



# City of Richmond

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

## Meeting Minutes - Final Urban Design Committee

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Thursday, March 9, 2017

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

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Call to Order

**Ms. Almond called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m**

### Roll Call

**Present --** 6 - \* Chair Andrea Almond, \* Bryan Green, \* Andrew P. Gould, \* Committee Member Dawn Hicks, \* Committee Member David Johannas and \* Jill Nolt  
**Absent --** 4 - \* Vice Chair Andrea Levine, \* Chris Arias, \* Giles Harnsberger and \* Robert Smith

### Approval of Minutes

**A motion was made by Committee Member Johannas, seconded by Green, that this be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye --** 6 - Almond, Green, Gould, Hicks, Johannas and Nolt

1. [UDC MIN 2017-02](#) Minutes of the Regular Meeting on February 9, 2017

**Attachments:** [Minutes of the Regular Meeting on February 9, 2017](#)

**A motion was made by Committee Member Johannas, seconded by Green, that this Minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.**

### Secretary's Report

Mr. Son stated that everything that was on the Planning Commission agenda from the UDC was approved including the Richmond Henrico Turnpike project, the Fire Station project and the Monroe Park project.

Mr. Son stated that they approved a West of Boulevard Design Overlay District application for the demolition of a carriage house that was a contributing member to the historic district and the new construction of a 2-door garage that complies with the overlay district in its place. Mr. Son stated that there is not necessarily anything in the design overlay district that mentions demolition and stated that in the guidelines if a contributing member is destroyed, a building with a street façade matching the street façade of the destroyed contributing member will be acceptable. Mr. Son stated that the purpose of these Guidelines is to maintain continuity between existing contributing members and new construction and therefore matching the façade of an existing contributing member by definition is acceptable.

Mr. Son stated that the Museum District Association is looking to add more banners throughout their neighborhood with regard to community identity so an amendment to the ordinance will be forthcoming.

Mr. Son stated that 17th Street Farmers Market was withdrawn by the applicant and stated that technically the UDC doesn't have the authority to defer an application from consideration by the Planning Commission but, rather, can vote to recommend denial of a project. Mr. Son stated that the UDC has formed a subcommittee to advise the applicant on the hardscape of the market which consisted of Ms. Almond and Mr. Johannas.

Ms. Almond inquired when the Farmers Market will be coming back to the Commission and Mr. Son stated that a date has not been decided. Ms. Almond gave a brief description of the details they discussed in the meeting regarding the Farmers Market.

Mr. Green stated that in regards to the Monroe Park project the UDC recommendations and staff recommendation for approval was for everything except the demolition of the trees and inquired if that is the way the Planning Commission passed it. Mr. Green inquired what does that functionally mean and Ms. Onufer stated that the modifications to the approved 2009 plans are approved and stated that they can renovate and install in accordance with the 2009 plans with those amendments. Ms. Onufer stated that the removal of trees within that project and any concerns about the process and operations of doing that would be a matter for internal operations and City Council to bring that up and stated that it is not a matter of location, character and extent review of the project. Ms. Onufer stated that for purposes of renovating the park and moving forward with the design, they are moving forward with the renovations of the park in accordance with the approved location, character and extent. Ms. Onufer stated that she is unaware of what is going on with the discussions of tree removal because it is not location, character and extent review and it is not for UDC staff to be involved. Ms. Onufer briefly discussed the Master Plan and how often they are updated and uploaded so that the public can view.

## Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

There were no continuances or deletions.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Stephen R. Romine, with LeClair Ryan, stated that he appreciates the Committee's time and consideration for the staff report and is here to answer any questions.

**A motion was made by Committee Member Johannas, seconded by Nolt, that this be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye --** 5 - Almond, Green, Hicks, Johannas and Nolt

**Abstain --** 1 - Gould

2. [UDC 2017-09](#) Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-442.4(1)d review of the pedestrian plazas at the new Church Hill North Culinary Complex, 2500-2534 Nine Mile Rd & 1401-1405 N. 25th St.

**Attachments:** [Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Location & Plans](#)

The application is for review of the pedestrian plazas at the proposed Church Hill North Culinary Complex at 2500-2534 Nine Mile Rd & 1401-1405 N. 25th St., as set forth in Section 30-442.4(1)d of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Urban Design Committee is making a recommendation to the Director of Planning and Development Review as part of the Plan of Development review process for the overall building.

**A motion was made by Mr. Johannas, seconded by Ms. Nolt, that the Consent**

Agenda items be recommended for approval to the Director of the Department of Planning and Development Review. The motion carried by the following vote:

3. [UDC 2017-10](#) Review of encroachments throughout the Near West End and Museum District area for Verizon Wireless telecommunications equipment on Dominion Poles, 5201 Patterson Avenue; 3407 Floyd Avenue; 336 Lexington Road; 4700 Hanover Avenue; 4601 Leonard Parkway

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

A motion was made by Mr. Johannas, seconded by Ms. Nolt, that the Consent Agenda items be recommended for approval to the Director of the Department of Public Works. The motion carried by the following vote:

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

4. [UDC 2017-11](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of Westhampton Streetscape Improvements – Patterson Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Willow Lawn Dr.); Grove Ave. (between Maple Ave. & Westview Ave.)

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

Ms. Nolt inquired if Mr. Son could speak more to the vision that they are expecting from the complete street reference.

Mr. Son stated (pulling language from the Complete Streets Guide) it means: Transportation agencies looking to adopt a policy would entail complete streets to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists making your area a better place to live. Mr. Son stated that, under the terms, the Complete Streets Guide reference would consist of the sidewalks and the bike parking accommodations to enable a more accessible amenity for people that are using different modes of transportation. Ms. Nolt stated that in the staff recommendation from the way it is worded is that they are asking the applicant to establish the vision that is set out in the complete streets but states that to be specific to them so they can try to accomplish that recommendation and stated that she is wondering if what Mr. Son stated is captured in the first two recommendations or if they need to capture something specific that is a part of that vision.

Ms. Almond stated that building on that comment further considering these things when individual projects are reviewed kind of implies that this applicant would be bringing forward all of the future projects and they would have oversight about how to incorporate that but states that is potentially not the case. Ms. Almond inquired how does that make anything happen and Mr. Son stated that when he was crafting this he was thinking of the idea that Public Works would consider this with every project as they make improvements or get funding for projects along the corridors and referencing best practices from the guide.

Ms. Nolt stated that if she is hearing this correctly they are asking the property owner,

as in this case Public Works, to establish the complete street vision as a part of this and future projects that will come forth in this area.

Mr. Son stated yes.

Ms. Onufer stated that she don't want to intrude upon staff's recommendations but there are very strong recommendations about this at the conceptual phase because it is for the design guidelines and that was the time to make comments about scope and projects bringing forward as they really narrowed the scope of the project. Ms. Onufer stated that the judgement is really deciding whether the project as proposed is adequate to match the location, character and extent and priorities that are set in the master plan and or not to make a recommendation to really expand the scope of the project. Ms. Onufer stated that they are plenty of changes to that right of way that are not under location, character and extent review and stated that largely this application should be focused on the improvements that are happening from property line to curb line area and whether the Committee feels that those improvements are appropriate to the location, character and extent be given to the Urban Design Guidelines and master plan to the area to making streetscape improvements. Ms. Onufer stated that given that they are talking about a phase project in establishing guidelines those first two considerations would have to be used by staff.

Ms. Nolt inquired if Mr. Son feels that the third point should be considered as stated so that the Committee is encompassing that vision of the complete streets for the guidelines of this project if another pilot project come before them it would be maintained and a recommendation that they use they use the complete street guideline on that project.

Mr. Son stated yes.

Mr. Green inquired what happens on the north side of the 5800 block when there is a potential large project coming in and what kind of coordination has been for the owner to make sure that the city streetscape improvements that are coming in are not undone by the new curb cut and new fenestration to that.

Mr. Son stated that is something that will fall under DPW purview as they will deal with the curb cuts or other right-of-way improvements and stated that he would imagine that with establishing the streetscape guidelines.

Mr. Son asked Ms. Onufer how staff does it with the West of the Boulevard Design Overlay District and inquired if this is something that can be set up.

Ms. Onufer stated that the West of the Boulevard Design Overlay District was established by a City Council action and stated that there are three different ways where the site plan of a project will be reviewed and if the scale is sufficient it will be reviewed under Planning and Development with both Planning and Public Works input in terms particularly of egress and access management that in particularly from the primary street frontage in this area where Pubic Works pays very close attention to. Ms. Onufer stated that the second option would be changing the rezoning of those underlying properties into districts that does not allow for Primary Street aggress and egress permission. Ms. Onufer went on to say that they may come forward with encroachments that may come forward before the Committee for review within that streetscape right-of-way if they did not comply with these guidelines that were adopted.

Ms. Almond inquired if they had any support or review from the neighborhood association and inquired if they have been involved in the project.

Mr. Son stated that might be a question for the applicant.

Ms. Yongping Wang, Manager of the Project with DPW, stated that from the beginning of the project they worked with the Merchant Association and they agree with the project.

Ms. Almond inquired about the plant selection, trees and shrubs and why they were chosen.

Mr. Andy Sisson, with HG Landscape, stated that the trees came directly from the City Arborist based on their master plan in those areas and stated that the one that stands out is the Red Buds along Patterson which was intended to keep them from the power lines. Mr. Sisson stated that the rest of the plantings idea was to try and get something that was low maintenance and kept as tight a shape as possible. Mr. Sisson stated that especially along Patterson in order to keep a full width for the sidewalk they reduced the amount of space between the sidewalk area and the curb and stated that they are down to 3 feet for the tree wells. Mr. Sisson stated that they tried to pick some things that were drought tolerant and tough where they have seen that was successful in other areas.

Ms. Almond inquired if the Maple and the Pastiche are already planted along the streetscape and Mr. Sisson stated that it is majority of what is planted and stated that the hope is to get back what the original look was especially on Grove where they have been consistent. Ms. Almond stated that despite of what the City Arborist may have recommended as a designer what trees, as a designer, would you recommend to go there.

Mr. Sisson stated that he actually like the Chinese pastiche in that area because it really thrives in that area and stated that personally he is not a big fan of Red Maple. Ms. Almond stated that they were not trying to plant anymore maples or Crepe Myrtles in the city.

Ms. Nolt stated that she would like to see more of a larger canopy tree and offer some shade to the pedestrian experience and stated that it seems with these conditions that there is room for a large canopy tree. Mr. Sisson stated that it is really the north side of Patterson where the Red Bud is where they have consistent utility lines and they line up directly over everything. Ms. Nolt inquired if they were going to remove some of the rogue trees and if so do they know what they are going to plant in their place to bring consistency to the streetscape. Mr. Sisson stated that it is a combination of both and stated that they are maintaining majority of the existing. Ms. Nolt stated that for the record they need to know what is being replaced and what is being removed. Mr. Sisson stated that they will add the plan to the project of what is being removed and replaced.

Mr. Johannas stated that he would like them to make the streets more habitable to walk so the idea of continuity of canopy is very important to him and stated where that falls in the plans. Mr. Sisson stated that with it being a lot of curb cuts there aren't enough places to put trees so you have 3 or 4 trees for the entire block and stated that it is hard to keep consistency when there is nowhere to put a tree. Mr. Johannas stated that he has a concern that as they are creating these character elements and defining characters and trying to create more neighborhood settings as opposed to drive through areas and one of his other concerns is that in the winter there is going to be asphalt with some grass sticking up and inquired if there is a way something about the planting schemes to compensate for the lack of visual continuity. Mr. Sisson stated that with all the parking and curb cuts there are not a lot of things they can do in those areas and stated that he can buffer one section of the asphalt but stated that he can't do both and be able to get people through. Mr. Johannas inquired if there was anything they can do with the species or plantings that will create a winter impact.

Mr. Gould inquired if they could increase the area where they have the trees to have some ground covering or something green at the base of the tree and Mr. Sisson stated that they do on the proposed planting plans, they have a section of greenery right at the base with some shrubs at the outside base.

Mr. Sisson stated that in regards to Mr. Green's comment regarding the north side of the street Phase I will be starting from Libby going down to Granite and stated that they stayed away from the area in front of the school knowing that it was going to be in flux for a while.

Mr. Johannas inquired if the B2 zoning area on Libby Street had been reviewed in the last couple of years for the alternate.

Mr. Son stated that he will look into it and stated that he think it was under review to rezone from Grove to Libby down to Patterson because they have a lot of special use permits going on.

Ms. Onufer stated that the 2011 master plan that is cited in the staff report was an attempt to look at updating the future land use area and then they began an effort in the summer of 2012 to take a look at some of the transitional small business and mixed use zoning options and stated that the effort hasn't gone anywhere but it can be reconsidered after the City master plan is updated or at the request of City Council, a person in the neighborhood or a business.

Mr. Gould inquired if these are the guidelines for the entire corridor or the design for Phase I so with the Committee recommendation they will be essentially endorsing both and inquired if the subsequent phases will come before them if they are consistent with the guidelines and Ms. Onufer stated that if they are consistent with the design guidelines they will not come before the Committee.

**Ms. Nolt made a motion to approve this item with staff recommendations and made a further recommendation to substitute the Chinese Pistache and the Red Maple in the plan to a larger canopy street tree such as an elm or an oak and furthermore that the substitution needs to be implemented into the streetscape design guidelines as well.**

The staff recommendations were:

- That the applicant further consider ways to increase pedestrian right-of-way and sidewalk width throughout the corridors when individual projects are reviewed
- That the applicant further consider bicycle parking accommodations when individual projects are reviewed
- That the applicant work with the Transportation Engineering division to establish a complete streets vision for the project when the time is appropriate

Mr. Gould seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

**A motion was made by Mr. Johannas, seconded by Ms. Nolt, that the March 6, 2017 meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Aye -- 6 - Almond, Green, Gould, Hicks, Johannas and Nolt**