

Minutes:

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

Meeting: September 16 , 2021

Greg Velzy: Chair – Presiding

Call to Order: 12:04 PM

Attending Committee Members: Anne Wright, Tricia Pearsall, John Heerwald, Greg Velzy, Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Alex Dahm, Jim Hill. Community Attending:), Shawna Shade (Assistant, Friends of the James River Park), Josh Stutz (Executive Director, Friends of the James River Park), Jenn Clarke (Public Education and Outreach Coordinator, City of Richmond), Grace LeRose (Policy Advisor, DPU, City of Richmond Virginia).

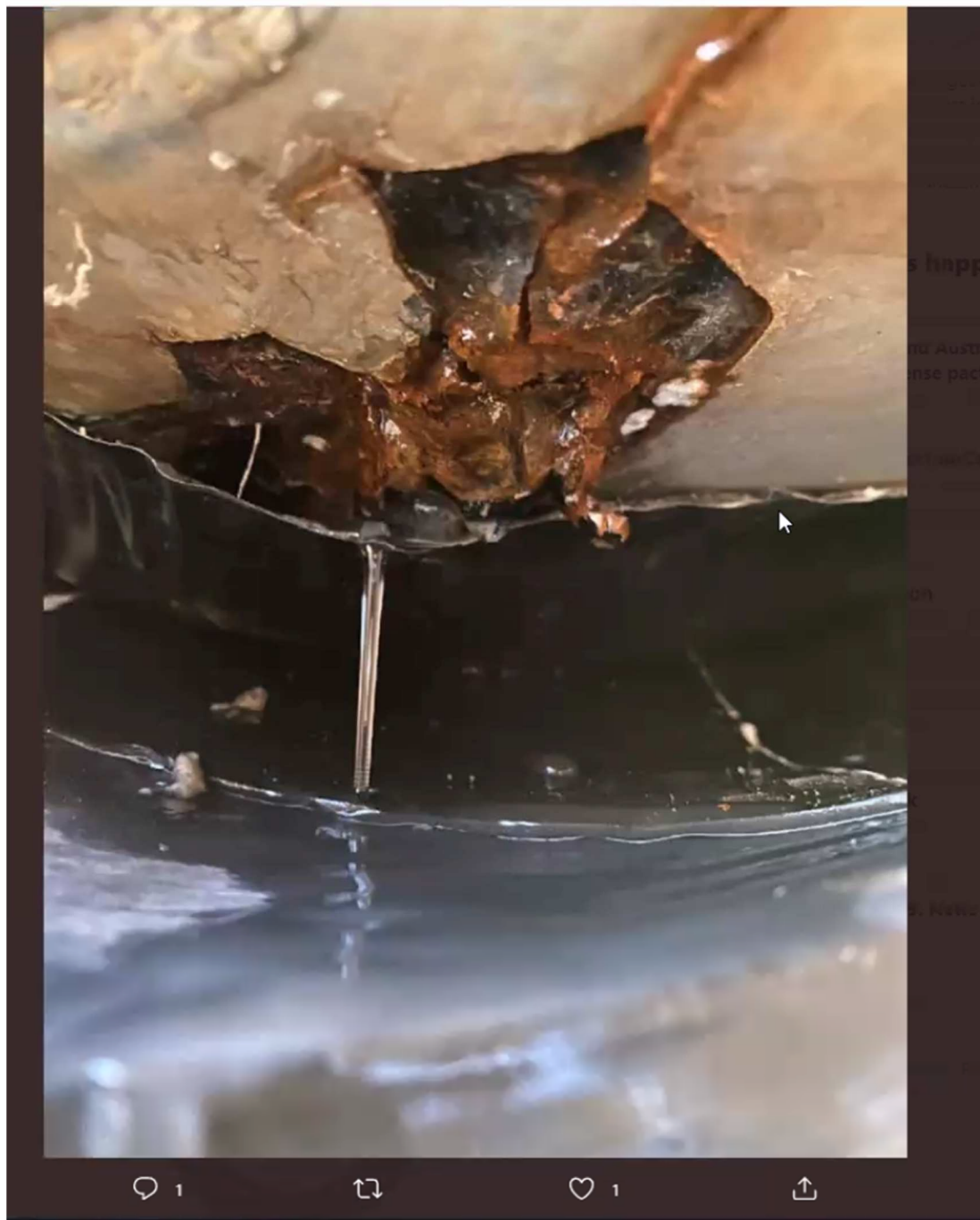
Minutes: Minutes of August 19, 2021. Motion to approve-Ralph Hambrick. Second-Leighton Powell. Approved.

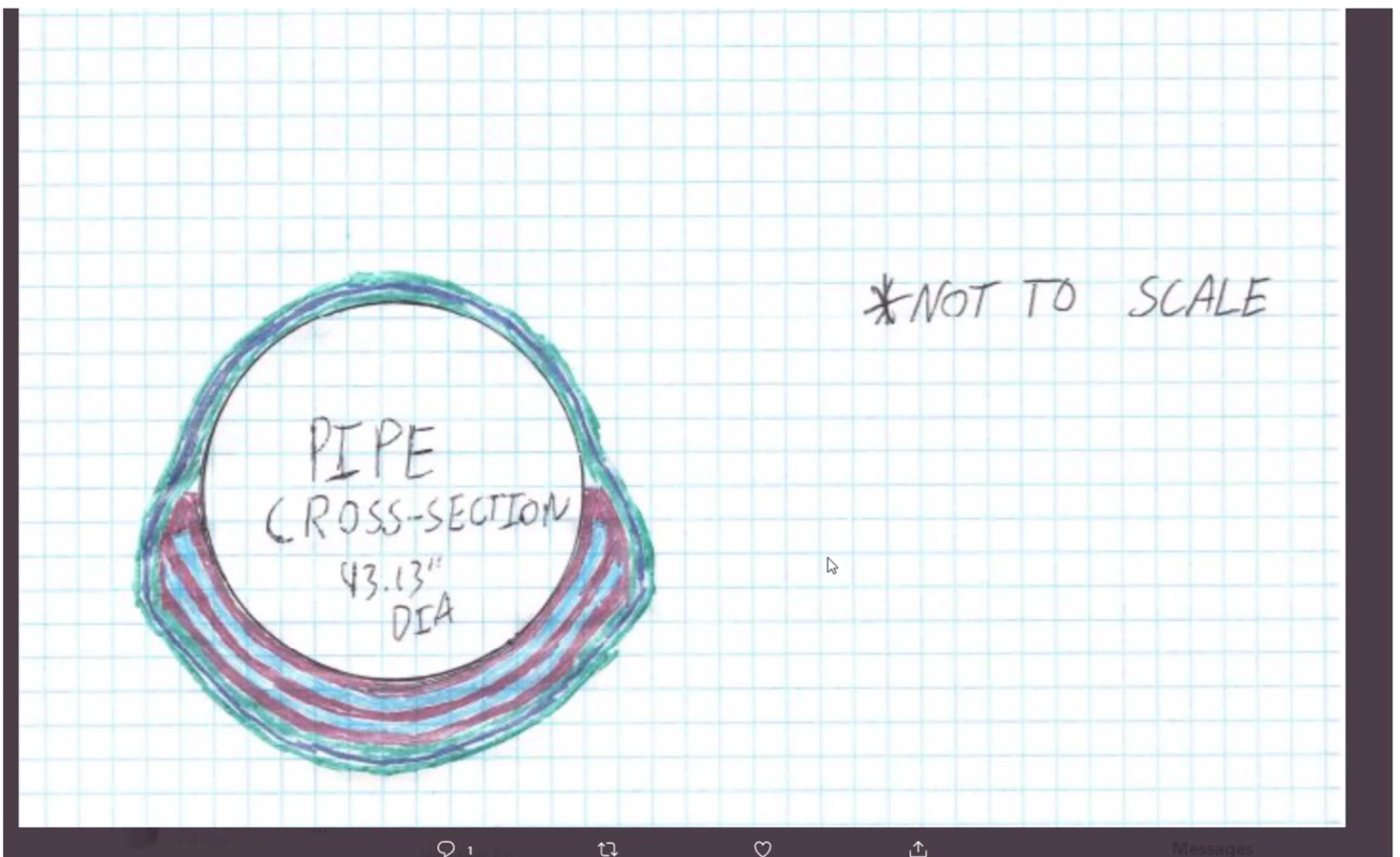
Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Plan** (and other James River related) updates: Kevin Vonck, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Community Review, City of Richmond-not present. **Jim Hill:** Will talk to Kim Chen (now on special assignment to Deputy CEO) to see if she can suggest a contact or get information concerning Riverfront Development Projects.
- **James River Safety Issues: CSX:** Ralph Hambrick wrote a letter to CSX and sent out September 13, 2021. He will send a similar Letter to the Editor Richmond Times-Dispatch on Monday, September 20, 2021. Leighton Powell said she would notify her editorial page contact at the Richmond Times-Dispatch to look out for the letter. Both letters are in the addendum to the minutes.
- **CRLC updates:** Parker Agelasto was not present. A survey was conducted primarily to the East End community concerning the land use for the new Dock Street parcel. Greg stated that JRA was conducting Zoom charettes concerning their new education center on this property. They are scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday September 20, 21, 22, 2021. Justin sent a notice to all the Falls' members.
- **I-95 bridge signage** update: Tricia needs to see if this sign has been placed on the James River bridge.
- **James River Park:** Greg and Josh Stutz filled in for Bryce Wilk:
 - The Netherwood Quarry has not gone forward. The Grant which was due late summer has been held off.
 - 14th Street parking is now allowed in the upper lot in the evenings free of charge.
 - Huguenot Flatwater: Groundbreaking is tomorrow, Friday, September 17, 2021 at 10:00am. Construction should start immediately with the bottom part of the ramp finished first in case of high-water event. The project should be completed by February, 2022. The parking lot area will be cleared for construction access.
- **DPU updates:** Grace LeRose and Jenn Clarke:

Pipeline rupture update: The domestic (City of Richmond) pipeline (large sewer pipe underneath the Pipeline Trail at the foot of 12th Street) is being repaired. Wastewater has been diverted. "All materials and supplies needed for repairs have arrived, and CSX gave us the green-light to start working on the pipe on Monday (09.13.2021), so our crews got to work! This week our team is using a cement substance to fill in those pesky leaking holes along the pipe. Then, next week, our team will layer an epoxy and a mesh on the bottom and surrounding the entire pipe's external circumference. Following the completion of all this work, our team will once again CCTV (closed-circuit television) the pipe to get an internal look at how we did. Only after we check our work and give it the thumbs up will the trail and beaches alongside it be reopened. (We think we're about two

weeks away from that point [mid-October].)” from Jenn Clarke. Grace also showed CCTV photos of the interior of the pipe with a sketch of the proposed repair and also noted that this pipe is 60 years old: See below.





- The James River & Kanawha Canal break. The gate is of treated wood which has rotted and needs repair. Engineers will solve this problem shortly. In the meantime, the water around the Pumphouse has receded:



- **BridgePark** Proposal Restructure: Jim Hill stated that they may be trying to put on a social event but for the time being he thinks this entire effort is on hold. He will check with Ted Elmore.

New Business:

- **CSX Lot at Belle Isle Parking Lot:** Greg Velzy asked if anyone knew the status of the Lot. Alex Dahm said that there had been no forward movement after Venture Richmond's request. CSX was not letting them use it for the Folk Festival, but it's on their radar screen.
- **Hybrid Meetings:** Ralph Hambrick asked if the Falls Committee could host hybrid-Zoom/in person meetings in the future as he will be out of town and others are being extremely Covid careful due to health issues. If the Stone House has wi-fi, we think that can be accomplished.

Reports:

JRA: Justin not present.

JRAC: 22nd Annual James River Cleanup was held last weekend. No results as yet.

JROC:

- JROC is volunteering at Music at Maymont, Friday, September 17, 2021-volunteers needed – Old Crow Medicine Show
- Raft Trip last week for Council. Kristen Larsen and Cynthia Newbile attended. They discussed many JRP items including need for and Urban Ranger program for public safety.

FOJRP: Josh Stutz:

- They recently received a grant for the JRP Outdoor Classroom. This will provide for Reedy Creek Access to the water.
- The Mayor's Plan would provide 160 million for Parks and Community Centers. Most will be spent south of the River. This will improve the Reedy Creek Greenway and north of the river will allow reconstruction of the Northbank Tower. This is a major City of Richmond investment. FOJRP is still hoping some funding can be directed to restoration of the Pumphouse
- Member event at Legends, Thursday, September 23rd 2021 at 6:00pm.
- Shawna added that FOJRP had received \$48,000 from license plate. That's \$8000 more than last year.

Open discussion:

Adjourn: 12:45PM

Next Public Meeting: October 21, 2021 at City Hall if it is open or Stone House, Forest Hills Park/Zoom

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.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary

Addendum:

9.13.21 Open Letter to CSX

CSX Corporate Headquarters
500 Water Street, 15th Floor
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear CSX:

Several CSX train derailments have occurred along the Kanawha Canal and James River in Richmond in the past few months, one of which dumped large quantities of coal into the Dominion pond which ultimately flows into the James River. We of course hope that such accidents do not continue to occur, but if such an event does happen again, we ask that CSX provide immediate notification to the public for the sake of James River and James River Park users. Delay in notification until the media discovers it days later, which seems to have been the case with recent spills, is not a responsible course of action.

Additionally, recent work on the elevated track along the river shoreline, much of which is above city sewer lines and park trails, has been carried out in less than a responsible manner. Workers have thrown clamps, nails, bolts and other debris to the ground making it impossible for city employees to enter the area to carry out needed sewer repair and trail restoration. Even if no one below is injured, this practice litters the ground with “industrial waste” defacing the riverfront. Coordination with the city and regard for the immediate environment could readily resolve these problems.

In short, as a regular and continuing presence in Richmond, we ask CSX to more fully live up to its own stated goals of being a “good neighbor,” maintaining a “culture of safety” and “giving back to the communities along the company’s network.”

Sincerely,

Greg Velzy, Chair
Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
8040 Brown Road
Richmond, VA 23235
velzyg@verizon.net

Copy: Editor, Times-Dispatch

9.13.21

letters@timesdispatch.com

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