



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
2nd Floor of City Hall  
Richmond, VA 23219  
www.richmondgov.com

## Meeting Minutes - Draft Urban Design Committee

Thursday, October 10, 2019

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

### Call to Order

### Roll Call

- Present** -- 5 - \* Jill Nolt, \* Andrea Quilici, \* Andrew P. Gould, \* James W. Klaus and \* Chair Andrea Almond
- Excused** -- 3 - \* David Johannas, \* Emily Smith and \* John Reyna
- Absent** -- 1 - \* Sahied Mansaray

### Approval of Minutes

This was approved

[UDC MIN  
2019-09](#)

Minutes of the regular meeting on September 5, 2019

**Attachments:** [DRAFT UDC MIN 2019-09](#)

**A motion was made by Committee Member Quilici that these Minutes be approved. Committee Member Klaus seconded, the motion carried by the following vote:**

- Aye** -- 5 - Jill Nolt, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus and Chair Andrea Almond
- Excused** -- 3 - David Johannas, Emily Smith and John Reyna

### Secretary's Report

The Secretary's Report was given by Mr. Alex Dandridge. Mr. Dandridge stated that the Planning Commission approved UDC 2019-24, the conceptual location, character, and extent review of the Broad Rock Sports Complex.

### Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

### CONSENT AGENDA

**There are no items on the Consent Agenda.**

### REGULAR AGENDA

[UDC 2019-27](#) Conceptual location, character, and extent review of Biosolids Storage Cover at the wastewater treatment plant, 1400 Brander Street

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

The application was presented by Mr. Dandridge. The applicant, Mr. Matthew Pugh, of Brown & Caldwell, introduced himself and assisted with explaining the treatment process and plant layout during Mr. Dandridge's presentation.

Mr. Dandridge: This application is for conceptual location, character, and extent review of a new roof canopy over the existing biosolids storage pad at the City of Richmond's Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is intended to minimize the re-wetting of the dewatered biosolids by rain and snow.

The site is located at 1400 Brander Street and lies within the M-2 (Heavy Industrial) zoning district. The property is over 150 acres in size and is surrounded by other industrial sites, bordered by Brander Street to the North and East, and Interstate 95 to the West.

In May 2019, the UDC reviewed and recommended that the Planning Commission grant final location, character, and extent approval for the new grit and screening facility at the City of Richmond's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The existing pad is not covered, which results in an increased moisture content of the dewatered biosolids cake due to exposure to rain and snow. The City is charged for hauling the biosolids by a third-party contractor on a per-weight basis, so it is of interest to the City to prevent the stored biosolids from being exposed to rain and snow to limit the amount of water that is being hauled.

The proposed cover system will cover an area of approximately 264 feet by 95 feet wide. A 100 feet by 50 feet section will remain uncovered to avoid conflict with underground utilities. The cover system will include structural steel primary and secondary members, metal roof system, column base plates, and anchor bolts.

The preliminary estimated construction cost for the Biosolids Storage Pad Cover is approximately \$2,000,000 and it is estimated to take approximately 10 months to complete.

During constructions, biosolids will be stored on an overflow pad to the west of the current concrete pad.

The City of Richmond's Wastewater Treatment plant produces Class B biosolids, nutrient-rich organic materials resulting from treatment of wastewater. This organic material is separated from the wastewater and stored on a concrete pad surrounded by a four foot concrete retaining wall where it can be dehydrated and then transported to be used as fertilizer on regional farms. The existing pad allows for a total storage capacity of approximately 81,000 cubic feet, and is not covered, exposing the biosolids to rain and snow.

This project proposes to construct a new concrete pad surrounded by an eight foot concrete retaining wall consisting of modular, concrete pieces that can be removed for maintenance. The pad will be covered by a canopy to allow for the proper dehydration of the biosolids, reducing the material's water weight and thus cost of transport. The new facility will have a storage capacity of 200,000 cubic feet, 160,000 cubic feet of which will be covered.

The new concrete pad and cover system fits into the existing infrastructure of the site, does not impact parking or pedestrian routes, and will have minimal impact on landscaping. The new structure is minimally visible and is in keeping with the industrial nature of the site.

Therefore Staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design, as presented.

Mr. Quilici asked about drainage at the plant. Mr. Pugh stated that, because there is a risk of spillage, the site is graded to allow drainage back to the sewer system for treatment – thus, the contaminated stormwater cannot be sent downstream.

Mr. Klaus asked what the payback, or financial advantage to the city, would be for the proposed project. Mr. Pugh stated that the applicants intend to take measurements the next time it rains, to gauge the dampness resulting from the lack of a cap, and the amount of time needed for the material to dry. Mr. Klaus asked if the applicants know what the city pays to have the material hauled away per year. Mr. Ed Edmondson, the Plant Operations Superintendent, stated that the cost is about half a million dollars per year. Mr. Klaus stated that cost-over-time information for the proposed project and for the current procedure should be provided by the applicants, so that the cost/benefit ratio can be properly assessed, and the financial benefit to the city made clear.

Mr. Edmondson stated that the benefit of covering the biosolids is that haulage is easier and less expensive when the biosolids are less damp, and also spillage is less likely. Another improvement in the current proposal is an increase in size for the containment facility. Chairman Klaus stated that all these benefits should be articulated in the final application, and the drying component and its expense be isolated from other project components, as budgets are a major concern in the City of Richmond. Mr. Edmondson stated that the floor, pad, drainage system, and retaining wall would also be upgraded in the project, and that these upgrades would help the plant to meet criteria of a national biosolids management partnership, of which the treatment plant is a member.

Mr. Pugh stated that he would gather information on the cost benefits of the project, and stated that the facility is 50 years old, so one benefit is simply needed maintenance and repair. Ms. Nolt suggested that the drainage improvements of the project be made clear in the final application, as these address important environmental concerns.

Mr. Quilici asked about the insulation indicated in the plans. Mr. Pugh stated that this information was erroneous and the accuracy would be improved after further meetings with manufacturers.

Mr. Quilici asked about the roof color, recommending that it be as light as possible, and that a green roof be considered if budget allows.

Ms. Nolt expressed concern about the wide span configuration and the chance of trucks maneuvering into load-bearing building supports, and suggested that bollards be installed. Mr. Pugh stated that a turning analysis had been done through the north side, and that there is sufficient room for backing in, and that there is a 30 foot clear opening. Trucks also would have the option to dump nearer to the egress, with a front end loader completing the haulage. Mr. Pugh stated that there will be 4 bollards at each corner.

Mr. Gould asked if there were concerns about excessive drying of the solids, from the combination of centrifuge and exposure to sunlight. Mr. Edmondson stated that three feet

into the pile the sun's effect is negligible, and also the pile gets moved rapidly.

Ms. Nolt asked if there were concerns about smell. Mr. Pugh stated that the upgraded walls will not be much higher than they are currently, and that there will be an opening at 20 feet, which should provide enough natural ventilation. Mr. Gould asked if there was danger of workers being overcome by fumes; Mr. Pugh stated that there would be no dangerous gases which would cause this.

Ms. Nolt asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

**A motion was made by Committee Member Gould, seconded by Committee Member Klaus, that this agenda item be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:**

**-Applicant provide a cost analysis which demonstrates the return on investment in processing biosolids with or without a roof canopy.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**-Applicant submit updated cut sheets to include roof materials.**

**-Applicant consider using a light colored roof material.**

**-The proposed canopy's columns be oriented so that the widest span between columns is placed on the side of the biosolids pad where trucks enter and exit.**

[UDC 2019-25](#) Resolution of Appreciation for Committee Member Chris Arias.

**Attachments:** [Resolution of Appreciation](#)

Mr. Dandridge read out the Resolution of Appreciation for Mr. Arias's service of two terms as Committee Member, citing his expertise, awareness of public art, and personal style.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Update regarding suggested changes to Urban Design Committee position descriptions

Ms. Almond explained her suggested revisions to Committee position descriptions.

Existing language:

The Committee shall consist of ten (10) members who either reside in the City or have their primary place of business in the City. Members shall be appointed by City Council. One (1) of the members of the Committee shall be a registered architect; one (1) shall be a member of a recognized local organization in one of the various fields of static arts; one (1) shall be a member of the faculty of the arts division of a local college or university; one (1) shall be a registered professional engineer; one (1) shall be a business executive or professional; one (1) shall be a registered landscape architect or a person having demonstrated talent in landscape design; one (1) shall be a member of the City Planning Commission; one (1) shall be a member of the Commission of Architectural Review; two (2) shall be citizens of the City appointed at-large; and one (1) shall be a member of the urban forestry commission, whom the urban forestry commission shall nominate.

Proposed language Option:

The Committee shall consist of ten (11) members who either reside in the City or have their primary place of business in the City. Members shall be appointed by City Council.

One (1) of the members of the Committee shall be a registered architect; one (1) shall be a member of a community non-profit organization; one (1) shall be a member of the faculty of a design or arts division of a local college or university; one (1) shall be a registered professional engineer; one (1) shall be an urban designer or urban planner; one (1) shall be a registered landscape architect; one (1) shall be a member of the City Planning Commission; one (1) shall be a member of the Commission of Architectural Review; two (2) shall be citizens of the City appointed at-large; and one (1) shall be a member of the urban forestry commission, whom the urban forestry commission shall nominate.

When evaluating applications for UDC membership the City of Richmond Land Use, Housing & Transportation Standing Committee should keep the following two suggestions in mind: 01) The Urban Design Committee reviews City of Richmond infrastructure projects that impact pedestrian safety, multi-modal transportation, and streetscape character; therefore members that have specific knowledge of Vision Zero strategies are of specific interest to the Committee. 02) Likewise, since the Urban Design Committee reviews City of Richmond public realm projects that impact the use and experience of public spaces and that can affect individual neighborhoods and citizens; members that have experience in stakeholder engagement, community building, and advocacy are also of specific interest to the Committee.

Ms. Nolt asked if the Land Use Committee of City Council, which oversees the UDC selection process, currently has guidelines and procedures which they follow in making selections. Ms. Almond stated that to her knowledge they do not, thus these recommendations that she is formulating could serve that purpose.

Mr. Son stated the Land Use Committee takes recommendations from others, so that if UDC members had a specific person in mind, they could bring this to the Land Use Committee's attention. Ms. Nolt stated that historically there is no notification to UDC, nor review by UDC, of new members. Mr. Son stated that he believed UDC Chairs have in the past made recommendations to Land Use Chairs. Ms. Almond stated that she never had, prior to this recent instance.

Mr. Son stated that the UDC Chairs are welcome to submit a recommendation. Ms. Nolt stated that, beyond that, potential members have not hitherto been discussed with current UDC members, nor has a recommendation been solicited. Mr. Quilici asked if prospective UDC members could be emailed to current members for comment. Ms. Nolt stated that she is not certain she would want to do that or if it is within UDC's purview to do so, but that she believes the general recommendations currently being formulated by UDC are important and can apply to all 11 seats on the UDC. Ms. Almond stated that they are only recommendations, and that Land Use Committee need not abide by them.

Ms. Almond stated that she had tried unsuccessfully to devise wording about not having 50% architects on the UDC. Ms. Nolt stated that she did not see a problem with the at-large UDC members being architects, as long as they have other diverse qualifications.

Mr. Gould requested clarification as to what constitutes a quorum. Mr. Son stated that, according to Robert's Rules of Order, a quorum is half-plus-one. However, since the UDC is a recommending body only, a quorum is not necessary. Mr. Klaus clarified that the half in question need not be half of the allotted membership, but half of the actual current membership; Mr. Son affirmed this, adding that if there is not a quorum, he is required to let Planning Commission know who was actually present.

Mr. Son stated that he would electronically share Ms. Almond's recommendation text

with the Committee, and if there were no additions or edits, final wording could be voted on at the next meeting. Ms. Nolt suggested that Mr. Son have the City Attorney review the language simultaneously.

Mr. Gould asked if the requirement of having a UDC member who is a university teacher might be too limiting. Ms. Nolt suggested that the university component could be removed. Mr. Son stated that he would check if there was a particular reason for the specifically university instructor component.

Ms. Kim Chen stated that the Secretary of the Public Art Committee had pointed out to her that there is overlap between what UDC and the Public Art Committee do, and that it might make sense to have a PAC member on the UDC. Ms. Almond pointed out that the PAC already has the requirement of having a UDC member in its ranks, and stated that perhaps this could be reversed.

Ms. Nolt stated that in other inter-committee connections, it is a UDC member sitting on another committee – the PAC is the only example of this being reversed, which is perhaps okay if that person reports back to UDC. Ms. Almond pointed out that many members of the PAC do not have an arts background, thus it is not necessarily an ideal way to get arts-oriented people onto the UDC.

Ms. Nolt put forth the question of whether a PAC member inclusion on the UDC should be recommended in writing. It was determined that this should be revisited at the next meeting.

#### Urban Design Guidelines Revision

Mr. Son stated that he is more than half way through incorporating Committee comments into a revised Guidelines draft, and has added comments on areas of overlap between sections. Mr. Son stated that he could share the Word version with his comments, and Committee members could mark it up and send it back. At a later stage graphics could be addressed, with the assistance of Mr. Dandridge.

Mr. Nolt asked if the Committee would like a current draft. Ms. Nolt stated that having the whole draft would be better, so that it could be edited holistically, with items shifting as needed.

Mr. Son stated that a Biology professor at Virginia Commonwealth University has requested a UDC member speak to her class about the intersection of biology and urban design. The class begins in January; more details are pending.

## Adjournment