



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
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## Meeting Minutes - Draft Urban Design Committee

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Thursday, April 9, 2015

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 10:00 a.m.

### Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Chair Andrea Almond, Chris Arias, Vaughn Garland, Bryan Green, Giles Harnsberger, Vice Chair Andrea Levine and Claire Shirley

**Absent:** 3 - Doug Cole, Jill Nolt and Robert Smith

#### Staff Present

Mr. Jeff Eastman, PDR  
Ms. Tara Ross, PDR  
Mr. James Hill, PDR  
Ms. Kathleen Onufer, PDR

#### Others Present

Mr. Kim Tingley  
Mr. Dexter Goode, DPW  
Mr. Ben Jackson, Dewberry  
Dr. Norman Merrifield, DPRCF  
Mr. Robert Easter, KEI Architects  
Ms. Guylaine DesRosiers, KEI Architects  
Mr. Charles Snead, Snead Associates, P.C.  
Mr. Mark Kronenthal, Mayor's Office  
Ms. Emily Smith  
Ms. Anna Sangree

### Approval of Minutes

[ID 2015-013](#) Regular Meeting of March 5, 2015

**Attachments:** [Regular Meeting of March 5, 2015](#)

**A motion was made by Ms. Harnsberger, seconded by Ms. Shirley, that the minutes from the March 5, 2015 meeting be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Almond, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Shirley

**Abstain:** 2 - Arias and Levine

### Secretary's Report

Mr. Eastman stated that at their March 16 meeting, the Planning Commission approved the Virginia and Canal streets improvements, the Manchester Courthouse sign, the Deepwater Terminal Road extension and the Commerce Road and Hopkins Road new building projects on the consent agenda, with any UDC recommendations. Mr. Eastman also stated that City Council was hosting a Boards and Commissions appreciation reception on Thursday, April 16 at 6:00 in the 1st floor lobby of City Hall. Mr. Eastman also read a Resolution of Appreciation for Ms. Shirley, whose second term on the Committee expires after the meeting. Mr. Eastman and the Committee thanked Ms. Shirley for her service.

## Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

There were no continuances or deletions.

## CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. [UDC No. 2015-10](#) Neighborhood Sign Encroachments at the intersection of Iron Bridge Road and Kenmare Loop

**Attachments:** [UDC Recommendation to DPW](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Location Map](#)  
[Application & Plans](#)

**This Encroachment Item was recommended for approval as submitted and was forwarded to the Department of Public Works.**

2. [UDC No. 2015-08\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 1638, 1650 and 1700 Commerce 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 April 20, 2015.**

3. [UDC No. 2015-09\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of the construction of two new buildings and associated site improvements at 3502 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 April 20, 2015.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

4. [UDC No. 2015-03\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent Review of Phase 1A of the renovations to Kanawha Plaza, 701 E. Canal Street

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

[Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Location Map](#)

[UDC Subcommittee Report to CPC on Revised Plans](#)

[Revised Plans for 4-20-15 CPC Meeting](#)

[Application & Plans](#)

[Public Comment](#)

Mr. Eastman stated that he received two public comments this morning.

Mr. Green inquired if the bike rack was one of the approved designs and Mr. Eastman stated that this is not one of the city designs but it is similar. Mr. Green stated that they are no longer using the master plan for bike racks and Mr. Eastman stated that they have city standards but the applicants opted for a different bike rack. Mr. Green inquired if there was a design for the seating and Mr. Eastman stated that he believes the only design for seating is the seat walls. Mr. Green stated that there is no freestanding seating and Mr. Eastman stated that are tables and chairs for the dining area.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired if the exercise pads are made with a rubber material and Mr. Eastman stated that it is poured rubber.

Ms. Shirley inquired what is Phase 1A and Mr. Eastman stated that Phase 1A is the entire park which includes landscaping, irrigation, lighting and hardscape and stated that Phase 1B includes the exercise equipment, the splash pads, the construction of the canopies, the sun shelters. Mr. Eastman stated that in Phase 1B they will determine what is going to be done with the fountain.

Mr. Garland stated that Phase 1A is scheduled to be done before the bike race and Phase 2 is scheduled for after the bike race. Mr. Eastman stated that Phase 1B encompasses the work that they want to have after the bike race and Phase 2 is the enclosure over top the Downtown expressway which entails a lot of engineering and construction work. Mr. Garland asked if they can assume that what is done in Phase 1A and 1B around the enclosure would have to be removed to enclose it for Phase 2 and Mr. Eastman stated that he is not sure but they have conceptual plans of what they want to do over top of the enclosures and it is possible that some of the landscaping will have to be removed.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that staff recommended detailed landscape plans for Phase 1B and stated that landscaping is included in Phase 1A and Mr. Eastman stated yes and his understanding from the applicant is that they are coming back for the Phase 1B approval in a month or two and that the actual construction wouldn't happen until after September. Mr. Eastman stated that at this point they really need to get in there and start doing general site work like demolition and grading and that the installation of the landscaping material is going to be happening pretty close to the September bike race

so there is time for them to come back in with a more refined plan.

Ms. Levine inquired if there were plans to use the park for the bike race and Mr. Eastman stated that he didn't think so and that he looked at the bike race routes and they don't come down Canal or E. Byrd but most of the routes run down Main Street. Mr. Eastman stated that the City has some fan zones and one of them is the 17th Street Farmers Market but to his knowledge Kanawha Plaza is not a fan zone.

Ms. Shirley inquired who will manage the events at the site and Mr. Eastman stated that the city is in preliminary talks with Venture Richmond to manage it but until that the maintenance will be handled by the City.

Mr. Robert Easter, from KEI Architects, thanked Mr. Eastman for his presentation and stated that they have received the staff recommendations. Mr. Easter stated that the City Deputy CAO for Human Services has been in discussion with Venture Richmond and they have reached a tentative agreement for management of both the park in terms of its maintenance and its scheduled planning.

Ms. Almond inquired if Venture Richmond thoroughly reviewed the plans for logistics; layout and utilities, etc. Mr. Easter stated that Venture has the conceptual plans and they are waiting for the construction documents which won't be available until the Committee approves it but Venture is reviewing the plans and has been involved with the process. Ms. Almond inquired if they anticipate any design changes that needs to happen based on their needs for running the park and Mr. Easter stated that they are not anticipating any changes being made.

Mr. Arias stated that he is concerned about the temporary porta-Johns and stated that they are sandwiched between the wall for the RMA and a wall that is containing them. Mr. Arias stated that he is concerned that it becomes a blind spot and they are going to be hidden from view or the public eye and stated that people may feel vulnerable. Mr. Arias stated that it is out of sight and maybe reorienting it or turning it perpendicular to the wall so that it is not closed up and hidden.

Ms. Almond inquired if the porta-Johns are a permanent solution to having bathrooms on site. Mr. Easter stated that it is not a permanent solution and when the holes are enclosed over the RMA they are anticipating permanent restroom structures being a part of the development. Ms. Almond inquired if the porta-Johns will be here all the time and Mr. Easter stated yes and during special events additional porta-Johns will be brought out by whoever is planning the event.

Mr. Green stated that if the infill proves to be cost prohibitive and budgets don't support it will permanent restrooms be provided or will porta-Johns be the permanent solution. Mr. Easter stated that level of conversation has not occurred. Mr. Easter stated that initially in the development of the park they didn't have the porta-Johns they had no restroom facilities and it was requested that they provide those and they are trying to find a solution that works and stated that no matter where they put the porta-Johns people don't want to see them.

Mr. Green inquired if there was a reason why they didn't use one of the city approved bike racks. Mr. Charles Snead with Snead Associates stated that they liked these ones better but they are not opposed to the City bike rack. Mr. Green stated that they spent a lot of time recently approving a group of bike racks that the City designed. Mr. Green inquired about the portable café seating and Mr. Easter stated that it will be permanently placed on the site.

Mr. Snead stated that it will be permanent on the site and stated that they want to have people to be able to move the chairs around and it will be a new experiment for the City.

Mr. Snead stated that they will have the two shelters where they can be stored and the stage is very open to allow people to take their lunch and their chair and table to the stage. Mr. Snead stated that the stage will be lit at nighttime so that the police can monitor the site. Mr. Snead stated that they spoke with Lieutenant Donald Davenport at the 4th Precinct and he is in charge of this facility and stated that he is very impressed that the site has good visibility for monitoring activities. Mr. Green stated that he likes the idea of furniture but removable furniture becomes removable. Mr. Easter stated that they visited several municipal parks prior to developing this concept and they all had movable furniture and they found that the furniture did not move beyond the street.

Mr. Green stated that it seems that the City is focusing a lot on parks for very specific programmatic uses and they don't have a lot of passive habitable spaces downtown. Mr. Green commented that there are no places in the public where you could go and sit in the shade and eat your lunch. Mr. Green stated that this park seems to be set up for events and inquired how someone uses this space at lunch. Mr. Easter stated that there are some seat walls around the plantings that will provide some additional opportunities for people to sit and eat their lunch and there are multiple opportunities for seating and congregating in the park.

Mr. Garland stated that he doesn't see anywhere established for workers to come out and hold meetings in the park. Mr. Easter stated that is the purpose of the shelters.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she is curious about Phase 1B, the stage and the shelters and stated that if it is just a concrete pad that is not much of an improvement and asked if they could talk about the main stage canopy and shelters and what would happen initially. Mr. Easter stated that the canopies will be constructed prior to bike race and that they have to bring them back to the Committee and they wanted to make sure that they had them ready to show to the Committee. Ms. Harnsberger inquired if the main stage is a part of the first phase and Mr. Easter stated yes.

Ms. Levine stated one of the staff's recommendations was about the many different types of hardscape materials. Ms. Levine stated that they want something that will last for generations and she strongly feels that they need to simplify a lot of the elements and it's not just the hardscape material but the boreal lighting. She doesn't know where that element came from and she doesn't see an element like that lasting for a long time. Ms. Levine stated that when she looks at the colorful furniture she thinks it's something that they have to be cautious about because it is not something that will last from generation to generation. Mr. Easter stated that he doesn't see the seating and tables lasting for generations and that there is going to be some furniture replacement over time and there will be opportunities for the City to upgrade areas on the site that is why the boreal lighting was selected.

Mr. Snead stated that the boreal lighting is to be used only around the food trucks and vendor areas so that it will help identify that zone as a place to have lunch. Mr. Snead stated that their other lighting is the same lamp that is used at Brown's Island with a different kind of pole. Mr. Snead stated that even though the boreal lighting is a specialty light it is really designed to denote their special food truck vendor area. Mr. Snead stated that other elements of the park are black and white with exposed aggregate and the wave pattern is designed to mimic the water movement and remind of the turning basin use of the site in the past. Mr. Snead went on to say that the granite walls are a very long-term hardscape feature that will endure the test of time and they have a lot of granite around the site as their screen walls and seat walls. Mr. Snead stated that they have taken the location where the porta-Johns are and put in a 2' high granite planter wall with a 4' high shrubbery in it.

Ms. Almond stated that the Committee doesn't have those drawings. Mr. Easter stated that if that portion of the site is something that the Committee prefers a different solution

then they can eliminate the protection around the porta-Johns from the approval process and bring back another solution to the Committee.

Ms. Levine stated that she wished they would have presented them several different options with the boreal lighting and on the hardscape materials why not continue the black and white aggregate throughout. Ms. Levine stated that there should be some cohesiveness to a park that is only two blocks by two blocks rather than having a little of this and a little of that. Ms. Levine stated that there needs to be a transition that is soothing and not shocking to an individual.

Mr. Snead stated that it is a very small park by park standards of the City Of Richmond and they are trying to accomplish a lot of various activities that will bring people to this space when they have so many other options that they could go to nearby. Mr. Snead stated that they have tried to incorporate a number of elements to attract people to the park at different hours of the day. Mr. Snead stated that the black and white aggregate they will be happy to extend the use of it further and stated that they are in full support of that. Mr. Snead stated that the food truck area is a separate concrete paver area to denote the driveway and to make that area separate and stated that they are down to the black and white pavement concrete paver at the food truck area and the brick sidewalks around the perimeter.

Ms. Almond inquired why they wouldn't extend the black and white pattern through the food truck area and Mr. Snead stated that it is vehicular area. Mr. Easter stated that if that is an issue they can bring that component back to the next meeting.

Ms. Shirley inquired if they could extend the black and white patterning through the pedestrian area and Mr. Snead stated that they would be in support of that.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she understands that there were two options that they were looking at which was the black aggregate and the brown river rock and she was concerned with the urban heat island affect because the brown is more compatible with the pavers for the food truck areas and stated that brown and white versus the black and white is more friendly and more in common with the river. Mr. Snead stated that it didn't contrast as well with the granite wall.

Mr. Arias stated that they have the RVA sign on the event space and inquired if it had been considered as far as acoustics go because he sees only one solid object to one side of the stand into the other and it seems like it's going to focus and reflect sound to the right side. Mr. Easter stated that they have had presentations and conversations with some of the City's vendors with the sound stage to review the design of the stage and the platform area and they have received feedback and support of the design. Mr. Arias inquired if they were going to have more detailed designs when they come back and Mr. Easter stated yes.

Mr. Garland stated that as a sound engineer this is going to cause a lot of problems with the sound bouncing off of that and then out into the public especially if they are hollow forms and that is going to act as a metal tin drop so that is not a very good place for sound. Mr. Easter stated that they are having conversations and the designs that they will see when they have been reviewed and approved.

Mr. Green stated that he is still having some issues with them bringing in all these uses to try and attract people is almost like they don't know what they want this park to be. Mr. Green stated that he doesn't know when he looks at this park who is going to use it and it seems like they are just throwing things at it with hopes of attracting people to it rather than creating one thing that people want to come to.

Ms. Shirley stated that she doesn't see herself bringing her small children to the splash

pad because it by the main roads. Mr. Snead stated that it will be in the interior of the park and they are anticipating having a larger tot lot, a dog park and restroom facilities once the other phases are complete.

Mr. Green expressed his concerns about the users for the park and Mr. Snead stated that the residents of the City Of Richmond and beyond will be the users of the park and they see the summer concert series coming back. Mr. Snead stated that people that exercise will come to the park because exercising is a growing industry and more people are aware of the health benefits from exercising. Mr. Snead stated that people can go outside of their office building and eat lunch outside and have a comfortable place to move your table and chair to have lunch and they think that is a sound activity. Mr. Snead stated that having sculptures in a park is a sound use of land and they have sun shelters, hardscape paving and an attractive fountain, a splash pad that is not just for the kids but adult oriented. Mr. Snead discussed other activities that can be held at the park without being in conflict with each other.

Mr. Garland stated that they could have those things and do it in a very simple way and let people determine those uses themselves.

Mr. Easter stated that what they did in their evaluation of the project is they visited with both city officials and some of their private sector clients and several sites in Oklahoma and Texas where similar efforts generated by public-private partnerships that generated parks that have both planned and unplanned activities.

Mr. Snead stated that the park that piqued the most interest was Clyde Warren Park in Dallas which is also built over the downtown expressway and stated that it has generated a lot of income for the area and has brought a lot of people back downtown with the different activities.

Mr. Easter stated that their park is the approximately the same size as this park is and they have many of the same features. Mr. Easter stated that they have restaurants, a child activity area, and a dog walking area and green space in the park and stated that it is a widely used park.

Mr. Green stated that he would like to see more granite seat walls instead of relying on chairs that can disappear and that the seating required no maintenance with trees for shade so that people can sit underneath them. Mr. Easter stated that if they listen to some of the diversity of comments that they are receiving from the Committee with regards to flexibility and space and places for offices to gather outside in this park and stated that they have both. Mr. Easter stated that granite walls are not flexible and they don't move and you can't take them and stick them under the shelter because it's raining. Mr. Green stated that the wall is not flexible but how you sit on them and those are parts of parks that last for generations.

Ms. Almond stated that the workout area should be flexible and should be designed as something timeless. Mr. Snead stated that the individual pads was born out of the need for personal space while they are working out even though they are separate pads some of them like the rubber ones don't have equipment in them and some of them are concrete pads so there is some flexibility in terms of having more open space for people to do exercises on a rubber pad. Ms. Almond stated that they can't use for a small event or gathering because of the fixed equipment. Mr. Easter stated that they think the overall plan is very flexible for wide range of activities.

Mr. Garland inquired if they are talking about equipment like row machines and Mr. Snead stated that some will be stationary like pull-up bars and some will be actual moving equipment. Mr. Garland inquired if they had anybody that would maintain the equipment. Mr. Easter stated that the equipment and exercise area is one of the areas

that was strongly driven by the corporate partners and is something that they really wanted. Mr. Easter stated if those areas are a challenge for the Urban Design Committee they can bring those areas back because their concern right now is a ticking clock. Mr. Easter stated that there has been a lot of discussion about that area and they have a large number of constituents who have a lot of investments both emotionally, psychologically and financially and they are trying to create a park that responds to a lot of ideas and a lot of interests and make the park have a unified theme that works for the City. Mr. Easter stated that it has been a challenging process and a fun process but they are willing to come back.

Mr. Garland stated that the Committee now knows that 2015 Bike race is not going to come through here and is not going to be used for space in 2015 Bike race and inquired what the need for getting this done by then and Mr. Easter stated that the same partners who are sponsors for the Bike race are the partners for this and they saw this as a project to have available to the Bike Race.

Mr. Mark Kronenthal from the Mayor's Office stated that this is not listed on the any of the current programming for the Bike race but it is their intention that it be available and that the corporate partners that are around the area intended that this project 1A to be available for the UCI Bike race.

Ms. Levine inquired if there is a risk of losing funding if it's not ready by them and Mr. Kronenthal stated yes. Ms. Levine stated that having all of these corporate sponsors and having all of these people that's what this feels like everyone saying they want this and they want that. Ms. Levine stated that she feels very strong about them simplifying it somehow and if they can't simplify with all of these corporate sponsors needs are you have to simplify it aesthetically. Ms. Levine stated that if they are under the gun maybe they can set up a sub-committee in which the Committee can help the applicant within 30 days and bring this to something that they feel is comfortable and that works.

Ms. Shirley stated that she agrees that there is so much is going on and it's not congruous and that there's a lot of traditional elements like the bollards and contemporary lights that are actually cool and she likes the lights and the bright chairs but it doesn't fit with the other materials that are surrounding the park.

Ms. Almond stated that it is not cohesive and it is not helping them understand what the design theme is and there should be some cohesiveness with the design that is reflected in the materials and furnishings.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she thinks the theme is the turning basin and she is seeing that in this discussion and also in a lot of the details and it is a place where a lot of activity comes together and not so simple in a way. Ms. Harnsberger stated that Ms. Levine's idea of having a sub-committee to look at some of the details is a good one because she doesn't want them to design by Committee because that is not what they are here to do. Ms. Harnsberger stated that Mr. Eastman's conditions actually addressed a lot of what they are talking about and while the corporate partner has influenced these plans she thinks it would be relatively easily to ask that they don't put the equipment in the circles because it won't work like that.

Mr. Garland stated that a lot of this would be helpful for park like them removing the structures and flattening the space and they can do that and fill that space with grass and have a pleasant place for people to go for the bike race but too much is going on and it needs to be done right.

Ms. Almond stated that she knows the fountain and the 8th Street gateway will be coming at a future meeting along with the stage structure but the fountain to her is a really big question about whether it's going to be preserved or rebuilt in its original design.



Ms. Almond inquired how the fountain influences the design of the rest of the park versus it being totally redone to be something different. Ms. Almond stated that looking at them separately when that the focal point of the park and not seeing how the design connecting between the A and B phase is hard because they need to interact and have a cohesiveness to them. Ms. Almond stated that being that the fountain is big component of the history of the park and seeing both phases together is necessary.

Mr. Arias stated that he agreed with Mr. Eastman's recommendation that they move the entrance over to align with the crosswalk and leave the fountain as it is now with the opportunity to restore it. They have already spent millions of dollars for adding the pump and would hate to see them just fill it in and just ignore the original intent.

Mr. Easter stated that they had multiple conversations about the fountain and one of the things that happened at the last UDC meeting was a recommendation that they look at shifting the water feature more to the 8th Street access and that is why it got taken out of this phase because they weren't sure how they would address that in terms of costs. Mr. Easter stated that their initial effort was to restore it in its original condition and the challenge they had with the restoration of it in its original condition is how poor the existing condition is. Mr. Easter stated that it's an aesthetic issue but it's a cost issue and they can see it getting restored or rebuilt in its current configuration.

Ms. Shirley stated that if that is the case then the park doesn't address the fountain at all. Mr. Easter stated that the point he is making is that it has just stop being a focal point of their effort because they are trying to look at how the remainder of the park would initially be developed and how the water feature at the entrance would then support the design that they come up with whether it was renovation or replacement or a new design. Mr. Easter stated that this happened because so many questions have been asked about the fountain and its location at the first UDC meeting.

Mr. Arias stated that he understands that it's hard to design something that they don't know what is going to happen to it and stated that is why suggested moving the entrance over so and stated that right now it is overlapping so there would have to be some modifications made to the fountain as well as the drive through area. Mr. Arias stated that his suggestion would be to have a buffer area and leave it alone so they could come back and address it later.

Ms. Almond inquired if the known cost of renovating the fountain is why it is pulled out the phasing. Mr. Easter stated that is why they stopped giving attention to its design and stated that they are still challenging whether it would be more cost effective to build a new fountain or to deconstruct or reconstruct a new one. Ms. Almond inquired if they were making a design decision about the fountain based on what's most cost effective or what's the right thing for the park. Mr. Easter stated that most of these decisions are based on cost effectiveness and the fountain is going to be in phase 2 and will come back later because it is going to be a more lengthy process.

Mr. Garland stated that it seems like the fountain is the key point of that whole space and Ms. Shirley stated that it is now. Mr. Garland stated that it seems strange to him that they are putting so much into the redesign of everything around it but they are not considering that there are crumbling steps around the fountain and it would be very strange for somebody to walk to that space and see this fountain falling apart but then see these brand new glistening pathways and plantings. Mr. Garland stated that with the importance of that water way and fountain it should be the first and foremost structure that they build the park around. Mr. Snead stated that there is no doubt that the fountain is a major item on the site however they never saw it as the focal point of the park itself. Mr. Snead stated that currently they are doing core drilling to test the concrete so they know if their concept design of building over the fountain with water proof concrete and changing the shape of the fountain is an appropriate and lasting thing to do versus

deconstructing. Mr. Snead stated that the fountain had become more involved and it is operable and if push comes to shove and the park is built in time for the Bike race the fountain can operate if it has to. Mr. Snead stated that once the water is flowing it hides a lot of the deteriorated concrete and it still can be an interesting beacon from the intersection but it is not a focal point of the park.

Mr. Garland stated that he disagrees with Mr. Snead and stated that he believes that the fountain is the focal point of the park.

Ms. Emily Smith, a citizen, stated that she can appreciate them trying to strike a balance between a heavily programmed environment and a lightly programmed environment and she also has concerns about how much programming they are trying to fit in the park. Ms. Smith stated that it is interesting to her to imagine that they have Belle Isle and all of these different parks that are not that far from here and how does this park fit in - is it a little brother or sister to something else or is it an entirely independent park? Ms. Smith stated that she can definitely see how it would be used during lunch but the other times of the day are challenging and one concern she has is the exercise area. Ms. Smith stated that with corporate partnership and others that have an end result or use in mind there are other ways to achieve it and that they could look at that are less specific. Ms. Smith stated that they could reconsider and have that area paved but the way it is done currently is very short sighted and in ten years' time it won't be used that way. Ms. Smith stated that they should think that it is going to be used by every citizen in the City Of Richmond and beyond but embrace how it could function in the next 50 years.

Ms. Shirley stated that they are irrigating the park with direct tap to the City water when they have this much open space and this much paving is irresponsible. They could use permeable pavement to collect the storm water and provide brown water instead. Ms. Shirley stated that on-site harvesting rain water can be achieved on these sites. Mr. Snead stated that there was some consideration of having a catch basin underneath some part of the structure.

Ms. Almond inquired what happened to that and Mr. Snead stated their civil engineers stated that they are not increasing the hardscape from the existing condition to now so they have no net increase of hardscape and their stormwater management stays the same as it is now.

Mr. Arias stated that maybe they need to take advantage of the opportunity to decrease the burden on the City Storm Water systems and Mr. Snead stated that 50% of their area is over the highway so automatically they have to capture that and drain it away and stated that the expense of detaining water underground is very expensive so they did not go that way.

Mr. Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, stated that they have been involved in a lot of meetings and the plans have gotten better since they first got involved but as a person that enjoys an urban park he shares some of the Committee's concerns. Mr. Olinger stated that he has very few operating principles but one of his operating principles is don't put more in the ground plane than you absolutely need because nobody cares. Mr. Olinger stated that when they think about design put the money where the memory is and not where you think it would make some kind of interesting design statement and with the ground plane the simpler the better. Mr. Olinger stated that in his conversations with them he is very concerned with food trucks because they leak and fryers leak and whatever they put in that food court area needs to hide to the greatest extent possible leaking transmissions and oil pans and fryers. Mr. Olinger stated that with the ground plane simpler is better and he doesn't know why the fountain is exactly where it is when they have this incredible terminus axis coming down the 8th Street hill. Mr. Olinger stated that the other thing he is interested in is for those

who are involved to put their money on the things that would last a long time and he would like to recommend that as they think about what some of these lighting fixtures are that they are looking at swapping out lighting fixtures along the canal walk. Mr. Olinger stated that he is not a believer that every streetscape element needs to match but on the plans he sees black poles, green trash cans and silver bike racks and that creates a certain amount of dissidence. Mr. Olinger stated that the comment about the idea of permeant seating as it relates to the granite walls would be an interesting thing to explore and do. Mr. Olinger stated that the nice thing about chairs is that you can move them and create conversation clusters that the granite seating walls don't provide and he likes the idea of the movable furniture and the color could be really cool and if they disappear they can buy more. Mr. Olinger stated that with the seat wall they can create curved or 90 degree angles where people can sit facing each other and if they don't provide that then they will have a hundred feet of granite seating wall that people can only communicate with the person beside them. Mr. Olinger stated that if they are looking for this to be something long term then they should provide opportunities for people to face each other in the seating area. Mr. Olinger stated that there has been about two thousand units of new housing within a quarter of a mile of this site that have been built and the area is evolving. Mr. Olinger stated that he thinks that this will become the neighborhood park for the residents of the lower downtown area. Mr. Olinger stated that the project has gotten better and that phase 1 they can get rid of a lot of stuff and work through some details and help understand exactly what the long-term future is. Mr. Olinger stated that they think of it as a great urban park surrounded by some of their most intensively developed office space but also some of their more intensively developed residential spaces. Mr. Olinger stated that he think that would be all of sudden this thing starts to feel different and not as a place that they are trying to draw people in but a place where people are coming. Mr. Olinger stated that they need to make sure that it functions well for them.

Mr. Green stated that is part of his struggle with some of the design is that he don't know if he understands the master plan for this site and that he don't understand what it is supposed to become. Mr. Green stated that he thinks the Bryant Park analogy is a good one because when Bryant Park was used more as passive park it failed. Mr. Green stated that when the City undertook very active management the use changed. Mr. Green stated that he is struggling with the identity of this park – it could be an active managed space or a passive space but he doesn't know which one it is yet.

Ms. Shirley stated that it is both - during the work week the 9 to 5 people will come there for lunch with the food trucks. Ms. Shirley stated that on the weekends and the evening it becomes more of a planned program place where there are concerts or activities.

Mr. Garland stated that he thinks the best way to go with this is make it simple as possible to find out what it is being used for which means removing some walls and ground and let the residents and citizens determine what the space is used for and then they could back 5 years from now and redesign it according to the management of the park and the way that it has been used. Mr. Garland stated that right now they are attaching so much stuff to it hoping that people will use it and stated that they can some of the money fix the fountain and make it a flat area that people go to.

Mr. Green stated that there are a lot of wonderful things about this park and when he goes back to the Bryant Park analogy what's missing in a lot of our parks is an active management plan. Mr. Green stated that they built this park thirty years ago and left it and it fell apart and they don't back to check to see if it's effective.

Mr. Garland stated that in regards to management they stated that Venture Richmond was going to be taking over that spot and he doesn't know if they know that. Mr. Garland stated that it is great to say that Venture Richmond might be doing it but it is also the City's responsibility to build some management around the park.

Mr. Mark Kronenthal from the Mayor's Office stated that he can confirm that Venture Richmond knows that they will be participating in the management of this park.

The Committee discussed in detail about creating a subcommittee to further get into the design with planting, hardscape and elements.

Mr. Eastman stated that the most time sensitive matter here is that they get in and start doing demolition and grading and that grading is based on the plan of what's going to go there. Mr. Eastman stated that the question is what exactly is their timeline and if there is way they can separate out that it is okay for them to start demolition and grading but they come back in a month and they have a more refined plan for everything or is there some stuff that they can say ok we're fine generally with the layout of this but the Committee needs to see X, Y and Z when they come back.

Mr. Garland stated that do they then vote on what is being proposed here and if it's a no do they then make a recommendation in that way. Mr. Eastman stated that there could be a recommendation to deny because there are too many questions or it could be a recommendation to approve for the purposes of demolition and grading but they come back with everything. Mr. Eastman stated that there also could be a recommendation to approve X, Y and Z and they want to see them come back with all of the other things that are shown on the plan that they are not ready to recommend approval on because they are incomplete and see it come back in a month.

Ms. Almond inquired if they did a subcommittee would that be a separate motion. Mr. Eastman stated yes and stated that it would depend upon the motion of the Planning Commission was and stated that if the Planning Commission heard that the UDC wanted to recommend approval of only parts of it right now and that the UDC would establish a subcommittee but they wanted to go ahead and approve everything as is next week then it wouldn't come back to the UDC.

Mr. Garland inquired what they were getting after the demo and Mr. Eastman stated that the demolition work is expected to commence in late May with construction starting by mid-June of this year and he doesn't know all of what they need to get lined up in order to start demo in late May but obviously if this goes to the UDC at the beginning of May and then to the Planning Commission meeting a week later that would line up with a late demo start. Mr. Eastman stated that the Committee could approve demolition now because they are not starting construction until mid-June but there are issues with ordering materials and things of that nature to get started sooner than later.

A motion to form a sub-committee composed of Ms. Almond and Ms. Harnsberger was made by Ms. Shirley, seconded by Mr. Green and passed 7-0-0 (Almond, Arias, Garland, Green, Harnsberger, Levine and Shirley for).

The Committee continued to discuss individual aspects of the design before creating the motion.

**This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for final approval for the purpose of demolition and grading of the site only, and was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on April 20, 2015. The UDC requests that the applicant work with the UDC subcommittee to further refine the details and bring back the plans to the May UDC meeting, with the following recommendations on the design:**

- That the applicant considers shifting the walkway from S. 8th Street to the west, aligning more with crosswalk, to avoid cutting off a section of the fountain.
- That all sidewalks at the perimeter of the site are composed of brick (except those provided over the expressway) including areas where a roll-top curb is

proposed for vehicular access.

- That the applicant considers reducing the number of different pavement types utilized on-site.
- That the applicant reconsiders the provision of a dumpster on the site.
- That the Phase 1B plans include a final landscape plan and schedule to include plant species, location, quantity, and size at the time of installation.
- That the Phase 1B plans include a signage package, if any is proposed.
- That the Phase 1B plans include details on the proposed stage canopy and sun shelters, including but not limited to structural components, materials, dimensions and finishes.
- That prior to Phase 1B consideration the applicant works with the Department of Public Works and Department of Planning & Development Review to ensure that every pedestrian crossing to the park contains a pedestrian countdown signal, preferably with an audio component, and ladder-style crosswalks.
- That prior to Phase 1B consideration the applicant works with the Department of Public Works and Department of Planning & Development Review to explore the opportunity of creating a curbed pedestrian refuge at S. 7th and Canal Streets as has been created at the corner of S. 9th and E. Canal Street, and to incorporate such a feature into the overall plans for the site if it is deemed a possibility.
- That prior to Phase 1B consideration the applicant works with the Department of Public Works and Department of Planning & Development Review to explore the opportunity of creating curb extensions at the adjacent street intersections that lead into the park.
- That prior to Phase 1B consideration the applicant works with the Department of Public Works and Department of Planning & Development Review to determine if it is possible to provide on-street parking along S. 7th Street.
- That the applicant considers ways to provide year-round interest in the fountain design, regardless of whether or not the water is running.
- That a focal point is provided at the terminus of S. 8th Street.
- That any Phase 1B and Phase 2 improvements are submitted to the UDC for separate review at such time in the future as plans are more defined.
- That the seat wall design be modified to create unique seating group areas.
- That the portable restroom setup and enclosure be re-oriented for security purposes.
- That a more cohesive furnishings and materials packet is submitted for the site.
- That the food truck lane paving material is darker (easier to maintain) and utilized just for the lane, and that the remainder of the paving in the immediately adjacent area matches the paving material for the rest of the site, to define those as two separate areas.

**Aye:** 5 - Almond, Arias, Harnsberger, Levine and Shirley

**No:** 2 - Garland and Green

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

## **Adjournment**

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 12:13 p.m.