



City of Richmond

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

Thursday, September 5, 2019

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

- Present --** 7 - * Jill Nolt, * Andrea Quilici, * Andrew P. Gould, * James W. Klaus, * Emily Smith, * Chair Andrea Almond and * John Reyna
- Excused --** 1 - * David Johannas
- Absent --** 1 - * Sahied Mansaray

Approval of Minutes

1. [UDC MIN 2019-08](#) Minutes of the regular meeting on August 8, 2019

Attachments: [DRAFT UDC MIN 2019-08](#)

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

- Aye --** 5 - Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus, Emily Smith and John Reyna
- Excused --** 1 - David Johannas
- Abstain --** 2 - Jill Nolt and Chair Andrea Almond

Secretary's Report

Alex Dandridge reported that staff reviewed and approved banners for the Scott's Addition Boulevard Association along Arthur Ashe Boulevard, between West Broad Street and Robin Hood Road. The banners will be up from August 2019 to July 2020.

Ms. Nolt stated that there are currently some faded banners on Robinson Street, and asked whether all banners have a time limit by which they are supposed to be taken down. Mr. Son confirmed that they do, but that unfortunately there are not inspectors to check on this. If a member of the public reports that they are faded, the deadline can be checked and the applicant can be contacted. Mr. Dandridge stated that he believed one year is the usual limit, at which point an applicant should either take banners down or re-apply.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

Committee Chair Almond stated that the applicants for agenda item 2019-23, for Binford Middle School, had requested a continuance.

CONSENT AGENDA**REGULAR AGENDA**

2. [UDC 2019-24](#) Conceptual location, character, and extent review of Broad Rock Sports Complex Master Plan, 4835 Old Warwick Road

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

The application was presented by Mr. Dandridge.

Mr. Gould recused himself from review of this application.

Deborah Morton, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, introduced herself. The other applicants present were Jennifer Weatherford of Worley Associates Architects, and Trevor Buckley, Landscape Planner with Timmons Group. Ms. Morton stated that the department has been trying to systematically improve all its parks. The one under review is very large and was popular in the 1980s. Like other parks it has not been ideally maintained due to lack of funding. The Department has decided to have Master Plans in place for its parks, and to get community input to their creation, to insure that the parks are used by members of their communities.

Broad Rock Park has had problems with drug dealing and other criminal activities. Security measures have therefore been put in place, including security staff and fencing. Park improvements will have to be done in phases, as funding becomes available. Having a master plan in place makes it easier to solicit corporate sponsors, one of which is already interested in assisting with the baseball facility.

Mr. Quilici asked what the priorities are for the park, as money becomes available. Ms. Morton stated that parking infrastructure is an immediate concern, followed probably by the baseball facility, and then outdoor fitness facilities.

Ms. Nolt asked if strategic planning had been done between parks, to have a balanced assortment of facilities between them. Ms. Morton stated that the Southside population is increasing, so that even with the Southside Community Center's facilities, there is still a need for sports and fitness facilities in the area. The planned aquatic facilities address a need also, as existing pools in the area are old. The City would manage the aquatic facilities, unless a different arrangement is worked out via a partnership.

Mr. Quilici asked about the security fence provision. Ms. Morton clarified that a gate has been put in place, and that between this and other security measures such as towing cars, the amount of night-time loitering has been reduced. Ms. Morton stated that the neighborhood is appreciative of these measures and has been actively taking part in meetings and a survey.

Ms. Almond expressed interest in having more details about bike and pedestrian connectivity between the park and the surrounding community, and about possible improvements that could be made to these. Ms. Weatherford stated that people from the community also have inquired about this. Mr. Buckley stated that connectivity to the library is shown in supporting materials for the application. Ms. Weatherford stated that

there had been community input about increasing pedestrian connection between the back side of the park and nearby neighborhoods, but that feelings about having multiple entrances were mixed, with residents feeling some concern about security.

Mr. Quilici asked how people most commonly get to the park now. Ms. Morton stated that the majority of park visitors drive there, probably partly because Warwick Road is busy and difficult to navigate on foot. Mr. Buckley pointed out that there are sidewalks in the area. Ms. Morton stated that the applicants would look into the question of bike and pedestrian accessibility. Mr. Buckley mentioned that the City has a Bike Master Plan, so they could look into that as well.

Ms. Almond stated that there are probably already some paths into the park from various surrounding neighborhoods, and if those were well-lit, those could be good options as well. Mr. Buckley stated that there are impediments in parts of the park, in the form of damp areas and a deep stormwater conveyance.

Ms. Smith asked if the circulation paths in the plans are educational, with signage, and if that is standardized across all parks in the system. Ms. Morton stated that a universal standard across parks is being worked on.

Ms. Almond asked if the loop trails were intended for doing laps, and asked if there was a way for an incomplete circle path on the plans to be completed. Mr. Buckley stated that this had been considered, but it had been thought that existing sidewalks and signage might suffice to make the connection. Ms. Weatherford stated that the avoidance of likely wetland areas has been a factor in the path layout. Ms. Nolt asked if a wetland delineation had been planned. Ms. Weatherford stated that it had not at this time. Ms. Nolt stated that this seems like an important next step.

Mr. Quilici recommended that existing trees be preserved and maintained as much as possible, and merely added to. Mr. Buckley stated that a full tree survey had not yet been done, but the locations of many trees had been mapped. Some existing trees, e.g., around parking islands, are not in good condition. Given the planned layout, some healthy trees would likely have to be removed. Ms. Morton stated that some new trees would be added as well, where appropriate.

Mr. Quilici recommended that the children's playground area be shaded, either by tree cover or a canopy of some kind. Ms. Morton stated that this need had been discussed.

Ms. Nolt suggested that wherever possible the solar orientation of playing fields should be oriented to optimize daytime play, with minimal glare.

Mr. Quilici asked what the multi-purpose field would be used for. Ms. Morton stated that it would be used for soccer, football, and possibly for an amphitheater for concerts. Broad Rock Park had also accommodated movies in the park, but drainage issues must be resolved before this can resume.

Mr. Reyna asked if there had been discussion of incorporating public art into the facilities. Ms. Weatherford stated that this had been discussed in connection with the baseball field.

Mr. Quilici asked if more permeable materials, e.g., permeable pavers, had been considered to address drainage issues. Mr. Buckley stated that they had been, and that this is mentioned in the report. A detailed, phased sequence of drainage improvements has been discussed with a civic engineer. A first priority would be to check existing pipes

and conduits for cleaning needs; a second step would be to identify and utilize a primary natural basin area and use this and other areas for bio-retention.

In addition, pervious paving will be used in the parking area redesign and resurfacing.

Ms. Smith asked if accessible paths exist between the parking area and the multi-purpose field. Mr. Buckley stated that this had not yet been incorporated into this plan, but that it could be. Ms. Smith stated that such a path should also be shaded.

Ms. Almond asked if the park, much of which is or appears to have been forested wetland, is part of a larger green space corridor, and if there are broader implications about maintaining this corridor while further developing the park. Mr. Buckley stated that the applicants have not identified what part of the park is and is not wetland.

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

Ms. Nolt asked for clarification from Mr. Josh Son as to whether the whole application would come before the Committee for a final review, or whether individual projects would be reviewed as funds and planning for them manifests. Mr. Son stated that it is the latter, this being a site development plan.

Mr. Reyna stated that light pollution from the ball fields should be avoided.

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

- **Broader, enhanced, safe pedestrian and bike connectivity from the park to surrounding neighborhoods**
- **Orientation of playing fields take into account optimum solar orientation (north and south), allowing elongated play with limited interference from the sun**
- **Connected, full loop trail around the site**
- **Connectivity among the green spaces and wetlands around the site**
- **Mitigation of light pollution on parking lots and playing fields**
- **Additional shade provided in the playground areas**
- **Opportunities for Public Art**
- **Preservation of existing healthy trees with an increase in the amount of canopy trees**

Aye -- 7 - Jill Nolt, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus, Emily Smith, Chair
Andrea Almond and John Reyna

Excused -- 1 - David Johannas

3. [UDC 2019-23](#) Final location, character, and extent review of window replacements for Binford Middle School, 1701 Floyd Avenue

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

This item was deleted from the Regular Agenda with the intent of returning for review at a later date.

This Location, Character and Extent Item was withdrawn by the applicant.

A motion was made by Committee Chair Almond that UDC 2019-23, Final

location, character, and extent review of window replacements for Binford Middle School, 1701 Floyd Avenue, be removed from the agenda. Committee Member Gould seconded, the motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 7 - Jill Nolt, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus, Emily Smith, Chair
Andrea Almond and John Reyna

Excused -- 1 - David Johannas

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Son stated that the resolution of appreciation for recent Committee member Chris Arias is still being worked on. If after this meeting there are no other suggested amendments to the resolution, Mr. Son stated that he would have it ready for the next meeting.

Mr. Son stated that Sahied Mansaray, who had been recently selected as a Committee member, has let Mr. Son know that due to changes in his work schedule he will not be able to serve and will have to resign from the Committee.

Update regarding changing the "static arts" position on the Urban Design Committee

Ms. Almond stated that in her research of Committee positions and descriptions she learned that as of 2013 the Committee had added an additional member, designated to be someone from the Urban Forestry Commission. Mr. Son stated that, because the Urban Forestry Commission is largely defunct, it appears that the UDC is back to a 10-member makeup; he stated that he was waiting to hear from Alison Miessler [Boards and Commissions Administrator in the Clerks Office] for clarification.

Ms. Almond recapped previous Committee discussion in which using the rubric of Urban Planner for the revised Committee position was discussed. The Committee is made up largely of architects at this point, even for positions which don't require this qualification. Ms. Almond raised the question of how to get more diversity on the Committee, suggesting that maybe rather than urban planning, community advocacy, community engagement, and/or social justice should be the priorities. This being a member at large position, it is intended to be filled by someone not necessarily in a design or planning-related field.

Ms. Smith asked if the position should be for a business-owner; it was pointed out that there is such a position, currently filled by Andrea Quilici. Mr. Quilici suggested that it could be good for the new position to be filled by someone involved in a community association, and asked if it might be possible to send an email to relevant associations. Ms. Nolt suggested that involvement in biking, schools, and/or parks would be useful attributes, if a way could be found to reach out to those groups.

Ms. Almond stated that the question then becomes, should one of the Committee positions be for an urban planner, and should one of the at-large positions be for someone with community involvement.

Mr. Quilici stated that the difficulty is in recruiting from groups that might not be aware of UDC's existence.

Ms. Almond suggested that for the two member-at-large Committee positions, the intent could actually be described for the position, to make the community engagement and related attributes explicit.

The question of how to advertise the positions to relevant groups was discussed. Mr. Son stated that a general posting could be sent out. Ms. Almond suggested that City Council could help to advertise the positions. Mr. Son stated that he was not certain if changes to community-at-large positions would require a zoning change [like the static arts role] and if these changes could be done in a batch.

The problem of creating a too-specific urban planning Committee member description, that it would preclude recruitment, was discussed. Ms. Almond summarized a strategy of targeting groups via the recruitment publicity, not so much via the description per se.

Ms. Almond summed up Committee discussion re the redefined Static Arts position and the two at-large positions: that the former would be for someone with urban planning expertise, and the latter would be intended for people with community organization and non-profit experience.

Ms. Nolt mentioned that the lighting expertise which there used to be on the Committee was very useful, and suggested that perhaps this and other specifically useful subject areas could be mentioned. Ms. Almond stated that such expertise seems likely to fall under the urban planning position, and perhaps also under the required civil engineer position.

Ms. Almond asked if it might be feasible to have an advisory committee with this kind of specific expertise, which could be called upon as necessary. Mr. Son pointed out that experts can be invited to Committee meetings as needed, but that the UDC does also have the power to create a subcommittee. Subcommittee meetings would be subject to the usual City committee and commission rules regarding meetings being public.

Ms. Almond stated that she would draft at-large position descriptions based on the Committee discussion, to be shared with the Committee for review.

Urban Design Guidelines Revision

Mr. Son stated that he is working through the revision to the urban design guidelines, and hopes to have something drafted and ready for Committee review by the end of the calendar year. Lighting will be included, probably under a "community character" section.

Adjournment