



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 9, 2015

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Ms. Almond called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Chair Andrea Almond, Doug Cole, Vaughn Garland, Bryan Green, Giles Harnsberger, Vice Chair Andrea Levine and Robert Smith

Absent: 3 - Chris Arias, Andrew P. Gould and Jill Nolt

Staff Present

Mr. Jeff Eastman, PDR
Ms. Tara Ross, PDR

Others Present

Ms. Beth Rappaport, DPW
Mr. Chris Beschler, DCAO for Operations
Mr. Michael Sawyer, DPW
Mr. Travis Bridewell, DPW
Ms. Maritza Feliz-Reyes, DPW
Mr. Chris Kiefer, Timmons Group

Approval of Minutes

[ID 2015-017](#) Regular Meeting of June 4, 2015

Attachments: [Regular Meeting of June 4, 2015](#)

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Mr. Cole, that the minutes from the June 4, 2015 meeting be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Cole, Garland and Levine

Abstain: 4 - Almond, Green, Harnsberger and Smith

Secretary's Report

Mr. Eastman stated that at their June 15th meeting, the Planning Commission approved the Broad Rock Elementary modular classrooms and the Kanawha Plaza landscape and furnishings package on the Consent agenda with the UDC recommendations. The Commission also approved the Greene Elementary modular classrooms on the regular agenda with the UDC recommendations. Mr. Eastman stated that the applicant altered the plans between the UDC and Planning Commission meetings to move the classrooms closer to the building to encroach less on the basketball and tennis courts,

as the UDC had recommended.

Mr. Eastman stated that he had approved a demolition permit for Kanawha Plaza and the pedestrian bridge. Mr. Eastman also stated that there is a Kanawha Plaza traffic and pedestrian access study that is moving forward, and that the applicant expects to bring some conceptual options in front of the UDC in October.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

There were no continuances or deletions.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Levine, that the Consent Agenda items be recommended for approval. The motion carried unanimously.

1. [UDC No. 2015-11\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of an addition to the Emergency Communications Center and associated site improvements at 3516 N. Hopkins Road

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)

[Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Location Map](#)

[Application & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval as submitted, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on July 20, 2015.

2. [UDC No. 2015-16](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the Richmond Justice Center identifying sign, 1701 Fairfield Way

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)

[Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Location Map](#)

[Application & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval as submitted, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on July 20, 2015.

REGULAR AGENDA

3. [UDC No. 2015-17](#) Conceptual Location, Character and Extent Review of a roundabout at the intersection of Belmont Road and West Belmont Road

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Application & Plans](#)
[Letters of Support](#)
[Letter of Opposition](#)

Mr. Eastman stated that he sent out public notice to two area civic associations and received a letter of support from the Brookbury Civic Association and 4 letters of support from citizens, including one that had a lot of specific examples of how to accommodate bicyclists through the intersection. He also received on letter in opposition. Mr. Eastman introduced the City's new transportation engineer, Mr. Mike Sawyer.

Ms. Almond asked where the overhead utility crosses the intersection and Mr. Eastman stated that it is roughly diagonal from northeast to southwest and stated that there may be an opportunity to reroute the lines to adjacent poles to remove the wires from the center of the intersection.

Mr. Cole inquired when the accident that instigated all of this was and Mr. Eastman stated in 2011. Mr. Cole inquired what the cause of the fatality was. Mr. Travis Bridewell, with the Department of Public Works, stated that a school bus came out and another SUV came by and hit it and flipped the SUV and they had a fatality. Mr. Bridewell stated that after that they did a signal study and later on they did a roundabout recommendation. They also installed flashing lights at the intersection.

Ms. Almond inquired about the lack of bike lanes and Mr. Mike Sawyer, City Transportation Engineer, stated that he knows that in the bicycle master plan there is an opportunity at some point to come in with buffered bike lanes and stated that he talked with Mr. Jake Helmboldt, the City Bike & Trail Coordinator, and stated that is not in the immediate future but it is in the master plan. Mr. Sawyer stated that it hasn't been adopted yet. Ms. Almond inquired if this design would make it difficult to come back and add a bicycle lane and Mr. Sawyer stated that if they had a multi-lane roundabout that is the time when they want to take bicycles out of the mix and give them a separate facility. Mr. Sawyer stated that since they have a single lane roundabout the speeds are 19 to 20 mph and with the restricted geometrics of the roadway that will allow the cyclist and motorists to play in the same sandbox at the same time.

Mr. Garland inquired if it is possible where they are tightening the road closer to the vehicular traffic and have one lane that goes through the new configuration for bikes specifically so they can move away from the traffic. Mr. Sawyer stated that if it was a double lane roundabout there would be a facility that follows where the pedestrian walks and they would have to widen that area for the pedestrian to provide that extra space but the issue they have here is the CIP has \$385,000 allocated for construction and right now this design is \$425,000 and stated that they are already over \$40,000 over budget. Mr. Sawyer stated that strictly speaking about cyclist if it was a double roundabout that is where they would pull them out.

Mr. Cole asked if the size of the apron could be reduced. Mr. Sawyer stated that they are going to look at the central island to see if they could enlarge it because it would save them on costs and the concern they have is relating to when Chippenham shuts down for whatever reason between Belmont and Ironbridge this road would facilitate that traffic. Mr. Cole inquired why more cars would cause an increase in the apron size. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's just the radius and the way that it is designed for a 62' truck which is just the wheel base and stated that they can go back to increasing the central

island and decreasing the apron. Mr. Sawyer stated that on a normal day it serves 7,000 vehicles but when something happens on Chippenham there is more traffic on Belmont. Mr. Sawyer stated that for street and corridor policy they don't design for that because they don't want the plantings or anything else they do there to be ripped out because a truck comes through.

Mr. Green stated that bigger trucks won't be diverted here than it has been designed for and Mr. Sawyer stated yes.

Ms. Almond stated that she agrees with all of staff's recommendations.

Mr. Cole inquired if some of the word "consider" should be removed from the recommendations.

Ms. Almond stated that the wording in the staff comment that says considers versus something else and inquired if there was a reason for that. Mr. Eastman stated that they try to keep things flexible here as a recommending body but stated that the Committee could put more strong language in there like "strongly considers" or even remove the word "considers".

Ms. Almond inquired if there were opportunities to plant shade trees outside the perimeter where the sidewalks are going around. Ms. Almond stated that many of the other traffic circle plans they have seen were more urban but there still was trees along the sidewalk on the outside.

Ms. Levine stated that would create a better separation for the residents.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired if the planting strips that Mr. Eastman referred to are from the bottom similar to the area where Ms. Almond was talking about with consideration of the street trees and Mr. Eastman stated that it might be same thing and stated that when they pinch the lanes down from 2 to 1 it creates very large planting strips between where the sidewalk is and where the roadway is and stated that is what he was referring to.

Mr. Cole inquired if it was VDOT road and do it has to go through standards review. Mr. Bridewell stated that it is all city money. Mr. Bridewell stated that there shouldn't be any issues because the speed limit is dropping from 19 to 20 mph and stated that there may be some conflict with the utilities.

Mr. Sawyer inquired if there was opportunity for the Arts Commission to provide something in the central island rather than a tree in that way they can avoid having to move the utilities and drive up the cost.

Mr. Chris Kiefer, with the Timmons Group, stated that one thing to keep in mind with the central island is that they want bushy things that stop you from seeing across the other side. Mr. Kiefer stated that one thing about a roundabout operation is that they want people entering the roundabout to feel that they have to yield and if drivers can see unlimited across the roundabout then they feel the compulsion to buzz in there at higher speeds. Mr. Kiefer stated that the bushy part in the middle is an advantage here and stated that the sight lines in a roundabout all you have to see is the quarter of the turn to your left. Mr. Kiefer stated that on the outside today some of the intersection is restricted because of some of the trees out there on the east side of the intersection if it were to remain as it is the trees are one the limiting factors but states that in the roundabout it's not as a concern because you are at low speed and is only looking a quarter of a turn to your left.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Garland, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for conceptual approval with the

following conditions:

- That the applicant considers reducing the apron width, with the excess used to enlarge the central landscaped island.
- That the final plans include a landscape plan and schedule showing plant species, quantity, location and size at the time of installation.
- That the applicant considers providing a larger shade tree (or multiple smaller trees) in the central landscaped portion of the roundabout in addition to the concentric rings of evergreen hedge, perennials/bulbs and an evergreen groundcover.
- That the applicant continues the existing median tree plantings on Belmont Road in the new median extensions.
- That the applicant provides shade trees in the newly created, larger planting strips on Belmont Road.
- That the applicant landscapes the splitters on W. Belmont Road.
- That the applicant explores overhead utility relocation through the intersection to allow for larger tree species in the central landscaped island.
- That the final plans include a lighting plan, showing make, model and finish for any light pole and fixture, as well as fixture light source and color temperature.
- That the final plans include a signage plan.
- That the applicant considers working with the Public Art Commission on an installation in the central landscaped island.

This item was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on July 20, 2015.

Aye: 7 - Almond, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger, Levine and Smith

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Almond initiated a discussion into the role of subcommittees.

Adjournment

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 10:52 a.m.