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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: February 20, 2018  
RE: **Final Location, Character, and Extent review of Bellemeade Enterprise Center,  
1600 Overlook St.; UDC File No. 2018-6**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Mark Olinger

**II. LOCATION**

1600 Overlook St.

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond Recreation & Parks

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final Location, Character, and Extent review of Bellemeade Enterprise Center, a semi-permanent storage facility comprised of two shipping containers and a roof structure.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The project involves the installation of two steel shipping containers and a roof truss built to specifications. The space will be divided in to two main uses: a bicycle repair shop that will house tools and supplies, and storage space for lawn care equipment, both of which will be used by the Green Workforce Program. The proposal seeks to increase stewardship opportunities at Bellemeade Park and in south Richmond communities through exposing Richmond teens to careers in conservation and recreation. Through this programming, Green Workforce engages teens to realize a high quality of life through career success.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval with the following conditions:

- That the applicant consult with DPU – Water Resources Division to ensure all design and plans are in compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations.
- That the applicant change the pitch of the roof for adequate head height

**Staff Contact:**

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**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The site is located adjacent to, and east of, the Bellemeade Community Center. Nestled among a group of trees, the proposed site lies south of an athletic field that is partially circumscribed by a creek that feeds into Goode Creek. The proposed site is located on an approximately 10 acre parcel zoned R-5

(residential, single family). It is predominantly surrounded by a residential neighborhood consisting mostly of single-family, detached homes.

**b. Scope of Review**

The proposed structure is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a “public building”.

**c. Project Description**

The Bellemeade Enterprise Center project was initiated in 2014 in order to facilitate bicycle and landscape maintenance equipment storage for a program known as Green Workforce in Bellemeade Park.

At Bellemeade Park, community connectivity via trails and complete streets, stormwater infrastructure, educational rain gardens, and a landscape plan that features local native species, were developed by the Green Infrastructure Center and Skeo Solutions as part of the Bellemeade Walkable Watershed Plan. Groundwork RVA and the teens that have trained under the organization are committed to the ongoing management of Bellemeade Park as an outdoor education center and a recreational asset to the Oak Grove, Bellemeade, and Hillside Court communities.

Since the construction of Oak Grove-Bellemeade Elementary School in 2013, a community effort to encourage walking and biking has developed. While 100% of students live safe walking distance to the school facility, few students have access to bike repair and maintenance. The Bellemeade Enterprise Center will house donated bicycles and a bicycle repair shop on one side where customers will have two methods of paying for the work performed: they can pay through credits earned in performing community service work or by bringing collected recycle materials to our collection center. These two methods of payment will promote a sense of community pride. Teens will work with VCU RamBikes to learn bicycle maintenance and will earn a stipend from Groundwork RVA.

The other side of the center will serve as a storage space for lawn care equipment for handyperson services as part of the “pay-what-you-can” enterprise program of Green Workforce. This program will allow trained Groundwork RVA teens to assist residents to maintain their lawns and gardens

The Bellemeade Enterprise Center’s dual purpose is to provide storage for landscape equipment and bicycles, which will be managed and maintained by the Groundwork RVA Green Workforce program through a collaborative agreement with DPR, and to provide a strategic hub for the Green Workforce program to engage volunteers and leverage partnerships to increase stewardship opportunities at Bellemeade Park and in south Richmond communities. To date, Groundwork RVA has leveraged partnerships to support the care of Bellemeade Park and to provide landscaping and recreational training for RPS youth from Bellemeade Recreation Center:

- Wheeler’s Landscaping Services
- True Timber, arborist services
- RES, green infrastructure maintenance
- Richmond Area Bicycle Association (RABA)
- Neighbor-2-Neighbor (City of Richmond)

- James River Park System Recreational Programming (City of Richmond)
- Falls of the James Branch, Sierra Club
- Boy Scouts of America

The Bellemeade Enterprise Center is proposed to be located on property owned and operated by the City of Richmond Department of Parks & Recreational Facilities. The site is located 180' north of the residential properties located on Royall Avenue.

The Bellemeade Enterprise Center is proposed to be an impermanent auxiliary structure that facilitates the realization of the Bellemeade Walkable Watershed (plan developed by the City of Richmond Dept. of Public Utilities and Skeo Solutions, 2012).

Steel shipping containers are pre-fabricated and were donated by the Port of Richmond. Ruffin and Payne supplied roof trusses. Groundwork RVA has raised private funds to support the project from a variety of individuals and local corporations, including McGuireWoods and the Royall Foundation. Construction will take place on Saturdays from February 25 – March 30, 2018 (pending approval), and will be completed by youth in the Green Workforce Program under the supervision of Will McQuate (GWF Manager). No changes will be made to the existing “Walkable Watershed” landscape plan for Bellemeade Park.

The Construction Budget is as follows:

Shipping Containers \$3,800  
 Lumber \$300  
 Hardware \$400  
 Roof materials (Galvalume) \$200  
 Roof Trusses \$800  
 Mural labor & supplies (Ham!?) \$1,500  
 TOTAL \$8,000

According to Skeo Solutions’ report, published in 2012: The Bellemeade neighborhood is home to approximately 5,000 lower income residents and the Bellemeade Elementary School. The community is bisected by an impaired and neglected urban creek. The creek could serve as a major revitalizing force if it was restored and embraced as a central asset to the community, along with the adjacent elementary school and community center.

Green Workforce began as a partnership between Groundwork RVA and the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities (DPR), and was initially funded through the support of 6th District City Councilperson Ellen Robertson.

**d. UDC Review History**

Staff was unable to identify any prior projects involving this property but a similar project (Final Location, Character and Extent review of rental outpost for the Richmond Cycling Corps’ Kickstand at 3011 Water St; UDC No. 2016-11) was reviewed and recommended for approval in April 2016.

**e. Master Plan**

This project falls within the Old South Planning District of the Master Plan. Aside from illustrating the property to remain as a public use, the area is not specifically referenced in the plan, however the plan does note that “Development of any City facilities should be sensitive to the environmental resources and conditions on site and maximize their use for educational purposes” (page 281).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that “Impacts to the natural landscape should be assessed and should generally be minimized when constructing man-made elements. A preference should be given toward materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality” (page 9).

The Urban Design Committee also supports programs in which citizens or organizations can participate in the maintenance of landscapes on City-owned property (page 10).

The Guidelines also note that “Building materials should be aesthetically and structurally durable, of high quality, and require little maintenance. Where appropriate, substances which resist graffiti should be applied to building materials to reduce maintenance requirements” (page 17).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**