

Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2020

Attendees: Alex Dahm, Justin Doyle, Ralph Hambrick, John Heerwald, Leighton Powell, Greg Velzy, Mark Olinger (Richmond Planning and Development Review), Shawna Shade (Friends of the James River Park)

January Meeting Minutes

Ralph Hambrick moved to approve the January meeting minutes. Leighton Powell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

Richmond Riverfront Plan Updates

Mark Olinger, Director of the City of Richmond's Department of Planning and Development Review, reported his department recommended the higher cost Missing Link project concept. Mark provided an update on riverfront improvements including the Brown's Island Walk, Tredegar Street project, and Lehigh. Improvements along Tredegar Street are funded by an appropriation from the City of Richmond and revenue sharing from the Virginia Department of Transportation. Greg Velzy suggested improving the existing boat ramp at Tredegar as part of the improvements planned along Tredegar Street.

Libby Hill Viewshed

Members of the Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee recently met Mark Olinger at Libby Hill Park to discuss creating an overlay district that would protect the view of the James River. Mark Olinger is in contact with the developers of Rocketts Landing but not with Henrico County's Planning Department. An overlay district would limit development within the viewshed from Libby Hill Park and provide guidance on things like building height, lighting, landscaping, and signage. The overlay district will need to be considered by Richmond's City Council.

Lock at Great Shiplock Park

Mark Olinger would like to open the lock at Great Shiplock Park. There are concerns about opening the canal to boar traffic. Greg Velzy mentioned the public access project planned under the Interstate 95 bridge on the south bank of the river, as recommended in the James River Park System Master Plan.

Boat Ramp at Tredegar

Alex Dahm reported improvements to the concrete ramp near the bayscape area at Tredegar is being improved by the James River Park System.

Route 5

Route 5 is a candidate to become a National Scenic Byway.

50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program

An event celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program is scheduled for the first week of June at Tredegar. Six segments of rivers in Virginia were designated state scenic rivers by the General Assembly this year. There are three active scenic river committees in Virginia.

Belle Isle Parking Area

The parking lot under the CSX railroad tracks, owned by CSX, is closed. Venture Richmond would like to lease or purchase the parcel.

Brown's Island Improvement Plan

Max Hepp-Buchanan of Venture Richmond will present the Brown's Island Improvement Plan to the Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee in March.

Viewshed Registry

Leighton Powell of Scenic Virginia provided an update on the statewide viewshed registry, which is administered by Scenic Virginia.

Upper Appomattox River Evaluation

Greg Velzy reported a scenic evaluation of the Upper Appomattox River is scheduled for the first week of April.

James River Park System Master Plan

Greg Velzy reported the James River Park Master Plan was adopted by Richmond's City Council. A Friends of the James River Park master plan implementation meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2020.

Capital Region Land Conservancy Updates

Greg Velzy reported annual monitoring of the James River Park System conservation easement is wrapping up.

Richmond Department of Public Utilities Updates

A representative of the Department of Public Utilities is not in attendance. The committee would like to reach out to Grace LeRose and Jennifer Clarke.

New Committee Members

Greg Velzy reported Charles Ware is a prospective committee member. The committee should review membership of the James River Advisory Council to identify additional prospects.

No Wake Zone

Justin Doyle reported the James River Association and James River Outdoor Coalition are working with Bryce Wilk of the City of Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities to advance the implementation of a no wake zone on the James River, from the 14th Street/Mayo Bridge to Rocketts Landing Marina.

Business Cards for Committee Members

A discussion about creating business cards for committee members occurred.

New Business

Chris Frelke, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

The committee would like to engage with Chris Frelke by inviting him to meetings. Leighton Powell will extend invitations to him.

City of Richmond River Specialist

The City of Richmond does not have a dedicated river specialist. Justin Doyle mentioned some local governments have natural resources specialists and pointed to Albemarle County.

Celebration for Nathan Burrell

A celebration for Nathan Burrell is scheduled for February 23, 2020 at Triple Crossing in Fulton.

James River Association Update: Combined Sewer Overflow Legislation

Justin Doyle provided an update on the combined sewer overflow legislation introduced during this year's General Assembly session.

James River Outdoor Coalition Update: Restoring the shelter near the Boulevard Bridge James River Outdoor Coalition project scheduled for February 22, 2020. Gear swap is scheduled for April.

Friends of the James River Park Update: An organizational strategic planning meeting was held in January. Brooks Whitten recently joined the board. Shawna Shade reported Friends received \$41,000 in revenue from license plates. A new logo and rebranding effort is in the works.

Anne Wright

Committee member Anne Wright is retiring from Virginia Commonwealth University. She will remain on the committee in retirement.

***Transforming the James River in Richmond* by Ralph Hambrick**

Ralph Hambrick's new book *Transforming the James River in Richmond* is coming out soon and he is looking for opportunities to promote it.