



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, December 6, 2018

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present -- 5 - * Chris Arias, * David Johannas, * Andrea Quilici, * Andrew P. Gould and * Chair
Andrea Almond

Absent -- 3 - * Jill Nolt, * James W. Klaus and * Emily Smith

Vacant -- 1 - * Vice Chair Giles Harnsberger

Approval of Minutes

[UDC MIN
2018-11](#)

Minutes of the regular meeting on November 8, 2018.

Attachments: [DRAFT UDC MIN 2018-11](#)

A motion was made by Committee Member Gould that these Minutes be approved.

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

Aye -- 4 - Chris Arias, David Johannas, Andrew P. Gould and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus and Emily Smith

Abstain -- 1 - Andrea Quilici

Secretary's Report

Mr. Son announced the review and staff approval of a banner for 17th St. Market, which will be on display from Nov. 21st, 2018 to Feb. 22nd, 2019, and is located above 15th Street.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

[UDC 2018-49](#) Final location, character, and extent review of the Richmond Slave Trail Renovation, 1500 Brander Street.

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

A motion was made by Committee Member Gould, seconded by Committee Member Quilici, that these items be withdrawn from the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye -- 5 - Chris Arias, David Johannas, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus and Emily Smith

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

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

A motion was made by Committee Member Gould, seconded by Committee Member Quilici, that these items be withdrawn from the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye -- 5 - Chris Arias, David Johannas, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus and Emily Smith

CONSENT AGENDA

[UDC 2018-51](#) Final location, character, and extent review of Main Street Station Site Work Improvements, 1500 East Main Street

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

Mr. Quilici: We are eliminating the uprights from trees, my suggestion was to provide empty conduits, and maybe if there is a future budget to add these uprights?

Mr. Son: When the budget does come for that, if they deviate from what was approved previously, then they would have to come through UDC again. Everything right now is due to budgetary constraints and the anticipation of high speed rail. If they are able to move forward when they have the funding, as long as they follow the plans that were approved previously they do not have to come before UDC. It's a phasing.

Mr. Quilici: So that [the uplighting] is not eliminated from the project?

Mr. Son: Correct. It's not eliminated, it's just that right now at this juncture they don't have the funds to provide the fully fleshed out plan.

Mr. Quilici: So all the exes that we see in the plans, that means they're not eliminated, but could be added back in later?

Mr. Son: Correct. They are to be added later, once funding is not an issue.

Mr. Quilici: That's a good clarification. If you're saying that it's just about postponing.

Mr. Son: Exactly.

Ms. Almond: Is there a timeline?

Mr. Son: Not that I'm aware of. That's something I can follow up with the applicant.

Mr. Quilici: I was wondering if there was some sort of timeline in regards to the budget, and I think the reply is that there is not.

Mr. Son: Right, there is not.

Mr. Quilici: She said that some contingency would be saved on the project so that near the end, when they are out of the woods, they can give an update about the banner.

Mr. Son: That's something we can keep tabs on, and the applicant can come and give a presentation on where they are, if you [the commission] request that.

Andrea Almond: Is there anyone here from the public who would like to comment on the consent agenda?

There was no public comment.

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

Aye -- 3 - David Johannas, Andrea Quilici, and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus, and Emily Smith

Abstain -- 1 - Andrew P. Gould

REGULAR AGENDA

[UDC 2018-50](#) Final section 17.05 review of new GRTC Bus Shelters, city-wide.

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

Mr. Son: The City of Richmond and GRTC Transit System (GRTC) worked collaboratively since January 2016 to develop a new bus network known as the Richmond Transit Network Plan (RTNP) that restructured the existing transit routes in a manner that would provide seamless connectivity to the GRTC Pulse Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Since the RTNP launched, GRTC has been monitoring the system identifying bus stop locations that need improved amenities, especially shelters.

GRTC and the City of Richmond would like to install three-sided, clear tempered glass shelters that will better protect bus riders from inclement weather more than the current custom and neighborhood shelters. The new proposed shelter design has already been approved by UDC and Planning Commission at two site-specific locations:

- Temporary Transfer Plaza on 9th and Marshall
- Hull and South Side Plaza

GRTC and the City of Richmond would like to receive approval for this design citywide. This will allow GRTC to re-use the shelters that will be temporarily installed at the Temporary Transfer Plaza at other locations. The shelter design has width and depth

ranges which provides footprint flexibility, dependent on the width of the sidewalk and frequency of use of the bus stop.

The structure will be black (powder-coated aluminum) with a matte black roof and black benches.

After this application was submitted, Ross Catrow made staff aware that the same company that provides these shelters also had alternative designs that could potentially fit for this purpose. The applicant was amenable to taking time to talk to the company to see if certain modifications can be made with this bus shelter, one being to perhaps install a glass structure in front to make the shelter more protective from the elements. This application suggests the city-wide use of a bus shelter design that was previously site-specifically approved for the Temporary Transfer Plaza on 9th and Marshall and for Southside Plaza. However, since the approval of these site-specific shelters, Staff was notified of other plausible, contemporary bus shelter designs that share similarities to the new BRT stations in terms of character and materials.

Staff believes there is an opportunity to improve existing shelters with a more modern, improved aesthetic which will help unify the transit network. Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant a deferral for resubmission.

The applicant is here in case you have any in-depth questions.

Ms. Almond: I agree with staff's suggestion: something a little more modern and in keeping with the BRT would make sense, particularly downtown. I don't necessarily mind some of the other ones at some of the more suburban locations.

Mr. Son: We would consider that, since they have already been bought by GRTC, that the ones that will soon be placed at the Transfer Plaza, once they are removed for future development they would be available to be used elsewhere in the city, at which point GRTC would get a recommendation for location for those. So they will still be located in the city.

Mr. Quilici: We cannot waste the opportunity with replacing them, to look at that in a much broader way. I agree with the comment that it's an opportunity to see if we can match a more consistent language with the new Pulse bus station.

Ms. Almond: Josh, when did we review these for the first time – the ones that go with the Transfer Plaza?

Mr. Son: I believe that was January of 2018.

Ms. Almond: When are they actually going to be installed? It's winter now and it's almost a year ago that we looked at them.

Adrienne Torres (of GRTC): The shelters should be arriving at GRTC either the end of this week or next week. They're supposed to be here by the end of December. There was a delay with the vendor – they were supposed to be here in October but it kept getting pushed back.

Mr. Johannas: How many?

Adrienne Torres: It is 6 for the transfer facility and 1 for Hull Street. The ones at the transfer station actually don't have this front piece on them.

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

Gordon Edgerton: I'm echoing what I think you've already heard. The character is a little bit lacking for the city and almost reminiscent of ten or fifteen years ago. I do think it's a great improvement and I want to commend you for getting this toward this – it's a vastly needed thing on the urban landscape. But the character is important, and I think it sets an example for what we're heading towards in the future of the city. The popularity of the Pulse is going to be showing that.

The other note is, maybe we could have something that's more local in terms of production. There's plenty of companies around Virginia that could produce this. One in Roanoke Virginia, Renaissance Contracting, does a really nice job and they've got stuff that could be produced and more easily maintained here in the city.

Ms. Almond: Any discussion from the committee?

Mr. Quilici: How does the process now work? Are we going to see several examples, options? Are we going to have timing for this?

Mr. Son: Depending on when the applicant is able to put together an application, the application for bus shelters to be used citywide would come under 17.05 review, which speaks to any infrastructure or structure that will be maintained by the city, which can be used anywhere in the city and will not have to come back to UDC. So at this one juncture we would review the different options, make a suggestion – I believe it is up to the applicants whether they come in for conceptual or final review – and to look at the different kinds of modification that we want: if we want a more enclosed shelter, or something not as enclosed, solar panels, things like that.

Mr. Quilici: It would be helpful for the Committee to understand first, what are the general needs that are necessary for these shelters. We approved solar panels, for example, in a previous one, to have continuous light in it. Maybe that's something we want to start looking at for all the other citywide shelters. Protection from wind is another one, or information – a list of these items would be helpful, to have the best city bus station that serves the people for the final selection.

Mr. Johannas: So, are you asking us to produce that list right now?

Mr. Quilici: I think it has to come from the applicant, because they know better. We can give suggestions, but I think it has to come from them first, according to what they see are the needs of the users.

A motion was made by Committee Member Quilici, seconded by Committee Member Johannas, that the regular agenda item be recommended for deferral for resubmission to the Planning Commission with the following conditions:

-That the applicant provides a list of projected user needs in addition to alternative design options for recommendation of approval

The motion carried unanimously.

Aye -- 5 - Chris Arias, David Johannas, Andrea Quilici, Andrew P. Gould and Chair Andrea Almond

Excused -- 3 - Jill Nolt, James W. Klaus and Emily Smith

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Quilici: I sent these suggestions for the review of the Urban Design Guidelines. What's the timeline, what's the next step?

Mr. Son: Now that I have everyone's comments and suggestions, I will need to review it and see if there's overlap. Then I may just do a section-by-section at one of the next meetings, or just send an email out so we can get to a point where we can bring it to a meeting in a form where it doesn't take too much time to go through. So I may just be in contact via email to the Committee members. Then you could respond individually to me so I can make sure I understood your comments and suggestions accurately. From there I may create a bullet-pointed list with what has changed and what has improved based on the different sections that we have.

Mr. Quilici: You asked us to send you comments regarding sustainability mostly in order to get it into the guidelines. But there were other topics we wanted to review or address; one of them was the lighting. We said we would get in touch with the Department of Public Utilities in order to understand this cobra lighting.

Mr. Son: I talked to Mark [Olinger] about this. He has not had a chance yet to speak to DPU about this. I'm working on that also, but that does seem to be something UDC has stated fundamentally: that they want to phase out the cobra lights and look at alternatives – which staff believes is in line with what we're trying to do with updating the Urban Design Guidelines.

Mr. Quilici: Are these two things going in parallel?

Mr. Son: Ideally, yes. But our [staff] time has been shifting back and forth from our local projects to the larger Planning Department focus – Richmond 300 and things like that.

Mr. Arias: Would it make sense for us to as a group discuss and review this at some point – add it to the consent agenda? Maybe we're contradicting each other, maybe there's ambiguity. I would like to know what other people are thinking.

Mr. Son: I could put into a matrix comments made by Committee Members, so they could be seen and commented on. Or we could have a special meeting to discuss, which we will then advertise to the public – maybe one day next year – maybe like a workshop of some sort.

Drew Gould and Chris Arias both agreed that it would be good to have public involvement.

Mr. Quilici: It's helpful to have this matrix you're talking about ahead of time so we come prepared.

Mr. Son: With that in mind, maybe we wait until I am able to get back with Pamela Nichols in the Clerk's office. I believe there is also someone sitting in for the Citizen-at-Large seat which was formerly held by Giles Harnsberger [Giles Garrison] To give them some time to look at the existing guidelines and make any recommendations they may have, and then we will send out each other's comments and then schedule a special meeting.

Chris Arias: Sometimes I feel that a lot of times we're picking the lesser of two evils, and I feel that there is better design out there. We rarely have the opportunity to say "this whole project needs to go back to the drawing board, because it's okay but it's not great." Is there some option that we have for this, rather than just saying "No" which seems too broad a stroke.

Mr. Son: Technically you have the power to recommend 6 different options: Conceptual Approval as Submitted; Conceptual Approval with Conditions; Approval as Submitted; Approval with Conditions; Deferral for Re-Submission; or Disapproval. Within those 6 things, the Committee has the power to recommend that to Planning Commission, DPW, Directors.

Ms. Almond: Any other business or questions for Josh?

There were no further questions or comments.

Adjournment