

**Minutes:**

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

**Meeting:** September 17, 2020

**Greg Velzy:** Chair – Presiding

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

**Attending:** Committee members: Jim Hill, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, Ralph Hambrick, John Heerwald, Leighton Powell, Justin Doyle, Bryce Wilk-Superintendent James River Park, Shawna Shade-Friends of the James River Park,

**Minutes** - Minutes of August 20, 2020 approved

**Current Issues:**

- **Riverfront – Planning and Development Issues:** Mark Olinger not present.
- **Libby Hill Viewshed Update:**
  - Mark Olinger was not present ,but Leighton said that he had made a Viewshed Presentation to the Churchill Association last night. Reports on the presentation have been generally positive with a few questions and concerns about properties not in the viewshed restrictions and some in the zone but will have to have variances for building current plans. Leighton also stated that she thought we should ask Mark for a presentation to the Falls Committee now rather than wait for the next meeting and agreed to contact Mark and make arrangements for such a Zoom presentation. Leighton added that she and Cyan Crump, Historic Richmond Foundation, did not feel that the overlay cone was wide enough
  - Regarding the removal of the tree blocking the view, Bryce stated that he needs letters of request and approval from the Churchill Association and other organizations before he can go ahead and take the tree out. Greg suggested that we lead the way with a letter sanctioning the tree removal. Members agreed and Leighton stated she would write such a letter.
- **Richmond 300 Survey update:** Mark Olinger not present but Justin added that the final version is out,
- **Brown’s Island Improvement Plan – Venture Richmond:** Max Hepp-Buchanan could not be present, but Tricia will reach out to him to finalize his presentation for the October zoom meeting.
- **Scenic Virginia Photo Contest:** Leighton said that this had not progressed much as she needed assistance to properly download all applicants’ submissions. She is seeking an intern. She has been very busy working with Virginia Tech on a book devoted to the Rural and Urban Divide. Her chapter is ‘Engagement with Scenic Resources’.
- **BridgePark Proposal Restructure:** Jim Hill said that they were hosting a virtual retreat to try to work out the main themes to take to their stakeholders such as: equity, mobility – bread issues. They still need to reduce the scope such that it is more manageable and feasible financially. The path to the river at Brown’s Island is still indeterminant. They would like to extend a commuter path to Southside to make the connection more accessible and extend to Southside parks. This thoroughfare would also create a new spine to the north to Leigh Street and serve with tentacles east to Churchill and west to Gilpin Court. By planning such a corridor, they would advocate for tree canopy and safe streets for bikers and pedestrians. There’s a lot going on but trying to corral into something workable. Bryce added that he doubly supported the greenway connections. They are trying to work with DPW in Manchester to furnish lanes onto the Manchester Bridge with planters and make the walkway accessible – currently is not. Jim added that they hope to have a finished proposal by the end of the year.
- **James River Park:** Bryce Wilk:
  - In regard to the MasterPlan strategy, they are working on prioritizing action items. He is meeting with Parks Director Chris Frelke and other Directors to advocate for fund raising as in funding a large portion of the improvements. They need to get this part in order before rolling out the strategy to the public. There needs for fund raising relate to : development of green spaces, historical interpretation, and advocacy for the funding of old buildings as in the Pumphouse.

- He and Grace LeRose are working on funding for Riparian Buffer Restoration at Wetlands and Pony Pasture as well as repairing erosion problems.
- Attendance figures: 1.51 million as of August 31, 2020 as compared to 1.39 million for August 31, 2019.
- River companies are doing well as did Passages Camp at 90% capacity with no Covid 19 cases.
- JRAC Cleanup September 12, 2020 was virtual but very successful. Had 35 people at Pony Pasture with 30 from Longwood at Ancarrow's. Excellent support.
- Winter Projects include beautifying Ancarrows, sanding and staining kiosks, putting up new maps. Matt Mason will be doing more trail work with bridges and boardwalk maintenance.
- He put out a request to meet with Fire and Police to recap the season – working with the JROC Safety Committee. No word back as yet.
- Huguenot Flatwater should begin in November. 95% ready only waiting on Army Corps of Engineers permit. Only a limited season to work as must halt for fish migration in February.
- **CRLC – Riverfront Updates:** Parker Agelasto not present.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50th Anniversary:**
  - Zoom meeting held September 1, 2020. A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video is underway with Melissa Lesh the videographer. This is being funded by a grant from Capital One funneled through JRA.
  - The South River in Waynesboro was successfully evaluated for Scenic River status. The Middle James and Hardware River are slated for evaluation. Leighton stated that the Lower Rappahannock is also on the list.

### **New Business:**

### **Reports:**

**James River Park System:** See above

**JRA:** Films on the Floodwall was excellent with about 60 persons in attendance. The discussion session were particularly well received.

**JRAC:** September 12, 2020 James River Cleanup very successful

**JROC:** JROC has started a discussion with various groups and users concerning greater use of more diverse peoples and representation from those users. Working at 21st St. Tower in October mulching, planting rain garden, pea gravel along slate pathways, moving rock to prevent erosion, stair renovation to 22nd parking lot.

**FoJRP:** New President, Mary Kay Martin, Vice President, Justin Doyle. Working on a new logo.

### **Open discussion:**

- Leighton mentioned that there was an effort at DCR initiated by Nathan Burrell to focus on equity in the Virginia Outdoor Plan.
- Jim Hill asked about the billboard on Vauxhall Island. Leighton said she would speak to John Sydnor at EnRichmond to see what/if anything was happening to take it down.

**Adjourn:** 1:15PM

### **Next Public Meeting: August, October 15, 2020 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