



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes - Final Urban Design Committee

Thursday, July 7, 2016

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

- Present --** 5 - * Chair Andrea Almond, * Chris Arias, * Andrew P. Gould, * Vice Chair Andrea Levine and * Committee Member Dawn Hicks
- Absent --** 4 - * Bryan Green, * Giles Harnsberger, * Jill Nolt and * Robert Smith

Approval of Minutes

1. [UDC MIN 2016-05](#) Minutes of the May 2016 UDC Meeting (Draft)

Attachments: [May 5 2016 Minutes \(Draft\)](#)

This item was deferred to the August agenda due to the lack of a quorum who was present at the May meeting of the UDC.

This Report was continued and referred back to the Urban Design Committee due back on 8/4/2016

Secretary's Report

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

CONSENT AGENDA

2. [UDC 2016-27](#) Conceptual Review of Westover Hills Public Library Sustainable Campus Initiative & Final Review of Phase 1

Attachments: [Location & Plans](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[UDC Report to CPC](#)

A motion was made by Ms. Levine to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was motion was seconded by Mr. Arias and passed 5-0-0(Almond, Arias, Levine, Hicks and Gould for).

REGULAR AGENDA

3. [UDC 2016-28](#) Final approval of Maggie Walker Memorial Plaza

Attachments: [UDC Report for CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location & Plans](#)
[Public Comment](#)
[Letter of Opposition](#)

Ms. Onufer read the staff report.

Mr. Toby Mendez, the artist, thanked the Committee for having them here today and thanked

Ms. Onufer for a thorough presentation. Mr. Mendez stated that they took the Committees recommendations and went before the Planning Commission and they stated that they wanted to see a final design incorporating the suggested changes that came out from UDC.

Mr. Mendez gave a presentation regarding the changes that were made per the UDC recommendations.

Mr. Arias inquired about the Hanover lantern that is slated to go in the plaza and inquired if they were consistent with the neighborhood. Mr. Arias stated that they are used to seeing the acorn with the cover on top. Mr. John Cartier, with VHB, stated that the Hanover is consistent with the Jackson Ward fixtures and stated that the acorn is the consistent look with the pedestrian lights on Broad Street. Mr. Arias inquired if the lights were translucent or opaque and Mr. Cartier stated that they are translucent.

Mr. Gould inquired about the size of the Honey Locust when they be installed because there is a lot of streetscape in the plaza and having shade is important. Ms. Nancy Rodrique, with the landscape architecture team VHB, stated that the budget affords a 3inch caliber tree so that is what they are proposing and stated that they can limb them up to half the height as they are planted and stated that as they start growing they will be able to go higher to keep the views towards the sculpture. Ms. Rodrique stated that they have changed from the Everclear elm which was a little more upright and stated that the new trees will provide more shed. Mr. Gould inquired how tall they would be when installed and Ms. Rodrique stated that they will 12 or 14ft in height.

Ms. Almond inquired about the Willow Oaks on Adams Street with tree grates and inquired if the tree is going to be too big. Ms. Rodrique stated that they are trying to match that same feel that's on Broad Street and stated that they are trying to get more shade and more canopy and stated that they seem to be doing well on Broad Street. Ms. Almond stated that she would should recommend that they chose something that is not going to get so large because the tree grates will be overgrown and they will have sidewalk problems. Ms. Almond stated that there is a look on Broad Street as a major corridor and this is a connecting street that should have a different scale of streetscape. Ms. Almond stated that they should at something smaller like a Bosque Elm or something in that range to replace the Willow Oaks. Ms. Rodrique stated that they can certainly take that into consideration. Ms. Almond stated that she agrees with staff's recommendation to add a little more seasonal interest be included and stated that none of the shrubs or ground coverings are native plants but states that the Pennisetum they can swap out some of that for some Dwarf Lillie grass and stated that it might bring some consistency and also have some good color in the fall. Ms. Rodrique stated that they can certainly look at that also.

Ms. Almond stated that in their previous comments that wanted to make the space feel more like a gateway to Jackson Ward by incorporating the character of elements that represent the neighborhood. Ms. Almond stated that it looks like the trash cans and

benches are a different style and inquired why they didn't go in that direction. Ms. Rodrique stated that they didn't see a standard in Jackson Ward except for the vertical strap receptacle and benches and stated that they are looking for something different that sets this up as a special place. Ms. Rodrique stated that they were looking at materials that can incorporate some wood that would be more comfortable to sit on and stated that they wanted something to set this aside as a special place for a memorial site.

Mr. Olinger stated that was his suggestion to get as many recycling containers in as many places as possible.

Mr. Gould inquired about the color of granites and where they are being used for. Mr. Mendez stated that the green is for the benches, the seating wall and the dedication wall. Mr. Mendez stated that the darkest is for the dark bands within the paving and larger part that appears to be white is a light warm grey so that it doesn't feel so stark.

Ms. Levine thanked the applicants for adding the recycling bins and stated that they need to start doing it in all of our public spaces. Ms. Levine stated that now might be the time for them to figure out what their universal choice will be on that for the City of Richmond and stated that it will be nice to know what will be the Richmond choice for the recycling bin.

Mr. Olinger and Committee briefly discussed the opportunity of having recycling bins in the City.

Mr. Arias inquired if it is an option to have the top of the lanterns to have a solid or opaque canopy to them or do all of the styles have glass and Mr. Cartier stated that these are all DPU standards and they are just tying into their system and using the same poles that they are using. Mr. Cartier stated that he can ask them the question if it is an opaque option. Mr. Arias stated that he has concerns about light pollution and if they are projecting light up and outwards and it will illuminate the buildings and trees around it. Mr. Arias stated that it will have a more dramatic effect if the buildings and trees behind Maggie Walker were dark and then when she is lit up she will have a more street presence when you are coming down the road. Mr. Cartier stated that he do know that the Hanover has a black top so the issue with light pollution going upward should not be an issue but states that it is still going to spray in every direction even towards the building.

Mr. Olinger stated that long term all of our hopes will be that they get active uses behind those storefronts along Brook and stated that they will also throw light out into the area over time as well.

Public Comment

Mr. Gary Flowers, speaking as a residence at 407 W. Clay Street in Jackson Ward, stated that he has issues one being that the original intent of the community was to bring full honor and glory to Ms. Walker by way of statuary at this corner. Mr. Flowers stated that they he have some concerns with the tree issues and stated that Willow Oaks grows to about 70 feet or higher. Mr. Flowers stated that Willow Oaks in the winter are clear but states that during the summer months the leaves are small but very dense and stated that if the tree is young it will be dense in the summer therefore providing blockage for a sight line and thinks that they should not look at Willow Oaks. Mr. Flowers stated the Everclear is a columnar tree and it doesn't spread out and gives foliage and does not draw birds. Mr. Flowers stated that they should at least consider the Honey Locust as a mid-range tree or the Everclear. Mr. Flowers stated that they should consider making the bands green because Ms. Walker's favorite color is green and the mighty green dragons of Maggie Walker High School colors.

Ms. Faithe Norrell, representing the Site Selection Committee and the mother of Maggie Walker's great great grandchildren, read a letter from the Site Selection Committee. Ms. Norrell stated that they have some reservation about the planting materials and stated that they like the idea of low evergreen shrubs and stated that some of the Committee members don't like the dedication wall. Ms. Norrell stated that it blocks the entry front the southeast and adds unnecessary expense and reinforces single direction of the sculpture since it only addresses Broad Street. Ms. Norrell stated that they would like to see the context in the plaza rather than using elements that is differentiated from its surroundings. Ms. Norrell stated that the green granite is more expensive than the grey granite that is seen all over Jackson Ward. Ms. Norrell stated that they would welcome some of the green granite on the pedestal and the surrounding benches. Ms. Norrell stated that they feel that the street furniture fails to draw Jackson Ward into the plaza and stated that the public wanted to see a classic conservative project a portrait on a pedestal to honor Ms. Walker and stated that the Site Selection Committee felt that this furniture does not reflect the classic style that was requested. Ms. Norrell stated that she agrees that they shouldn't use a Willow Oak Tree and that the concentric circles and pedestals should be green.

Mr. Maurice Hopkins, alumni of Maggie Walker High School from the class of 1965, inquired if they are still incorporating the electronic kiosk to give information about the Gateway of

Jackson Ward and Maggie Walker's past. Ms. Onufer stated that it was not included in the conceptual design. Mr. Mendez stated that it was not included in the design as it is now but stated that they did leave areas where they could be included. Mr. Mendez stated that they created this design so that in the future if that is something that could be afforded and desired there is a place for it. Mr. Hopkins stated that having some information on that would be great so that younger people would who she was.

Mr. Melvin Jones stated that they should keep the trees down to a nice size around Broad Street and stated that it would help the businesses and the vision of Maggie Walker. Mr. Jones stated that he likes the idea of the band being around the pedestal and inquired about the old style sign and inquired if they were going to do that along Broad Street and Brook Road. Mr. Olinger stated that were special sings that came to the UDC and stated they can look into that but stated that they don't want to clutter up the sidewalks with a lot of sign posts. Mr. Jones inquired if the drainage, sewage and electrical things have been taken care of and Mr. Olinger stated yes.

Ms. Aaron Hawkins inquired how they came up with the concept of where the statue is facing and Mr. Mendez stated that the statue is standing looking toward the welcoming view into Jackson Ward and stated that this will be the primary view of Maggie Walker on Broad Street.

Public Comment

Ms. Almond asked the Committee how they felt about the furnishings and Ms. Levine stated that she was pushing herself to say that it is okay because it is a different spot and it identifies as a different spot and stated that she can see it being consistent with the look of what Jackson Ward is and after hearing the citizens she would lean that way.

Mr. Arias state that he understands what they are trying to do and stated that sometimes when they establish a set of rules and then they break a rule then that moment of the break becomes more important than the hierarchy of the design if it would have fell along with the steps of Jackson Ward. Mr. Arias stated that he is glad that they brought wood into it. Mr. Arias stated that cast iron tends to be more fragile and stated that if they kind of mimic the porches that are up and down Jackson Ward it

will be as practical as the steel on the benches now. Ms. Almond stated that a lot of the new versions of the site furnishings like cast iron and stated that they can replicate that look.

Ms. Almond stated that there were several comments about the trees to not use the Willow Oaks but instead use the Everclear or Bosque Elm to replace those and to upsize the Honey Locust to a 4 inch caliber to get taller trees. Ms. Almond stated that they could use some more seasonal interest in the shrub plantings by creating some new egress and stated that they do like the idea of having recycling bins that are consistent with the neighborhood. Ms. Almond stated that the Hanover Lanterns have a solid top on them and stated that there were some comments that came from the public about the extent of the green granite to the benches or whether having the stripes or just to the base makes sense.

Ms. Levine inquired about the cost difference of the green granite. Mr. Mendez stated that when you change the color or granite there is not really a price difference.

Ms. Almond inquired how the applicant felt about the suggestion from the public. Mr. Mendez stated that he had a second thought about the green and stated that if he were to change anything the dedication wall and the seating wall he would go to a gray. Mr. Mendez stated that if you cut the benches as green and the pedestal green and stated that he would consider the band in the paving but states that he has some resistance to that. Mr. Mendez stated that if you have the benches green and the pedestal green and the backdrop to those and the seating wall and the dedication wall the green would pop. Mr. Mendez stated that it would be much more noticeable as a color and stated that if the veneer wall was the medium gray it would complement the cobblestone and more of the attention would go to Maggie Walker. Mr. Mendez stated that in terms of the paving band he would keep those the masobi black because once they carve the lettering into the paving they would finish that with white letters and stated that it will be easier to read. Mr. Mendez stated that if you were to do the paving green because it is a paving surface it not going to hold up better than the black paving. Mr. Mendez stated that it is important to everybody that the longer they can read the lettering in the paving the better. Mr. Mendez stated that there is a difference in the square footage of the green by \$17 a square foot which is almost twice as much as the charcoal grey.

Ms. Almond inquired about the 3 tree wells that are supposed have grates that are custom because they are all different shapes and inquired if someone could speak to that choice. Ms. Rodrique stated that they are custom shapes and stated that they wanted to keep the continuity of the Brook Road curve and stated that the shapes they end up becoming would be custom. Mr. Rodrique stated that in those locations they felt it would be better to have tree grates better than to have open planting buds to expand the hardscape and it will make it easier for people to get around in those particular locations. Ms. Almond stated that she has a concern about the tree grates unless they are in a tight area and stated that they are expensive and maintenance concerns as well and stated that she feels that the tree wells could just have ground coverage on them so they wouldn't have to worry about them.

Mr. Arias stated that his concern with that is that the ground covering and mulch tends to bleed out into the sidewalk and stated that the tree grates will make it a cleaner surface. Ms. Almond stated that there are no tree grates in the area so it will be a new element.

Mr. Arias stated that it a good idea to change the color of the granite and stated that if it is a cost than it's a win win and that it will help define the area of Maggie Walker.

A motion was made by Ms. Almond for final approval for the location, character and extent of the Maggie Walker Memorial Plaza with staff conditions and with the following conditions:

- That the proposed Willow Oaks be replaced with a more medium size tree such as an Everclear or a Bosque Elm
- That the Honey Locus be increased in size to a 4 inch caliber tree
- That the applicant incorporate recycling bins in the plan
- That the benches, trash cans and recycling bins elements be more represented of the cast iron style of Jackson Ward
- That the Hanover Lantern street lights have an opaque top
- That the dedication and seating walls be changed to the gray granite versus the green granite
- That the applicant relocate trash cans so that there is an adequate buffer distance to seating areas.
- That the applicant consider other plantings within the beds to provide more seasonal color, variety, and contrast

The motion was seconded by Mr. Arias and passed 5-0-0(Almond, Arias, Levine, Gould and Hicks for).

Aye -- 5 - Almond, Arias, Gould, Levine and Hicks

4. [UDC 2016-26](#) Conceptual review of Patterson & Grove Ave Streetscape

Attachments: [Location & Plans](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Public Comment](#)
[UDC Report for CPC](#)

Ms. Onufer read the staff report.

Mr. Robbie Roach, with HG, stated that they wanted to get some feedback from the Committee in terms of widening the sidewalks and stated that there are some limitations with that because of the tree wells. Mr. Roach inquired if there was some give and take and they are already trying to expand those tree pits and work with as of the existing concrete as possible. Mr. Roach inquired if there was any issues with them limiting the width of those tree wells to accommodate for 4 to 6ft wide sidewalks in certain areas. Mr. Roach stated that the color concrete is a no no and inquired if there was other considerations for that because they have a very limited budget. Ms. Almond stated that she wouldn't be afraid of the concrete pavers but stated that there are some nice ones out there now that are fairly affordable. Ms. Almond stated that as far as the tree wells size typically they are okay with the tree wells being narrower but only if they become longer and stated that if they have the ability and streetscape to do some longer thin ones. Mr. Roach stated that is their intent with that. Ms. Almond stated that in the ground coverings and the shrubs that they should try to get a couple more of native species in their plan and to keep maintenance in mind.

Ms. Levine stated that regarding parking and removing the lines and stated that at the same time it would be nice and a great opportunity to put charging station somewhere in that area because it is a heavily used shopping district and Mr. Roach stated that they were task with the back of the curb to the right-of-way so it would be great to address on all of those master plan points but states for this limited scope they are not able to address bike lanes and other things. Ms. Onufer stated that because this is conceptual design and it does moves into the right of way and stated that recommendations like that are appropriate to the conceptual design with the understanding that they are going to bring forward a final design that is more focused on achieving elements in that area.

Mr. Arias inquired what the idea was behind brick pavers and what they are trying to do

with the bands on the outside and Mr. Roach stated that they are trying to draw the character from downtown and the far west end tie these two West Hampton neighborhoods together and stated that it is very hard because it is very broken up like Ms. Onufer mentioned with different uses and a lot of curb cuts which is not as convenient. Mr. Roach stated that they are very limited with where they can put those things and address everything but states that they really want it to be this way for once they arrive in this common space you will know that you have arrived. Mr. Roach stated that it will be subtle with light fixtures, consistent street trees, sight band and brick pavers and stated that it is drawn from the downtown and UDC recommendations.

Ms. Almond stated that there are other elements in the neighborhood that they could look at.

Mr. Arias stated that he suggest they look at some other period of time.

No public comment

A motion was made by Ms. Levine to approve the conceptual design with all of staff recommendations:

- **That the applicant consider ways to increase pedestrian right-of-way and sidewalk width throughout the corridors**
- **That the applicant address bicycle accommodations within their streetscape plan**
- **That any on-street parking be marked as a lane, not stalls, to allow for compact and super-compact cars and consider EV charging stations within the corridor**
- **That the applicant work with the Transportation Engineering division to establish a complete streets vision for the project**
- **That the applicant clarify the pedestrian lighting offset, and ensure a spacing of 40-60 feet as recommended by the Urban Design Guidelines**
- **That the applicant consider treatments other than a brick band for the sidewalk treatment**
- **To consider elements more in line with the period of when the neighborhood was established, a la 1940s-1950s**
- **To consider the use of more native plantings in the corridor**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Gould and passed 5-0-0 (Arias, Levine, Hicks, Almond and Gould for).

Aye -- 5 - Almond, Arias, Gould, Levine and Hicks

5. [UDC 2016-29](#) Final Review of East Riverfront Transportation Improvements

Attachments: [Location & Plans](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Public Agency Comment](#)
[Public Comment](#)
[Applicant Presentation to UDC](#)
[UDC Report to CPC](#)

Ms. Onufer gave the staff report.

Mr. Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, gave a brief overview

of the project.

Mr. Lamont Benjamin, Capital Projects Administrative Public Works, gave a brief introduction to their presentation. Mr. Benjamin stated that they appreciate the UDC for giving them their recommendations from the conceptual review and have taken those into consideration and tried to implement them into their project. Mr. Benjamin stated that this is a very aggressive schedule that they have for this project with the BRT Route being a part of this project. Mr. Benjamin stated that it has been a collaborative effort with the Planning Department, Economic Development, Traffic Engineering and Public Utilities and stated that they will see from their presentation that they have incorporated all of them into their plan and they will continue to move forward with whatever recommendations for final approval that UDC can give them today.

Mr. Mark Vasco, Design Consultant, gave a presentation of the project elements, discussed the updates and gave a schedule of the phases of the project. Mr. Vasco discussed UDC recommendations and how they implemented them into the design.

No public Comment

Mr. Olinger stated that he appreciated working with DPW, DPU and the consulting team for helping move this along and the willingness of everybody to take a really hard look at the undergrounding of the utilities in this area. Mr. Olinger stated that this entire area is in a hundred year flood plain and stated that he has photos that he is willing to share which he shared with the Mayor about what could happen if they don't get rid of the utilities. Mr. Olinger stated that he would say that they have estimates and they have had positive feedback from the Dominion and their willingness to work with them. Mr. Olinger stated that one of the comments that Hargrove's made in the Riverfront plan that was an outstanding comment was do they really want vehicular traffic closer to the river or do they the people closer to the river. Mr. Olinger stated that through this project by pulling so much of that traffic they see along dock now up to the top of the hill as opposed to the bottom of the hill the creation of a great people space down along the water will be significantly enhanced from what it is today.

A motion was made by Mr. Arias to approve the final review of the Riverfront Transportation Improvement project as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Levine and passed 4-0-0 (Arias, Levine, Hicks and Almond for).

Aye -- 4 - Almond, Arias, Levine and Hicks

Recused -- 1 - Gould

OTHER BUSINESS

Adjournment