



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, June 7, 2018

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present -- 6 - * Chair Andrea Almond, * Chris Arias, * David Johannas, * Jill Nolt, * Andrew P. Gould and * James W. Klaus
Excused -- 3 - * Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, * Robert Smith and * Andrea Quilici

Approval of Minutes

[UDC MIN 2018-05](#) Minutes of the regular meeting on May 10, 2018

Attachments: [UDC MIN 2018-05 DRAFT](#)

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

Aye -- 4 - Chris Arias, Jill Nolt, Andrew P. Gould and James W. Klaus
Excused -- 4 - Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, David Johannas, Robert Smith and Andrea Quilici
Abstain -- 1 - Chair Andrea Almond

Secretary's Report

Secretary Son stated that the Commission approved Altria Theater banners for Impractical Jokers, which are on display from May 28, 2018 until July 2, 2018.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

The committee unanimously voted to move item four on the agenda, UDC 2018-22 concerning the Final Review of Modifications to the VCU School of Engineering, from the regular agenda to the consent agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

[UDC 2018-26](#) Final Location, Character, and Extent review of a pad as part of a new outdoor classroom pavilion for Patrick Henry School of Science and Art, 3411 Semmes Ave.

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

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that the Consent Agenda items be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission 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.

Committee Member Klaus seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

[UDC 2018-24](#) Final Location, Character, and Extent review of Richmond Police Department Equestrian Center, 3900 Crestview Rd.

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

Mr. Son: The Equestrian Center will replace the aging and operationally deficient stable currently located at 801 Brook Road. The new building will consist of a wood frame structure with metal wall and roof panels and associated site amenities. The proposed new building will include a main floor level that will accommodate an administration area for the mounted officers and a stable area for the horses. A hay loft will be included above the stable for the storage of hay and will include four openings to facilitate feeding the horses.

An open office area will be provided with work stations for approximately eight to ten mounted officers in addition to a private office for the Sergeant in charge. A training classroom and conference room will be provided to accommodate approximately 20 to 25 persons for Regional Equestrian Training and Educational Tours. The administration area will, also, provide a break room and storage cabinets for operational and office needs. Associated support spaces will be provided.

The roof will consist of an insulated roof assembly with metal roof panels. Asphalt shingles may, also, be considered, if necessary, to stay within the project budget. The site amenities will include a gravel parking area for visitors, staff, police vehicles, and horse trailers. Other site amenities will include pastures for horses, a training room comprised of sand and dirt or clay and silt, a round pen for training, and a bin for bedding. An area for a dumpster will, also, be provided with an access ramp to facilitate staff dumping wheel barrows directly into the top of the dumpster after cleaning up the stalls.

The building will be designed to comply with The Virginia Construction Code as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act. The total project budget, including soft and hard costs, is 1.5 million. The Master Plan states that horse stables are appropriate for this area as part of the City Park System expansion. Staff is supportive of the project and recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Planning Commission approve the final design as submitted.

The applicant, Dexter Goode, from City Special Projects Group introduced himself.

Mr. Arias: I, also, sit on the Public Arts Commission. So, I am curious if there is consideration of the one percent allocated to the arts as part of the scope of the project?

Mr. Goode: I am not quite sure. I don't have a direct answer to tell you. We are going to look at what we can do for that. As far as the funding, I don't think that the budget itself was set up to incorporate that, initially.

Ms. Almond: The design team did a good job addressing all of the things that we asked for in conceptual. It looks great.

Ms. Nolt: I think that we could add the one percent to the recommendation.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that the consent agenda items be recommended for approval with the following conditions:

-That, if it is still required, the applicant consider the regulation that 1% of Capital Improvement Project costs go toward public art resources

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

Aye -- 5 - Chair Andrea Almond, Chris Arias, David Johannas, Jill Nolt and James W. Klaus

Excused -- 3 - Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, Robert Smith and Andrea Quilici

Recused -- 1 - Andrew P. Gould

[UDC 2018-23](#) Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of updates to the Southside Community Center Master Plan, 6255 Old Warwick Rd.

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

Mr. Son: The City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities purchased the South Side Community Center property in 2014 with the goal of creating a regional park to diversify recreational opportunities for the residents of the Midlothian Planning District. In addition to the gymnasium and the former sanctuary building, an assortment of preexisting buildings of various scale, condition, and utility are situated on site. Other elements include a small skate park, a multi-use field, three baseball fields, and expansive parking areas.

Since the original Master Plan, two major decisions have been made by the Department of Parks and Recreation over the last year that have caused the need for this Master Plan to be updated. All the existing buildings, except for the existing gym and accessory building to the west, are in disrepair and costing the city a great deal of money to maintain and operate in their current condition. There is an increased need to demolish those buildings as soon as possible and update the Master Plan to reflect the best use of this land. The expense of the pool and related facilities relative to the low demand from the community are difficult to justify, and the project budget will no longer support that program element.

To date, approximately 2.25 through 2.5 million is now allocated for the construction of this project and the Capital Improvement Fund for Parks and Recreation. Staff finds the project to be well-considered with the renovation and re-purposing of key structures, the continued utilization of specific, existing paved areas, and the programming of compatible indoor and outdoor activities. Staff further finds that the public process improves the programming of the site, providing a better mix of active and passive uses, as well as enhanced cohesiveness, overall. Thus, staff recommends that the Urban Design

Committee recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval as submitted with the following conditions: the final plans address for any aspect of this proposal; sustainability as detailed in the Urban Design Guidelines, such as but not limited to the utilization of pervious pavement for the parking areas, an increase in programming to address storm water drainage and that additional trees be planted along the trail and within the parking lot islands; the final plan consider the position of the softball field to ensure that stray balls do not negatively impact incoming traffic; the final plan consider access between the trail and the parking lot to the north of the softball field; and that the plan provide a comprehensive planting plan schedule and lighting plan.

Ms. Nolt: Josh, I have a question for you before we go to the applicant. It is in regard to your last two recommendations for a comprehensive planting plan schedule and the final lighting plan. Is that level of detail typically required on a Master Plan Review such as this?

Mr. Son: This is a master plan but not so large that it encompasses a full neighborhood.

Ms. Nolt: Could we recommend a planting palette so that they don't have to get into the details of every plant, location, and quantities? It would be helpful to see a proposed lighting specification but maybe not have to do all the photo metrics and technicals that come with that.

Mr. Son: Sure. Since we are just a recommending body, it is more a matter of us being ok with the design and what is being put forth for a final construction.

Ms. Nolt: As a Master Plan, would any portion of this project, as it moves forward into detailed design and construction, come back to us?

Mr. Son: If it's modified, it would come back to us. Otherwise, it would be ok to just move forward.

Scott Wiley, landscape architect with Timmons group: While this is an update to a Master Plan, Josh and I discussed this when we were submitting the application. This would be an update just to get the current plan in place and approved by your body and by the Planning Commission. The next step would be to take Phase One, whatever that might be, and come back, then, with a full set of plans. So, you would have the layout, the site design, and all of the materials to have a chance to review all of that.

Ms. Nolt: So, is this a conceptual review of updates or a final review of updates?

Mr. Wiley: We debated that a bit, as well. We are hoping that it is a final review of the master plan, but the next step is to come forward with a full site plan for your review and approval. I think that we discussed that this would be a conceptual approval of the master plan, and the final approval of the master plan would be all of the full details and site related items, if that's amenable to you all.

Mr. Goode: Let me just add that the real reason that we are here is because of the demolition. The initial Master Plan incorporated a lot of the buildings that are still at the site, but because of the deterioration of the buildings and the expense to try to keep these buildings, the plan was revised and determined that it would be in the best interest of the city and the plan itself to demolish some of those buildings. We no longer want to keep those buildings in the plan. We will be back in front of you when we have more detail.

Ms. Nolt: That makes sense in my mind.

Mr. Wiley: To speak to two of your recommendations that we had a little bit of justification for, the recommendation to put more trees in the parking lot---as a landscape architect, I would want to put in as many as I can to get a good urban canopy—but we are working around a 100 foot transmission easement by Dominion. They have restrictions on what we can put underneath the lines. We have located trees anywhere we can outside of the easement.

Mr. Klaus: Is there some kind of public issue about putting a Community Center under the transmission lines?

Mr. Wiley: There is one there today. They do use it for many of these same functions. There is a skate park there right next to the transmission lines. There's a basketball court there. There's a softball field. They are already doing these activities there. We are locating them outside of the easement for the most part, but, of course, there is always concern.

Mr. Wiley: The only other item that I will speak to concerning Josh's recommendations will be the location of the softball field. There was some concern that it was getting pretty close to the road there so that a long ball might go into Old Carnation Street. We have located it so that there is about a 300 foot distance from the batter's box to Old Carnation Street. We feel that we have adequate distance.

Ms. Nolt: Are pedestrian connections and ways to safely access the site being looked at?

Mr. Goode: Yes, it is. We have already talked with Traffic and Engineering. They have a project to do some sidewalks.

Mr. Wiley: There will be perimeter sidewalk on both surrounding streets, and we would just tie into them.

Mr. Johannas: When do you think that construction might start?

Mr. Goode: It's all funding-contingent. We hope to have additional funding, again, next year. It's about a 10 million dollar job. Right now, we have about 2.5 million.

Ms. Nolt: Do we need to include in our recommendation that the building comes back to us for conceptual design, rather than come straight to final design?

Mr. Johannas: Yeah. I think that all the new construction should come back.

Mr. Son: I believe that it's up to the applicant whether they want to come for final or conceptual. Considering it's a public property, they will come back through the UDC.

Ms. Nolt: I would like to include a recommendation that the building design come back for a conceptual review.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that the consent agenda items be recommended for approval with Staff recommendations.

Staff recommendations are:

-That the final plans address, for any aspect of this proposal, sustainability as

detailed in the Urban Design Guidelines such as, but not limited to:

- The utilization of pervious pavement for the parking areas
- An increase in programming to address stormwater drainage
- Additional trees to be planted along the trail and within the parking lot islands
- That the final plan consider the position of the softball field to ensure stray balls do not negatively impact oncoming traffic
- That the final plan consider access between the trail and the parking lot to the north of the softball field
- That the final plan provide a comprehensive planting plan and schedule
- That the final plan provide a lighting plan, considering the use of LED with a 3000k correlated color temperature or less

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

Aye -- 5 - Chair Andrea Almond, Chris Arias, David Johannas, Jill Nolt and James W. Klaus

Excused -- 3 - Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, Robert Smith and Andrea Quilici

Recused -- 1 - Andrew P. Gould

[UDC 2018-22](#) Final review of modifications to VCU School of Engineering – Engineering Research Building (ERB) Streetscape, 601 W. Main St.

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

This item was moved to the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Committee Member Nolt that this item be recommended for approval to the Department of Public Works with Staff conditions as part of the Consent agenda:

Staff Conditions are:

- To retain the existing trees along Belvidere St.
- To increase the urban tree canopy where possible

Committee Member Klaus seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Aye -- 6 - Chair Andrea Almond, Chris Arias, David Johannas, Jill Nolt, Andrew P. Gould and James W. Klaus

Excused -- 3 - Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, Robert Smith and Andrea Quilici

[UDC 2018-25](#) Final Location, Character, and Extent review of Monroe Park – Wayfinding signage, 719 W. Franklin St.

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

Mr. Son: The Monroe Park Conservancy seeks final approval on wayfinding signs to be installed in the park prior to the park opening in 2018. The Conservancy will pay for the cost of all sign fabrication and installation. The proposed fonts are presented as a

package to show how the logo, branding, and text work together. The quantity and size of the signs have been reduced. The applicant is limiting signage on the Checker's House, and the Donor Recognition sign is no longer proposed for the wall of the Checker's House.

This final plan for wayfinding signage in Monroe Park is part of a larger restoration effort. The proposed signage incorporates various historic elements specific to the space, such as the logo that echoes topography from a 19th century map of the park. The angular pathways influence the form of the primary and secondary signs. The proposed design of the signage signifies the park's entry into a new contemporary chapter of its life as a public space. This proposal for final review reflects the applicant's ability to incorporate the conditions of approval from the UDC and the Planning Commission. Therefore, staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Planning Commission approve the final design as submitted.

Jim Hill, Monroe Park Conservancy: Alice Massie has brought the prototype for the sign. I want to thank for the input that we received at the last meeting, at conceptual review.

Mr. Hill discussed sign placement, at length.

Ms. Nolt: So, will you be doing technical drawings showing actual location of the signage? What is the procedure for the final location?

Alice Massie: The sign company will take the structure and continue it into the ground so that it appears to be a flush. The bottom would have something that would prevent bugs from going in; it would sit just above grade.

Mr. Hill: The sign company will influence how the signs are installed, but we will, also, want to indicate precisely where the signs are located. The logic for placing the signs is so that they do not interfere with the maintenance of the grass but are outside the alignment.

Ms. Nolt: Can you speak to the durability of the signs for vandalism, graffiti, scratching—what is the finish that you are applying to ensure?

Ms. Massie: Top priority.

Dave Wolf: I am working with the Conservancy and managing recommendations for durability. The particular text here, provided as a sample for the commission, will not be the final version.

Mr. Hill: We came away with four conditions that ya'll set for us and that were, also, adopted by the Planning Commission. The way that we attempted to address those was by reducing the size of each of these signs and the number of signs.

Ms. Nolt: Any other questions for the applicant?

Mr. Gould: Is there any lighting—is it just ambient light that would light the sign?

Mr. Hill: Yes. There is new lighting for the park. Most of these are at the entrances. The park will, generally, be open from sunrise to sunset. People are permitted to pass through the park walking on bikes after the park is closed. During the winter commute, the park lighting, I believe, will still be on within the park.

Mr. Klaus: I am sure that you know that there has been a lot of public comment regarding

the donor sign. We have a size and a schematic, but we don't know what it's going to say. My reading of the comments is that the city has provided half of the funding for this. People are jumping to a conclusion that it is going to only state only corporate sponsors, which feeds into the idea that this is a private partnership. How are you going to, without us seeing anything, comment to their concerns?

Mr. Hill: Many conclusions have been jumped to. The sign is not a corporate billboard or corporate branding of the park. It's a partnership between the city and the conservancy that was tasked with raising the funds. A number of donors will be listed. There are a couple of corporate donors. There are a couple of foundations. There are a couple of individuals. They will all be listed there.

Mr. Klaus: And the city? I think that is the biggest concern. If the city is the biggest single provider of funds for this project...We need to emphasize the public nature of this. People's fear is that there will not be prominence given to the fifty percent funder of this project.

Ms. Nolt: Jim, how far are you from actually having the final graphic design complete for all of these signs, in general?

Mr. Hill: We have the layouts and maps.

Mr. Klaus: FYI, there were no questions about any of the other signs. The only negative was about the donor sign. If there was a layout for one that I would really need to see, it would be for that one.

Mr. Hill: I don't mean to be flip, but does the content of the sign fall under location, character, or extent? We want to be open about this.

Mr. Gould: What is the approval process of the actual final sign content? Who signs off on that?

Mr. Hill: We work with the Police Department on the park rules. We work with the Park Department on appropriate policies.

Ms. Nolt: We have had other sign wayfinding applications come before us, and we could see the content of what was on those signs by way of reviewing character and extent of the signs.

Mr. Son: When it comes to permits for the signage, they will make sure that there is nothing inappropriate on the signage.

Mr. Hill: The content will talk about the partnership between the city and the Conservancy. There is certainly no attempt to obscure the fact that the city is a partner in the redevelopment and renovation of the public park.

Ms. Nolt: Is there a reason why you wouldn't bring the content of the sign to the UDC?

Mr. Hill: We are still working out the actual text. We are not attempting to hide what the sign is going to say. The Conservancy recognizes the partnership with the City of Richmond. We have not attempted today to counter each of the claims that you might have encountered in your opposition letters.

Mr. Gould: I don't think that you need to do that. If there is time for us to see the

content, that would make me feel more comfortable. When I think of character, if we aren't comfortable with what is on the sign, in my mind, that falls into character. There has been a lot of public interest in this content.

Ms. Massie: So, I would like to say that we are representing this typeface. You are going to get typeface. You are not going to get logos. Nobody is bigger. Nobody is smaller. It is very important to be, across the board, equal to anybody who is on that sign. If you are the City of Richmond and have spent the most money, then, you will be at the top. It is very simple and straightforward.

Mr. Gould: I don't see anything there or here to show that. To indicate that fact is important to the citizens who have written us.

Ms. Nolt: I think that we are getting as much information as we can get today from the applicant. We can make our recommendations based on that.

Mr. Hill: Also, whatever you might receive in a letter, it's a public park. It will continue to be a public park.

Ms. Nolt: The public is here today and is able and, in many cases, willing to submit their opinion. Any other questions for the applicant? Is there anyone from the public who would like to speak in favor or in opposition to the application?

Todd Woodson, Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association: The Conservancy put out a press release in November of 2016, saying that they had completed the fundraising. They know exactly who the donors are.

We don't want the city to be acknowledged here. This is a public park. The conceptual by the Planning Commission—one of the commissioners made a very appropriate assessment in saying 'What about engraved pavers?' Ms. Massie stood up and said that these are permeable and can't be engraved. Here is a letter from Hanover Architectural Products; I asked if they could be engraved. Yes. We could definitely engrave permeable pavers.

I need to stress that this is a Historic Landmark. It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is our oldest and most historic park. It was acquired by the city in 1851. Many people are very concerned about citing donors at a permanent—this is your grandchildren's grandchildren that could come out from a wedding at Sacred Heart and will see the donors from 100 years ago. It's very inappropriate. We are devastated by what is going on in the park. In closing, no corporate donor signs. We don't need them. We appreciate what the corporations have done. The citizens have put four million dollars plus into this, but we're not asking for anything. You keep hearing 'partnership between the city and the Conservancy,' and the community has been left out. I'm sorry about that.

Ms. Nolt: Anyone else here who would like to speak about the project? I will close public comment and bring it back to the committee.

Mr. Son: I believe that, in thinking of the location, character, and extent, there are other processes that this will have to go through. We are just a recommending body to the Planning Commission. So, we are meant to review on the aesthetics, location, and appropriateness of public structures. This is, also, something from 2016--the opinion of the City Attorney: the word character means trait, conferring distinctiveness, attribute, or quality which distinguishes one thing from another. It does not reach the particular specific or precise.

Mr. Johannas: I, personally, don't think that this includes content of the script. I think that it includes the formatting of the script, location, the look of it, the style of it, the color of it, but not that actual content.

Mr. Gould: If there is public opposition to the content of the sign, one of the responses is going to be, "Well, it's been approved by the Urban Design Committee." In fact, we have not approved the content. If there is some body that is going to review the content in light of the public comments that have been made, I can be comfortable with that.

Mr. Klaus: We do feel that it is very important for the content of the sign to be reviewed by some body so that, at least, they won't just say that it was approved with no comment. We did have a comment. We were not given the content.

Ms. Nolt: Josh, are there any entities or bodies that Drew mentioned that will be reviewing and approving the content?

Mr. Son: The Sign Permitting Division would review it for content. This will, also, then, head to the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Committee Member Klaus that this item be recommended for approval with the following conditions:

- That the Planning Commission, or a body they appoint, review the content of the signage before final approval**
- That the applicant submit exact locations of stationery signage for administrative review**

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

Aye -- 5 - Chris Arias, David Johannas, Jill Nolt, Andrew P. Gould and James W. Klaus

Excused -- 3 - Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger, Robert Smith and Andrea Quilici

Recused -- 1 - Chair Andrea Almond

[UDC 2018-27](#) Resolution of Appreciation for Committee Member Bryan Green

Attachments: [Resolution of Appreciation, Bryan Green](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

Adjournment