

**Minutes:**

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee  
Zoom  
Richmond VA**

**Meeting:** February 18, 2021

**Greg Velzy:** Chair – Presiding

**Call to Order:** 12:03 PM

**Attending via Zoom:** Committee Members: Anne Wright, Justin Doyle, Jim Hill, Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, John Heerwald, Alex Dahm. City and River Community Representatives: Kevin Vonck (Acting Director, Department of Planning and Community Review, City of Richmond), Marianne Pitts (Special Assistant to the Director, Department of Planning and Development Review), Yessenia Revilla (Planner, Department of Planning and Development Review), Bill Street (CEO, James River Association), Grace LeRose (TMDL Coordinator at City of Richmond Virginia), Jenn Clarke (Public Education and Outreach Coordinator, City of Richmond), Shawna Shade (Friends of the James River Park)

**Minutes** - Minutes of January 21, 2020. Approved.

**Current Issues:**

- **Riverfront Development Plan (and other James River related) budget proposals and priorities:** Kevin Vonck was introduced and is coming up to speed having been in the Acting Director's position for less than 2 weeks. He reported that the 'asks' for the upcoming Capital Improvement Budget proposal included three items pertaining to the James Riverfront.
  - 8.5 million for the Lehigh Project design documents (which were supposed to have been completed in 2016)
  - 16.4 million for the Missing Link Project to include funds for conceptual design (Hargreaves Jones' proposals 'e' & 'f') and construction thereof.
  - 800,000 for public improvements to Manchester Canal and Walker's Creek area.
- **Libby Hill Viewshed Proposal update:** Yessenia Revilla stated that the Viewshed proposal was Included in the Richmond 300 Plan as an overlay district, but not so specific as to not allow for different approaches. Leighton shared with Kevin that she had the entire history of this effort if he needed the efforts backstory to date.
- **Manchester Development/Hull Street Projects and Manchester Canal Bridge/Walker Creek updates -** Kevin stated that not only were they concerned about safety access but also about flooding safety access vs. density. Safety measures are a concern. Jim Hill added not to forget the fishing community in the access plans for this area as they use the bridge and floodwall, particularly during shad/striper season. Tricia also added that she hoped the City would next make Manchester Green a Riverfront Development Plan priority, considering the density growing in Manchester and the need for park lands and green spaces as evidenced by the more than two-fold increase during the pandemic.
- **Richmond 300 Master Plan update:** Marianne Pitts affirmed that City Council was working through issues and limitations regarding the 300 Master Plan as adopted, for promised amendments. She also reported that the Shockoe Small Area Plan was coming before City Planning. This was one effort which was not fully integrated into the 300 Master Plan for growth.
- **Tredegar Street Project** - Kevin thinks this is moving forward with funding through a VDOT grant and City budget approved for sidewalk improvement and ADA access to Brown's Island. Alex stated that public works still needs help in this area as traffic has doubled in the last year. Kevin added that there is a timetable for the ADA compliant ramp moving forward,
- **James River Association:** Bill Street and Justin Doyle gave a presentation concerning a JRA vision for positive possibilities along the Downriver portion of the Richmond Riverfront – a lively discussion followed.

- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Leighton reported that both VA HB1819 - Rappahannock River; designating a 79-mile portion as a component of Va. Scenic Rivers System and VA HB1958 - South River; designates segment in City of Waynesboro as part of Va. Scenic Rivers System had passed the House with votes in favor of passage. The measures had then been shunted to the Senate agriculture Committee due to the short session time constraints. She felt they both had the votes to pass the Senate. (As of 2021-02-19 – HB1958 passed Senate (32-Y 5-N).
- **BridgePark Proposal Restructure:** Jim Hill: Progress is being made on reconfiguring the proposal after receiving feedback.
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto not present.
- **DPU Updates:** Grace LeRose is preparing an interim report after the Senate has required means of reducing the CSO quicker than previously proposed. They will submit the report to DEQW for approval by March and make public by July 2021. She also said that perhaps we could take a tour of the sewer pipes below the City via the “cloud” at another meeting.
- **James River Park:** Bryce Wilk (not present) has been promoted to Parks and Recreation South Division Maintenance and Operations Manager, a position that Nathan Burrell held before going to DCR. There was also much discussion regarding the Billboard removal on Vauxhall Island as part of the conveyance of deed to the City of Richmond. This deed states that this must be accomplished by February 28, 2021 – two years after the deed was conveyed to the City. There was discussion of what it will take to get this done including the possibility of a suit.
- **JRA:** Justin reported that the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR)-access ramp permit fee program has been put on hold by the House/Senate budget administration until more study can be done concerning the impact and regulatory structure, particularly for raft companies and outdoor programs. DWR will conduct the study.
- **VDOT for I-95 James River Bridge sign:** still in the works!

### New Business:

### Reports:

**James River Park System:** No report

**JRA:** Justin Doyle: see above

**JRAC:** Greg may have an administrative role.

**JROC:** Greg Velzy: Bridge repairs at 2 Sawmill Island bridges for 2.20.21

**FOJRP:** Shawna Shade: Bill Draper’s book: *A Photographic Journey through the James River Park System* is in its second printing. Friends is looking to replace the floating fishing dock at the Belle Isle quarry through the efforts of Greg and Kevin Tobin (Passages). Friends is also in process of hiring of an Executive Director.

### Open discussion:

**Adjourn:** 1:30PM

### **Next Public Meeting: March 18, 2021 via Zoom**

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Richmond City Hall or on Zoom. 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.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary