

City of Richmond

*900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 5, 2022

10:00 AM

This meeting will be held in-person at City Hall

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Urban Design Committee

Attachments: [Public Access and Participation Instruction UDC](#)

Call to Order

Present -- 9 - * Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, * Charles Woodson, * Andrea Quilici, * Justin Doyle, * Eva Clarke, * Jessie Gemmer, * Mitchell Danese, * Damon Pearson and * Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

Absent -- 1 - * Amelia Wehunt

Roll Call

Present -- 9 - * Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, * Charles Woodson, * Andrea Quilici, * Justin Doyle, * Eva Clarke, * Jessie Gemmer, * Mitchell Danese, * Damon Pearson and * Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

Absent -- 1 - * Amelia Wehunt

Approval of Minutes

Secretary's Report

CONSENT AGENDA

REGULAR AGENDA

1.

Attachments: [Application & Plans](#)
[Staff Report](#)
[Applicant Presentation](#)

Planner Oliver presented the application.

The applicant, Tim Davey of Timmons Group, said they had safety concerns regarding the path from the intersection to the restaurant. They were willing to "soften" the corner with input from Staff.

Chair Quilici requested clarification.

Applicant Davey said it would be the restaurant tenants responsibility to secure outdoor tables and chairs. He clarified there was a liability and theft risk to the restaurant if pedestrians were able to walk up to the tables at night when the restaurant is closed.

Committee Member Pearson questioned if there was a way to rethink the layout to make it accessible to the public.

Committee Member Gemmer asked why the application was for a plaza rather than outdoor dining.

Applicant Davey stated that they wanted their employees and the public to have a place to be along the river. He also noted that Venture Richmond had reviewed the plans and were in support.

Committee Member Clarke asked about the tree planting. She said the chosen species

were considered as invasive and gave alternative recommendations.

Committee Member Gemmer asked if there were ADA ramps for accessibility considerations.

Applicant Davey said the east-west connection provides an accessible walkway from 5th Street and Tredegar Street.

Chair Quilici said he wasn't aware that it would be closed at night, so it's not really a plaza.

Applicant Davey said it's really trying to serve both purposes of plaza and dining.

Chair Quilici said the original plan had tables all around the edge – he asked why they moved the green area to the corner.

Mr. Davey answered so the restaurant operator might have some flexibility on how to use the space.

Chair Quilici opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment provided.

Janine Lester of DPW Forestry Division said that there are under plantings in tree wells, which are prohibited by Urban Forestry.

A motion was made by Eva Clarke, seconded by Gemmer, to approve the revised plans with staff comments except the terraced ped entrances and with additional trash receptacle at corner, and adding a condition to reconsider the bark elm trees.

Committee Member Mignardi asked if the bollards could be lighted on a timer.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan said that there's been a lot of bad activity on 5th Street and Tredegar Street, so the security issues are greater than the potential problems with light pollution.

Committee Member Gemmer said she doesn't feel the path is necessary if there are multiple uses. She would rather leave the lawn open. She also asked about the terraced pedestrian entrance.

Committee Member Woodson asked how many employees will be at the building
Applicant Davey responded with 3,500.

Chair Quilici asked what is needed to maintain the proposed layout at the street corner but to make it less "hard." He also asked about the material of the 3-ft high wall.

A representative of the applicant, Mr. Ross, said they're looking at the existing walls of the canal for inspiration, so probably a stone or pre-cast.

Committee Member Clarke said there needs to be a trash receptacle at the corner.

A motion was made by Clarke, seconded by Gemmer, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved with the recommended conditions, except with additional trash receptacle at corner and to reconsider the bark elm trees, but to not include Staffs recommendation to provide a pedestrian access from the street corner.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 9 - Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, Charles Woodson, Andrea Quilici, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke, Jessie Gemmer, Mitchell Danese, Damon Pearson and Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

2.

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

Planner Oliver provided a presentation.

Representatives of the Applicant Dexter with Special Capital Projects and Jennifer Weatherford provided further detail.

Committee Member Gemmer asked where the yellow color came from that was included on the architectural facade.

Applicant Weatherford stated that multiple color schemes were presented to PCRF, and yellow was chosen because it's lively.

Chair Quilici asked if the yellow represents the entrance.

Applicant Weatherford said that the other yellow portion will be indoor/outdoor playground.

Chair Quilici asked if it'll be clear where the entrance is.

Applicant Weatherford said the canopy is up in the air right now – there might be a shade sail on the playground.

Deborah Morton from DPR responded to a question about interior uses, stating that a specialized boxing program would be provided that was not open to walk in users and was staffed at all times.

No Public Comment was received.

A motion was made by Pearson, seconded by Doyle, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 9 - Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, Charles Woodson, Andrea Quilici, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke, Jessie Gemmer, Mitchell Danese, Damon Pearson and Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

3.

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Application & Plans - Current July 2022](#)
[Application & Plans \(May 2022\)](#)
[Staff Report to UDC - May 2022](#)
[Staff Report to UDC - July 2022](#)

Planner Oliver provided an application.

John Kim representing DPW, John Westbrook from DPW, and Gary Johnson from Timmons provided further detail. They stated that the existing bridge structure was built in

1909 and it needs to be replaced because there were ~28k cars passing every day.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan asked about the reduction in the width of the culvert. Applicant Kim said that it was chosen to that traffic would not have to be stopped over the bridge when it is constructed. Applicant Kim said the new width would be 20 feet.

Chair Quilici asked about the height.

Applicant Kim said it would be about 23 feet vertically but the final design of the tunnel structure will be determined in the final design stage.

Committee Member Woodson asked what the purpose of narrowing the underpass. Applicant Westbrook said it provided for having a more shallow foundation.

Applicant Woodson detailed that the area was witness to many historical events, including Gabriel's hanging, and said it's a very sacred area. Applicant Kim said that it's a balance between historic value and safety.

Committee Member Clarke asked about historic signage.

The Applicants stated that signage would be chosen through a separate project that included signage across the area and that the design was specifically chosen to allow the greatest latitude for future decisions.

Chair Quilici said this isn't an adequate connection for such a sacred site.

Applicant Johnson said there will be community outreach at a later stage.

Committee Member Clarke said that the grass strip would be difficult to maintain and that native plants would be better.

No Public Comment was received.

A motion was made by Woodson, seconded by Quilici, to deny the application.

Chair Quilici said it's too important of a connection and it's a lost opportunity.

Applicant Kim said if a subcommittee is possible, that would be best because time is critical for this application.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes – Quilici, Woodson

No – Clarke, Danese, Doyle, Gemmer, Hepp-Buchanan, Minardi, Pearson

Excused – Wehunt

A motion was made by Doyle, seconded by Danese, to defer for 30 days and create a subcommittee.

Gemmer and Woodson volunteered to be subcommittee members.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes – Quilici, Woodson, Clarke, Danese, Doyle, Gemmer, Hepp-Buchanan, Minardi, Pearson

Excused – Wehunt

A motion was made by Committee Member Doyle, seconded by Danese, that this Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent item be deferred for 30 days pending the consideration of a subcommittee.

The motioned carried by the following vote:

4.

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

Planner Oliver provided a presentation.

The applicant, Josh, with Friends of James River Parks, provided further detail. He included that the project was funded and there were a few custom graphics that still need to be made, the existing signage was not consistent across the area, and there was no brand guidelines for signage. The signs were written by City Staff.

Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan asked who the graphic design team was. Applicant Josh said Rocket Pop.

Committee Member Pearson asked if the sign would be painted. Applicant Josh said it would be painted and UV treated so it's easily cleaned from graffiti.

Deborah Morton of DPR said they are going to systematically look at all signage in all parks in the near future.

Committee Member Doyle said to add bilingual signage as well.

No Public Comment was received.

A motion was made by Committee Member Hepp-Buchanan, seconded by Gemmer, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 8 - Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, Charles Woodson, Andrea Quilici, Eva Clarke, Jessie Gemmer, Mitchell Danese, Damon Pearson and Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

Abstain -- 1 - Justin Doyle

5.

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Application & Plans](#)
[Presentation to UDC - Existing Library Examples](#)

Planner Oliver provided a presentation.

Applicant Delia Nevola provided further detail.

Monica with KER Architects and Dexter from Special Capital Projects stated guiding principles of the RPL Library System Master Plan.

Committee Member Pearson asked if the columns are being removed.

The applicants confirmed.

Committee Member Gemmer asked how the plan maintained the historic beauty. Applicant Nevola said that there are interior components to salvage and utilize elsewhere in the building.

Chair Quilici said that it was a 1930's building and gave the historic background. He asked if there was any consideration in the narrative of the library. Applicant Nevola said the history will be addressed within the space. The applicants said it's too difficult to salvage the Dooley section and it's a significant fire issue.

Committee Member Woodson asks about potential usage of bird-safe glass.

Committee Member Minardi said the proposed green space could be a good seating area.

Committee Member Gemmer said she had a problem with the context and character of the building. She said the addition did not relate to the existing building.

Committee Member Clarke said maybe the splash pad could be moved to the back.

Committee Member Pearson said that he finds the form problematic and thinks it didnt seem flexible or inviting.

Chair Quilici said that the windows didnt connect to the street at a pedestrian level. He also asked about the blank walls on corners. He also stated that windows facing west catch a greater amount of sunlight and therefore transmit heat to a greater degree.

Max Hepp-Buchanan had to leave the meeting due to scheduling conflict.

Chair Quilici said to consider a sculpture in the plaza.

No Public Comment was received.

A motion was made by Committee Member Danese, seconded by Committee Member Clarke, to accept with staff conditions.

Committee Member Pearson said he could not vote for that. He said there's a major misstep. Committee Member Clarke agreed.

Applicant Nevola requested if the plans could be resubmit.

Committee Member Danese withdrew his motion.

A motion was made by Committee Member Danese, seconded by Committee Member Pearson, to defer the application for 30 days.

This Location, Character and Extent Item was continued and referred back to the Urban Design Committee due back on 7/7/2022

Aye -- 9 - Committee Member Luigi Mignardi, Charles Woodson, Andrea Quilici, Justin Doyle, Eva Clarke, Jessie Gemmer, Mitchell Danese, Damon Pearson and Committee Member Max Hepp-Buchanan

OTHER BUSINESS

Leo Mantey, the new Deputy Director of DPR, introduced himself.

Committee Chair Quilici presented a letter for them to not tear down the Second Baptist Church.

Adjournment