

Minutes:

Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

Meeting: - November 16, 2017, 5th Floor Conference Room – City Hall – Richmond, VA

Greg Velzy – Chair Presiding

Call to Order: 12:11

Minutes - October 19, 2017 minutes – approved with revisions regarding goose poop pollution

Attending: Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Ralph Hambrick, John Thompson, John Heerwald, Jim Hill, Justin Doyle, Ralph White, Grace LeRose – DPU - TMDL Coordinator at City of Richmond, Nathan Burrell – James River Park Manager.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Plan:**
 - **Potterfield Bridge** – Updates: (Nathan Burrell) The punch list review is ongoing. Work is being done to repair the hanging gaskets, lighting fixtures (curved, not sharp cornered), replacing dead tree plantings (under contract to be watered for two years). Ralph White suggested increasing diameter of mulch around trees and adding pellets to help with water retention.
 - **Advocacy for Maintenance Funding for ALL Park and Related Projects** - Nathan initiated a discussion regarding the Falls Committee's roll in advocating for maintenance to be built into ALL new and existing Park and other riverfront project funding at the onset. To date, no projects have been funded for ongoing maintenance, and this is making proper care of the newly acquired JRP land responsibilities almost impossible. It was decided that as a committee we need to insist that maintenance be built into each new Riverfront project.
 - **Missing Link Phase** – (Nathan Burrell) Hargreaves and Nathan walked the trail, but nothing has happened regarding proposals for a connection, nor have any monies been allocated for feasibility study or other effort regarding this trail connector.
 - **Downriver Development:** Main Street is reopened and Dock closed for good. Construction is moving rapidly. Tricia voiced concern about the three bricked pedestrian crossings. Cars move fast along this road with this being the prime traffic entrance to downtown from the East End along the river. Need to be addressed.

- **EnRichmond – Vauxhall Island** - Cede to City of Richmond Update. (Nathan Burrell) The island is still undergoing survey and being put under easement before being given to the City. EnRichmond and the City are working on the proper language and such before the transaction takes place.

- **Falls Committee's meeting with Mayor Levar Stoney** – Leighton Powell: No report

- **Capital Region Land Conservancy** – Jane Myers reported that CRLC closed on an easement on Four Mile Creek just upstream from Deep Bottom Park in Henrico County. 82 acres. Large area of wetland and RPA protected. Working on another large piece down there as well.

- **James River Park Relationship with Director of the City Department of Parks and Recreation** – Nathan reported that he and The James River Park now report directly to the Director and Assistant Director of parks and Recreation. He went on to say that the new Director, Chris Frelke, has a heavy recreation background. He's a trail and marathon runner and comes to Richmond from Raleigh, NC. He came to the FoJRP Meeting (a first ever) and sees the James River Park as a model for community interaction. We will try to have him come to a Falls Meeting

in the New Year. He is also supportive of the JRP Master Plan.

- **Master Plan Proposals** – (Nathan Burrell and Greg Velzy) Katherine Godin, Vice President of the FoJRP Board is leading the fundraising effort for the JRP Master Plan. We would like for her to make a presentation to the Falls Committee, and the Falls Committee needs to write a letter in support of the fundraising effort for the JRP Master Plan. FoJRP has already set aside \$50,000 as seed fund for the Plan, which is projected to cost \$250,000. No City funds have been allotted to date. Nathan is working with the new Director to get full compliance from the Department. The Committee felt that the City needed to commit funds toward the Plan and perhaps the regional Counties as well. It was suggested that the Park needed to show county usage statistics, as well as non-local users. The plan will attempt to gain input from every district in the City as well as the surrounding Counties.

Greg said he would send copies of the Master Plan proposal to the Committee members electronically.

New Business:

- Capital Region Collaborative James River Action Team – Justin Doyle reporting. The Team, which is comprised of JRA staff and regional representatives, presented a RVA Snapshot (<https://cdn.capitalregioncollaborative.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2017-RVA-Snapshot.pdf>) along with other regional efforts, which included the new camping facilities at Lawrence Lewis Park and introduced the Arts Music Environment – 3 day Festival - for June 2018. Also involved with this Collaborative is the presentation of the State of the James: <https://jrava.org/about-the-james-river/state-of-the-james/> and the Virginia Outdoor Plan. They are also working with JRAC.
- **James River & Kanawha Canal** – drained. Grace indicated she would try to find out the timeline for rewatering.
- **Invitation to two Scenic River Advisory Committees** – The Committee is happy to invite members of Catoctin and Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committees to attend our January 2018 Meeting: David Ward - Catoctin Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee, Benjamin Lawrence - Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee and Mark Novak - Loudoun County staff for Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee.

Reports:

James River Park System – Nathan Burrell – The JRP has received a 3-year grant of \$450,000 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide all Richmond Public school students in sixth grade—about 1,600 students total — to take part in the Students Investigating Urban Parks program. Science teachers are receiving professional development training focused on the program and the sixth-grade Standards of Learning guidelines. This grant was facilitated by JRA.

The JRP has also received a grant of \$10,000 from Universal Leaf to support the Invasive Species Removal Project.

RVA MORE is conducting a trails training workshop this weekend.

The climbing protection at the Manchester Wall has been replaced and improvements made. A path that goes behind belayers is underway for the safety of walkers and other pedestrians. The JRP will also develop safety and other interpretive signs for this area. When asked about Interpretive signage for the Potterfield Bridge, Nathan replied that he knew nothing about that placement and the Committee should talk to the Director of Planning.

DPU – Grace LeRose stated that the Gillies Creek Greenway is moving forward. They are also considering making a connection from Chimborazo Park to Gillies Creek. DPU has also opened restored facility at 1801 Commerce Road which is a LEAD Silver certified structure.

JRA - Justin, in addition to the above, reported on the State of the James improvement to B-. He also reported that the Gillies Creek Greenway meeting went well with good community participation.

JRAC - 25th Annual Parade of Lights, Saturday, December 9, 6-9 p.m.

JROC - Working on replacing the chain-link fence with a split rail fence in the Reedy Creek Parking lot on November 18. Also made improvements at 14th Street Takeout.

FoJRP - in addition to the Master Plan fundraising, they will hold a Winter Solstice celebration on Belle Isle at 5:00, December 21, 2018.

Open Discussion:

Nathan was asked if the permit system for high water boaters had been reinstated. No, because the City is having to look at the entire permitting system regulations involving the River and the Park, as there was conflict between State and Local regulation procedure.

Discussion also ended about the trails at Larus Park and the additional 18.5 acres, which the JRP staff will be involved. At present, they are working to put this additional acreage under conservation easement.

Meeting Adjourned:

******Next Public Meeting: - 21 NOVEMBER 2017******

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.

