

Minutes:

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

Meeting: - June 20, 2019

Greg Velzy, Chair– Presiding

Call to Order: 12:00 PM

Attending: Committee members: John Heerwald, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, Leighton Powell, Jim Hill, Anne Wright, Justin Doyle, Parker Agelasto - Executive Director, Capital Region Land Conservancy, Bryce Wilk – James River Park Superintendant, Shawna Shade – Friends of the James River Park.

Minutes - May 16, 2019 minutes – John Heerwald moved to approve. L. Powell seconded. Unanimously approved.

Current Issues:

Mayor Storey’s 2020 Budget and Appropriations for James River Park and Projects: The Budget for 2020 includes a bit over \$927,000 for James River Park management which will be used for 2 additional staff members: Programs Education and Operations. The amount funded the Huguenot Flatwater Ramp was \$150,000, a cut of \$180,000. Councilwoman Kristen Larson introduced ORD. 2019-158 to Richmond City Council: “To create a new reservation of fund balance called the 2019 Capital Projects Replenishment Reserve intended to be categorized as a committed fund balance and used to restore funding to certain capital projects for which funding was reduced in the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 capital budget.” Which would restore funding (\$180,000) to Huguenot Flatwater Access Ramp as well as (\$282,558.00) to Tredegar Accessible Walk Improvements. The Ordinance was to be heard at 1:00PM by the Finance Committee. (It was recommended to Council, placed on the Consent Agenda for June 24, 2018 and passed).

- **Riverfront Development Plan - Planning Department Updates:** Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, City of Richmond was not present and no updates provided.
 - **Riverfront Development Plan -Downriver Updates:** Leighton Powell had none.
 - **Missing Link** – no information on status of survey
- **Virginia Scenic James River Designation Extension:** Parker Agelasto provided copies of letters sent from Richmond City Council to The Honorable Leslie Haley, Chair, Chesterfield Board of Supervisors and to The Honorable Tyrone Nelson, Chairman, Henrico Board of Supervisors. No reply from either. Parker has not heard in writing why the PDC can’t move on this, particularly since all seem to be in agreement that Scenic River extension on the James River is desirable. Parker will continue to press for letters of study from a legislative perspective. In the meantime, he suggested that members and Henrico/Chesterfield citizens talk to both Tyrone Nelson & Pat O’Bannon in Henrico and to others in Chesterfield. It was also discussed that from the view of Richmond Regional Tourism, this would be an excellent economic opportunity. It was emphasized that this must be citizen driven and perhaps talking to Rte 5 Corridor Group as well as involving FOLAR and reaching out to Leslie Haley, Midlothian District Supervisor and Pat O’Bannon, Tuckahoe District Supervisor would be helpful.

John Heerwald reported that it was Scottsville citizen involvement that was pushing the drive for designation of a Middle James segment and that citizens from Fluvanna were going to speak to Buckingham residents about the designation potential.

Leighton Powell also stated that she and Tricia would get together to discuss an Opinion piece for the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50th Anniversary:**
 - John Heerwald and Justin Doyle attended the June 10th is an informational session in Charlottesville. He reported on the Scottsville Initiative – see above.
 - Tricia Pearsall reported on the excellent opportunity provided by Lynn Crump to participate in the field evaluation of the Pound River in Dickensen County on June 14, 2019. This experience provided an eye-opener to the stringent criteria demanded for Scenic River designation, as well as the eagerness of designation benefit potential as sought by rural counties in desperate need of economic reroutes.

- **James River Park MasterPlan – Update - Bryce Wilk:** Should be holding a meeting the week of July 15, 2019 to brief the public on the Masterplan survey results and initial phase of deciphering these results/ prioritization and drafting document. Last week Bryce met with Chris Dewitt (VHB) and Jacob Humboldt (City) to discuss Greenways as transportation corridors both to reach unrepresented populations, work with neighborhoods throughout the City and to disperse JRP visitors. Anne Wright asked if wildlife corridors were discussed. Bryce said no. People were the focus of these conversations. The closing of roads was also discussed as a means of moving people during certain times. Bryce was reminded that if this is to remain an urban wilderness then the forests and wildlife must be considered. Anne also reported capturing ATV's or motorized vehicles on her game cameras.

- **CRLC – Updates:** Parker Agelasto:
 - Must address the impervious surface offset (Huguenot Flatwater Access Ramp must be offset by at least 50 acres of new pervious lands). There are 140 acres of land soon to be added to the JRP, which would offset this deficit, but it hasn't happened yet. He presented a letter from Christopher Frelke, Director Department of Parks and Recreation listing City-owned parcels designated for easement protection. This letter was in honor of the Easement's 10th Anniversary celebration. It was noted, however, that many of the listed parcels are not owned by the City. Parker presented two maps showing the parcels that the City does own in the Downtown and Western sections. He also stated that the Ellet islands gift to the City is not a done deal as the Ellet family may withdraw their gift due to City inaction.
 - The 10th Anniversary celebration of the Conservation Easement Wednesday, June 5 at the Pony Pasture was a huge success. Please view the video prepared honoring the celebration and those who made the effort possible: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/TWvHBpDTQSQ?fbclid=IwAR0JRV5f6xXEVDQ3GVw664S5eLK2BleE62XICetY5ijkdZ7OR5DZ9p63rW6o>

- **DPU updates:** Grace LeRose was not present.

New Business: None

Reports:

James River Park System – Bryce Wilk stated that the first Summer Camps would begin next week. They have boats, bikes and 6 education staff. He also reported that they are looking into incentives for getting volunteers to staff JRPark Headquarters. He said that the Park was running quite well with the usual trash and grass needs of summer. He was very excited by the inclusion of the Park in the Urban Old Growth Tree Network as well as the Conservation Easement's 10th Anniversary. There are new trail signs for Park Rules and Trail Rules – see attachment.

Also have trimmed Riverside Meadows corridor and removed invasives and working on replacing rocks at Pony Pasture to prevent parking on rocks. Working with Police as well, but only so effective.

JRA - Justin Doyle: James River Watch is underway – monitoring water, etc. JRA is working on a new website to launch soon.

JRAC - James River Cleanup - September 2019 – 2nd weekend and there will be a Christmas Parade of Lights this year!

JROC – Built one dumpster blind for Pony Pasture. Auger broke so need to finish second. Will paint Park Brown.

FoJRP - Master Plan for JRPS. Looking for public meeting site.

Open Discussion: Anne Wright brought up effects of development in Southside neighborhood at end of Southcliff Drive on Buttermilk area of Park, which is a native plant hotspot. The developer has not been able to get storm water drain permit and she wanted to know what could be done to prevent building density as well as invasive plant planting.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:15 pm

Tricia Pearsall - Secretary

Next Public Meeting: - July 18, 2019

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.

