

IN TUNE: Nature, Place, Connection

Mural for Jefferson Park Stage Wall

Background:

In August 2023, the volunteer/citizen organization, Friends of Jefferson Park, <https://verdantrichmond.org/friends-of-jefferson-park/> received news of Mayor Stoney's \$250,000 in fiscal year 07/1/23-06/30/2024 budget appropriation for the Richmond Outdoor and Prosperity Fund. Ordinance 2023-247, was administered by the Community Foundation, "for the purpose of administering funds for outdoor projects within the City of Richmond". Applicant organizations were required to complete detailed proposals by September 30 2023.

Open Space Education (OSE), <https://www.openspaceed.org/> collaborated with Friends of Jefferson Park and prepared an application for the funding of an outdoor mural on the stage wall in Jefferson Park. OSE is an established non-profit 501c3 after-school arts program that partners with Richmond Public Schools, and is contributing a portion of the funds needed to complete this project. In October 2023, The Community Foundation awarded \$10,000 from the Outdoor and Prosperity Fund to this mural project (via 501c3 fiscal sponsor, Verdant Richmond).

City of Richmond Deputy Director of Parks, Shamar Young, has approved this project and pledged to support the surface preparation activities (power washing.) Our 7th District City Council Representative, Dr. Cynthia Newbille has acknowledged the grant award and generously offered assistance as needed (see pgs 12 and 13 in attachments). Following CAR review, Public Art Commission will review this proposed mural (target date early 1Q2024.)

The mural will be painted by students who participate in the OSE after-school program at Martin Luther King, Jr., Middle School. In the Spring 2024 semester, students will be mentored by two professional teaching artists and muralists (members of OSE faculty, bios pgs 10-11) and paint the mural during their after-school program.

Project goals:

The mural project entitled "IN TUNE: Nature, Place, Connection" will ask students to take a closer look at the familiar: their neighborhood park. By learning more about the trees, plants, and animals that live there, as well as the varied histories of the park, students will collaboratively create a mural that expresses the energy of a particular place.

The mural will empower students of Martin Luther King, Jr., Middle School to become youth-stewards of Jefferson Park. The park is six blocks from their school and the closest city park to Mosby Court, Richmond's second largest public housing community.

Planning and executing the mural painting will connect students to the natural world as a way of recognizing their interconnection with the community in which they live. Students will experience a sense of place and have access to the benefits of being in nature while cultivating creative, intuitive, socio-emotional, and leadership skills. Projects like this help develop creative thinkers, environmental stewards, and change-makers who will shape a brighter future for themselves and their community.

The mural will be a source of pride and accomplishment for MLK students. When completed, it will be a manifestation of how a team can create a meaningful work of art that is highly visible and appreciated by their families, friends and neighbors. It will enliven a highly visible “blank space” which is all too often a place of neglect, litter and vandalism when not being used for healthy, productive outdoor activities.

Current conditions:

Building:

The Jefferson Park stage and restrooms building has a construction date of 1970 per City tax records. It is identified as a “non-historic bandstand with comfort station” in the National Park Service Register for the Union Hill Historic District.

In addition to the stage, the structure includes seasonal restrooms and a locked mechanical room. A community bulletin board is affixed to the north side of the building. The concrete sidewalk on the west side includes a drinking water fountain and a bike repair station. A larger concrete pad extends from the stage knee wall to the east. This audience area includes benches and trash receptacles. See photos pg 4-6.

The stage wall faces east. The entire stage floor and the stage wall are covered by the roof of the round-house structure. There is dusk-to-dawn lighting of the stage via LED down lights in the ceiling and soffit. Stage floor is concrete, steps lead up to the stage on the south and north sides. Four simple columns support the stage opening.

The stage wall in addition to all other exterior walls are a frequent location for vandalism and graffiti. Parks and Recreation maintenance staff occasionally clean/paint over the graffiti tags. Currently, there is illegible scrawling on the stage wall which appears to be drawn with colored sidewalk chalk. Spray-painted graffiti tags currently appear on the west/southwest elevations and the mechanical room door. See photos pgs 5-6.

The bricks that comprise the veneer of the building are considered modern with a Portland cement mortar. The bricks are in good condition and the mortar joints are tight on all surfaces. See photos pg 6.

Site description and project context

The proposed mural would face east, toward the main entrance to the park at Mosby Street and “Mr. Smedley” sculpture. The bronze “Mr. Smedley” was commissioned by the City of Richmond by Virginia artist Jack Witt, the same artist who created the iconic “Mr. Bojangles” sculpture at Brook Road and E. Leigh Street in Jackson Ward. “Mr Smedley”, originally stood at the entrance of 6th Street Marketplace. In 2014, the Richmond Public Art Commission relocated the sculpture to Jefferson Park.

See photo pg 4.

The stage house is adjacent to a large playground with shady trees and a view of Downtown Richmond. Drinking water fountains and bathrooms are available in the warm weather months. The stage and adjacent concrete pad is a popular location for birthday parties, family reunions, school and church groups, civic association meetings and neighborhood picnics. Youth play, sing, dance and skate on the stage. There is electricity available for permitted events that include amplified music or live performances.

The stage is occasionally used for shelter by the community’s un-housed residents. When extended periods of overnight camping occur, City of Richmond Park staff and members of the HOPE program respond in a compassionate manner, encouraging more appropriate long term shelter and other services for the individuals involved.

Proposed work:

Painted mural on the 24’x 8’ stage wall area under roof, facing east and lit at night (lighting currently exists and is dusk to dawn). See concept image pg 7.

- Cleaning of masonry surface by The Richmond Department of Parks and Recreation (a gentle pressure wash with water).
- Application of breathable primer for masonry (exterior), Sherwin-Williams/LOXON Concrete and Masonry Primer and Sealer, 2 coats.
- Mural paint: acrylic/latex and aerosol, Behr, Golden, and Sherwin-Williams Latitude.
- Top coat: VandIGuard One Anti-Graffiti Coating, water-based, breathable, and non-yellowing, UV safe.

Existing murals in the neighborhood:

Professionally painted murals exist in Chimborazo Park & Richmond Hill (both in City Old & Historic Districts.) Adjacent to the Union Hill Old & Historic District are murals on the MLK Bridge and N. 25th Street. See photos pgs 7-10.

Existing Conditions:
Jefferson Park, Stage House, East Elevation



Jefferson Park, Public Art & Stage House



Jefferson Park, Vandalism on Stage House



Southwest Elevation, with recent vandalism



West Elevation, with recent vandalism



Brick and mortar detail (vandalism in white chalk)



Jefferson Park/Open Space Education, Mural Conceptual Design:



Examples of public space murals in neighboring historic districts:



Chimborazo Playground



Richmond Hill

Adjacent to Union Hill Old & Historic District:



MLK Bridge/Leigh Street Viaduct at "O" Street

25th Street/Church Hill North



Open Space Education Artist Bios:

CIDNEY “BIRDIE” OLENIACZ

artist | educator | muralist



Birdie lives and works in Richmond as a teaching artist and muralist. She has led 6 Open Space programs and completed the 42nd St. tower mural in the James River Park in December 2022.

Birdie is passionate about connecting with the communities around her. She is excited by her experiences that push her to ask questions and work to expand her artistic endeavors. Birdie has a sincere appreciation for the outdoors and is constantly relating nature to her art practice.



James River Park System Tower, painted 2022 with teens.

Open Space Education Artist Bio:

AUSTIN "AUZ" MILES

artist | educator | muralist



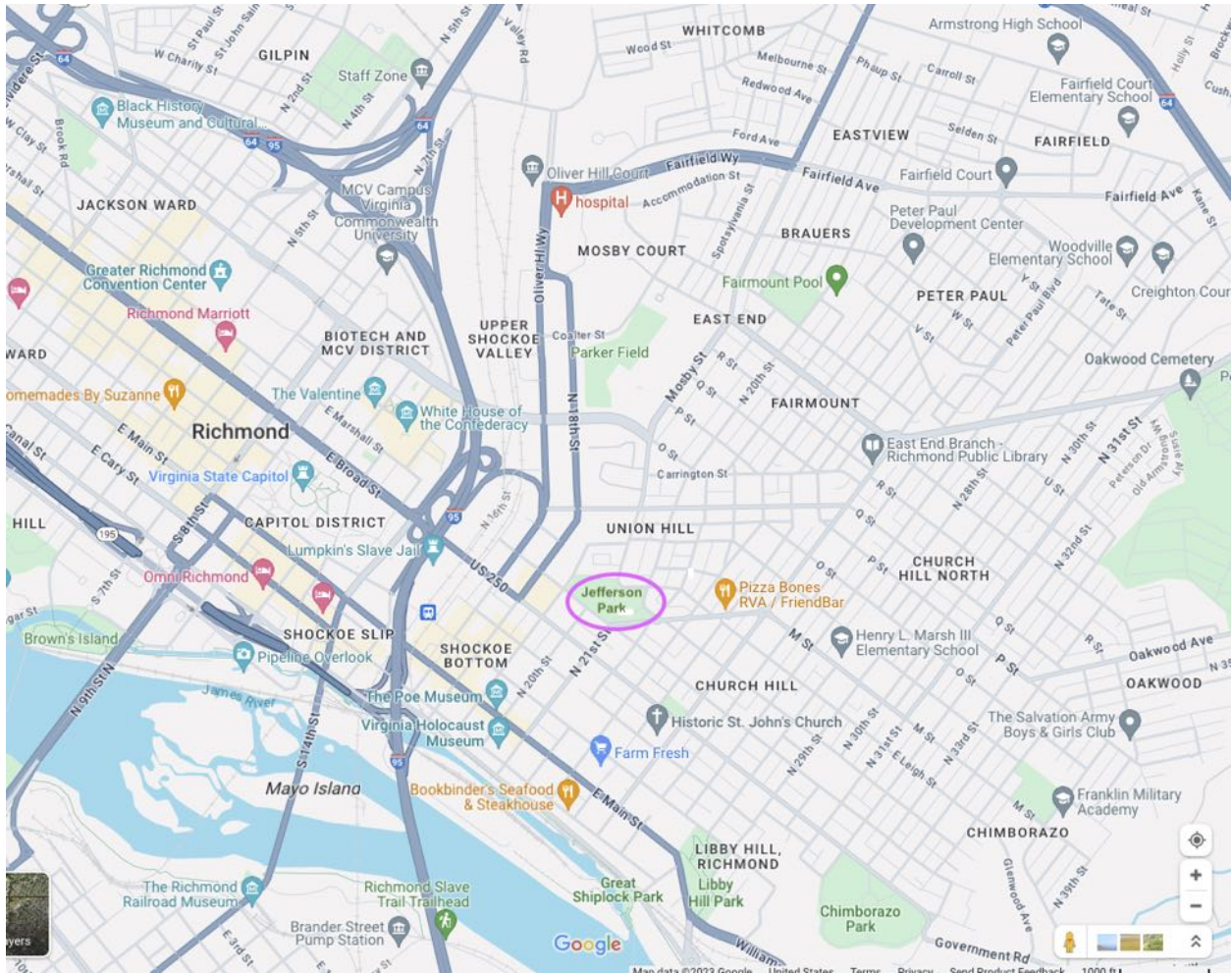
Austin's work tells stories about beauty ideals, spirituality, ancestry, and individual experiences of women as they relate to the African Diaspora.

In Austin's community practice as a public artist, she has installed numerous national murals in Richmond, VA; Norfolk, VA; Durham, NC; Cleveland, OH; and Magnolia, MS.

Auz' Power Plant Mural, painted 2022, RVA Street Art Festival



Location of Jefferson Park



richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6347026&GUID=5A8F3EF...

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File #: ORD. 2023-247 Version: Name: _____

Type: Ordinance Status: **Adopted**

File created: 8/1/2023 In control: [City Council](#)

On agenda: 9/25/2023 Final action: 9/25/2023

Title: To amend Ord. No. 2023-071, adopted May 8, 2023, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) transfer \$250,000.00 from the Non-Departmental agency Reserve for Richmond **Outdoor** and Prosperity Fund line item (ii) create a new line item entitled "The Community Foundation, Inc." in the Non-Departmental agency, and (iii) appropriate such \$250,000.00 to such new line item in the Non-Departmental agency, for the purpose of administering funds for **outdoor** projects within the city of Richmond.

Patrons: [Mayor Stoney](#), [Stephanie Lynch](#)

Attachments: 1. [Ord. No. 2023-247](#)

History (2)		Text					
Date	Ver.	Group	Action	Result	Action Details	Meeting Details	Video
9/25/2023	2	City Council	adopted	Pass	Action details	Meeting details	Not available
9/11/2023	2	City Council	introduced and referred		Action details	Meeting details	Not available



Elaine Odell <elaineodell@gmail.com>

\$10K grant for Jefferson Park mural

3 messages

Elaine Odell <elaineodell@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 17, 2023 at 11:16 AM

To: "Young, Shamar D. - DPR" <Shamar.Young@rva.gov>, Cynthia.Newbille@rva.gov
Cc: "Rivara, Katherine - DPR" <Katherine.Rivara@rva.gov>, Blythe King <bking.openspace@gmail.com>, Lawrence Miller <lawrence.miller@verdantrichmond.org>

Good morning, Shamar and Cynthia

This email is to inform you of a \$10,000 grant for a specific infrastructure improvement project in Jefferson Park.

Thanks to the 2023 Richmond Outdoor & Prosperity Fund, the Friends of Jefferson Park has been awarded \$10,000 to fund a **painted mural on the stage wall of the park round house**. Details of the project, along with photos of the mural area, are in the attached document.

The stage wall mural is a collaboration with Open Space Education, an established Richmond Public Schools after-school art program. Students from Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School will **design and paint the mural during the Spring 2024 semester** under the guidance of two professional mural artists with Richmond Parks & Recreation experience.

We anticipate that Parks & Recreation staff will support this new mural project and assist with surface preparation. Specifically, power washing the brick wall and the concrete floor of the stage area in late Winter/early Spring 2024, before the students begin their work. Both of these stage surfaces are under the park house roof (facing the traffic circle at Mosby Street.)

Shamar, what else do you need from me/Open Space Education at this point? Should Kate Rivara be our point-of-contact in your office going forward?

This month, we will be reaching out to the Public Art Commission and Commission of Architectural Review to secure any additional approvals needed for this mural.

Gratefully,

Elaine Odell
Volunteer, Friends of Jefferson Park
mobile: 804-937-9375

 **Jefferson Park Mural Grant Awarded.pdf**
3302K

Young, Shamar D. - DPR <Shamar.Young@rva.gov>

Tue, Oct 17, 2023 at 11:30 AM

To: Elaine Odell <elaineodell@gmail.com>, "Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council" <Cynthia.Newbille@rva.gov>, "Frelke, Christopher E. - DPR" <Christopher.Frelke@rva.gov>
Cc: "Rivara, Katherine - DPR" <Katherine.Rivara@rva.gov>, Blythe King <bking.openspace@gmail.com>, Lawrence Miller <lawrence.miller@verdantrichmond.org>, "Wynne, Trae L. - DPR" <Trae.Wynne2@rva.gov>

Elaine

Thank you for sharing this exciting news

Yes, Kate will be your point of contact from Parks

I have also included Trae Wynn who is our Superintendent of Trades, his department will also lend support to this project

Please keep us updated on the review & permitting process, and let us know where else we can assist

Thank you again and congratulations

Shamar

Shamar Young

Deputy Director of Parks

City Of Richmond

Department of Parks Recreation & Community Facilities

1209 Admiral Street

Richmond, Virginia 23220

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@rvaparksandrec

[Quoted text hidden]

Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council <Cynthia.Newbille@rva.gov>

Tue, Oct 17, 2023 at 11:33 AM

To: Elaine Odell <elaineodell@gmail.com>

Cc: "Young, Shamar D. - DPR" <Shamar.Young@rva.gov>, "Rivara, Katherine - DPR" <Katherine.Rivara@rva.gov>, Blythe King <bking.openspace@gmail.com>, Lawrence Miller <lawrence.miller@verdantrichmond.org>

Elaine

Great news!

Please keep me posted, and let me know if I can assist in any way.

Best

Cynthia

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 17, 2023, at 11:16 AM, Elaine Odell <elaineodell@gmail.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

<Jefferson Park Mural Grant Awarded.pdf>

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Submitted to The City of Richmond Commission of Architectural Review
November 30, 2023.