

**Minutes:**

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

**Meeting:** October 15, 2020

**Greg Velzy:** Chair – Presiding

**Call to Order:** 12:02 PM

**Attending:** Committee members: Jim Hill, Tricia Pearsall, Greg Velzy, Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Bryce Wilk-Superintendent James River Park, Parker Agelasto-Executive Director, Capital Region Land Conservancy, Grace LeRose-TMDL Coordinator, City of Richmond VA, Mark Olinger- Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review, City of Richmond VA, Yessenia Revilla, Planner II, Planning & Development Review, City of Richmond VA, Jennifer Clarke- Public Education and Outreach Coordinator, City of Richmond VA

**Minutes** - Minutes of September 17, 2020 approved

**Current Issues:**

• **Libby Hill Viewshed Update:**

- Mark Olinger with the assistance of Yessenia Revilla made a presentation (Viewshed Analysis Part 1) of the Libby Hill Viewshed project . This is a V-shaped cone view which would protect the Libby Hill historic river view down the James River from any future view encroachment as determined by 5 categories as described below. The view cone has been shifted slightly to the west to eliminate the Stone Brewery complex and buildings under construction at or near Rockett's Landing. The presentation included the view as protected by a lower foreground treeline and showed up to a mile + out. Using LIDAR images (thanks to Yessenia) it also showed land elevations across the river and beyond to indicate just what height would be seen from the Libby Hill view. The cone gives a slight winter-view of the bend in the river as it flows east. The Viewshed Corridor would affect: building height, roof top appropriation, lighting, signage and landscape. He thinks this can work with effective restrictive regulations.
- Olinger indicated that there may be several exemption parcels, particularly at Nicholson and Main, but that he had talked to all landowners and businesses in the viewshed except the Newton Bus Company. He also has had a conversation with the EDA about the Intermediate Terminal building and understands that they have retained Timmons to study the building for future use. It was noted that the first-floor, though elevated, is in the flood plain.
- The Churchill Association had been concerned that the cone was to the left of the View Sign. Olinger suggested moving the sign to the west in line with the cobbled street so that the river view is an extension of the street.
- Regarding the removal of the small tree blocking the current view, Leighton stated she would write a letter in support of its removal.

• **Manchester Development/Hull Street Updates:** Mark stated that the 3 Manchester Road or Hydro Project has received approval. The Silo project is looking for rezoning because of access factors. (Decatur Street). New lighting should be going down Hull Street.

• **Richmond 300 Survey update:** Mark stated that the Planning Commission had adopted the plan and hopefully it would be able to be released by the end of the year.

• **Riverfront Development Plan:** Mark stated that he was submitting for funds in the next year's budget to finish up Downriver resources and to complete the conceptual for the Missing Link connector. The Falls Committee added that they would write a letter in support of this addition to the budget. Mark stated that he was also keeping in consideration any long-range proposals for greenspace connectivity particularly for Southside as there are no parks. (Parker stated that a letter of intent has been submitted regarding the gift of a 13-acre parcel off Warwick Road). Tricia asked that he mention in his dealings with the Henrico County administration that they consider declaring the

eastern segment of the James River to the Chesterfield border and westward, a Scenic River. That should be a benefit to this area.

- **Brown's Island Improvement Plan – Venture Richmond:** Max Hepp-Buchanan will make the presentation at the November 19, 2020 meeting.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Program 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:**
  - At the October 6 Zoom meeting:
    - Field evaluations of the following rivers were reported: the South qualified, the James qualified, NF Shenandoah scheduled for 10/7, Broad Run may happen later.
    - All coasters have been distributed throughout the State.
    - The Scenic Rivers' video is currently in production.
    - Rappahannock Film discussion slated for October 15, 2020 on Zoom
    - The Virtual Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be held November 9 at 4:30pm to include the Governor, film and the photographic panels.
    - Leighton added that the Lower Rappahannock had support for Scenic River designation from all counties except Middlesex and asked for any help with folks in that area.
- **Scenic Virginia Photo Contest:** Leighton said photos have been downloaded. They will be checking GPS to make certain photos are on Scenic River segments and judging should begin soon.
- **BridgePark Proposal Restructure:** Jim Hill - Retreat in time of COVID took place as 90-minute Zoom meetings over the course of two weeks, September 22 through October 1. The focus was on refining the BridgePark Mission and Values as well as developing the following (DRAFT) themes: Mobility and Access, Equitable Revitalization, Environment and Health, Culture, Activation, and Tourism, and Education. The group is on track to produce a report in booklet form that will include the above as well as the History, Planning Process, and Implementation Strategy for the project by the end of the year. He also emphasized that they were trying to include equity throughout all themes.
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto
  - Parker reported that the easement on the Main Street property (below Libby Hill) the foreground parcel had been recorded and that they were currently working on the area down to the river.
  - He also reported on another 50-acre easement in Henrico County on the James River near Osborne Landing - very important parcel due to the marsh migration factors with increased sea-level rise.
  - Also working on an easement for a 3-acre portion of land east of Maymont, land adjacent to the Canal.
- **DPU Updates:** Jenn Clarke reported that the
  - Green Infrastructure Master Plan currently underway in conjunction with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation involving Shockoe Creek, Gillis Creek and the Manchester Canal. They are also working to include and educate all city offices and levels as to the challenges with regard to these watersheds. These areas were chosen because they contribute the most pollution of the James River.
  - She also reported that the Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements have been approved such that now 140 million gallons of stormwater can now be processed. Grace LeRose also added that this significant improvement adds to the overall short/long term plan which will allow a 50% reduction in overflow stormwater. This effort is also trying to have all new development and offices think about the capacity issue of stormwater when planning.
- **James River Park:** Bryce Wilk:
  - The title searches for the 180 acres to be added to the Conservation Easement is almost complete
  - Working with Grace LeRose on funding for Riparian Buffer Restoration at Wetlands and Pony Pasture and wetlands restoration.
  - Just completed a plant inventory of Williams Island and found some city/county firsts.
  - Art Evans, entomologist, just completed and bug survey of Pony Pasture and the Wetlands and also reported City and State firsts.
  - Huguenot Flatwater Access Ramp should go out for bid to start construction in November/December. This public/private partnership with JROC has been a huge effort. There's a very narrow window for construction work because of fish migration stipulations. Still waiting, however, on Army Corps of Engineers permit.
  - Still treating the ash trees for borers with funding through a grant
  - This weekend they will be planting natives at the Pumhouse along with a benefit featuring a tour with Edgar Allen Poe.
  - Volunteer effort at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street tower this weekend to replant, to move stones, put up split rail fencing to

- prevent social paths and erosion.
- Attendance figures: 1.69 million as of September 30, 2020
- Meeting with city and others to prioritize action items of the Park Master Plan today
- There have been concerns from citizens whose land borders the JRP and the river concerning a flier which circulated stating that the city/park was going to use eminent domain to take land for trail and greenway networks. This of course is not true. There was an effort under the Green Plan to make vacant areas green for water runoff improvement. Parker Agelasto stated that he would like to work with Bryce on this issue. He also stated that CRLC held easement on Bandy Field as well as working to include Larus Park.

**New Business:** None

**Reports:**

**James River Park System:** See above

**JRA:** Justin Doyle not present

**JRAC:** Think the Christmas Parade of boats will proceed.

**JROC:** 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 logo underway featuring a hipper salamander. Continuing discussions on Master Plan strategy, implementation and first projects.

**Open discussion:**

- Leighton mentioned Lynn Crump said the River Symposium has been moved to April 13-15 2021.

**Adjourn:** 1:48PM

**Next Public Meeting: November 19, 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