

Friends of the James River Park  
Board Meeting  
Tuesday, May 1, 2012, 6 p.m.  
Visitors Center – Park Headquarters

Attendees: Betsy, Ralph (JRPS Manager), Elaine, Myrna, Larry, Warren, Vicky, Maureen

- I. Welcome, Introductions - Betsy
- II. Minutes of previous meeting – (Vicky) – revised minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – (Myrna) – Board intends to move \$1K to Nathan Burrell's special revenue budget (from Luck Stone, associated with Riverrock July 2011). General balance of \$56,823.14 includes a few restricted gifts, totaling several thousand dollars.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Communication/Publicity – (Maureen) River Heroes will be announced (Velzy and Steidel were winners this year). Pleas are being made to our full membership (Board, Volunteers, and general Members) to participate in FoJRP initiatives and responsibilities. Request was put out to take on some of Mary Helen's responsibilities, until she can return to routine schedule. May is a big month for Park-related activities, and there is a big volunteer need at that time. Need people at Riverrock, May 18, 19, and 20, especially... FoJRP Picnic is June the 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Pumphouse, 6PM, and X-Terra games which are June 9<sup>th</sup> (and also the JRAC cleanup). We also have a Riverside Drive Cleanup May 12<sup>th</sup> on the docket.

B. Events – (Mary Helen/Elaine)

1. Richmond's Earth Day Festival could not be staffed due to not enough participation, even from Board stalwarts. Return to discussion of strategies to better engage our full FoJRP membership to ensure adequate presence at important events.
2. Dominion Riverrock, May 18-20, Brown's Island – Sign-Up sheet distributed to Board Members.

C. Finance/Fundraising – (Warren) -- Non-personalized Park license plates to be processed and mailed by May 4<sup>th</sup>, with about 7 additional days needed for personalized plates. Also, it should be able to purchase plates online within a few weeks.

D. Park Improvements/Projects – (Larry) – Again, Riverside drive cleanup May 12th, 9-11 AM at Pony Pasture (Southampton to Scottview; Huguenot Flatwater West to Fishing Club). Ralph mentioned that at that event volunteers also can plant mushroom spores, transplant mayapples, etc... We also need to drag a lawnmower along park trails.

E. Membership/Volunteers – (Myrna, who was given A Big Thanks!) -- Membership renewal letters (January to April '12) were sent out Saturday, using an adapted version of Michael's letter. Expired memberships will be sent out in the middle of each month. Letter will be modified to include options for volunteering. Myrna offered to show people how to pull info from the database.

V. Old Business

River Hero – (Maureen) – Winners will be given a restaurant gift certificate, a Discover the James tour, and a Real Richmond food tour. Mr. Steidel cannot, however, receive gifts associated with his duties as a City Employee.

- A. Thoughts on river memorials – (Elaine) – discussion deferred this meeting.
- B. Picnic – June 2 – (Betsy) – volunteer sign-up sheet passed around to Board Members.
- C. Meeting with Dr. Merrifield – (Elaine) -- Molly attended this meeting, which went well. Ralph (Park Manager) can't fill out his retirement paperwork until 3 months prior, and the City can't begin a search for his position until Ralph fills out paperwork. City is considering two positions: administrative and a naturalist. Ralph urged a paid naturalist for the City (with enthusiasm, ability to work on a tight budget, strong oral and written communication, abilities to engage and interact with volunteers) over an administrative position, if need be. Ralph's original position was naturalist not park manager; but, the Park needs both. Board hopes that possible candidates could be located through ads placed in publications related to the Audobon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, James River organizations, Sierra Club, etc.

New Business – noted that the items listed below were discussed together. Again, FoJRP membership must come together and find new energy, as a New Chair for Events is needed, and Board Officers will be elected soon. Ideas for energizing the membership included offering incentives, such as a 3 hour tube trip with Ralph in exchange for 3 hours of volunteering. Also discussed was the absence of JRP Programs in James River Days brochure. So, FoJRP Membership could be offered exclusive events: the slave trail, various nature walks, firefly trips, frog's eye tours, etc.

(This covers New Business: New chair for and Events, Nominating Committee, and Getting Membership more involved, and was a general discussion).

Report – (Ralph) -- Ralph commended the Altria group for their volunteer efforts, and noted that they will be repainting the interior of the Pumphouse. There is a broad need for Park programming and big volunteer groups. Ralph reported that the Park recycles 5K lbs. of glass and plastic per year. It was a good month for media – 7 references including large section on Commentary section of R-TD. Projects include Anne Wright's phone app for a geology tour, and other initiatives. The Cushing family underwrote benches and trash cans... Earth Day brought guided walks to heron rookery, kids fishing, turtles and snakes, horse and carriage to new park: the Basin park near I-95 by Hull street. On the flip side, there are challenges with lots of graffiti this year. Ralph filled in the group on some problems with staff pay – 'Downtown problems.' He also said he was called to a predisciplinary hearing. Park is busy, with June, July and August bit in April – which have strained staff resources. The salamander pond culvert again was vandalized, and this needs to be addressed. No coverage in James River Days brochure, so events should be presented to the media or restricted to membership. Maintenance needed in Pony Pasture restroom, need \$2K for hand dryers. Fish stocking was completed at Belle Island, Quarry Pond and Manchester canal. There were automobile accidents at 29<sup>th</sup> St/ Riverside and on the Capitol Trail. New Huguenot Bridge has no provision for distracted drivers – such as a textured pavement or visual marking. Accidents close to Park areas suggest need for this. The art show along floodwall was well-attended but appeared to encourage graffiti: as seen in the participatory events -- demos of chalking and spray painting on fabric covering floodwall. There is a big need for volunteers – especially manning the Pony Pasture parking lot Memorial Day weekend and Monday itself. Ralph again hopes to plan a Wounded Warriors full moon paddle in June and/ or July. This Saturday (5-5-12) is a SuperMoon evening!

Next meeting June 5<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM, Park Headquarters. It's a cliffhanger: Will Myrna again bring pimento and ham rolls on mini potato buns?