

Agenda for  
Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee  
5th Floor Conference Room Richmond City Hall  
December 18, 2025

**Call to Order: Committee Attendance: L Crump, C Spohn, W Isenberg, R Hambrick, G Velzy, S Shade, K. Schmidt, J Hill.  
Non-Committee Attendance: P Davenport Gorman, W Wheeler, J Kim, S Fishe, M.S. Khara, E Jeter (virtual attendance)**

**Minutes:** November 20, 2025

**Current Issues:**

- **Mayo Bridge Design Update:** Dr. John Kim, *City Bridge Engineer, Department of Public Works, City of Richmond,* William Wheeler, *Sr. Eng. Project Manager / Richmond District L&D, Virginia Department of Transportation*
  - **Slides shared via email, attached as well.**
  - **Committee members asked questions and were answered by VDOT committee.**
  
- **Richmond Riverfront Planning:** Marianne Pitts, *Deputy Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review, City Of Richmond*
  - Code Refresh ordinances that affect the James River- **surface level research by Christina Spohn:**
    - **Mentions of the following terms in the PDF the second draft - river, riverfront, flood, parks,**
      - **Wireless telecom facilities: All new structures are limited to monopole designs only, and are subject to the following locational standards: 1. There is a setback of 500 feet from any property within an R or RO zoning district and a setback of 1,000 feet from the shoreline of the James River. In no case can a setback exceed the largest setback imposed by this chapter on other types of similar structures of a similar size, including utility poles**
      - **Some standards for required bicycle parking (5 spaces per park)**
    - **Zoning stay the same (public open space) - South shore of the river from Pony to Ancarrows (excluding Willow Oaks CC)**
    - **New proposed zoning changes -**
      - **Mayo changing from M1 to OS (open space)**
      - **South shore -**
        - **private land from Huguenot to Pony moving to RD-A (from RD-2)**
        - **Buttermilk trail corridor moving from R2 to OS**
        - **Railroad lot moving from B-2 to MX-U (near floodwall / Mayo bridge)**
      - **North Shore -**
        - **Canal shore from Williams Island to water treatment plant east shore moving from R1 to OS**
        - **North shore of river moving from R2 to OS**
        - **Dominion parking lot and building west of Belle ped bridge moving from from B5 to MX5)**
        - **Brown's Island east, from 9th st bridge to Mayo bridge (B4 moving to MX-U, M1 moving to IL)**
        - **Park 14th moving from B-4 to MX-U**
    - **Next meeting: Zoning Advisory Council Meeting: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 from 4-6:30pm**
      - **City Hall, 5th Floor Conference Room | 900 E. Broad St**
  - **CRLC Richmond Updates:** Parker Agelasto, *Executive Director, Capital Regional Land Conservancy*
    - James River islands' easement updates
      - **Not present**
  
  - **VA Scenic Rivers Update:** Joshua Bateman, *Environmental Program Planner, DCR*
    - **No updates**
  
  - **James River Park Update:** Penelope Davenport Gorman, *Outdoor Education Supervisor*
    - **Natural Resources Management Plan update and implementation**

- **Parks is excited about this. Kat, the Invasive Species manager, is training staff on how to implement the plan.**
  - JRP Update
  - **Looking for Andrew's monthly report to come via email - can attach to minutes when received**
- **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle, *Director of Community Conservation, James River Association*
  - General Assembly funding for City of Richmond infrastructure – update
  - JRA updates
  - **No update, not present**
- **American Rivers:** Katie Schmidt, *Associate Director, Dam Removals Project, American Rivers*
  - **2027 legislative session focus on low head dam**
  - **Through 2026, conversations happening with DWR, DCR, other constituents**
    - **Downtown dams are not a priority (because they are currently acceptable fish passage)**
    - **Z Dam is eligible for evaluation, but maybe needed for city water treatment plan**
      - **DPU is removing a tree on the upstream side of the dam and adding more concrete**
    - **Bosher's TBD**
    - **Rock Creek Park lake dam has been deemed unsafe. Residents required to pay for remediation.**
- **DPU/RVA H2O Updates:** Grace LeRose, *Program Manager, Department of Public Utilities*
  - **No update**
- **Scenic Virginia Updates:** Lynn Crump, *Viewshed Project Manager*
  - **New board coming 2026 - email Lynn if you want to be on the email list**
- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Shawna Shade, *Office Administrator, Friends of the James River Park*
  - **Thursday speaker series - Reedy Creek office 6-8pm Thursdays in January**
    - **Ralph White**
    - **Lesley Bulluck (VCU avian research)**
    - **JRPS Invasive species team**
    - **Matt Balazik (VCU sturgeon research)**
  - **ED search is going well, search firm is also working to gather candidates**
  - **Park cleanup organized last week by Greg and Shauna - got JRPS staff and RFD swiftwater team to help with a huge cleanup. Lots of scooters and other big trash removed between 4th drop and 14th st. along the Pipeline corridor.**
  - **Norfolk Southern came back in Fall and removed all of their debris from the coffer dams on their railbridge construction from earlier in 2025.**
- **Brown's Island Renovation Update:** Alex Dahm, *Operations Manager, Venture Richmond*
  - **Closed until October 2026**
  - **Belle Isle/Tredegear parking lot has been locked. If you see the lot locked, reach out to Venture Richmond to keep the pressure on them.**

**New Business:** Presentation & Vote - 2026 Slate of Officers for Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Chair – Katie Schmidt

Vice Chair - Will Isenberg

Secretary – Christina Spohn (with help from Tricia Pearsall & Justin Doyle)

**Unanimous vote in favor of the committee as listed above.**

- **Discussion of:**

- **Meeting locations**

- **Wanting to keep the 5th floor room for proximity to the Planning Dept**

- **Desire to reach out to DPU for their conference space**

- **We need a new contact at DPU (Jenn Clarke? Reach out to Grace to see if she can recommend us her replacement?)**

- **Meeting frequency**

- *Determine every month, whether or not we should meet each month. Chair can share the week prior whether or not the meeting will happen.*
- *Do the people on the agenda know that they are on the agenda?*
  - *Asking for a response for folks who are listed on the agenda*
- *Proactiveness of this group?*
  - *Wild and Scenic section of the James - potentially a project for us to engage with in a more concrete way?*
    - *Katie will update*
- *Appointments to this committee -*
  - *Who is participating? Who isn't?*
  - *Who should we recruit new folks?*
- *Plaque for Tricia for her secretarial efforts*

**Reports:**

Richmond Boat Parade of Lights – December 13, 2025, 4:00PM

**Open Discussion:**

**Adjourn:**

**Next Public Meeting: January 15, 2026**

Meetings usually 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 the chair. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.