



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes - Final Urban Design Committee

Thursday, May 8, 2014

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Ms. Nolt called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Mr. Chris Arias, Mr. Doug Cole, Vice Chair Bryan Green, Ms. Giles Harnsberger, Ms. Andrea Levine, Chair Jill Nolt and Mr. Robert Smith

Absent: 3 - Ms. Andrea Almond, Mr. Vaughn Garland and Ms. Claire Shirley

Approval of Minutes

[ID 14-021](#) Regular Meeting of April 10, 2014

Attachments: [Minutes from the April 10, 2014 UDC meeting](#)

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Mr. Arias, that the minutes from the April 10, 2014 meeting be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Arias, Cole, Green, Harnsberger and Levine

Abstain: 2 - Nolt and Smith

Secretary's Report

Mr. Eastman stated that the Planning Commission considered the final review of the Cary Elementary bus loop and the 10th Street streetscape improvements along with the conceptual review of the RMA Plaza at their April 21st meeting, and all were approved with UDC recommendations. Mr. Eastman congratulated the Committee for their work on the Cary Elementary bus loop.

Mr. Eastman stated that the Planning Commission also appointed a subcommittee for the Powell Court House to join the UDC subcommittee (Mr. Green and Mr. Cole) and that those groups will be meeting in a few weeks.

Mr. Eastman stated that the UDC has started using a new legislative website for distribution of the meeting information and asked the Committee for feedback. The Committee members discussed their experience and concerns with the new system.

Mr. Eastman made the Committee aware of the untimely loss of Mr. Tyler Potterfield, a senior planner who had been with the City for 23 years. Mr. Eastman showed a brief presentation on Mr. Potterfield's work and the things that he loved about his work with the City of Richmond.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

There were no continuances or deletions.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Mr. Green, that the Consent Agenda items be recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. The motion carried unanimously.

1. [UDC No. 2014-16\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of renovations to the RMA Plaza, 210 S. 10th Street.

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

Mr. Eastman stated that the designers added a ramp with an 8.3% grade, which is ADA compliant for a trail setting, on the western side of the plaza next to the entrance to the parking garage. Mr. Eastman stated that the applicant met with the City arborists and looked at the limits of the demolition in order to replace the membrane on the bridge and determined that they were going to come close enough to the willow oaks on Byrd Street that they will have to be removed.

Mr. Cole stated that during conceptual review there were tree wells on Byrd Street now there is going to be a green strip instead. Mr. Eastman stated that the existing condition is a continuous, wide planting strip and if it was shown as tree wells on the conceptual plan that was probably an error in the drafting because originally the intent was to keep the existing trees. Mr. Cole stated that he thinks river birches are odd street trees and Mr. Eastman stated that the city arborists from the Urban Forestry Division selected those because they get to a pretty good size and have non-invasive roots which are a strong consideration for this application.

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for approval on the Consent Agenda as submitted and forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on May 19, 2014. Ms. Nolt recused herself due to a conflict of interest.

2. [UDC No. 2014-18](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of a green alley connecting T and S Streets between N. 26th and N. 27th Streets.

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

Mr. Smith stated that the green alley feels like a more urban design and questioned the need for a highly engineered alley in a residential area. Mr. Kevin Newcomb, Department of Public Works, stated that this alley design is something that has been used previously in other applications from the Department of Public Utilities and they copied it for this project.

This Location, Character and Extent Item was recommended for approval on the Consent Agenda as submitted and forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on May 19, 2014.

REGULAR AGENDA

3. [UDC No. 2014-04\(2\)](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of the site and building plans associated with the renovation of 1801 Commerce Road for use by the Department of Public Utilities.

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

Ms. Levine had a number of questions concerning the plans and made a motion to move the item to the regular agenda, seconded by Mr. Arias and passed 5-2-0 (Arias, Cole, Harnsberger, Levine and Nolt for and Green and Smith against).

Ms. Levine stated that everybody has the right to enjoy a space and inquired about the use of the outdoor break area by smokers and non-smokers. She asked if that is something the UDC has considered before and Mr. Eastman stated that this is the first time he has heard it discussed but he would defer to the applicant on how that space will be used. Ms. Levine stated that if the applicants have some suggestions about how to move the areas around that would be great but there needs to be some separation because there are some people that can't be around smoke.

Mr. Willie Horton, Deputy Director for the Department of Public Utilities, stated that if there is a concern or issue about providing additional space for people to take a break outside he thinks they can accommodate that on this space. Mr. Horton stated that this space that they have identified for the smokers is in the back part of the property and if the concern is providing outside break area for non-smokers he thinks they can do that. Ms. Levine stated that she would like to see that and that the building is great.

Mr. Arias stated that he noticed that they included the skylights that are going down the hallway and to him it looks like a little redundancy as far as the natural light coming in. He stated that maybe some of those skylights can be moved to the garage areas or some of the other work areas. Mr. Arias stated that it seems like the intent of the skylights are to reduce the burden of electricity and utilities on the building and having all of them in all in a line in one hallway doesn't seem to really achieve or start to achieve that goal. Mr. Horton stated that he doesn't have a problem with that and will ask the designer and architect to look at that.

A motion was made by Ms. Levine, seconded by Mr. Green, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with the following condition:

- That the applicant considers providing an outdoor break area for employees and is considerate of providing separate spaces for smokers and non-smokers

The motion carried unanimously, and the item was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on May 19, 2014.

Aye: 7 - Arias, Cole, Green, Harnsberger, Levine, Nolt and Smith

4. [UDC No. 2014-17](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of improvements to Ancarrow's Landing following soil remediation, 1308 & 1308A Brander

Street.

Attachments: [UDC Report to CPC](#)

[Staff Report to UDC](#)

[Location Map](#)

[Application & Plans](#)

Mr. Green inquired if there was any money currently in any budget to restore and move the Winfree Cottage and Mr. Eastman stated that he thinks it is being scoped as a potential site and he doesn't know if any money is in the budget to move the Winfree Cottage there. Mr. Green stated that if they move it will the Committee have the chance to discuss the location, restoration and the appropriate money's for maintenance and other issues and Mr. Eastman stated that is what the recommendation covers.

Mr. Cole stated that the reason for the whole project is because of the soil remediation or is it because they need for boat, ramp or river parking and Mr. Eastman stated that question will be better answered by the applicant because they have been meeting about this since 2010. Mr. Cole inquired who was paying for all of this and Mr. Eastman stated ExxonMobil.

Mr. Cole stated that the conversations on this started in 2010, which was before the Riverfront Master Plan and inquired if the two work together. Mr. Eastman stated that he couldn't speak as to whether or not this project was considered during the Riverfront Plan process.

Ms. Rosemary Green, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Utilities, stated that Exxon approached the City about doing the remediation and DPU reached out to other agencies in the City and said if this work is to be done do they have plans for improvements to the park which Parks and Recreation did. Ms. Green stated that Larry Miller, previously with the Department of Parks and Recreation presented them with a plan that showed much of what is shown today and includes additional parking for April when the shad are running and additional parking is needed.

Mr. Barry Russell, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that the true essence of the Master Plan is to allow access and they are looking to enhance every opportunity that they can and this is an opportunity to allow better access and continued access and accommodate more people in a safer manner.

Ms. Green stated that they also reached out to Mr. Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review, and Mr. Olinger reviewed it and he supports it with the Master Plan.

Mr. Cole stated that it is a great facility for residents but he would recommend more signage for people to be aware it. Mr. Russell stated that they have to identify a lot of their opportunities a little bit better than what they are doing and they are working on that.

Ms. Nolt inquired about what kind of access people will have for fishing at the river's edge. Mr. Nathan Burrell, Park Superintendent for James River Park System, stated that fishing access will still be afforded and access to the park will still be afforded during and throughout construction. Mr. Burrell stated that there will be access to the motorized boat put-in as well as the section to the immediate left of the access point and some of the access on the slave dock area. Mr. Burrell stated that in this area there will be some phasing and staging and at certain points there will be restricted access but there will still be areas for fishing and accommodations for boats throughout the

duration of the project. Mr. Burrell stated that fishing season is really active currently and dies down by the time this project is projected to be started in August and September.

Ms. Harnsberger stated that she is really excited about this project and excited that this is a potential location for the Winfree Cottage and thinks this a great way to mark the beginning of the Slave Trail. Ms. Harnsberger inquired if they are considering any Public Art on Ancarrow's Landing and Mr. Burrell stated that it is not a part of this project but as it relates to the Riverfront Plan not only will there be better wayfinding throughout the Riverfront area that would lead people to Ancarrow's Landing but there are a number of different sites that had been marked as potential areas for public art and stated Ancarrow's is one of those sites.

Mr. Green asked if there has been any archeological survey testing done to make sure that no sites are being obliterated as a part of this project and Ms. Green stated that there has not been any archeological testing done however they can look into that.

Ms. Harnsberger inquired if there was anywhere else in the city that these solar powered LED lights are used and Mr. Eastman stated that they had an encroachment project in the new Dove Street development area that has solar street lights and stated that there's another one in the Randolph area.

Mr. Smith stated that his only concern is with the solar light color temperature which is 5000 for that area and stated that it would seem much more natural if they brought it down a little bit to like 3500 or 4100 in terms of color temperature.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Levine, that this Location, Character and Extent Item be recommended for approval with the following conditions:

- That, at such time as plans are finalized to locate the Winfree Cottage on the site, said plans will be presented for review by the Urban Design Committee and Planning Commission to ensure that the cottage can be safely located on site with regards to protection from flood.
- That the applicant considers lowering the color temperature of the proposed lights to 3500k or 4100k.

The motion carried unanimously, and the item was forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their meeting on May 19, 2014.

Aye: 7 - Arias, Cole, Green, Harnsberger, Levine, Nolt and Smith

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Adjournment

11:03 a.m.