

Minutes:

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

Meeting: April 21, 2022

Greg Velzy: Chair – Presiding

Call to Order: 12:15 PM

Attending Committee Members: Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Justin Doyle, Greg Velzy, Tricia Pearsall, Jim Hill.

Minutes: Minutes of March 17, 2021. Motion to approve-Ralph Hambrick, Second-Greg Velzy. Approved.

Current Issues:

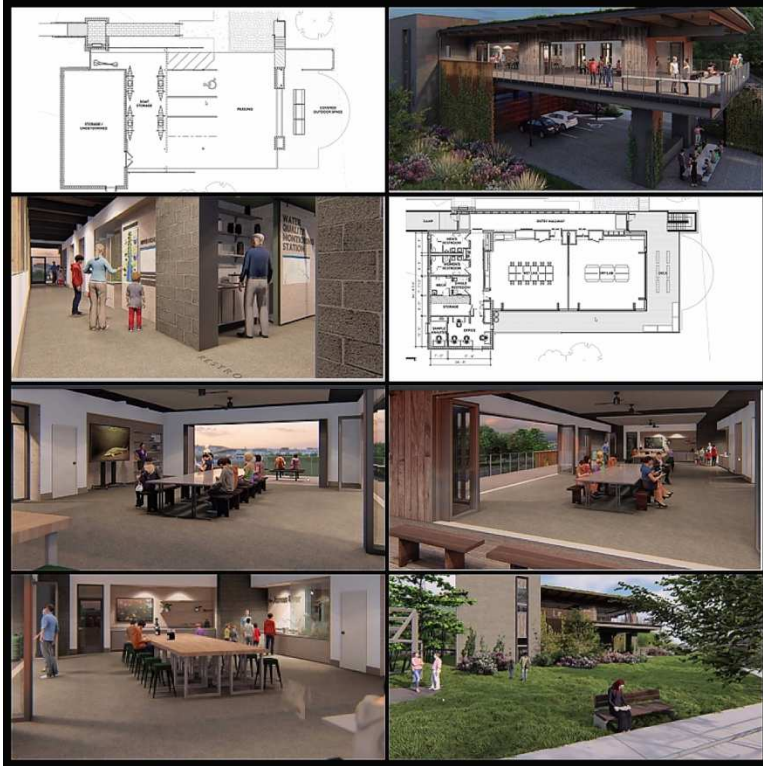
- **Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee Meeting return to 5th Floor Conference Room-City Hall, Richmond VA:** Tricia Pearsall reported that she had been in contact with Michael Winborne, Security Manager City Hall, Kris Kristina Daniel-Thiem, Executive Assistant to Kevin Vonck and to Kevin Anderson in parking concerning our returning to regular pre-COVID meetings. There is new security which only allows City employees with a badge to use the elevators. Kevin was happy to provide parking as usual for 4-5 members, just let him know ahead of time. Kris stated that she could try securing the room if we let her know a week in advance those committee members and others who would be attending and times in/out. The committee discussed other meeting site options and decided to continue the May 19, 2022 meeting via Zoom and then to offer hybrid meetings in the future no matter the physical meeting location. We also decided to try to meet in City Hall for the June 16, 2020 meeting.
- **Riverfront Development Plan** (and other James River related) updates: Kevin Vonck, (Director, Department of Planning and Community Review, City of Richmond.)
 - Kevin was not present. Greg and Tricia have an on-site meeting (Diversity Park/Hull Street) with him May 4, 2022 at 3:15pm. Everyone is invited to attend.
 - **Mayo Bridge:** Federal funds have been allotted for building a new span from North/South. A recent news article stated that the bridge, once design had been established, might be closed for 2 years: <https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/richmond-new-mayo-bridge-plan>. Bridge plans were to go before the Regional Planning Commission for hearing on CVTA (Central Virginia Transit Authority) funding projects for 2023 – 2026. Comment period ends April 28, 2022.

Richmond	D Mayo Bridge (South) Replacement US 360 Crossing James River	The South Bridge is an eleven (11) span arch structure carrying 4 lanes of traffic between the south bank of the James River and Mayo Island. The project is proposed to remove the existing Melan Arch System and replace the superstructure using conventional beam girders (prestressed concrete beam) with a facade that resembles the arch visual appearance. The approach roadway work will be limited to transitions to the superstructure replacement and will not include any appreciable grade changes; this will include roadway work on the island between the two bridges to maintain the same proposed section.	Bridge	\$ 45,011,837	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 2,500,000
Richmond	E Mayo Bridge (North) Replacement US 360 Crossing James River	The North Bridge is a seven (7) span arch structure carrying 4 lanes between Mayo Island and the north bank of the James River. The project is proposed to remove the existing Melan Arch System and replace the superstructure using conventional beam girders (prestressed concrete beam) with a facade that resembles the arch visual appearance. The approach roadway work will be limited to transitions to the superstructure replacement and will not include any appreciable grade changes; this will include roadway work on the island between the two bridges to maintain the same proposed section.	Bridge	\$ 34,971,587	\$ 23,000,000	\$ 2,500,000

*The authority will hold a public hearing and vote on the projects to be funded when it meets on April 29. The meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at the PlanRVA office at 9211 Forest Hill Avenue, Suite 200.”

- The Committee also discussed the sale of portions of Mayo Island and relation to the future construction of the Mayo Bridge (including height, etc.). Justin related that he heard that CRLC was considering a Flood Preparedness Grant to purchase Mayo Island property. Parker Agelasto confirmed that this was in process.
- Hull Street at Mayo Bridge and Manchester Canal improvement input surveys: <https://rva.gov/public-works/construction-projects-road-improvements>
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e575ec9493534c6cae7ebaffe96dfdf0>

- **CRLC- JRA-Parker Agelasto** not present: Justin Doyle reported that 15 different JRP parcels are in process of coming under Conservation Easement. He then stated that tours would be given of the property for the 2022 Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference and that JRA was working through the final plans with 3North Architects to finish interior designs. He then showed us the designs:



Justin was questioned as to when the rest of the area would be opened to the public. He didn't know but would have conversations with Chris Frelke, Director of Parks & Recreation, next week. Regarding movement of the Capital Trail toward the river and off Dock Street, Justin said there would be an interim plan until the City decides what can be done on its path. The Falls Committee encouraged public comment regarding path placement and through a unanimous motion (Greg Velzy, 2nd Leighton Powell), stated: "We support community engagement of the use of the City's parcels of the Dock Street property along the James River."

Jim Hill asked if anything had come of the movement to host the headquarters of the American Canoe Association? Greg stated that this had been Sportsbacker driven and perhaps Jon Lugbill knew more, but he thought it had sort of fallen by the wayside.

Justin also said that JRA needs to circulate back to its original stakeholders after plans finalized.

- **Virginia Scenic Rivers:** Tricia reported that a VCU graduate student, Grace Lumsden-Cook is working with Lynn Crump to institutionalize training/teaching materials for field evaluation of potential Virginia Scenic River segments by VCU students. The mechanism for doing this is still a bit messy and subjective. Leighton said that scenic Virginia was hiring Lynn Crump part time to assist with their efforts, particularly advocating statewide and General Assembly for scenic projects.
- **JRA:**
 - JRA Education Programs are going gangbusters in RVA (Henrico), Hampton Rhodes and Lynchburg.
 - Urban stormwater projects are nearing completion – Plantings at public libraries went quite well.
- **James River Park update:** No representatives present, but Greg Velzy provided some update.
 - Greg stated that while building infrastructure, everyone needs to work towards preserving the Park wilderness.

- Huguenot Flatwater: Moving at snail's pace but hopefully will be completed in under 3 weeks. Greg has met with Michael Burton and the construction foreman. Down to last concrete pour.
- **DPU updates:** Jenn Clarke, Grace LeRose not present.
- **Friends of James River Park:**
 - Wood River Run was a huge success with 150-200 runners, raising \$50,000. This will provide scholarships for Passages Camp.

New Business: 50th Anniversary of James River Park to be celebrated in September

Reports:

JRAC: none

JROC: Swap Meet – Saturday April 23, 2022 in Forest Hills Park

Open discussion:

- There was discussion about the impact of removing preservation planning from the City Planning Department and placing it under Economic Development and what this might mean for development along the river as well as impact other areas such as the Shockoe area.
- Leighton also brought up the difficulties in designating Scenic Rivers in this year's General Assemble and how we need to monitor designated areas as most legislators don't see the importance of the designation in Virginia.

Adjourn: 1:35pm

Next Public Meeting: May 19, 2022

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall and conducted via 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. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary