

## URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

April 10, 2014

The City of Richmond Urban Design Committee held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor Conference Room of City Hall, Richmond, Virginia. (Reference is made to the audio recording, dated April 10, 2014, on file in the Planning and Preservation offices for the record of the meeting.)

**Members Present:** Mr. Bryan Green, Vice Chair  
Mr. Doug Cole  
Mr. Vaughn Garland  
Ms. Giles Harnsberger  
Ms. Andrea Levine  
Mr. Chris Arias

**Member(s) Absent:** Ms. Jill Nolt, Chair  
Mr. Robert Smith  
Ms. Andrea Almond  
Ms. Claire Shirley

**Staff Present:** Mr. Jeff Eastman, DPDR  
Mr. Mark Olinger, Director, DPDR  
Mr. Jim Hill, DPDR  
Ms. Tara Ross, DPDR  
Mr. William Palmquist, DPDR

**Others Present:** Ms. Sandra Christian, DPW  
Mr. Travis Bridewell, DPW  
Mr. Kevin O'Meara, Timmons Group  
Mr. Todd Hopkins, DPU  
Mr. Keith Whipple, waterstreet studio  
Mr. Carl Purdin, VCU  
Mr. Dave Taylor, Clark Nexsen  
Mr. Bob Tabor, VCU  
Mr. Keith Van Inwegen, HG Landscape Architects  
Mr. M. Khara, DPW  
Mr. Lamont Benjamin, DPW  
Mr. Todd Loney, DPW  
Mr. Jay Hugo, 3North  
Mr. Jeremy Schlusel, WRA

### Call to Order

Mr. Green called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Arias stated that he was included in the vote for the March minutes but he did not attend the March meeting. He asked that the minutes be corrected accordingly.

A motion to approve the amended March 6<sup>th</sup> minutes was made by Ms. Harnsberger, seconded by Mr. Cole and passed 4-0-2 (Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger for; Arias and Levine abstained).

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Eastman stated that the Planning Commission considered the Tredegar Green Amphitheater project at their March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, but prior to the meeting the applicant sent in some alterations that included the following conditions:

1. That the applicant will not implement that portion of the plan north of the brick wall foundation on City property without returning to the Planning Commission for approval, which means that there will be no modification to the tow path on City property, no modification to the banks of the canal on City property, and no filling of wetlands on City property;
2. That there will be no cutting of the banks on the downhill (southern) side of the tow path bank that might undermine the foundation of the proposed brick wall; and,
3. That there will be no use of the City property north of the canal for festival purposes.

Mr. Eastman added that the applicant will still provide the additional landscaping above the canal on the City property, and that the project was approved on a 6 to 2 vote. Mr. Eastman stated that the new conditions from the applicant removes on the city owned portion of the property any need for section 106 Review because they are not disturbing the wetlands in the canal. Mr. Eastman stated that at the request of City Council he is now sending out public notice to Civic Associations and council people within 1000' of any project that the UDC reviews. Mr. Eastman stated that there is no legal requirement to send notices but in the spirit of good and open government they are sending notices out now. Mr. Eastman stated that they always encourage the applicants to meet with council people and with civic associations before they even come to the UDC. Mr. Eastman stated that the City has new software called Granicus and that all of the UDC projects are going to be on the web and when he sends out the packets they will no longer be going to the FTP site but will be sending the members and the public a link to the Granicus website. Mr. Eastman gave the Committee a brief description of how the software will work and stated that the Planning Commission, Urban Design Committee, Commission of Architectural Review and City Council will be using Granicus.

Mr. Olinger stated that one of the reasons why they wanted to do the FTP site is because they were trying to migrate to Granicus and it is taking a little longer than he had hoped to get there because they had some issues with DIT and some turnover but states it will fundamentally change the way we disseminate information. Mr. Olinger stated that you will also be able to look at conceptual plans and final plans and go back and forth through the file to see how things have changed without having to have the hard copy in the front of you. Mr. Olinger stated that the FTP site was trying to help them wean themselves off of the hard copy and Granicus would certainly do that as it relates to how transparent and accessible the information

will be to members of the general public and over time it will be a great benefit to the City and the Boards and Commission members as well.

Mr. Eastman stated that City Council video records their meetings and the videos will be online and it will also be streamed and time stamped. Mr. Eastman stated that the UDC will be able to do that with the audio recording and it will be time stamped and it will change the way they do their minutes and it will be easier because they will have a laptop in the meeting and as the vote goes around they will actually be able to record that as well as time stamping it. Mr. Eastman stated that the minutes will actually be less verbatim that they are now because they will have that recording and will be able to go to it and hear it themselves.

Mr. Green inquired if there was a citizen comment on a project does it goes to Mr. Eastman or get posted to Granicus. Mr. Eastman stated that he can post that to Granicus as part of the file. Mr. Olinger stated that it will still come to staff and staff will upload it to Granicus. Mr. Green asked if they could see the comments before the meeting and Mr. Eastman stated yes.

Mr. Eastman stated that a couple of years ago the UDC reviewed a project for a street narrowing in front of the Powell Courthouse to put in security measures. Mr. Eastman stated that the applicant has scaled the proposal back and are now asking for a subcommittee to be appointed by members of UDC. Mr. Eastman stated that he spoke with the Secretary of the Planning Commission about a subcommittee of the Planning Commission as well. Mr. Eastman stated that they are trying to get back in front of the Committee soon but they want to have a little more input from the people that are going to be making the decisions. Mr. Eastman stated that a motion was required to appoint two members to that subcommittee.

A motion was made by Ms. Levine to appoint Mr. Green and Mr. Cole to the subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

Mr. Eastman stated that a couple of months ago the UDC had a couple of subcommittees formed to look at various aspects of lighting and a tree study and when those come back they will be amendments to the UDC Guidelines. This gave Staff a chance to look at the Guidelines and they determined that the Guidelines probably need to be updated as well. Mr. Eastman stated that he would ask the Committee for a motion to take a comprehensive look at the Guidelines with the idea of updating them. A motion was made by Mr. Garland to take a look at updating the Guidelines. The motion was seconded by Ms. Levine and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

### **Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda**

There were no continuances or deletions.

### **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Eastman stated that on Agenda Item #8 there were a couple of requests that Staff had made that had been verbally agreed to by VCU but that hadn't been updated on the plans prior to the packets going out. Mr. Eastman stated that the old plans were showing Allee Elms on

Broad Street when it should have been green Zelkovas which are along Broad Street already. Mr. Eastman stated that the old plans were also indicating that a VCU standard light would be attached to the back of the Broad Street cobrahead fixtures which was also incorrect and it will be the Acorn fixture which is the standard one that is on the back of those lights already. Mr. Eastman stated that the plans in the packets on the tables reflects those changes.

A motion was made by Ms. Levine to recommend that the Planning Commission grant final approval of the drop off/pick-up drive as submitted.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

**6. Final Location, Character and Extent review of a drop off/pick-up drive at Cary Elementary School, 3021 Maplewood Avenue; UDC #14-02(2)**

This project involves the construction of a drop-off/pick-up access drive in front of Cary Elementary School. Currently those students who travel to/from school by vehicle are dropped off at the curb in front of the school on Maplewood Avenue. The school currently sets out traffic cones and temporary signs delineating a lane for student drop-off and pick-up. A representative from the school patrols the sidewalk on Maplewood Avenue, assisting students out of their cars and into the school. There is also a crossing guard that is stationed at the speed table on Maplewood Avenue just east of S. Belmont Avenue. Students who travel to/from school by bus are dropped off at the curb on the S. Belmont Avenue side of the school.

The proposed access drive would be approximately 290' long and 19' from the face-of-curb to face-of-curb. Drop-off would be permitted on the southern side of the drive, with the northern side left open for circulation. The drive would permit parking for 12 vehicles. New sidewalk will be provided to the south of the loop, connecting to the existing sidewalks to the east and west of the proposed drive. There will be an accessible ramp installed in the center of the new sidewalk, aligning with the entrance to the school.

The island created by the access drive will contain both 5'7" depth of the existing sidewalk in the central area and 5'7" depth of a landscaped area, with full-depth sections of landscaping on the ends. This configuration of sidewalk and landscaped area will help direct any students who are dropped off on Maplewood Avenue towards the crosswalk connecting the island to the sidewalk directly in front of the school entrance.

Construction of the access drive will require the removal of two existing street trees and several shrubs from the landscaped area in front of the school, however, the new island will be heavily landscaped. At the eastern end of the island is an existing elm tree that will be retained. Four new Zelkova trees, 2.5" in caliper at the time of installation, will be installed: 3 in the island and 1 in a vacant tree well to the east of the island. The Zelkova is a medium-growth tree attaining a height and spread of 50'-75'. The plans also call for the installation of two smaller trees in the island on each side of the crosswalk, to be planted either with Japanese maples, Japanese snowbells, or a combination of the two. The remainder of the planting area in the island will be landscaped with a total of 92 shrubs (6 Rose Creek Abelias, 50 Ilex Hoogendorn "Soft Touch" Hollies, and 36 Loropetalums) and hundreds of groundcover plants (126 Blue Rug Junipers, 206 variegated liriopel plants, and 70 Barren Strawberry plants).

The project budget is \$90,000, funded by the City, and work is anticipated to begin this spring/summer.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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A motion was made by Ms. Levine to recommend that the Planning Commission grant final approval of the streetscape improvements as submitted.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

**7. Final Location, Character and Extent review of streetscape improvements to N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, between E. Main Street and E. Cary Street; UDC #14-15**

This project involves the installation of new street trees and pedestrian scaled streetlights on both sides of N. 10th Street between E. Main and E. Cary Streets, as well as new crosswalks at the intersections. The previous iteration of this project involved the installation of stormwater planters, some new trees and also retention of some existing trees. In this application, all of the existing trees would be removed. At present, there are 14 trees on the subject block. Twelve are Lindens ranging in caliper from 7 to 10 inches and two are Redbuds roughly 3.5 inches in caliper. The Applicant's Report states that the current canopy coverage is calculated to be 4,196 square feet but that four of the lindens are dead or dying. The Report further states that assuming these trees were to be removed, post-removal canopy is calculated to be 2,880 square feet. The proposed planting plans would yield a calculated 10 year canopy coverage of 6,023 square feet.

On both sides of the street north of the alley, the plans call for the installation of tree wells that are recessed 6" from the sidewalk surface. The recessed tree wells, 5' in width and varying from 19' to 30' in length, are designed to increase potential root volume for the proposed street trees. The two tree wells at the intersection with E. Main Street are proposed to be planted with seedless Sweet Gum trees (40'-50' high, 25'-30' wide at maturity), 2.5" in caliper at the times of installation, while the remaining wells are to be planted with Littleleaf Linden trees (40'-50' high, 15'-20' wide at maturity), also 2.5" in caliper at the time of installation. The wells will also be heavily planted with groundcover sedge and an extensive mix of daffodil and crocus bulbs and will then be mulched. The recessed beds will be occasionally interrupted by brick bands for placement of lights and for passage by pedestrians.

On both sides of the street from the alley southward, the plans call for the installation of a series of tree wells and stormwater planters. The tree wells, 5' to 7'6" in width and 10' in length, will be flush-mounted with the sidewalk surface and will contain Littleleaf Lindens in all wells except the two at the intersection with E. Cary Street, which will be planted with seedless Sweet Gum trees. The stormwater planters, 5'6" in width and 8' in length, are located between the tree wells and are designed to detain and treat stormwater runoff from the roadways. The system, similar to those reviewed by the UDC and approved by the Planning Commission and

subsequently built along 9th and 14th Streets, links planters through a series of weir channels and underdrains, allowing for increased infiltration and treatment prior to its connection to the existing City storm sewer. The planters will contain dwarf red osier dogwood shrubs and will be occasionally interrupted by brick bands for placement of lights and for passage by pedestrians. On the eastern side of the street, provision is made for the placement of canal block bench seating in the sidewalk under the trees.

In all, the proposed tree wells and stormwater planters will result in a reduction of 2,600 square feet of impervious area from the right-of-way in this block. In addition, the stormwater planters will provide water quality treatment for a 34,413 square feet drainage area from the right-of-way.

The proposed streetlights are a Charleston fixture on a fluted 12' tall Hanover pole, all painted black. The top of the Charleston fixture will be solid, while the bottom will be composed of clear polycarbonate. The light source is a 150watt high pressure sodium bulb. This is the same light setup as was used on the similar S. 14th Street streetscape project between Bank and E. Main Streets.

At the intersections of N. 10th Street with E. Main and E. Cary Streets, the plans call for the crosswalks on N. 10 Street to be composed of stamped asphalt in a red brick pattern. The crosswalks along E. Main and E. Cary Streets will be re-striped. The sidewalks on N. 10th Street at the intersections with E. Main and E. Cary Streets will be composed of red brick, while the remainder of the sidewalk on the block will be composed of concrete with the exception of the aforementioned brick bands.

The estimated construction budget for this project is \$950,000, and is being funded through the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Capital Trees, which have also received private donations from local corporations and foundations. Construction is slated to begin in fall of this year.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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A motion was made by Ms. Levine to recommend that the Department of Public Works give approval to the streetscape encroachments with the following recommendations:

- That the ornamental light fixtures are located at the same setback from the curb as the lights in the adjacent blocks.
- That the tactile warning strip in the crosswalk match the color of those used in adjacent blocks.
- That any curbing being replaced or added match the material of adjacent curbing.
- That the applicant work with the Department of Public Utilities to remove the existing Cobra Head light fixture located mid-block on W. Grace Street and install a standard VCU site light in its place.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

**8. VCU Streetscape Encroachments adjacent to 500 N. Harrison Street and 1010 W. Grace Street; UDC #14-13**

This is a request to replace the existing sidewalk and install street trees and pedestrian-scaled ornamental lighting fixtures along the rights-of-way adjacent to 500 N. Harrison & 1010 W. Grace Street. In recent history, these properties were improved with surface parking, but they are now being developed into student dormitory housing with ground-floor retail. A curb cut on the west side of N. Harrison Street will be removed as part of the project and replaced with granite curbing which will match the adjacent curbs. Also, a curb cut on the east side of Ryland Street will be reconfigured and replaced with granite curbing which will match adjacent curbs as well.

The existing sidewalks are composed of concrete with granite curbing. The sidewalk along the south side of Broad Street will be replaced with a 5' wide section composed of brick laid in a herringbone pattern with 5' wide concrete panels bordering it on either side, matching the installation on the north side of the block and on blocks to the east. Parts of the sidewalk along Ryland, N. Harrison, and W. Grace streets will be replaced with brick laid in a herringbone pattern with an 8" wide border course, matching the installation on surrounding blocks. The width of these sidewalks will vary between approximately 10' and 13', but will allow a minimum of 5' of pedestrian clearance after subtracting the 5' wide proposed tree wells.

Five ornamental, pedestrian-scaled streetlights are proposed to be installed along the subject rights-of-way, with three being installed on W. Grace Street and two being installed on N. Harrison Street. The proposed light fixture would match those existing on adjacent blocks and used extensively throughout the VCU Monroe Park campus, which are fourteen feet (14') in height and black in color. Three standard VCU site light fixtures will be mounted with a bracket to power poles, with one being installed on N. Harrison Street and two on W. Grace Street. The existing power poles are made of wood, and the applicant plans to replace these with steel poles so that the light fixtures will match in material.

The proposed fixtures on W. Grace Street are spaced between 36' and 61' feet apart, with a minimum distance of 13' from each fixture to the nearest tree. On N. Harrison Street, the lights are spaced uniformly with approximately 52' between each fixture. The oddly spaced light fixtures along W. Grace Street may have to do with the presence of underground utilities which are located on this side of the street, as well as due to the fact that existing power poles will be utilized to support bolted-on light fixtures.

A total of 17 Allee elms, 3.5" in caliper at the time of installation, will be planted, with 7 on W. Broad Street, 2 on Ryland Street, and 8 on W. Grace Street. The Allee elm is the species already utilized on adjacent blocks of W. Grace Street and is considered a medium-large sized street tree with a mature height of approximately 50' and a width of 35'. The trees are spaced approximately 35' apart on W. Broad Street, 28' on Ryland Street, and between 27' and 31' feet on W. Grace Street. The street trees along all four blocks will be planted in 5' by 5' tree wells with a 2' wide border of brick in a running bond pattern. No trees are proposed to be planted along N. Harrison Street due to the presence of a Dominion Power duct bank and a 51"

combined sewer line. Five existing street trees along W. Grace Street have already been removed in order to begin construction of the dorm in the southeast corner of the block. No on-street trees currently exist along the other segments of the blocks for which improvements are proposed. Overhead power lines are situated on portions of W. Grace, N. Harrison and Ryland streets, with underground utilities located along W. Broad Street.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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A motion was made by Ms. Levine to recommend that the Department of Public Works give approval to the streetscape encroachments with the following recommendations:

- That the ornamental light fixtures are located at the same setback from the curb as the lights in the adjacent blocks.
- That the tactile warning strip in the crosswalk match the color of those used in adjacent blocks.
- That any curbing being replaced or added match the material of adjacent curbing.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

**9. VCU Streetscape Encroachments along W. Broad Street between Goshen and N. Pine Streets and along W. Grace Street between N. Harrison and N. Pine Streets; UDC #14-14**

This is a request to replace the existing sidewalk and install street trees and pedestrian-scaled ornamental lighting fixtures along the rights-of-way of W. Broad Street and W. Grace Street. The existing sidewalks are of concrete and/or brick with granite curbing. The sidewalk along Broad Street will be replaced with a 5' wide section composed of brick laid in a herringbone pattern with concrete panels bordering it on either side. The width of the concrete panels will be 7' on the curb-side and approximately 5' on the building site. This will match the installation on previously completed sections of the street. The sidewalk along W. Grace Street will be replaced with brick laid in a herringbone pattern with an 8" wide border course, matching the installation on previously completed sections of the street. The sidewalk will be approximately 10' wide, leaving about 5' for pedestrian travel in areas with 5' by 5' tree wells.

A curb cut on the north side of W. Grace Street between N. Harrison and Shafer streets will be removed and replaced with granite curbing which will match the adjacent curbs. Also, two inoperable curb cuts on the north side of W. Broad Street on each side of Goshen Street will be removed and replaced with granite curbing which will match the adjacent curbs.

A total of 29 ornamental, pedestrian-scaled streetlights are proposed to be installed along W. Grace Street. The proposed light fixture would match those existing on adjacent blocks and used extensively throughout the VCU Monroe Park campus, which are fourteen feet (14') in height and black in color. Spacing for the light fixtures will vary between 31' and 40' on center, which is consistent with recent installations on surrounding blocks.



Along W. Broad Street a total of 11 decorative acorn light fixtures will be bolted to existing Cobra Head light poles to provide pedestrian scale lighting to the sidewalk. Spacing of the existing Cobra Head lights with the attached acorn light fixtures along W. Broad Street are not as consistent but should still provide adequate lighting along the sidewalk. This will match previously installed light fixtures, as well as proposed light fixtures, along other blocks of W. Broad Street.

A total of 30 Allee elms, 3.5" in caliper at the time of installation, will be planted along W. Grace Street. The Allee elm is the species already utilized on adjacent blocks of W. Grace Street and is considered a medium-large sized street tree with a mature height of approximately 50' and a width of 35'. The trees are to be spaced approximately 32' to 45' which is due in part to existing curb cuts and parking pull-off areas. A total of 12 existing street trees are proposed to be removed as part of the sidewalk removal and replacement. The tree wells on W. Grace Street will be 5' by 5' with a border of 6" wide concrete and approximately 1' wide brick in a header border course pattern. With a total width of approximately 10', a remainder of about 5' of sidewalk width will allow for pedestrian traffic in sections with tree wells.

A total of 23 Green Vase Zelkovas, a medium-large sized street tree with a mature height of approximately 60' to 80', will be planted along W. Broad Street, matching the planting along adjacent blocks of the street. No street trees currently exist along these segments of W. Broad Street so no removals will be necessary. The tree wells be 5' by 5' with a 2' wide border of brick in a running bond pattern. With a total width of approximately 18', a remainder of about 13' of sidewalk width will allow for pedestrian traffic in sections with tree wells.

There are no overhead power lines on the sections of the blocks for which improvements are proposed.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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#### **Regular Agenda**

A motion was made by Ms. Levine to recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval of the renovations, with the following recommendations:

- That the applicant considers relocating the "entrance ramp open" sign at the corner of S. 9<sup>th</sup> and E. Byrd Streets to better facilitate pedestrian movement along the sidewalk.
- That the applicant seeks to locate additional trees in and around the perimeter of the park, wherever feasible, whether they are provided in the ground or in planters of some design.
- That effort be made to retain the existing Willow Oak trees on E. Byrd Street, but if that proves impossible during demolition, that those trees are replaced with Willow Oak trees or a similar canopy species as determined by the City Arborist.
- That the final plans include a landscape plan, to show plant species, quantity, and size at the time of installation.

- That the final plans provide details on all proposed hardscape materials.
- That the applicant considers using a pedestrian light fixture that is consistent with other lighting in the area, but not the existing light, and that the final plans provide details on the proposed lights, to include pole and fixture model, height, color, finish and light source.
- That the final plans include trash receptacles located throughout the park, and that the plans provide details on the design of such receptacles.
- That the applicant considers providing more shading opportunities on the site, not necessarily from trees.
- That the applicant reassess the pedestrian flow at the corner of S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Byrd Street.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Harnsberger and passed 6-0-0 (Arias, Cole, Garland, Green, Harnsberger and Levine for).

#### **10. Conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of renovations to the RMA Plaza, 210 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street; UDC #14-16**

This project involves the extensive renovation of the RMA Plaza, a small urban park on the south side of the RMA parking deck at the intersection of S. 9<sup>th</sup> and E. Byrd Streets. The site slopes downward from the parking deck towards E. Byrd Street, and the existing plaza features a raised central landscaped semi-circle flanked by two large landscape beds planted with crepe myrtles and grass. There are also two large raised circular planters that are landscaped with an unknown species of tree and grass. A vehicular entrance to the parking garage occupies the southwest corner of the site and presents a conflict point with pedestrians. Overall, the park is in very poor condition, with large sections of marble missing from the seating walls around the planters, heaving walkway pavers and accumulated debris.

Aside from the poor condition of the park, there are some issues where leaks have formed in the structure of the Downtown Expressway tunnel, which sits underneath the park. The resulting waterproofing work to the Downtown Expressway tunnel necessitates the removal of entire central portion of plaza. The plans currently call for the retention of the existing willow oak street trees along E. Byrd Street, but the removal of all of the interior landscaping, to include the demolition of the raised landscaped areas. The interior of the park will now feature a series of undulating lawn steps cascading from the colonnade on the northwest side of the park. A wide central walkway of brick pavers will bisect the site from southwest to northeast, and the southeast portion of the park will contain a large, relatively flat portion of lawn. The lawn is proposed to be irrigated, and a portion of the lawn near the corner of S. 10<sup>th</sup> and E. Byrd Streets will contain a rain garden.

Though no final selection has been made on the walkway material, the design intent is to provide brick to provide visual compatibility with the material palettes of the adjacent RMA parking deck and the Riverfront Plaza across E. Byrd Street. The stairs are proposed to be a combination of brick and concrete paving. The stair treads/nosings are expected to be pre-cast concrete and will match the materials on the lawn steps. The plans also show ornamental lights and movable furniture being located in the central walkway.

This project is estimated to cost \$1,350,000 and is being financed through general obligation bonds. Work is expected to commence by late summer/early fall of this year.

Mr. Cole inquired who owns the property and Mr. Eastman stated that there was an ordinance that was adopted last year that transferred the property from the RMA to the City of Richmond but there are some complex issues at hand that involves the air rights that allowed for the WilliamsMullen building to be built on top of the parking deck so the transfer hasn't actually gone through yet but is to be the City or Richmond property. Mr. Cole inquired if the City of Richmond will maintain it and Mr. Eastman stated that the Parks Department will maintain it. Mr. Cole inquired if they can add conditions that the applicants be required to have a maintenance agreement or program. Mr. Eastman stated that is a question that he doesn't know the answer to but if they feel strongly about it they can put that recommendation in the motion and he can figure it out before the Planning Commission consideration.

Mr. Green inquired who the designer of the original plaza and Mr. Eastman stated that he doesn't know.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired where Mr. Eastman wants the sign to be moved to and Mr. Eastman stated that he will leave that to the applicant to decide where would be the best place for it to be moved but it obstructs pedestrian flow and moving it should be a consideration.

Mr. Todd Loney with DPW introduced the project team.

Mr. Cole asked if the reason for doing the redesign is because of water seeping into the tunnel and Mr. Loney stated yes and that the membrane needs to be replaced throughout the whole area and stated that there needs to be some structural repairs as well.

Mr. Eastman stated that one of the questions that he had was the extent of how far underneath that the tunnel goes and how does that impact what is aboveground.

Mr. Jeremy Schluskel with Whitman Requardt and Associates stated that they are the structural engineers who are going to be working to repair the structural elements and it is a complex situation. Mr. Schluskel stated that there is a pier which goes down the middle that is all structure and there are another three separate structures tied together so there are four joints and you can see water dripping through. Mr. Schluskel stated that part of the issue is that they need to fix that so they can stop the deterioration of the structural element and in order to do that they have to remove everything. They believe that the membrane that is underneath there that has failed and it has been out there since 1990. They are going to put a new membrane down as well as improve the joints that are out there but there is very minimal space available to put a lot of soil and planters and elements like that back into the Plaza.

Mr. Garland inquired how long will the membrane work and Mr. Schluskel stated that it should last 50 years but they don't know if there is a membrane there now. Mr. Schluskel stated that there are separate structures out there and stated that they are putting a 2 level bridge joint that is going between the structures and then put a membrane on top of that. Mr. Schluskel stated that they are going to have two different joints sitting up there in case one does fail you have a second joint there as a better long term maintenance solution.

Mr. Arias asked if there was a way going forward that this can be designed in a way that allows for additional needed maintenance without destroying everything again and Mr. Schluskel stated that from a structural point of view the membrane and joint once it is covered by the hardscaped the only way to get back down there will be to take everything back up. Mr. Schluskel stated that based on what they have talked about it will be easier now and that what is hampering this situation now is that they have all of the steps and physical structure on top of the structure and to remove that is difficult.

Mr. Cole inquired if there is a preference for them whether it is grass or brick pavers and inquired if one works better than the other. Mr. Cole inquired if brick pavers help get the water away instead of going down through it or does it not matter. Mr. Schluskel stated that from a weight standpoint they are trying to keep it similar in weight so the soil versus the brick pavers is kind of indifferent to them and the big thing for them is a drainage element overall. Mr. Schluskel stated that Mr. Hugo is working with that and tying it into the rain garden on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Byrd.

Mr. Garland inquired if the tree roots can go down through the membrane and cause this to happen again. Mr. Jay Hugo, 3North, stated that this project really began as an infrastructure project to address the waterproofing issue and it wasn't driven by the public space improvements but by the practical waterproofing needs and as they got into those specifics it became clear that the viewing of the existing conditions rather than the design drawings that the structural capacity of the existing structure is at its limit. They can't impose any new loads and they want to reduce the loads on the existing structure so that was one driver in the design and in addition the practicality of having a continuous waterproofing membrane that was not interrupted by new stem walls and footings or things of that nature would do very well for the long term maintenance. Mr. Hugo stated that from an overall design standpoint they think the prior scenario looks great in plain view but changes in the elevation make the park very difficult to occupy with the raised planters that have lawn areas that aren't really useful for much. If they are maintained well they can be reasonable to look at but it wouldn't be a great place to be, necessarily. Mr. Hugo stated that they used the less is more approach where they really tried to flatten out the park and make the edges more porous and allow people to come in from the sidewalks particularly on the east and south side and really go with the flow as far as the existing grading. The predominant slope is in that direction from north to south but there is a cross slope from west to east. Mr. Hugo stated that they are basically trying to create a fairly flat plain with broad lawn terraces on each side of the hardscaped areas and in general they are thinking of this as a great lunch spot relative to the existing willow Oaks on Byrd Street. They are maturing willow oaks and generally healthy and are probably planted a little too close together but they are substantial shade trees and it will be the general preference to hold on to those to the extent that they can. They recently got into the practical issues of how much disturbance will happen to those tree roots during the removal of the existing park and the installation of the new park and he feels there is more studying to be done to determine if they can save those trees. Mr. Hugo stated that it may not be possible and early on in this process there have been design conversations with the city arborists and community groups that are focused on trees like Capital Trees and the tree stewards and the general consensus was they would like to retain those trees if they can but they need to find out if that is feasible. Mr. Hugo stated that they all talked about the need for shade in this park and from a practical standpoint again it is going to be essentially impossible to plant new trees in the soil within the interior of the park but they have talked about trying to get larger container planted trees to the extent that the loading requirements will allow it within the park. In addition to that on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street side

there is hope to integrate that streetscape again maybe in the form of container planters with additional work that is being conceived and even the work that the Committee has approved this morning. Further north on 10<sup>th</sup> Street as part of the Jefferson greenway idea a term that has been coined to talk about the continuous streetscape improvements from Capitol Square all the way down to the canal and their hope is to make sure that whatever improvements are developed along 10<sup>th</sup> Street are integrated into that overall idea.

Ms. Levine asked if the movable furniture is heavy enough that people can't walk off with it and Mr. Hugo stated that what they have learned through research and looking at similar park settings is that theft is not as much of an issue. Bryant Park in Manhattan tends to be a model project that a lot of people look at that has light movable tables and chairs in the middle of New York City and they don't get stolen.

Ms. Levine stated that on 9<sup>th</sup> Street it seems to be a really hard corner making a pedestrian turn and inquired how wide is the sidewalk where the wall is to the street and would it help to soften that corner. Mr. Schlüssel stated that the sidewalk itself is 4' wide and it was part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge prior to them filling in the middle and there is a set of stairs there.

Mr. Olinger stated that on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street side it is shown as all hardscaped and inquired if there was a way to do something to the curb other than trees to soften that feel and help direct people to the corner. Mr. Hugo stated that a combination of trees and container plants, furniture, and benches and lighting with banners will begin to make that space feel human and right now both the 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street sides are fairly barren and inhospitable. Having that street furnished creating an edge of the street from both a buffering and from a visual continuity standpoint will be great. None of those solutions will require deep foundation or will be restricted by the structural conditions.

Mr. Schlüssel stated that they have to work in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and they are only working with a small area and in reality they can do a lot with because then the RMA Plaza abutment is behind it. Mr. Olinger stated that some kind of container system would work and the problem he has with the bridge is that it is so barren. As you are continuing to try to bring people down to the canal and ultimately to the river or back up towards the Capital it's stark and he is trying to figure out something that they can do that would give a continuity of shade or continuity of materials other than concrete.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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#### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:13 am.