

Minutes - Friends of James River Park Board Meeting Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 6:30- 8:00PM

Attendees: Byron Chafin, Scott Dickens, Mike Doerr, Kevin Tobin, Scott Silvester, Brooks Whitten, Dean Brunson, Greg Velzy, Jake Savage, Justin Doyle, Katherine Mitchell, Mary Kay Martin, David Broocke, & Madge Bemiss

Absent: Brittany Zamborsky, Cat Anthony, and Cary Wing

- 1) Mary Kay Martin, President, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, a quorum was present.
- 2) Minutes for the Feb. 2, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted
- 3) Guests introduction and presentation - None
- 4) Presidents Report - Reminder of the Board volunteer event at 42nd Street on March 27, 2021
- 5) Park/Volunteer Report - Bryce Wilk - new title is Senior Superintendent - congratulations were offered by the Board - in this new position Bryce will oversee: a) trails and greenways, b) Forest Hill Park and Southern Division parks on the Southside, c) Community Gardens, d) Work-force development and e) Recreational Centers
- 6) JRP System Report:
 - A. JRP System is the largest and most visited park system in the City of Richmond with YTD visitation of 199,320 through February;
 - B. A demographic study on who uses the JRP System, an aspect of the Master Plan, is being bid on by VCU;
 - C. The park is partnering with the AmeriCorps program in which the hired employee will be paid by the Federal Government. The employee will focus on trails and invasive species. This position will be filled soon and will run through August 2021.
 - D. Summer intern funded by FoJRP will be starting soon.
 - E. The Virginia Department of Forestry has provided a grant to focus on the Historic Slave Trail. The Historic Slave Trail has also been adopted by the National Association of Black Social Workers and Black Girl Bikers.

- F. The number of JRPS volunteers allowed to be volunteering at one time in one place has been increased to up to 25 people per new Covid protocols.
 - G. New kiosks have been installed at the Wetlands and at the southern end of the T-Pott Bridge.
 - H. Tragically, a frequent visitor to Larus Park died of natural causes while walking on the trails there.
 - I. The NOAA/BWET grant in partnership with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Richmond Public Schools has been submitted. FoJRP is a named partner, but not the main Fiduciary (City of Richmond is). The FoJRP was not named Fiduciary due to a technicality related to our SAM# (which allows for grants to be given by the Federal Government) not being generated in time by the IRS. We have it now so this should not hinder us in the future.
 - J. Education – Univ. of Richmond OSHAR program will focus on the park in the fall. Belle Isle history hike with OSHAR in Oct; in-person summer camps with RPS are being scheduled; Science Museum development day is being scheduled as well.
 - K. The contractor who bid on the universal access project at Huguenot Flatwater is working with staff and Timmons Group, who estimated the cost of the project a few years ago, to change the scope of the project to lower its cost.
 - L. 15 acres near Bell Road is being considered to be put in the JRP System.
 - M. ADA access is being studied for consideration at the Pumphouse and Belle Isle
 - N. Virginia Outdoor Fountain has provided two grants, among many (\$1.9 million in total grants), to: a) \$25,000 to the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities for “planning related to the development of five parcels of city-owned property into parkland in neighborhoods that have disproportionately low usable green space per capita”; and, b) \$20,000 to James River Outdoor Coalition to create and distribute bilingual river safety signage and brochures in the heavily used James River Park System in Richmond.”
- 7) Treasurer’s Report - Dean Brunson - Dean reported that the FoJRP is collecting more monies than are being spent, a good problem to have, but one that will be changing as we hire a new Executive Director and begin the hard work of implementing the Master Plan.

- 8) Finance Committee - Jake Savage - Jake reported on a finance study by the Finance Committee regarding how the FoJRP can finance the new Executive Director position over the next three years through cash flow and existing cash on hand. Accordingly, Scott Dickens motioned that the FoJRP fund the ED position up to \$70,000 per year for the next three years assuming a 3% growth rate in the amount per year. Justin Doyle seconded the motion. After minimal discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
- 9) Membership Committee - Katherine Mitchell
 - A. During the past month, an email vote was taken by the Board which unanimously approved reordering 1,000 copies of A Photographic Journey Through the James River Park by Bill Draper. It is expected that we shall take delivery for these in May 2021. Various new approaches for selling the book have been discussed and will be implemented once delivery is taken.
- 10) Leadership Development Committee - Greg Velzy – Several Board Member prospects have been identified and will be approached about joining the Board or a Committee of the Board over the next month or so.
- 11) Communications Committee - Scott Dickens - Website visitation has been strong and new content drives people to the site, such as the goats at Pony Pasture article. Also, the Executive Director position is on the website with an embedded application for use by prospective candidates.
- 12) AC & MP - MKM - Mary Kay asked how FoJRP can best prioritize near term goals and projects. See new business below 15.b.
- 13) Invasive Plant Task Force - Madge Bemiss
 - A. National Invasive Species Awareness week was rained out unfortunately.
- 14) Executive Director Action Team - Jake Savage - the Job Description is complete, and we are on schedule with regards to the implementation timeline. See No. 7 above Finance Committee report regarding financing the position.
- 15) New Business:
 - A. River Rock is expected to be a go on May 14-16
 - B. Floating Dock at the Belle Isle quarry - Keven Tobin and Greg Velzy--
A history of the dock was provided saying that the original dock sank

and was removed 5-10 years ago. The idea is to install a new dock that will be a safe and accessible fishing platform with minimal maintenance required. The goal will be for this to be a turn-key installation project so that JRPS staff are not needed to be involved. Dock & Dredge Company, a local company, is spec'ing the project out and we should have more information at next month's Board meeting.

- C. Partner Groups - a) Greg asked if the FoJRP would pay for second port-o-john at Huguenot Flat Water from April through September? He is getting quotes and will give a report next month on this. b) CRLC - Conservation Easement Inspections are in process and should be completed in a week or so, a few weeks behind schedule due to the heavy rain the area has experienced the past month. c) JROC – the south end of the First Break Dam on Sawmill Island has experienced severe erosion and will need to be mitigated to potentially prevent the flow of the river from changing. The Vauxhaul Island bill board is being removed and the Island will be a part of the Park's conservation easement.
- D. Work day for the Board involving invasive species removal at 42nd street will be March 27, 2021, 10:00am-Noon.

The next virtual meeting will be on April 6, 2021 at 6:30PM.