



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
2nd Floor of City Hall  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.richmondgov.com](http://www.richmondgov.com)

## Meeting Minutes Urban Design Committee

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Thursday, September 10, 2020

10:00 AM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

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**This meeting will be held through electronic participation means.**

This meeting will be held through electronic communication means pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020. This meeting will be open to participation through electronic communication means by the public and closed to in-person participation by the public.

Committee members and other staff will participate by teleconference/videoconference via Microsoft Teams.

Special Guidelines for Public Access and Citizen Participation:

Audio of the meeting will be streamed live online at the following web address:  
<https://richmondva.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

To listen to the meeting's live stream at the web address provided, find and click the link that reads, "In Progress" in the farthest right hand column entitled, "Video".

Interested citizens who wish to speak will be given an opportunity to do so by following the instructions below.

[PDRPRES 2020.049](#) Public Participation and Access Instructions - Urban Design Committee

**Attachments:** [09 Public Access and Participation Instructions - URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE](#)

### Call to Order

### Roll Call

**Present --** 4 - \* Andrea Quilici, \* Chair Andrea Almond, \* Charles Woodson and \* Max Hepp-Buchanan

**Absent --** 5 - \* Jill Nolt, \* Andrew P. Gould, \* James W. Klaus, \* Emily Smith and \* John Reyna

### Approval of Minutes

**This was approved**

**Aye --** 3 - Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson and Max Hepp-Buchanan

**Abstain --** 1 - Andrea Quilici

**UDC MIN** Minutes of the August 6th, 2020 Meeting  
**2020-08**

**Attachments:** UDC MIN 2020-08 DRAFT

**This Minutes was approved**

**Aye --** 3 - Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson and Max Hepp-Buchanan

**Abstain --** 1 - Andrea Quilici

**Secretary's Report**

The Secretary's Report was delivered by Committee Secretary Alex Dandridge.

The updated UDC Membership Language zoning change was introduced to Richmond City Council on August 3rd 2020. The zoning change was then reviewed by the City Planning Commission on August 17th, 2020. The Planning Commission recommended that City Council approve the zoning change, and the final review of this item by City Council will be on September 14th, 2020.

The following items were approved by Planning Commission at the August 17th, 2020 Meeting: UDC 2020-12, Final Review of Warwick Road Maintenance Facility Improvements and UDC 2020-13, Final Review of the Baseline Parklet Design.

**Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda****CONSENT AGENDA**

There are no items on the Consent Agenda

**REGULAR AGENDA**

[UDC 2020-14](#) UDC 2020-14 Final Review of a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue.

**Attachments:** [Application & Plans](#)  
[Staff Report to UDC](#)  
[Public Comment](#)  
[UDC Report to DPW](#)

The application was presented by Mr. Dandridge.

Mr. Dandridge: The only item on the Regular Agenda is UDC 2020-14, encroachment review of a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue. The subject right-of-way is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue. This intersection is an un-signalized four-way stop. It is located within an area zoned R-4 Residential. Bellevue Avenue is a striped, two-way road with a posted speed limit of 25 mph, and Fauquier Avenue is a two-way road, separated by a median south of Bellevue Avenue, and has a posted speed limit of 25 mph. The subject right-of-way is in the heart of a residential area, and in close proximity to two

commercial areas, one being along Bellevue Avenue, and the other being along MacArthur Avenue.

Although there have not been any previous projects reviewed at the subject right-of-way, the Urban Design Committee reviewed and recommended approval of the Bellevue Neighborhood sign in October 2006. This sign is located at the intersection of Fauquier Avenue and Brook Road.

Bellevue is a neighborhood in Richmond's Northside composed of over 1,240 homes and a network of sidewalks. The Bellevue Civic Association is proposing to construct a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue.

This location is positioned at a 4-way stop. This project proposes to transform this underutilized public right-of-way into an attractive spot where passersby can stop and sit. Existing conditions show there is an informal foot path across the site, demonstrating the natural movement of pedestrians cutting across from Fauquier Avenue and onto the sidewalk along Bellevue Avenue. There are two signs, a stop sign and a street sign, located on the corner. The signs will not be impacted or obstructed by the project.

The hardscape will be professionally installed by My New Project, LLC, owned by Victor Ayala, who has performed numerous projects in Bellevue. Pete Rose will be supplying the NewLine paver materials. The proposed hardscape will follow the sidewalk on the south side and then curve around the curb and follow the Fauquier curb with an offset for a possible sidewalk installation in the future. From the point of the corner the hardscape will go back 20' and feature a 21" curved seating wall composed of pavers and a bull-nose cap along the western edge of the hardscape.

The hardscape design will utilize Fieldstone, gray colored pavers that are six by nine by three inches in size with a granite colored border. The 21" sitting wall will utilize six-inch and three-inch blocks in a random pattern. The top will use Fieldstone, gray colored caps with a bullnose edge. The stones will be laid and held together by poly sand, a mix of fine sand and polymer additives. Upon proper installation, the polymers will activate and bind together inside the paver joints.

There are no plans for landscaping, as pavers will cover the site. The Bellevue Civic Association will be responsible for maintenance of the project, to include spraying for weed control if necessary. The Bellevue Civic Association is working with the City of Richmond to create a Maintenance Agreement which will turn over all maintenance from the City to the Bellevue Civic Association. This Maintenance Agreement is scheduled to be introduced to the City Council on September 28th, 2020.

There are no plans for additional lighting or other site improvements at this time.

The Urban Design Guidelines state that "simpler paving designs are more compatible with diverse building styles and better unify the various design elements found on City streets. The color of brick and concrete pavers should coordinate with building architecture and adjacent streetscape pavements" (pg. 20), and that "the design of walls or fences and screening should be consistent with the design, materials, colors and textures of the adjacent buildings" (pg. 25). Staff finds that the proposed materials are neutral in color and simple in design, and will not impact the visual characteristics of the surrounding residential block. The proposed stone and color for this project are similar in visual characteristics to the materials used in the original Bellevue Arch on Hermitage Road and Pope Avenue, as well as the newer Bellevue Neighborhood sign on Fauquier Avenue and Brook Road.

The Guidelines emphasize that impervious materials should be minimized within the scope of proposed projects. As submitted, the current design of the hardscape will utilize impervious pavers over a footprint of approximately 200 square feet. If feasible, staff recommends that the applicant consider utilizing pervious pavers, or an installation method that allows for the absorption of water on site.

The Bellevue Civic Association is proposing to construct a seating wall at the northwest corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue, a location that is located within the Bellevue neighborhood in Richmond's Northside. This project proposes to transform an underutilized portion of a public right-of-way into an attractive and activated space that residents and visitors can enjoy.

It is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Director of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request with the following conditions: a Maintenance Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Bellevue Civic Association be finalized and adopted by City Council before work begins on the project; to better understand the extent of the encroachment, a site plan showing more specific measurements of the hardscape and seating wall and the project's relation to the neighboring private property be submitted to the Department of Public Works before work begins; applicant consider the feasibility of including pervious pavers, or an installation method of the impervious pavers that allows for water infiltration into the project design.

The applicant David Lydiard not being present, Brian Copple from Public Works stated that he could speak somewhat to the project.

Mr. Copple stated that he had told Mr. Lydiard that it will be crucial for DPW to receive a site plan, so that DPW can ensure that the site triangle is not overly obstructed. Other than that need for detail, Mr. Copple stated that DPW is supportive of the project.

Mr. Quilici asked about accessibility at the project site, stating that he did not see a curb cut or accessibility features, and asked if this could be added. Mr. Quilici asked about the setback, stating that a setback of five feet is important to allow for turning. Mr. Quilici also asked about lighting, and whether the project would require any new lighting.

Mr. Quilici suggested that the new sign for the project could use the same post that is currently present at the site for a stop sign.

Mr. Quilici asked if staff suggestions about using water-absorbing pavers had been incorporated into the project.

Mr. Copple stated that applicants would be required to adhere to Better Street guidelines for the project. Mr. Copple stated that there are setback guidelines which will also need to be followed. Mr. Copple stated that City policy does not allow combining traffic control and street signage on one post. Mr. Copple stated that he did not know of a lighting component to the plan, and that he did not think it would be necessary, although some sort of a maintenance plan would be necessary.

Mr. Copple stated that his understanding was that pervious pavers could only be recommended, not required. Mr. Dandridge confirmed this, and added that the closest light pole appeared to be at the corner of Fauquier and Bellevue, on the eastern side. Mr. Quilici stated that this sounded sufficient.

Mr. Dandridge stated that one public comment had been received in support of the project, and that Mr. Lydiard, who is the head of the local neighborhood association, had

told him that there was overwhelming neighborhood support for the project.

Mr. Hepp-Buchanan asked if accessibility requirements would include a requirement that the applicants pay for installation of a new curb ramp, or whether accessibility requirements would only apply to the project itself, not the sidewalk conditions. Mr. Copple stated that the corner in question is deficient and does need accessibility upgrades and that a maintenance agreement will be needed.

Mr. Copple stated that he believed DPW has the authority to require this.

Mr. Hepp-Buchanan stated that he believed that Fauquier is due for re-paving, and expressed hope the City could include the curb ramp in this work, so the civic association would not have to pay for it. Mr. Copple stated the civic association is eager to have the curb ramp, but that he would encourage them to wait for the City to do this. Mr. Copple stated that he believed Fauquier was due for re-paving next summer (2021) and that he did not think it prudent for the civic association to take responsibility for the curb ramp.

Committee Chair Almond asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

Mr. Dandridge stated that Mr. Lydiard was having difficulty joining the meeting. Ms. Jones suggested that he call in either to the meeting or to her direct line, as this would be simpler than joining via internet.

Ms. Almond determined that the vote on the motion should proceed.

Mr. Woodson suggested that for the spraying component of the plan, glyphosate usage be avoided in favor of milder weed-killing measures such as dishwashing liquid or organic weed control measures. Ms. Almond stated that the Committee could add a condition that, when the maintenance agreement is negotiated with the City, this be included.

**A motion was made by Committee Chair Almond, seconded by Committee Member Quilici, that this encroachment be recommended for approval by the Department of Public Works with the following conditions:**

**-A Maintenance Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Bellevue Civic Association be finalized and adopted by City Council before work begins.**

**-The adopted Maintenance Agreement include a clause that ensures the use of organic, chemical-free weed control methods during maintenance of the site by the Bellevue Civic Association.**

**-To better understand the extent of the encroachment, a site plan showing more specific measurements of the hardscape and seating wall and the project's relation to the neighboring private property be submitted to the Department of Public Works before work begins.**

**-The installation of an accessible ramp on the northwestern corner of Bellevue Avenue and Fauquier Avenue be included in the scope of work for this project.**

**-Applicant consider the feasibility of including pervious pavers, or an installation method of the impervious pavers that allows for water infiltration into the project design.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye -- 4 - Andrea Quilici, Chair Andrea Almond, Charles Woodson and Max Hepp-Buchanan**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

## UDC Guidelines Update Discussion

Mr. Dandridge recapped that the Guidelines subcommittee had met recently and discussed the community character section of the Guidelines, specifically street tree plantings, and that as a follow-up he had put together some new language for the Committee to review.

Mr. Dandridge stated that the subcommittee meeting had focused on whether or not to allow ground cover and when it's appropriate for it to be included in tree wells; as well as attempting to define the distinction between street tree plantings and other streetscape plantings. The latter would include dedicated areas for smaller shrubs or ground cover.

Mr. Dandridge read the new proposed language in the guidelines, regarding tree well volume and other specifications, placement, selection, and maintenance; as well as streetscape plantings, including ground covers.

Ms. Almond suggested that language strongly recommending the provision of irrigation by either the property owner or the City be added. Ms. Almond stated that this had been one item emphasized as critical by Janine Lester, the Urban Forestry Interim Operations Manager, in UDC discussions with her.

Mr. Dandridge stated that there had been discussion about ambiguous terminology in the Guidelines, and asked if further explanation might be needed to distinguish street tree wells from other planting areas.

Ms. Almond suggested that language about spacing between trees could be added, though what is stated already may be sufficient. Ms. Almond stated that the Committee had discussed how on larger streets the space between tree plantings is quite significant, and that there could be smaller decorative plantings that contribute to the streetscape in between. Ms. Almond stated that Committee members had wanted to include language about this in the Guidelines.

Mr. Quilici stated that a recent example of tree plantings is on West Broad Street near the Whole Foods Market [at 2024 W. Broad Street] which includes large trees with irrigation. Mr. Quilici asked if the Guidelines require maintenance of new ground cover and bushes. Ms. Almond agreed that maintenance should be required, stating that Urban Forestry staff are focused on maintaining the trees, and additional landscaping, which UDC does find desirable, is not maintained by the City; if property owners are slated to maintain features, the City then does not maintain them and they tend to be neglected. Ms. Almond stated that there should be language in the Guidelines about maintenance agreements.

Mr. Dandridge stated that he was in the process of tidying up other sections and hoped to have text edits done by the end of the next two UDC meetings, and a final draft ready for review by UDC by November and December. Mr. Dandridge stated that getting the final text ready would just be a matter of him making a few edits and then having PDR staff review it for grammar, spelling, and organization.

Ms. Almond stated that Ms. Lester of Urban Forestry had stated that local tree health standards, which reference American Nurserymen standards are not strong enough, and had encouraged adopting a set of standards that is used in Florida. Ms. Almond suggested that maybe some language about getting higher quality street trees could be added to the Guidelines. Mr. Dandridge stated that language about overall health of the trees at the time of planting definitely would be worthwhile, and that he had been hesitant

to reference the specific Florida standards because Ms. Lester had mentioned that they are only in force within the state of Florida. Ms. Almond stated that the Guidelines already have language about the general health of street trees, but that Ms. Lester had recommended very specific standards that would be more stringent.

Mr. Quilici asked if the Florida standards in question were state-wide or localized standards. Ms. Almond stated that there is Florida state nurserymen association, whose standards are stricter and clearer than other state standards and national standards, but that she was not certain if it would be possible contractually for UDC to adopt these. Mr. Quilici asked if the standards could potentially be adopted by the City of Richmond, as specific standards distinct from state standards. Ms. Almond stated that she was not sure, but that she would hope so, and that this would be something to include in a City tree ordinance.

Mr. Dandridge stated that he could do research on what legally could be adopted in terms of planting guidelines.

Mr. Todd Woodson stated that the Parks Department has their own arborist, and asked if it would be appropriate to discuss tree standards with them. Mr. Dandridge stated that he could contact other arborists for feedback. Ms. Almond stated that the UDC had been focused on streetscapes, and that parks is another topic that could be discussed with an arborist. Ms. Almond stated that part of the reason for discussing these topics with Ms. Lester was her authority as acting Director of Urban Forestry, and that she was not sure how that would work with the director of the Parks Department, but that the UDC could find out.

## **Adjournment**

Committee Chair Andrea Almond adjourned the meeting at 10:49 AM.