



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes - Final Urban Design Committee

Thursday, January 10, 2019

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

- Present** -- 6 - * Chris Arias, * Jill Nolt, * Andrea Quilici, * James W. Klaus, * Emily Smith and * Chair Andrea Almond
- Excused** -- 2 - * David Johannas and * Andrew P. Gould
- Vacant** -- 1 - * Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger

Approval of Minutes

[UDC MIN 2018-12](#) Minutes to the regular meeting on December 6, 2018

Attachments: [DRAFT UDC MIN 2018-12](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Quilici that these Minutes be approved with the clarified comments.

Committee Member Arias seconded, the motion carried by the following vote:

- Aye** -- 3 - Chris Arias, Andrea Quilici and Chair Andrea Almond
- Excused** -- 2 - David Johannas and Andrew P. Gould
- Abstain** -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus and Emily Smith

Secretary's Report

Mr. Son stated that, since the last meeting, Staff has reviewed and approved banners for "Celtic Woman: Ancient Land" which will be on display from February 4 to March 25, 2019, as well as the Sheetz Annual Hockey Tournament, on display from February 20 to February 25, 2019.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

[UDC 2019-05](#) Final location, character, and extent review of Bellemeade Green Street, along Minefee St. from Harwood St. to Gunn St.

Attachments: [Location & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was withdrawn by the applicant.

CONSENT AGENDA

[UDC 2019-03](#) Final review of outdoor dining encroachments associated with Brenner Pass Restaurant, 3200 Rockbridge Street

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

Mr. Klaus: I just want to make sure we're approving it with the clearances that are appropriate

Ms. Lori Markham, representing the applicant for item 2019-03, introduced herself.

Ms. Markham: We appreciate the comments from Public Works. We don't agree with their requirement for a seven-foot clearance. We would respectfully request that you do not condition the approval on that 7-foot clearance, when the minimum clearance in the café guidelines is 5 feet. I'm happy to answer any other questions you have about the application.

Ms. Nolt: In that five-foot area where you have the dimension of five-ten on your plans, is that a drop inlet? What are we seeing in the sidewalk area?

Ms. Markham: It isn't a drop inlet. It's a flush surface that you can walk on.

Ms. Nolt: ADA-accessible?

Ms. Markham: Yes.

Ms. Nolt: And there was once concern about a dimensional conflict. Can you clarify – is it 5' 10" or is it 5' 1"?

Ms. Markham: Yes, it is 5' 10". The 5' 1" is on the architectural drawings and this is not to the face of the curb. It is 5' 10" to the face of the curb, so to the back of the curb it would be about 5' 6" or 5' 4".

Mr. Klaus: Is that a tree well that's adjacent to that?

Ms. Nolt: That's a drop inlet.

Ms. Markham: The comments talk about on-street parking. There is no on-street parking on that side of High Point. There is on the other side but not on that side, so there would be no conflicts with vehicles.

Ms. Nolt: I don't have any further questions.

Ms. Almond: Josh, if we approve this as proposed on the consent agenda, that's endorsing them to go to 5' 10", correct?

Mr. Son: Correct. As proposed.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt, seconded by Committee Member Smith, that the consent agenda items be recommended for approval to the Department of Public Works as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

[UDC 2019-06](#) Final review of outdoor dining encroachments, 1548 E. Main Street

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

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt, seconded by Committee Member Smith, that the consent agenda items be recommended for approval to the Department of Public Works as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

[UDC 2018-52](#) Final location, character, and extent review of electrical enclosures in 17th Street Market, 50 North 17th Street
(2)

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

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt, seconded by Committee Member Smith, that the consent agenda items be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

[UDC 2019-04](#) Final location, character, and extent review of trail improvements, 1704 Pump House Drive

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

Mr. Son: The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (DPRCF) plans to construct a 530-foot-long, 8-foot wide asphalt trail to connect existing trail networks between Pump House Drive and Park Drive at the north end of the Boulevard Bridge. This trail will be dimensioned for two-way traffic flow and will serve both cyclists and pedestrians accessing the Pump House Park, Byrd Park, and the North Bank Trail. The trail will also be designed to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) "shared used path" standards and to Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards for trails to provide an accessible pathway. (The more northern of the two spurs connecting to the sidewalk along Pump House Drive is not graded to accessible standards.)

The trail connector will be bordered by locally-sourced granite boulders (some already stockpiled at the site) to form a traffic barrier through the Pump House Parking Lot, and it will be furnished with repurposed concrete blocks (from the site). The stormwater management plan includes a swale that roughly parallels the length of the trail and will conduit water to a bioretention basin (level 2) adjacent to the trail at its western end. This stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP) will be planted and will be visible from Pump House Drive. Existing signs will be resituated with the new design; additional trail-related signage will be added by DPRCF as needed using their standard signage program.

The trail crosses property owned by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) that is currently used for the parking lot and trailhead for the North Bank Trail, as well as property owned by the Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority (RMTA) along Park Drive south of the toll plaza. The project has been permitted with RMTA.

The project budget is \$124,634.40, which includes the following:

- Environmental and cultural resource studies needed for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) compliance (given the federal funding)
- Submission of an application and design exhibits to the City's Urban Design Committee (UDC) and the Planning Commission and assistance with the approval process of these two bodies
- Submission of applications and design drawings to the City's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and assistance with the permitting process
- Construction administration of the project
- Construction of an eight-foot wide asphalt trail, bioretention facility, and associated landscaping and site amenities

The project is being funded through a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant award. The RTP is a federally-funded program 80-20 matching reimbursement program administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). DPRCF is sourcing the 20% match (20% of the project total budget or \$24,926.80) from the City's major Parks fund. The remainder of the budget is funded through the grant reward. DPRCF is working closely with DCR staff on the grant reporting requirements to track the project's progress and secure reimbursement.

This improvement plan for the Pump House Parking Lot Trail will enhance the City of Richmond's Riverfront trail network by connecting trails between Pump House Drive and Park Drive at the north end of the Boulevard Bridge. Pedestrians and bikers will benefit from the improvements, which propose replacing the existing foot path in this location with a 530-foot-long asphalt trail. New trees will be planted to replace non-invasive tree species removed on city property, and a bioretention basin with additional native plantings will improve the visual aesthetic of the trail and aid in effective stormwater drainage. Staff finds that the proposed improvements are consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant final approval with the following conditions: If any existing cobblestone or granite is removed, it be stockpiled or reused; the applicant consider using pervious pavement materials where possible.

The applicant is also here, should you have any questions.

Mr. Klaus: You mentioned that they are going to reuse concrete boulders that are from the site?

Mr. Son indicated the slide showing the boulders.

Mr. Quilici: Where will they be located? Are they all there?

Mr. Son: Yes, I believe that is all of them.

Mr. Arias: Do they have historical significance? Why are they being used?

Mr. Son: I'm not sure, but the applicant is here. That might be something he can better explain.

Ms. Nolt: Is there any pedestrian- or bicycle-oriented signage that is part of the project?

Mr. Son: I believe it's part of what the City's park and trail system already uses, they

would just use the same signage.

Ms. Nolt: But are there locations or types of signage being proposed?

Mr. Son: That might be a question for the applicant. We have the existing signage here, but in terms of other wayfinding signage, aside from what is existing and what they currently use, I'm not sure if there is anything beyond that.

Mr. Quilici: Is there any work to be done on the paving of the parking lot?

Mr. Son: I don't believe that's in the scope of this project.

Ms. Smith: Does the end of the sidewalk of this new trail meet an existing sidewalk on Pump House Drive, or is that just a gravel shoulder on the side of the road?

Mr. Son: I'm not sure; that might be a better question for the applicant.

Trevor Buckley introduced himself as the consultant associated with the project.

Mr. Buckley: I think there are three questions. One was the concrete blocks. Those are currently located in a spot where the proposed trail will be passing through, and we thought it would be great to repurpose those as benches. They will be located in a few spots. We have one or two located at the western end of the trail, some by the water fountain, and some over by the existing kiosk by the parking lot by the north entry.

Mr. Klaus: So there's only two or three of them, so they're not going to be interspersed all along this whole line.

Mr. Buckley: No, the granite boulders will serve as the barrier between the trail and the parking lot. That's what you're seeing lined along the trail.

Ms. Nolt: Are those granite boulders canal stones?

Mr. Buckley: I believe they're probably Petersburg granite, which is commonly found in some of the city properties and parks.

Ms. Nolt: They're in rough shape, though.

Mr. Buckley: Yes, kind of rough hewn. There are already some in this overgrown wooded area where the trail will be passing through. And if there need to be any additional, I believe that the city has a stockpile of them.

Ms. Nolt: I had a question about pedestrian and bicycle signage. I'm interested to know how this project is tying into the pedestrian and bicycle network on both sides. It looks like here on the east side it's tying directly into the sidewalk.

Mr. Buckley: That's correct.

Ms. Nolt: Do cyclists have to dismount their bikes and walk the bridge?

Mr. Buckley: They can now bike across.

Ms. Nolt: So that sidewalk is currently dual bicycle/pedestrian.

Mr. Buckley: That's correct.

Ms. Nolt: And I'm interested to know how the other side ties into pedestrian and bike routes.

Mr. Buckley: At the west end of the trail, it terminates at the drive aisle and the other drive aisle [indicating spot on map] is an entrance to a maintenance facility for DPU. So cyclists and pedestrians would turn to the right at the end of the trail to go over to Pump House Drive. There is no sidewalk over there; however, the street is very wide over there. In the city's bike master plan, I don't think this has been fully realized yet but there is a sharrow [shared lane marking] designation for the Boulevard bridge over to Park Drive, and then it turns over to Pump House Drive. So we're incorporating this into the existing proposed trail network. As far as signage: there are just a couple of signs, one when you're coming from Park Drive toward the parking lot that directs pedestrians and cyclists over to the North Bank trailhead; and there is a yield sign for cyclists who are coming along the existing path and making that turn over to Park Drive, and we have those identified on the plan, and those will be relocated during construction. We had put "no new signage" but that will be up to the Parks Department to put as they deem necessary.

Ms. Nolt: So, if the intent is for the trail to connect people to Pump House Drive, is there a way that the path can actually get out to Pump House Drive rather than stop short of that intersection? It seems like we might be setting up a dangerous situation, dropping pedestrians and cyclists into that intersection where cars are coming in to park, whereas if we could at least get them out to the shoulder of Pump House Drive, connect them to the road, it would be a safer access to the future sharrow or the shoulder along Pump House.

Mr. Buckley: I think that's definitely a possibility that we could look at from a design standpoint. I don't know if there are any property issues or coordination issues that would pose any limitations.

Ms. Nolt: And if you can't do that, I think there should be some signage for "pedestrian crossing" or "bike/pedestrian crossing" in that area, especially as visitors are entering to get to the parking area.

Mr. Buckley: I'll put that in there too.

Ms. Smith: That point where there's a tree as indicated in the drawing, on a Saturday there can be a lot of people there.

Ms. Nolt: And that's a new tree proposed, so that could get shifted.

Mr. Quilici: I think that the head of the trail is also for a mountain biking trail, correct? The trail that starts right there where we see the sign is also used by bicycles.

Mr. Buckley: The existing trail?

Mr. Quilici: Yes.

Mr. Buckley: I believe that's correct, yes.

Mr. Quilici: If there's someone coming out from the trail and continuing to the bridge, or someone from the bridge going to the trail, it looks like they're going to miss a connection there. Was the start of the trail for bicycles something that was considered

possible to do? Is there a way maybe to extend the paving to the start of the trail?

Michael Burton introduced himself as the trail manager for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Burton: You'll still be able to make an easy connection from the sidewalk to the north bank trail. It'll be behind the row of barriers that separated the parking lot from the waterfront area. If you come across the bridge and take a left heading toward the parking lot, you'll be able to continue left onto the north bank trail behind the row of barriers. The whole idea is to separate the trail use both in that instance and passing through the parking lot. The whole project is a major improvement of the existing conditions.

Mr. Quilici: All the dirt there would be connected? I'm fine with that

Mr. Buckley: The condition of the parking lot is that there's some remnant pavement. It's not loose gravel.

Mr. Burton: Yes, that surface is pretty durable as it is. That area's not a dirt area like the trail between the water fountain and the sidewalk. It doesn't get muddy and dirty like the rest of the area. Where the path is going from the water fountain area to the sidewalk now is a clay mud area – it gets really messy in the wintertime. The asphalt trail through there will allow for year-round commuter bike use and year-round trail use without having to go through that muddy area.

Mr. Quilici: If there's any work that's going to be done on the parking, is it included in this?

Mr. Burton: It's not included in this project, but parking lots in general fall to Parks and Recreation. That parking lot will get re-graveled. We currently do that and will continue to do that. I know it's in rough shape at the moment, like kind of everything in the park is in rough shape at the moment. It's been a tough winter, with all the rain. It's going to be a great improvement for the cycling community. We keep saying "cycling" but it's absolutely a multi-use trail, and it gets a lot more foot traffic than it does bike traffic.

Mr. Quilici asked whether, if cobblestones have to be removed in the course of the project, if they could be re-used around the fountain, perhaps as an edge on the concrete.

Mr. Buckley: That's definitely something we can look at. We knew that we would stockpile them, so they won't be put to waste. We hadn't designated any use for them specifically on site yet.

Mr. Bennett: We repurpose them all the time on other projects around the park. They certainly won't go to waste.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt, seconded by Committee Member Smith, that this regular agenda item be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- If any existing cobblestone or granite is removed, it be stockpiled or reused
- The applicant consider using pervious pavement materials where possible
- The applicant further study the western end of the trail connection to provide better pedestrian and cycling access to Pump House Drive

[UDC 2019-01](#) Final location, character, and extent review of a new middle school

(formerly Elkhardt Middle School), 6300 Hull Street

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

Commissioner Nolt recused herself from participating in review of this item.

Mr. Son: In early 2018, The City of Richmond Public Schools issued an RFP for the design of a new 1500-student middle school. The intent of the RFP was to provide a prototype design that would allow for a reduced design timeline in order to have the new school operational by September 2020. Under a previous RPS term contract, the existing school building at 6300 Hull Street was demolished, and the site was selected to be the home of the new 1500-student middle school. Four prototypes were presented to the School Board and to the community, and the plans presented here represent the selected prototype.

The selected site is approximately 19 acres, with a major grade change between the building area and the football field. Improvements will be provided to allow ADA access to all areas of the site. A secondary entrance will be provided at the northern end of the property, where one exists today, but this access will be gated and will be emergency access only. Parking for 25 buses and 150 staff/visitors has been provided based on conversations with RPS staff. Asphalt roadways and concrete curb are provided for all vehicular areas. Pedestrian areas will be concrete. Buffers consistent with the city's requirements will be provided as shown to screen the parking areas from adjacent properties and roadways. Landscaping within the parking areas will also be provided, consistent with the City's requirements. Additional foundation plantings will be provided along the building face to enhance those areas. All plantings will be based on native or adaptive species to minimize the watering requirements. It is anticipated that the new school will be designed to meet LEED Silver certification.

Access to the property from Hull Street and Elkhardt Road is limited, and it is important to separate access between buses and cars. Therefore, the access points shown on the plan represent the continued discussions and coordination with both DPW and RPS. In addition, the plan includes the improvements that are proposed with Hull Street (by others), as we understand this work is underway as well. Hull Street will be widened to accommodate a shared-use path on the north side of the road. As such, applicant is not proposing sidewalk along Hull Street, but they are including a sidewalk extension along Elkhardt Road.

The project involves the construction of a new middle school to accommodate 1500 students. The intention of the project is to reduce the design timeline in order to have the new school operational by 2020. The programming of the surrounding area will allow flexibility and the space in between the "wings" of the school may allow for future outdoor facilities to enhance the educational programming, which is desirable. Additionally, existing utility lines onsite will be buried.

Staff is supportive of the overall design of the school building, which is required to meet LEED Silver.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant final approval of this project.

Updated elevation drawings, as well as material samples, were distributed to the Commission by the project design team.

Ms. Almond: The main comments we had last time were about the north elevation and the west, correct?

Mr. Arias: The west elevation and entrance off the parking lot.

Mr. Son: Correct. The north and the west elevation. The discussion was more focused on the western elevation because that was the more prominent façade facing Hull Street. So this is Hull Street here [indicating on map] so consider that this would be the most prominent facing people.

Mr. Arias: So am I understanding correctly that there was no change to that western elevation?

Mr. Son: There have been changes. They enhanced the façade.

Mr. Arias: We had talked about that main entrance into the hallway. I see that they made changes along the shed roof area, the single-story area.

Ms. Almond: Why don't we have the applicants come up and walk through the changes that were made? That might be the easiest way to do this.

Jeff Harris of RRMM Architects introduced himself.

Mr. Harris: We've added the entry canopy, the little portico there. We did not have any covering feature previously. We also incorporated these planting elements along the one-story elevation facing Hull Street. We tried to add the additional design features that you requested, that would have the least impact on the schedule.

Mr. Arias: I was wondering, without changing anything drastically that might affect the schedule – you still have the same style security doors at the entrance on the side; maybe just swapping out this one door leading to the hallway for a more formal entry door that's mostly glass, as opposed to steel, if that would be possible.

Mr. Harris: There's a security issue there, but we also don't want to confuse the public. We don't want them to approach this door and think it's an entry point. It's primarily for exit only. We do have some staff parking there, but staff would utilize those parking spaces rather than visitors.

Ms. Almond: Was anything changed on the north elevation – the end of each of the back bays?

Mr. Harris: There was a comment about the height of the Craftsman-style element, and we did lower it down some.

Chris Gossett of RRMM Architects introduced himself as the project manager for the project.

Mr. Gossett: At the bus entrance at the rear of the building, the north elevation, we pulled up the base of that feature near the roofline to take some weight out of that in response to one of your original comments.

Mr. Harris: I think the original comment was that the cap appeared too heavy, too thick, so we thinned it up a little bit.

Mr. Klaus: I hear your concern about the west elevation and not having people think it's an entrance, which goes against our wanting to make it more prominent. Maybe something can be done with the landscaping plan on that side to make it more attractive and interesting. Things that can't be done through making it look like a main entrance; maybe through a landscape plan that's more active and interesting that could be an interesting side of the building that doesn't have to be changed architecturally.

Ms. Almond: In the plans, they did add some flowering crepe myrtle along that wall, so it looks like they may have made some effort to do that. It's not on the renderings, it's just in the planting plan.

The planting plan and plans were displayed and examined.

Mr. Klaus: It is still a prominent façade; maybe there's a way to make us all happy by doing something with landscaping that doesn't affect your plans.

Ms. Almond: So we could ask them to continue those trees the rest of the way down.

Mr. Klaus: I would maximize the plantings on that wall.

Ms. Almond: Do we have any other questions?

Mr. Quilici: Can we go through some of these requests [from the last meeting] and see how they were addressed?

Ms. Almond: I think most of these were just asking for the final set of plans, which were not finished at the time. The landscape plan was one; more details on the lighting; the samples, we saw; and the main conversation we had was about those two elevations we just discussed. The last comment, about consideration of outdoor learning engagement opportunities, doesn't sound like it was addressed other than to say, in the future there are spaces that could be used for that, but it's not in the current budget to make enhancements.

Mr. Gossett: Between each academic wing we have outdoor learning spaces. In addition to that we will have the amphitheater on the hill at the back of the site, where we'll have an outdoor classroom with benches and seating and such. And we're providing accessible pathways to that. There are steps and a ramp that you can see lead down to the amphitheater.

John Carty, Associate Land Development Manager with VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin) introduced himself.

Mr. Carty: On the hillside as you go down to the soccer field, we've incorporated a set of stairs and an ADA-accessible ramp. On the left side of the stairs we've tiered off to create widened platforms for each of the stairs, so there's a three-tiered seating area that can house about 30 students.

Mr. Quilici: Would it be possible to do the opposite – instead of tier with steps on the left-hand side, maybe have that integrated with the ramp, so also the stairs are accessible with the ramp? Maybe in this case the ramp gets a bit bigger. So, integrate the two of them: ramp, and seating. Is this something that could be done? I think it would be more successful because at that point the ramp isn't a ramp for specific needs but becomes part of the amphitheater, and viewing, and stepping.

Mr. Carty: We did look at that option. Right now this ADA ramp is at 7.5%. Every 30 feet

it has intermediate landings, which means that it also has railings. So trying to incorporate seating in amid the railings is a challenge.

Mr. Quilici: What about 1 in 20 to better integrate ramp and seating?

Mr. Carty: The main purpose of the ADA ramp was to be able to get students to the track and the soccer field. I think we've created a space that allows anyone with disabilities to sit at the lower elevation, so they can be a part of any teachings that go on there, although obviously it doesn't give access to every row of seating. We've tried to tuck it into the hill as much as possible, to minimize the look and feel of it.

With regard to landscaping on the western façade: we wouldn't typically put plantings along the side of a building. Putting in foundation plantings all along the west side, was a response to the comments from last time, trying to enhance that façade. In addition to that we've got some pretty large trees in that corner to try to screen not only the school from the intersection, but also to screen the western façade from the road.

Mr. Klaus: Are those existing trees?

Mr. Carty: No, they are proposed. We're adding trees on the other side of the parking lot to create a buffer. We recognize that we have a lot squeezed in on this property, so we're doing our best to cultivate the feeling that you're at a school and not on a six-lane highway.

Mr. Quilici: Would you please indicate on the site map where you have all these landscape furnishings? I see some hedges, and some trash cans. It's kind of difficult to tell where they're located. If you could briefly guide us.

Mr. Carty: Generally, I don't think we have locations set yet for trashcans, but we've identified what types of materials we want to use, so we want to give you those. With the long rectangular concrete benches, our thought was that there was a significant skateboard opportunity there, so we've restricted the use of those to the gated courtyards interior to the wings to try to minimize the damage. The other benches, which are the same benches you would see at Broad Rock or at MLK, would be throughout the site, strategically – basketball court, tennis court, soccer field. The spherical bollards would be at the front entrance. We're going to have a flush condition at the front drop-off area. The bike racks we have situated just off to the side of the front entrance.

Mr. Quilici: Below the porch?

Mr. Gossett: They're near the gymnasium, where people would come during the weekend to ride their bikes, near the basketball court. And to further clarify about the benches – there were questions about the outdoor learning spaces. In between each grade house we have two outdoor classrooms. Those benches are located in the secure courtyards and kind of define the outdoor learning space. We'll have different colored paving to define spaces. We'll also have those solid benches to define the space. Between the classes we have six outdoor learning spaces, and then you have the amphitheater – that's a seventh potential outdoor learning space.

Mr. Arias: Did you decide on what mortar you're going to go with? I know we discussed that at the last meeting.

The applicants passed out materials samples to the Committee.

Mr. Arias: It's a lot different than the picture.

Mr. Gossett: Yes. The stone is just like brick. It's stacked.

Mr. Quilici: Could we see also the glass sample? It seems quite dark. What is the light transmittance?

Mr. Gossett: We're using the most reflective glass we can use. And we have a spandrel in some of the locations, so you're not seeing the difference in terms of the spandrel and clear glazing. We want it to all appear the same from the exterior.

Mr. Quilici: It seems quite dark. If you want to enhance the eye on the street, I think you should be able to see inside.

Mr. Harris: The sample always appears darker when you're holding it than when it's installed.

Mr. Quilici: You don't know the light transmittance?
After some discussion it was determined that the light transmittance of the proposed glass was .34.

Mr. Quilici: Is there any chance you could get something lighter and still be the same for heat gain?

Mr. Gossett: The goal is to meet the LEED criteria. If we do go lighter, we will be able to differentiate between the spandrel and the clear glazing, so you'll see dark glass in some areas and clear glass in some areas – so it won't be uniform across the elevation.

Mr. Quilici: At the same time, you'll have a better connection to the outside, and more natural light coming in. I feel it's a little too dark. I know you have to ascertain what is the real heat gain, et cetera. You can also get spandrels that sort of match.

Ms. Almond: Let's ask that they look into it, and see if it can still be LEED.

Mr. Gossett: We can find a lighter tinted glass that will still give us the same numbers.

Mr. Quilici: I'm sure you have different options. My preference for lighter glass is because I believe for a public school it's important to have this visual connection between the inside and outside, for security and for natural light.

Ms. Smith: I think there are a lot of nice details in the outdoor learning environment in terms of the seating and the changes in color and materiality. The one that's next to the sports field is accessible, but it would be nice to make it a more inclusive environment for those who would need the ramp. If the top portion that is accessible were a larger portion which would make it more for general students, rather than having that top section be a place for those that require the ramp. If it was larger it wouldn't be just for those students who are using the ramp. That plus the lack of shade – there are quite a few public schools that have concrete paths outside of the buildings, and they are challenging environments to teach in for more than a few minutes because of the lack of shade.

Mr. Harris: Are you saying to enlarge the upper portion?

Ms. Smith: Right now the three different levels where students would gather are split evenly, and I imagine there would be a teacher on the lower level looking up. If that portion were larger, that's one way for more of the students to be congregating, whether they

require the ramp or not – to be in the same place, rather than having a designated place for those who require the ramp.

Mr. Quilici: That's why I was suggesting to have steps on the other side, and where you have the landing figure out a possibility for a wheelchair to get to this landing in some way, so that people with wheelchairs and other students are integrated better.

Mr. Harris: The bottom of the sheet is the high side.

Ms. Smith: I apologize. I was looking at it from the wrong direction.

Mr. Gustafson: So you go down the ramp towards the track, so they have the whole space down there, and then they just step up a couple steps to the next landing.

Ms. Smith: Could it not still hold true, though, to have the larger portion be the more accessible portion, so it's the place where more students are congregating or gathering?

Mr. Harris: Yes, I think that's possible.

Mr. Arias: Are there trees planned for right there?

Mr. Harris: There are not.

Mr. Carty: I just want to clarify the request. Thirty feet is pretty wide, and to get a row of students across thirty feet is a lot, so we were trying to narrow the width of the space. That way in an outdoor environment a teacher doesn't have to scream and look in both directions. ADA accessibility obviously gives them access to the lower row. We could widen the space in front of the first row of seating to make it a little more viable to stand around. We were trying to not only give ADA access to the lower track area but also have access to the lower row of the amphitheater.

Mr. Arias: Go from 9 to 12 or 16, something like that.

Mr. Carty: But not widen it?

Mr. Arias: No.

Mr. Harris: So deeper, rather than. Okay.

Mr. Arias: Is that 7 foot being dictated by the landings?

Mr. Carty: It is, on both sides. That and the railings. We're going to have breaks in the railings for the stairs. We want to make sure that we have a clear width between the overhangs of the handrails coming down at the bottom of the stairs.

Ms. Almond: One of the recommendations I was going to potentially add if we made a motion was about adding trees on the western elevation like we talked about; providing shade trees on the southern side of that outdoor teaching place and the ramp, and also on the south side of the basketball courts along the walkway - between the athletic field and the building along the walkway next to those asphalt courts.

Mr. Carty: You're talking about along the western side of the basketball courts?

Ms. Almond: The southwestern. The sidewalk side. And the same thing at the outdoor

teaching area staircase – on the left side of that as well. A general comment, which I don't like making: I think there are way too many perennials. My concern with them is maintenance. The schools that have been done in recent years just don't have the staff to maintain those landscape areas, particularly the perennials. They don't have people hand-weeding, they don't cut them back at the right times. It's not something they can handle. Much as it would be beautiful, we need to err on the side of less perennials and ground cover and more trees and shrubs, so that we don't end up with areas which are overgrown with weeds that then get mown down and turned into lawn. That's what has happened at several schools. Until that problem can be solved, the plans need to scale back on that. It's the opposite of what we should be doing, but it's also disheartening to see the investment made in something like that, and then it just can't be maintained.

Mr. Quilici: I understand this is a LEED project. Probably there's no irrigation. Does the RPS have a plan for irrigating the trees and maintaining the landscape for the first two years that the plants are established. Because otherwise, we can plant as many trees as we like but they won't grow.

Mr. Carty: We will make sure in our specs that there's a warranty for the first year.

Mr. Quilici: But the warranty is void, probably, if there is not someone watering the trees.

Mr. Carty: No, that will be in our specs: the watering.

Ms. Almond: Is there someone from RPS here who can speak to that, for special projects? Because one of the UDC requirements is to delve into maintenance, and to provide information on how projects will be maintained. Knowing that there are actually plans in place to irrigate landscape during establishment is important, and something we can ask for.

Mike McIntyre, an AECOM consultant for special capital projects with DPW, introduced himself.

Mr. McIntyre: What we're looking at regarding landscaping is including a one-year maintenance plan with the warranty period. That maintenance plan would be written by a landscape architect, similar to what we're doing with the building itself, which is: taking maintenance away from the owner for a year, and putting it in the hands of the professionals. After that one-year period, it's back on the owner.

Mr. Arias: Are there any systems in place for water retention and capturing the runoff to aid in the irrigation?

Mr. Carty: Not to aid in the irrigation. We do have two storm tank systems that are underground that would detain and slow it down, but nothing to retain and reuse water. The building will have hose bibs along the face, and we do have an extension of the line to have hose bibs down at the lower level for the track. So we do have the ability to water, but we are designing for no irrigation.

Mr. Arias: Is there an opportunity in the future to add rain barrels? There are quite a few downspouts, with a lot of water coming off them – divert it from Richmond's waste management system, use it for irrigation. There's a great opportunity here to make sure that those plants were investing so much money in stay alive after that one-year period.

Mr. Carty: There's no question that we have an opportunity with proposed downspouts. I think that would be a question for RPS. We are not currently proposing any storm water

management of that nature.

Mr. Arias: Are there any conversations about public art? This project falls under the One Percent [for the Arts].

Mr. McIntyre: The school's programs do not fall under the One Percent. Schools were removed from the One Percent for Public Arts in the last school program. So one percent is not being set aside for public arts out of the school's bond program.

Mr. Arias: When did that happen?

Mr. McIntyre: After the last round of school projects, which was six years ago. This particular program is funded by the Meals Tax, and under the ordinance for the Meals Tax, money for school projects cannot be used for anything but the schools themselves.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Committee Member Almond, seconded by Committee Member Klaus, that this regular agenda item be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- The applicant consider a lighter glazing tint for the glass
- To increase the depth of the bottom landing of the outdoor classroom
- The addition of shade trees along the south western side of both the outdoor classroom stairs and the basketball courts
- The addition of crepe myrtles along the west elevation of the building to provide further screening of the facade
- The reduction of perennials in the overall planting plan to address concerns of maintenance

[UDC 2019-02](#) Final location, character, and extent review of new construction of an elementary school, 1745 Catalina Drive

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

Prior to moving this item onto the regular agenda:

Chair Andrea Almond made a motion that item 2019-02 be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. It was subsequently discussed on the regular agenda.

Mr. Quilici: Are we allowed to ask any questions on this consent agenda?

Ms. Almond: Yes. If it starts to get too involved, then we just pull it off [the consent agenda].

Ms. Almond: Are there any members of the public who would like to comment, before we vote on the items on the consent agenda?

There was no public comment on the consent agenda.

This item was then moved onto the regular agenda:

Mr. Son: The Building One Richmond Program currently includes a five-year, \$150 million

plus program focused on the new construction of public elementary, middle and high schools in the city. The school Board of the City of Richmond has updated its 2002 Facilities Master Plan, and the update identifies ESH Greene Elementary School as a prioritized "Phase 1" project. The Owner has identified \$150 million in funding for those projects identified in the updated 2002 Facilities Master Plan as "Phase 1" projects. The design and construction of these projects is a collaborative effort between the City of Richmond, which is the owner of the schools, and the School Board, which will operate the schools once they open.

E.S.H. Greene Elementary School was named for Edwin Stonewall Hunter Greene, a former superintendent of schools for Chesterfield County and the City of Colonial Heights. The school was built in 1954. In 1970, the city of Richmond annexed the area including E.S.H. Greene School from Chesterfield County and the school then became a part of the Richmond Public School System. E.S.H. Greene School is located at 1745 Catalina Drive on the constantly growing and culturally changing south side of Richmond, Virginia. It has a main building which houses grades K-2 and 2 modular buildings, with an additional cafeteria, to house grades 3-5.

During the construction of the new ESH Greene Elementary School, the existing elementary school and modular buildings must remain operational. This constraint gives the applicant only one area of the property to build the new school, behind the existing building. The new ESH Greene Elementary School will be an approximately 115,000-square-foot facility with a capacity for approximately 1,000 students. The building will be construction type IIB and fully sprinklered. It will have CMY bearing walls with brick veneer and a standing seam metal roof. Sustainability is a key component to this project. The project will achieve a minimum LEED Silver Certification. The site plan will allow for complete separation of car and bus traffic. It will provide parking for staff and visitors as well as a drop-off lane for parents that choose to drive their children to school. There will be playground areas behind the school that will be fenced for safety purposes. There will also be playground and athletic field areas at the front of the site that will be used by the school during the day and by the community after school hours. Construction is scheduled to begin in the early spring of 2019. Occupation of the new ESH Greene Elementary School is planned for the fall of 2020, with the demolition of the existing school planned for fall of 2020 and potentially into the spring of 2021. ESH Greene Elementary School is bordered by residential properties. The surrounding streets are Catalina Drive, Cranford Avenue, Kinsley Avenue, and Broad Rock Boulevard. It is located east of the intersection of Hull Street Road and Warwick Road, and northeast of the Broad Rock Sports Complex.

The project involves the construction of a new elementary school to accommodate 1,000 students. The proposed building will replace an existing school that has been expanded with two modular units that house additional classrooms and an additional cafeteria. Richmond Public Schools (RPS) selected four school design prototypes and presented them to the School board and community. The intention of the project is to reduce the design timeline in order to have the new school operational by 2020. Due to existing physical constraints, the existing school will remain open as the new school is under construction directly behind.

Staff is supportive of the overall design of the school building, which is required to meet LEED Silver. Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant final location, character and extent approval of this project.

Ms. Almond: I have a question about the bike racks. Is this a school where a lot of children ride their bikes to school?

Mr. Greg Nelson, Project Engineer with Timmons Group, introduced himself.

Mr. Nelson: We proposed bike racks as per LEED Silver requirements, as shown on the plans. I'm not sure how many of the student population will bike to this facility.

Ms. Almond: I know that at some of our other elementary schools there are more bikes than racks, and everyone locks up to fences and all over the place.

Mr. McIntyre: The school population of this building is slated to be 1000, but the existing school doesn't have anywhere near that population. This school is being designed for 1000 due to future redistricting and closure of some schools. RPS [Richmond Public Schools] does not know what the makeup of that school population will be: how many of them will be bused; some may be walkers; or, parent drop-off. We could probably add more bike racks, but at this point we don't know whether they would actually be utilized. But it's something that we could work with RPS on as the project moves forward, for the duration of the project, and possibly add more bike racks as the student population is better understood.

Ms. Almond: If it's something you anticipate them having a need for, it would be nice to get it into the project, rather than adding it later.

Mr. McIntyre: RPS is still working on their redistricting. Some effort may move forward before the end of this project so the population would be better understood, but until that point it could just be throwing bike racks at an issue that doesn't exist. But if it does become an issue, we will do that. We're following a specific process that is much easier to add as the project moves forward than it is under the normal design-build-bill process because it's a locked-in, fixed price. This gives us some flexibility and the projects do have some internal, built-in contingency to handle some of those kinds of things – to add bike rack, or to add benches, because the population does come quickly.

Mr. Quilici: Would it be possible to go through the changes that were done, since the previous presentation?

Dan Wiggins of RRMM Architects introduced himself.

Mr. Wiggins: As with the middle school, a lot of those [changes] were asking for additional information, which we put in the presentation and your packets, mainly the site plan, building plans, site furnishings lighting.

Mr. Nelson: From a site planning perspective, the key things were we added some enhanced connectivity between the bus loop, the wing heading to the west, the playground area, and the main parking lot.

Mr. Klaus: Can you go into more detail on that?

Mr. Nelson: Hearing your feedback, we attempted to provide some direct connectivity both from the bus loop to the main parking area and subsequently out to Catalina Drive, and also provide better connectivity for all students and public from the building to those facilities: the playground, the paved play area, the basketball court, and the main multi-purpose field. I've also added some landscaping in those areas, and benches.

Mr. Klaus: Was that done just with the pathways.

Mr. Nelson: In essence, yes. Before, you had to backtrack to get to the bus loop.

Ms. Almond: I know this playground is just the template shape, but is there a way to make it look like it's not a weird shape within another weird shape? Maybe the edging could line up with the edge of hardscape?

Mr. Nelson: We can evaluate that.

Ms. Almond: It seems weird that on the left side the edging follows the hardscape, but then on the right there's an odd gap of grass that's not responding to your layout.

Mr. Arias: I could see that expanding all the way out and just having no grass there.

Ms. Almond: Yes, just have it be the playground material. The other one is just floating in space, so that seems like less of a concern, but right at the front it seems a little odd.

Mr. Nelson: The other site comment was to add some shade trees adjacent to the playground and the paved play areas where feasible, and we've done that – primarily on the southern side where we expect the sun path to follow. Those are the primary site comments. We did also add the lighting plan.

Ms. Almond: The area labeled "stormwater management" – not the large one, but the linear one next to the bus loop – what's the nature of that? Because I notice on the landscape plan it has River Birch as planted in it.

Mr. Nelson: It's intended to be a small bio-retention facility.

Ms. Almond: Mulched? Or planted?

Mr. Nelson: It's going to be grass.

Ms. Almond: And how deep is it?

Mr. Nelson: From the bus loop it's only two feet.

Ms. Almond: And those trees can be planted dead center, like they're shown? They're not in contact with the drain.

Mr. Nelson: Yes.

Mr. Quilici: Are the trees planted next to the playground tall trees?

Mr. Nelson: Yes, they are large shade trees.

Mr. Arias: Could you tell us the mounting height of these wall sconces?

Mr. Wiggins: They should be about ten feet.

Mr. Arias: This is pretty close to the neighborhood and there are houses that flank all sides of it. In my neighborhood the lights on the school just light up the neighborhood – those LEDs go right in the first floor.

Mr. Wiggins: The intent is not to throw light off the property and to meet code-required egress lighting. On the sighting plan, anything that is provided for the parking faces in.

Ms. Almond: So this photometric plan incorporates the sconces?

Mr. Wiggins: Yes.

Mr. Quilici: Is the glazing the same as for the other school we are reviewing?

Mr. Wiggins: Roughly the same. There is a different sample that does have some of the values. We can put the tinting surface to be the third surface which will be interior glass. If the concern is that it looks dark from the exterior.

Mr. Quilici: There's that, but also the amount of light that comes into the building. I would like it to be a little bit brighter. I'm guessing that you will also have shades in the southern exposure, but in general my preference would be for a lighter glass.

Mr. Wiggins: We can certainly look at that.

Mr. Quilici: So, there are no trees along Catalina Drive – is there any reason why?

Mr. Nelson: There are remaining trees that are quite large – I believe they're willow oaks.

Mr. Quilici: Is there any plan to add more canopies along the street?

Mr. Nelson: No intent at this point in time – just to meet zoning requirements, essentially.

There was no public comment.

This item was moved from the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Committee Member Almond, seconded by Committee Member Smith, that this regular agenda item be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

- The applicant consider a lighter glazing tint for the glass**
- The applicant work with RPS to anticipate the needs for bike racks and incorporate them into the project**
- The applicant modify the shape of the front playground edging to better fit within its hardscape boundaries**

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Son: Staff is currently processing comments and waiting to hear back from Committee members regarding updates. So, if you have not submitted your comments, please do so ASAP. We've also enlisted the Urban Forestry team to submit comments. The Urban Forestry Committee was a thing but now is not a thing, so that's a way to have street trees and shrubs as part of the UDC guidelines.

These updates, once I have all of them, will be shared with UDC and other City departments for comment, once a draft is developed so they have something to review.

Last fall there was a lot of turnover, so we never had a chance to discuss developing resolutions for Robert Smith and Giles Harnsberger, so I will send an email out with some language. If you have comments and suggestions for any positive resolutions for either of them, please send them my way.

Ms. Smith: I thought that I was filling the vacancy created by Robert Smith's leaving?

Mr. Son: You are. Usually what happens when someone resigns or leaves is we have a resolution to thank them for their service. It's fairly lighthearted.

Mr. Klaus: We still have two spots to fill, right?

Mr. Son: Correct. One is the citizen-at-large, which was Giles' position. The other is the Static Arts position. We had an applicant for either one of these positions; however, we've also had a lot of turnover at the Clerk's office, so Alexander Rawls is no longer there. He was the person I was working with on that, so I have to get the new person, Pamela Nichols, up to speed.

Mr. Quilici: Regarding the consent agenda and how it works. I understand it's something that you review and you think you know that it meets all the requirements, but this cuts off almost any question or clarification that we would want to have. Is there a way to limit the consent agenda? I don't know why we have items that are on consent agenda and items that are not, unless it's kind of a formality. I would still be inclined to have a quick discussion or review of all the projects that are coming before the Committee. This is a general question for everyone.

Mr. Klaus: We always have the opportunity to pull them off the consent agenda.

Mr. Quilici: Sometimes with a couple clarifications I understand better what the project is. That opportunity to ask for clarification could also entail some comments, an opportunity to better understand some things we haven't understood just from the paperwork of the case.

Mr. Son: Usually the consent agenda is for projects of a non-controversial matter. You all have the option, when I disseminate the agenda on the Friday before this meeting, to review all the projects. Everything that I have gotten at that point is up for review to the public. So if any of you should have any questions at that point through the weekend or even on Monday, it would be ideal to ask, "is this something that we can move on to the regular agenda, or is this aspect something that the applicant has already addressed?" Then maybe we can keep it on the consent agenda, because maybe there's nothing to discuss, as they've already met the requirements that we had at the previous meeting. The regular agenda is usually reserved for things that I know need further clarification. It really comes down to you all emailing or coordinating with me at least two days before this meeting so I understand that there is something I need to ask the applicant to then address. In trying to coordinate all these different projects and know to certain levels of details, I'm not going to be able to catch something that you may see or have a question about. So it's really up to you, the earlier the better, so we can have that conversation and determine what gets to stay on the consent agenda and what gets placed on the regular agenda.

Mr. Quilici asked if it would be possible to have a brief presentation of consent agenda items at the meeting, at which point they could then be moved to the consent agenda.

Ms. Smith: I like the system that we have because it allows us, with certain things like the 17th Street Market, where we already know that we have the information we need, it limits that time so things can be more efficient in the meeting. Us having the few days on the week before to go through everything is the way that it's been designed, so we can bring up things that we need. Is what you're saying that you feel like sometimes it would be worth having a presentation?

Mr. Quilici: Yes. For 17th Street Market, I had a couple questions. For example, I could not see where the furniture objects were. Is it worth it to move to the regular agenda for this question, or is it something I can ask?

Mr. Son: The way my predecessor ran the UDC was: we get the submission, say for this meeting on January 10th. The applicants have to submit an application by December 13th. By that date I should have the full application. I took it upon myself to post those plans on that Friday. So between that point and when I create the agenda, I would hope that you all would air your concerns to me, because in that time I'm also coordinating with DPU and DPW, the applicant, other concerned citizens, to get all these questions and concerns aired out, across multiple projects. If there is something that you see, the onus would be more on Committee members to review the applications as soon as I put them online or send that email out. That way we can see what questions or concerns you have may have a simple answer, or whether it may be a more intense discussion. I feel that it would be up to the Committee to review the plans earlier rather than before this meeting. That way we can keep things on the consent agenda and keep the time here to discuss more pressing items.

Mr. Arias: I would be concerned that the meetings would go really long. As an example, 17th St. Marketplace has been before the UDC several times now. I'd be afraid that if we started looking at it, we'd open up a can of worms and going back into a lot of decisions.

Ms. Almond: That's the point I was going to make. Everyone should feel comfortable pulling something off the consent agenda, but revisiting something that has already been decided causes problems. Sometimes someone isn't here when something comes here for conceptual review, and then it goes on consent, there might be a lot of things that you'd want to add, but can't.

Mr. Klaus: What you're saying is that everything has been conceptually reviewed, or seen in some form? Maybe something shouldn't go on consent that hasn't in some form been looked at. My assumption is, I haven't seen the market, but that's because I haven't been on the Committee long enough, and that's why I'm letting it go. I know that that's what we do in CAR (the Commission of Architectural Review) – you make the assumption that it's been reviewed. To pull it off just because you want to hear isn't really fair to the applicant.

Mr. Son: In that case, get with me. Usually in our staff reports we have that section on the UDC history. If you need to see the files or need to be directed to them, let me know and we can talk about it. We are usually pressed for time, and then having to get the reports ready for Planning Commission. That's what the applicants come here dreading: they know they have to go through UDC and then through Planning Commission or DPW or whatever it is, so I'm really trying to increase the efficiency, time-wise, as much as I can. When I came on board, I tried to, once I got all the applications, put them all online, because that's public information. Before, you wouldn't see the project or the plan until the Friday before this meeting. I'm trying to give you all as much time as possible to review. It was a Brian Greene suggestion, I think, to have that. If there's anything that I can do to clarify previous projects, just reach out to me.

Mr. Klaus: I assume Brenner Pass has never been seen conceptually. How do we feel about that being put directly to consent, without any review?

Mr. Arias: I think there are some decisions that we have faith in staff looking at them and doing triage.

Ms. Almond: Especially things like encroachments, where we're just making recommendations to public works vs. planning commission

Mr. Son: And that was a specific thing, because I got comments from internal staff yesterday with the intent that they would have submitted them earlier. That gave me a red flag to say "this happened, if you want to consider this." There are other things that I don't consider that you all would consider, and vice versa, because you all have different backgrounds.

Mr. Klaus: I'm really new, so I don't even know which ones are going to Planning and which ones are going elsewhere.

Ms. Almond: Most of them are going to Planning. Sometimes we're asked to make a recommendation to Department of Public Works for something like these encroachments. And he doesn't even have to do what we say, it's just suggesting something.

Mr. Son: No one has to do what we say, because we're an advisory commission.

Mr. Klaus: Maybe if it could be clearer on the staff report, "this is something we're reviewing for DPW."

Mr. Son: We do say that under Finding of Facts and the scope of review. That is where we'll either reference section 1707 or we'll say "UDC is sometimes asked to make recommendations to the Department of Public Works." It does get confusing when you have two applications for the same location, and one of them is for an encroachment and one is not.

Mr. Arias left the meeting at this point.

Mr. Quilici: So you're sending out the plans on Friday? When does the agenda come out?

Mr. Son: The agenda, with the staff reports, came out last Friday. I disseminate the plans that are submitted to me, that I'm about to review, two weeks ago – that Friday. I send out an email saying is a public notice, stating that you can go on Legistar and find the plan. I may take it upon myself to share links to individual documents, that might be a little easier. Then you have two weeks – technically three weeks – to review them. But I usually ask for one week because I'm developing the staff report and I like to have all the feedback in.

Mr. Quilici: If you could have the links when you send that...

Mr. Son: The one general link is in the email, but I'll do the specific links to the projects.

Mr. Quilici: Usually when I have questions I send them to Josh. Is that something we want to share?

Mr. Son: If we email two or more people in the same email, that is considered a public meeting, so that would need to be distributed widely. That's why, whenever I email you all, it's usually BCC. That way you come back to me. If it's something you want me to share I can then BCC back to the Committee.

Ms. Almond: So, that's the reason. Otherwise, we could have a thorough email discussion before the meetings. But we can't.

Mr. Quilici: So we'll send the comments to you. How then do we decide if these comments are worth changing the agenda? Is it something that you [Mr. Son] will decide at that point?

Mr. Son: If it seems like the applicant doesn't have an appropriate answer, or something that warrants further discussion or that we can't get a straightforward answer to, or that I email back to you and you're not satisfied, then that's something that I'll consider. If it's asking about the height of a planting bed and the applicant says it's going to be one and a half feet, I would still say that that's okay, we can move forward to the consent agenda. If you have an issue with it, saying, "at two feet it's a public harm, I have serious reservations about it," then I would probably put that on the regular agenda.

Mr. Quilici: But once you issue the agenda, we can still change it.

Mr. Son: You can still change it. I would prefer to have it at least two days before so I can make the changes, because everything that you see has been in its place since at least Friday. In order to go in and change, that alters everything else. It would be appreciated if it was done earlier.

Ms. Smith: When we have the ADA that provides guidance for certain things. Then we have a situation like today with the school – a conversation about accessibility and inclusivity. There's not really code or guidelines that really get into what inclusivity is. As a UDC member, we can offer comment on something like that, but I didn't see anything in our guidelines that really goes into that. Is that true?

Ms. Almond: I don't think so. It just references ADA.

Mr. Son: It's a fine line between UDC guidelines and the specific technical details because we are purely supposed to be reviewing for location, character, and extent. But what you're not seeing is all these applications are in tandem going through the internal system downstairs which will consist of DPU, DPW, which is where Jakob Helmboldt works. DPW would review these for accessibility issues. When they do that, we make a recommendation that is based on urban design, whereas Jake may be making it based on width or size or clearance, which then is difficult for the applicant. We will sometimes review things out of the scope of what we should be reviewing. That's something that we as a committee need to be more aware of. However, we could put a stipulation that says, "DPW focuses on this one aspect – clearance, or accessibility. That's something that we can always put in the conditions.

Ms. Smith: There's a quality of experience that is not really covered in ADA, that makes urban environments successful. If we are looking at success long-term, it's not enough to say "in the plan it works," but we look at real conditions. I do want to respect that if someone comes to the UDC to present, that we do stay within our scope. Yet, there's this opportunity to improve the urban landscape.

Ms. Almond: What's frustrating about these prototype schools, as an example, is they're coming to us with a schedule and a deadline and a budget, and they came for conceptual review and had a stair and a ramp down to that athletic field. One of our comments was about adding better outdoor learning spaces or gathering spaces. They tacked one on to the staircase instead of designing a well-thought-out feature to get down the hill and incorporate the ramp and the seating. But now they're here for final and they did a thing we asked, and aside from trying to redesign it to make it that thing we want it to be, I don't know what else to do other than what we did: make slight improvements.

Ms. Smith: I was uncomfortable with where it was left. I don't know if the change that was recommended is going to address what I was actually getting at. But what I was trying to create a discussion about seemed beyond the scope of the UDC.

Mr. Son: We're not supposed to redesign what they are applying for. That's why we have to try to stay within our lane. When I make public the plans, that is the time when you would contact me and then I would contact the applicant. Or, I could easily put you all together, which is fine as long as it's just one UDC member and the applicant. The earlier the better – we can see if they have a way to make improvements.

Ms. Almond: In conceptual design, if we had said, "turn that ramp and that stair into an amphitheater/classroom," they would have brought back something closer to what we were hoping. But you can't always anticipate what you should be asking for.

Ms. Smith: There's no regulation that states that you have to have a certain amount of shaded area in the outdoor learning areas.

Mr. Son: In the updates, that's something we can incorporate.

Mr. Quilici: Can we incorporate something about inclusivity in the updates? I don't know if there is a document that we could reference that would be helpful.

Ms. Smith: I emailed Josh and asked, and I'd like to look into this: Are there any documents that we could reference that would help to bolster the logic, our ground to request to have that in the guidelines.

Mr. Klaus: The other real hole that you brought up, and I don't know if it could be in our guidelines, is water retention and using it for irrigation. If stormwater management is so important to the city, why are they not requiring more robust stormwater management plans for these huge new schools that they're building?

Ms. Smith: Do we revise our guidelines every year?

Mr. Son: No. The last time it was done was in 2006.

Ms. Smith: We'll send suggestions to you; and then, will we be having a meeting to discuss this?

Mr. Son: Yes. Once I get everyone's comments, I will try to put a draft together. With Richmond 300 and other things that I have to do as a planner here, it's a slow process, but the more ahead I can get, the more I can do this in tandem with everything else. We're not really on a deadline, but as soon as you can.

Ms. Almond: I would like us to have a deadline, and a real schedule.

Mr. Son: Okay, I can send an email with a deadline. I'm just waiting for the full committee.

Ms. Almond: At some point we have to call it and move ahead without full committee if people aren't giving you comments.

Mr. Son: It was suggested that we do a workshop day. Mark Olinger would come and discuss, for example, streetlights, or outdoor dining accoutrements and his vision for that for the city. Then I would take that and put it into a document, and then it would come back for review. He's talking about getting a consultant for the design of the layout of the

guidelines. I will shoot an email out to get comments back by the end of this month.

Ms. Smith: Would it be worth inviting Jake [Jakob Helmboldt, bike path expert with DPW] here, to talk with us as a committee? I don't want to add if we don't feel it's valuable.

Mr. Son: That's something we could easily place in "other business."

Ms. Smith: Has he already come in to talk to the Committee before I joined?

Mr. Son: No.

Ms. Almond: It might be better to have one-on-one conversations with him, if you want to dive into those issues.

Mr. Son: Just let me know and I can give him a buzz.

Ms. Smith: When we say "staff has approved," how many people are part of that?

Mr. Son: It depends on the project. Usually, it's myself, Alex [Dandridge] and other Planning and Preservation staff. If it's something like historical preservation or close to it, I'll ask Kim [Chen]'s help; if it's a land use issue I might get help from Leigh Kelley or Matt Ebinger. I'll get Doug Mawby and Jake Helmboldt to talk about encroachments. So, when I say "staff" it's usually myself typing out comments from other staff within Planning and Preservation that might be able to speak on it.

Ms. Almond: I had conversations with folks who thought it might be easier to understand projects that are coming before Planning Commission and UDC if in addition to the agenda which lists everybody by address, they were actually on a map so that you could see, "oh, there are five projects over here. I need to pay attention to that meeting." Otherwise you have to look at each one individually and google the address.

Mr. Son: You're saying you would want something more expanded?

Ms. Almond: I think a summary map of, for example, our January agenda projects. Because it's a lot of work to go through and look up each one.

Mr. Son: It takes time to develop a map and then when something gets withdrawn, staff would have to go back and delete the dot – or leave it there, and that could prove confusing for some folks. That's why we keep it individualized. The map sheet here does say what council district and gives a proposal of where it is. But, if it's something online that we could do, that might be faster to manipulate when things change.

Ms. Almond: Is there some way to tag it into the GIS?

Mr. Son: That would be having one of our GIS people take time off from what they're doing, but it's something I can look into. Are you saying to do that once a month?

Ms. Almond: I think it's something that would accompany the agenda for the meetings. If I'm a member of the public, I'm not seeing the maps in all of the individual submittals. If there was a map that went with this that told what districts they were in, that would make it a lot easier. I don't know if it needs to be detailed and updated – it goes with this, and if it becomes outdated you delete it.

Mr. Son: So that would just be on the agenda that I send out on Friday? I can understand

that. Then if something were to be withdrawn, too bad, but it would be reflected in the agenda. It could be easily done, now that I think of it that way.

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 12:18 PM.

Adjournment