



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**PAC 14-012:** Section 17.05 Review to approve the relocation of the public art sculpture “The Mill,” by Bradley Robinson from its present location on Brown’s Island, to a new location in order to provide for the installation of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument by the Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Commission.

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**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Mark A. Olinger, Director  
**Date:** March 19, 2018

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**APPLICANT:** Mark A. Olinger, Director, Planning & Development Review  
City of Richmond

**LOCATION:** Brown’s Island

**PURPOSE:** Section 17.05 Review of the relocation of public art sculpture “The Mill,” by Bradley Robinson from its present location on Brown’s Island, to a new location in order to provide for the installation of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument by the Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Commission.

**SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION:** The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Commission is a statutory and bi-partisan agency of the Virginia General Assembly, created in 1992, to honor the memory and legacy of Dr. King and to continue his work through educational, historical, and cultural programs, among other activities. The Commission is implementing the development, creation, and erection of the Virginia Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument to serve as an education site and tool for educating the public about the importance of the Emancipation Proclamation and to memorialize as part of the Monument notable African American Virginians who have made significant contributions to the emancipation and freedom of formerly enslaved persons or descendants.

The Commission received funding to help in the planning, design, fabrication, and installation from the General Assembly in 2012 and has selected artist Thomas J. Warren of Oregon to fabricate and install the 12-foot monument on Brown’s Island in time to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America in Jamestown.

As owner of Brown’s Island, City staff have been part of the discussions related to the placement of the Monument on Brown’s Island, and have advised the Commission on the

necessary processes necessary to place the Monument on Brown's Island. In order to make it possible for the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument to be located at this particular site a total of four (4) Ordinances will ultimately need to be adopted by Council. Those Ordinances include:

Adopted by Council:

1. To declare and direct conveyance of a portion of City-owned real estate to the Commonwealth of Virginia to facilitate the installation, and maintenance of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument. Council adopted Ordinance No. 2017-005 on February 13, 2017.

To be Adopted by Council (Introduction Date 2/26/18)

2. To grant a non-exclusive permanent deed of easement to install, access, and maintain the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument. All maintenance costs associated with the installation of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument will be borne by the Commonwealth of Virginia.
3. To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Fourth Amendment to the Controlled Public Access Lease Agreement between the City of Richmond and Venture Richmond, Inc., for the purpose of excluding from the "Demised Premises" certain real property.
4. To authorize the Chief Administrative Office to accept a donation of services and materials from Venture Richmond, Inc., in an amount approximated at \$103,800 related to the movement of the sculpture "The Mill" from its present location on Brown's Island to a new location, including site preparation, and new site elements.

Improvements to Brown's Island include removal of "The Mill" from its current location and relocation of "The Mill" to its new site, are detailed in the attached plan, as prepared by 3north. "The Mill" must be relocated to its new location before the final planning and construction of the Emancipation & Freedom Monument can begin.

On February 22, 2018, the Public Art Commission recommended approval of the proposed relocation of "The Mill" from its current location to its new site as per the attached plans. The vote was 6:1 in favor.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed relocation of The Mill to its new location.

## FINDINGS OF FACT

**Site Description and Surrounding Context:** The Mill will be relocated from its present location at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge (Brent Halsey Bridge) to a location near the terminus of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge on Brown's Island. Additionally, the site is at the intersection of several other pathways, creating the potential for activation of this area and for its visibility from a number of vantage points on Brown's Island.

**Scope of Review:** The project is subject to review as relocation of public art, per Section 17.05 of the City Charter. The Public Art Commission is an advisory body to the City Planning Commission.

**Project Description & Background:** The City has been working with Venture Richmond and the Commonwealth to provide for the relocation of "The Mill" to its new location. Venture Richmond has been asked to help facilitate the move. Costs associated with the relocation of "The Mill" will be reimbursed to Venture Richmond by the Commonwealth.

The sculpture, benches, and hardscape will be installed at the new site in the same arrangement as they are now, with some additional landscaping. The existing walkway to the helipad will also be removed and reseeded. The existing site will have the existing hardscape removed, the site, cleaned, and any disturbed areas reseeded with grass. Actual installation of the Emancipation Proclamation & Freedom Monument will be managed by the Commonwealth.

**DISCUSSION:** The Commission discussed the relocation plan with some question as to the need to relocate "The Mill" at all. Public Art Commission members stated that the Commonwealth has decided that the location for the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument will go where "The Mill" is presently located. Staff was asked to communicate with Venture Richmond to see if there had been any contact with WestRock regarding the potential relocation of "The Mill." Subsequent to the Public Art Commission meeting, staff did reach out to Venture to address this issue. Venture did reach out to WestRock and they had no issues with the relocation of the sculpture.

### Attachments:

1. "The Mill" Sculpture Relocation Site Analysis and Plan, prepared by 3north

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