



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
2nd Floor of City Hall
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com

Meeting Minutes - Draft Urban Design Committee

Thursday, October 4, 2018

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

- Present** -- 5 - * Jill Nolt, * Andrea Quilici, * Andrew P. Gould, * James W. Klaus and * Chair Andrea Almond
- Excused** -- 3 - * Chris Arias, * David Johannas and * Emily Smith
- Vacant** -- 1 - * Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger

Approval of Minutes

1. [UDC MIN 2018-09](#) Minutes of the regular meeting on September 6, 2018

Attachments: [DRAFT UDC MIN 2018-09](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that these Minutes be approved. Committee Member Quilici seconded, the motion carried by the following vote:

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

Secretary's Report

Mr. Son announced the approval of banners for the International Code Council to be located on 5th Street between Leigh and Marshall Streets. He stated that the banners will be on display from October 18, 2018 through October 30, 2018.

Mr. Son added that Monroe Park is now open to the public, with the direct feedback on Monroe Park being positive. Mr. Klaus suggested that there is still a lot to be done in Monroe Park, noting missing benches. Ms. Almond stated that additional benches and trash cans are projected to be in the park.

Mr. Son further added that Ms. Harnsberger, who held the Citizen-at-Large position, has resigned from the committee, creating a second vacancy on the committee. Ms. Almond concluded that the committee could wait on a new Vice-Chair at the next committee meeting.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

CONSENT AGENDA

2. [UDC 2018-39](#) Final review of encroachments and streetscape improvements for the Sauer Center, 2000 W. Marshall Street and 840 Hermitage Road

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

A motion was made by Ms. Nolt, seconded by Mr. Quilici, that the consent agenda item be recommended for approval to the Director of Public Works as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

3. [UDC 2018-37](#) Conceptual location, character, and extent review of Southside Community Center building addition, 6255 Old Warwick Road

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

Joshua Son: The City of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities envision the Southside Community Center as a regional gathering place for community and recreational activities. The project will provide interactive, lively spaces for community wellness and recreation activities. The building program includes an Auxiliary Gymnasium, Boxing Studio, community interaction spaces, video and sound studios, a culinary teaching kitchen, and support administration spaces. The project will feature a unique Indoor Playground encouraging active-play with interactive, educational, and technological attributes. The mezzanine provides flexible programming and wheelchair accessibility to the second-floor spaces that are proposed for renovation in the existing Gymnasium structure.

The first meeting with the community was held on November 19, 2015 and consisted of a short presentation of various program elements, both interior and exterior. The public comment period lasted over an hour, indicating how passionate this community is about their parks and recreation. All age groups were represented and a common theme of 'giving the children a place to go' was expressed again and again.

On February 18, 2016, the design team held a second community meeting to present the proposed master plan. Each element of the plan, including interior programming, was isolated and described. Feedback was again obtained through public comment and written response.

Based on input received during the community meetings and coordination with Parks and Recreation, a Master Plan was finalized and presented to UDC for Conceptual Review in May of 2016.

Subsequently, two major decisions were made by the Parks/Recreation and Capital Projects division that caused the need for the master plan to be updated.

1.) All of the existing buildings, except the existing Gymnasium structure and accessory building to the west, are in disrepair and costing a great deal of money to maintain in their current condition. The need to demolish these structures was immediate; demolition design documents are forthcoming this fall.

2.) The expense of the pool and related facilities are, also, difficult to justify and the project budget will no longer support this program element. The Master Plan was revised, submitted for conceptual review and approved, with conditions, this past June. This is the Final Master Plan.

Staff finds the project to be well-considered in regards to design and aesthetic. The use of materials and color add to the interest and nature of this facility as a gathering place for the community. Providing visibility into the internal programming of the building enhances security. Staff further finds that the provision of natural light is conducive to the mental and physical health of the users of the space.

Thus, Staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval as submitted, with the following conditions:

- That the final plan provide a planting plan and schedule, with special consideration given to external areas of the building that may have large expanses of wall such as the auxiliary multipurpose court, utility pump room, etc.
- That the final plan provide a lighting plan, considering the use of LED with a 3000k correlated color temperature or less.

Mr. Quilici: Is there any work that is going to be done at the gym, the exterior, or in general?

Mr. Son: Not that I reviewed.

Jennifer Weatherford, Worley and Associates (Applicant's Team): I'm the architect working on the project. To answer your question, the plan is to put a fresh coat of paint on the existing building and to replace windows that are in need of replacement. There are some masonry repairs that will come associated with that, but nothing that's really considered a structural item—it's more making sure that there aren't any holes or anything in the building for rodents or whatnot to get into.

Mr. Quilici: Is the roof going to be repaired?

Ms. Weatherford: The roof has been replaced.

Dexter Goode: That was the first thing we did. Before we did any renovations interior-wise, the roof was the very first thing that was done. That was about four years ago.

Ms. Nolt: Do you have a north elevation of the project where the addition meets the gym on the soccer field side?

Ms. Weatherford: The plan is to have a brick façade from the rear of the multi-purpose court, so it will tie into the brick piers that are on the existing building.

Ms. Nolt: Painted brick?

Ms. Weatherford: No. No.

Mr. Quilici: Since we are talking about materials, can we go to the elevation and describe the materials that are there?

Ms. Weatherford: Sure. From left to right, what you see in the far left would be the existing building. We are showing those piers painted out at this point just to be one solid color. We would like to de-accentuate the existing building, going with a neutral color that kind-of works with some of the other materials—but not trying to match anything exactly. The other use of materials that we have considered are metal panels, both right there are grey-toned, the dark blue-toned, and the yellow as an accent color. The wood look would, also, be metal panel, but we want to bring some warmth into the project, especially considering that it's a Park and Rec building. The Auxiliary Gym would be masonry construction with brick veneer. The idea would be that we would find a brick for the new, and whatever we would paint for the existing would sort-of match that.

Ms. Almond: It might be nice to consider having some actual covered space near those entrances and exits. I feel like a lot of times, at the community center, kids are getting picked up and dropped off and waiting when there is inclement weather.

Mr. Quilici: It's a good idea. I was noticing that in the plaza, there might be a possibility of having a tree that would help a little bit to create some canopy. Looking at the Master Plan, I understand that these two dash lines are the easement, and right there where the seven is... Is there a possibility there for some shading for summertime and putting some benches for kids to be picked up?

Ms. Weatherford: Unfortunately, in that specific location, I don't think so. That is where one of the major power poles are, and there is a 25 foot radius around the pole itself that we can't plant anything in. In other areas around the building in that easement, we can plant trees that will not grow beyond ten feet. I believe that's the maximum based on the power lines.

Mr. Quilici: Talking about trees, where the playground is, is there any canopy there or possibility of having any shading area? There doesn't seem to be trees in that location.

Ms. Weatherford: Yes. I think that is a possibility. In the development of that playground, we will consider it for sure.

Mr. Quilici: I have a comment on the interior. I like very much the design. I didn't see any visual connection from the mezzanine to the activities room, like, for example, the existing gym. Is there any chance to get some visual connection?

Ms. Weatherford: Yes. On the first floor, there is some graphic representation of where there could be some glazing into those spaces. I would like that glazing to be 12 or 15 feet tall so that you can catch a glimpse from that mezzanine level into those spaces.

Ms. Almond: Is there funding to continue moving forward?

Mr. Goode: Funding is multi-year. We are hoping that we will get sufficient funding so that we can really get going with the actual construction piece. Right now, we are moving forward with the demolition. We've got sufficient funding to do the demolition that was previously discussed that Josh mentioned. As far as the surrounding buildings and the existing tie-in to the existing gym—they are in horrible shape. We do some civil work as well, while we are doing that, with some funding for that, as well. To the extent of the funding, we are going to try to utilize as much as possible.

Ms. Almond: Is there anyone from the public who would like to speak to this project?

There was no public comment.

Commission Discussion:

Ms. Nolt: I think that I, generally, like the design on the elevations that I see. Somehow, I would love to see that north elevation, specifically because it opens right into the lobby social mezzanine area and is connecting to the soccer field. So, I am interested to know what that elevation looks like, how the composition was working with the existing gymnasium—I don't want to hold up the process. Seeing the other elevations, I'm sure that you've solved it well, but I would, somehow, like to see that as the budget moves forward.

Mr. Quilici: Maybe, it could be as easy—even if there's not a canopy there, we could assess the door to create a little canopy there.

Ms. Nolt: It's north-facing, so you are not going to get a lot of hot sun there. It's a tricky façade. You don't have the layering like you have on the south façade of the addition. Otherwise, I'm supportive of the project. It looks good. If the project comes back to us again, bring that elevation with you so we can take a closer look at that.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that this item be approved with the Staff conditions.

Staff conditions were:

-That the final plan provide a planting plan and schedule, with special consideration given to external areas of the building that may have large expanses of wall such as the auxiliary multipurpose court, utility pump room, etc.

-That the final plan provide a lighting plan, considering the use of LED with a 3000k correlated color temperature or less

Committee Member Klaus seconded the motion and it carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 5 - Jill Nolt, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Chris Arias, David Johannas and Emily Smith

4. [UDC 2018-38](#) Final review of electronic signage encroachments at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, 5th and E. Broad Streets, 3rd and E. Marshall Streets

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

Mr. Son: The installation and operation of the EMCs will be for the purpose of educating the public about events that will be taking place at the facility. It is customary for convention centers to have one or more EMC's to help inform the public about upcoming events at the facility. EMC's were contemplated as part of the original build out of the GRCC but were removed from the original project due to value engineering to reduce overall cost to build the facility.

The proposal calls for the installation and operation of three full color EMCs with identical dimensions of 75.5" (H) x 126" (W). Each EMC is to be placed 144" above grade with all power and communication equipment placed inside the buildings on which they are

mounted. It is proposed that the EMCs will change messages every eight seconds (or less often as needed). The units will not scroll data or show animation. All transitions between messages will be full screen changes. All proposed EMCs will be controlled by GRCC staff and will display content-related to GRCC functions.

This plan for electronic signage encroachments around the Greater Richmond Convention Center is planned to provide information to passersby and users of the convention center. There is not much language regarding the installation of electronic message centers (EMCs) in the Urban Design Guidelines; however, staff believes that EMCs have the ability to provide high-quality visuals that may enhance the vibrancy of a community when executed appropriately.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Director of Public Works grant approval with the following conditions:

- That the proposed sign for 3rd and E. Marshall Streets be moved to 5th and Marshall Streets to reduce negative impacts on abutting historical residential neighborhoods
- That the proposed signs are adjusted for appropriate brightness
- That the proposed signs utilize the highest resolution possible to ensure high-quality visuals
- That the proposed signs do not change messages, produce animations, or flash any more than once every five seconds, per the zoning ordinance

Bob Moore, applicant: I'm president and owner of Holiday Signs in Chester. I've done a lot of the signs here in Richmond, and I am privileged to work with the Greater Richmond Convention Center on their electronic message center project.

Taking the staff recommendations from the last point up, those are the easy ones to address. The last recommendation that it not change more than once every five seconds, per the zoning ordinance--that's not a problem. In fact, it will probably be more along the lines of every 10 or 12 seconds. The messaging does not require anything nearly that quick. Be assured that the electronic message center controls and regulates on a consistent basis. The proposed signs utilize the highest resolution. These are 10 millimeter resolution, the leading edge resolution, and they are perfectly appropriate for this application. The viewing distance of 30 feet or greater is appropriate with these. At thirty feet and greater, the images don't pixelate anymore. People, by the time they get within 30 feet, are looking for their next visual target. These are perfectly appropriate for this application.

Proposed signs are adjusted for appropriate brightness. This is a part of our software that regulates the brightness both by time of day and by weather, actually. So, our software monitors the zip code of the installation, and we know obviously what time it should be in that zip code. We have a dimming factor set in there that ties by time of day. We, also, monitor for weather, so if it's overcast during the day, your sign doesn't need to be as bright when it's dark. So, even if it's overcast or if it's a rainy day, we will get it down so that it doesn't jump out and be intrusive. Those three points are not a problem.

We are here, primarily, to talk about the staff recommendation to move the message center from 3rd and Marshall over to 5th and Marshall. The thing with digital and electronic messaging is that it is all about distances. If we wanted to attract somebody that was as far away as possible, we would have to have a super large message center, and we would have it very bright so that they could see it. Well, the fact is that these message centers are relatively small and really are targeted for a much closer audience--somebody that is coming up roughly on the other side of the street. So, there's no reason to have these any brighter than to capture those folk's interest in the period of

time that they are crossing the street, getting to about that 50 foot mark. Then, within the 50 foot mark, they're actually starting to look for their next visual target.

So, I've shaded comparable viewing differences if anybody wanted to go test how bright these things will be. LED message centers are directional light sources. They don't broadcast 360 degrees. They shine out, and they do go up and out to the sides a little bit. They are not lighting up the whole area. Further, light is governed by the inverse squared law, so if you are twice as far away, it's one quarter as bright. What that is saying is that if you are at 200 feet, each of these circles is a 50 foot increment to the preceding circle. So, here I am at 50 foot; if I go out to 200 feet, that is four times the distance. It's going to be 1/16th as bright. So, at a 100 foot radius, it's one quarter as bright. So, the brightness and intensity dies down pretty quickly. We're focusing our attention on these people in this zone. If you are familiar with the geometry of this area, the corner of the GRCC blocks light from going down here. There is a reason why we wouldn't want to turn it up, because it's just wasting electricity.

Continuing on to give context on this, Dominion Energy Center is close by and has a much larger marquis that has residential and business in a much closer proximity to it.

Here's the crux of the matter—the reason why the client wants it where it's located. Message centers are about advertising, and advertising is about eyeballs. Eyeballs, in this instance, are in the form of cars. For the City of Richmond, traffic engineering measures the traffic along these streets. We have the 3rd and 5th street. 3rd street is 8,500 cars per day, and 5th street is only 2900 cars per day.

Mr. Quilici: If the goal is to catch as many cars as possible coming from 3rd street from the highway, have you considered, maybe, to move the sign on the same road but at the beginning of the convention center at the other intersection?

Mr. Moore: There's no opportunity there. When we chose these locations, we considered the optimal spots. We would not consider staff's recommendation. What they weren't showing in their pictures are a number of trees up 5th street that you would not be able to see the marquis, and there's a sky bridge that comes from the parking deck to the convention center. That would, also, block the marquis.

Ms. Nolt: When guests or visitors come to the Convention Center, can you show us how they typically arrive and enter the parking deck?

Mr. Moore: Well, there's multiple locations. Our parking deck is at the corner of 3rd and Marshall and has 400 spaces. So, they enter off of 3rd street.

Ms. Nolt: But the Convention Center deck there at 3rd and Marshall has the entrance on 3rd street?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Klaus: What is the intent for—are these 24 hours a day, or are these from 7 to 11? What's the thinking as to how long they will be lit up each day?

Mr. Moore: It's something that we just recently discussed. We are open to the idea, and the question comes when considering energy and costs.

Mr. Klaus: I have lived in cities where signs can be very annoying. It might be nice to turn it off at 11.

Mr. Moore: It's certainly something to consider.

Mr. Gould: Josh, is there nothing in code that speaks to the time of day of these signs?

Mr. Son: Everything that was proposed in the application is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Nolt: While we are speaking of positioning, do you think it would, also, be possible to align the right side of the sign—this is a composition that was part of the convention center...So, I think that if we are being thoughtful about locating it on this façade if this is where we end up—that we are thoughtful about how the sign works with that composition...either aligning it to the edge of the glass monitor there...If that doesn't work with your sight lines—centering it between the left side of the letters and the left side of the brick so that it's composed on that brick façade?

Mr. Moore: The one further to the right will probably be the one that we are most interested in because of the traffic sight line.

Mr. Quilici: If you are talking about composition, I have some questions about the other sign—the one in the corner. We care about the architecture and how that has integrated with the building. To me, the two panels right there seem like an afterthought, so I almost would like to see three panels connected there to create an area.

Ms. Nolt: So, remove the sign that says Greater Richmond Convention Center and replace with three panels?

Mr. Quilici: Yes.

Mr. Moore: I love the idea, but as a consultant, I don't think that it's a good idea, respectfully. The reason being is because, then, what you are looking to do is have a single message, functionally. What happens with that single message is your viewer coming down Broad Street is only going to see half of it. Your viewer coming down 5th street is only going to see half of it. What I might recommend is that there be a black background added to that to bring the whole thing together.

Ms. Nolt: I know that you are trying to get the sign large enough so that you have the visibility in this location because of the architecture. I would almost be inclined to make the sign a bit smaller so that you can see the white stone around it. So, I guess what I'm suggesting is not aligning but giving some space there so that it's framed by the architecture.

Ms. Almond: Is there anyone from the public that wants to speak on this project?

Commission Discussion:

Ms. Nolt: I think that I am actually ok with the sign located on 3rd street, and I think that it helps that it's facing north. It really is directed to the flow of traffic arriving to the Convention Center arriving to the entrance to the parking deck. If it were facing west towards Jackson Ward, I would be more concerned.

Mr. Klaus: A recommendation that the lights are turned off at night? I would like to put in something about turning it off.

Ms. Nolt: The worry about turning them off is that, then, they look broken and like they don't function. I think that they should stay on Broad Street, but, maybe, they should consider them on 3rd Street?

Mr. Quilici: I would, also, like to see it centered and possibly aligned to give some direction.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that this item be recommended for approval with some Staff conditions and additional conditions.

Staff conditions to forward were:

- That the proposed signs are adjusted for appropriate brightness
- That the proposed signs utilize the highest resolution possible to ensure highquality visuals
- That the proposed signs do not change messages, produce animations, or flash any more than once every five seconds, per the zoning ordinance

Additional conditions were:

- The 3rd and Marshall Street EMC be located evenly on the building panel that holds the "PAR" in the "PARKING" sign and to align with the light tower/glass structure or to position the EMC to be centered with the left side of the brick wall and the left side of the "PARKING" sign
- To consider a shut-off time for the 3rd and Marshall Street EMC in the late evening
- The 5th and Broad EMCs have aluminum frames and they are positioned in away that exposes the brick/architectural panels from behind to further frame them

Committee Member Klaus seconded the motion and it carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 5 - Jill Nolt, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould, James W. Klaus and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Chris Arias, David Johannas and Emily Smith

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Son stated that on behalf of the Department of Public Utilities, a Monroe Park sign may be forthcoming.

Mr. Quilici asked if the Urban Design Committee still intends to have a discussion about the committee's composition. Mr. Son replied that he needs to follow back up with Pamela Nichols and Director Mark Olinger to resume the conversation regarding committee composition. Ms. Jones noted that she will put the discussion of committee composition on the agenda for the next UDC meeting. Ms. Nolt confirmed that the Committee seats that are currently open are the Citizen at Large and Static Arts position seats. Mr. Son further stated that there may be a representative of the Urban Forestry Committee on the UDC Committee in the future.

Mr. Quilici asked if there is any update on the Cobra Lights and how the UDC guidelines will address the Cobra Lights, noting that the guidelines currently suggest replacing Cobra Lights. Mr. Son replied that staff is currently updating the UDC guidelines and placing updates regarding Cobra Lights into the guidelines. Mr. Son further noted that discussions about the Cobra Lights are consistently held with the Department of Public

Works. Ms. Nolt noted that Director Mark Olinger had been taking the initiative to review some of the Lighting Master Plan, and she asked if there is a selection of light fixtures appropriated to be located in certain areas. Mr. Son further stated that he will move forward with discussion concerning the lighting study.

Mr. Quilici asked if sustainability guidelines will be a part of the UDC guidelines. Mr. Son replied that as staff is currently updating the guidelines, staff will send out the sustainability section to the committee as staff progresses towards updating the guidelines further.

Adjournment

Ms. Almond adjourned the meeting at 11:23 am.