No report
- GRTC Bus Route Development - Letter Supporting Bus Access to the James River Park – Leighton Powell: No report
- RVAH20 – Update on stream restoration underway: From Jennifer Hatchett:
  - Feedback from stakeholders on the Stream Restoration criteria was received and incorporated into the Draft Integrated Water Resources Management Plan, and the broader meetings with stakeholders are now complete. Comments on the Plan are due by Aug 1. The city is now prioritizing watersheds for restoration by looking at where they own the most properties and where restoration efforts will do the most good and be economical. The next step will be to choose a pilot watershed and 2 others from the priority list for restoration. Then they will move to Framework Planning, which will assess leveraging public, private, grant funded assets and development opportunities that are proposed or in the works in said watersheds. She used Gillie’s Creek as an example of an area that has that type of potential. The issue of removing the culverts was discussed, but the cost and upstream issues seem prohibitive. As an example of what could be possible, Tricia described a similar stream in S Korea that had been extensively restored and was now a destination. Jennifer would like to attend our meetings on a more regular basis.

**New Business:**  
**Reports -**

James River Park System – Nathan Burrell: No report

JRA - No report

JRAC - Canal Cleanup. No report

JROC - Clean-up of debris islands in the Canal from the Pumphouse to the Powhite Bridge and removal of water plants choking canal passage just above the Powhite Bridge.

FoJRP - No report

**Open discussion:**

- Alex hinted at a big project on the horizon that involves the re-watering of the canal and creating a park space. It has gained widespread support. VHB has done surveys, and DPU, Mayor Stoney, and Venture Richmond are on board. Greg Velzy has gained permission to lead kayak trips from the Pump House to the floodwall of the Water Treatment Plant. Tricia speculated that once the 2 locks are functioning, there could be clear water access on the Canal from the Park Hydro to Tuckahoe Creek, though there are big issues with security near the Water Treatment Plant.

It was noted that Hollywood and Mount Calvary cemeteries have been dumping stumps, dirt, and limbs into the canal for many years. The accumulated debris is acting as a dam and restricting water flow in areas of the canal. How this will be removed or resolved is unclear, but something will have to be done.

Decking and lighting are being replaced on T-Pot and will be completed by October. JROC has paid for water fountains and Venture Richmond is doing the installation below Tredegar and one on Brown's Island. Jennifer said that the City might be interested in adding an educational piece at each fountain.

Alex added that Nate has a plan to limit/stop commuter parking at the Tredegar lot. The lot will be locked from 9:30pm to 9am, so as to make commuters later to work if they arrive at the lot after the gates open in the morning. A contractor will open and close the lot, not Park staff.

- \*\*\* It was decided to **SKIP THE AUGUST MEETING** and reconvene in September\*\*\*

**\*\*\*\*Next Public Meeting: - 21 SEPTEMBER, 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.

Submitted by Anne Wright