

Friends of the James River Park Three-Year Strategic Planning Retreat Notes (Draft)

Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 4-8 pm

Dominion Energy

Facilitated by Ruth Morrison

Board members in attendance: All board members attended the meeting with the exception Scott Dickens. Mike Doerr left the meeting around 6:00 pm.

Staff members in attendance: Shawna Shade, Bryce Wilk

Friends of the James River Park Business Items

- **Introductions:** Katherine Mitchell welcomed board members.
- **Meeting Minutes:** Kevin Tobin motioned to approve the December meeting minutes. Jake Savage seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- **Rocket Pop Media:** Scott Dickens of Rocket Pop Media drafted a proposal for services. Board members reviewed the proposal and discussion ensued. Mary Kay Martin motioned to secure Rocket Pop Media for \$800.00 per month through June 30, 2020. Cary Wing seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- **Conservation Easement Monitoring:** Greg Velzy is working with Capital Region Land Conservancy to organize two conservation easement monitoring trainings on January 14 (6:30 pm) and January 15 (12:00 pm). Both trainings will be held at James River Park System Headquarters.
- **Membership:** Cat Anthony and Shawna Shade reported increases in membership thanks to year end appeal letters to past donors.
- **Budget:** Dean Brunson reported the organization is on track.
- **Retreat Overview:** Katherine Mitchell introduced Ruth Morrison, the strategic planning facilitator.

Mission Discussion & Activity

Ruth Morrison led a discussion and activity about the mission of the organization. How does it impact you, some place, some one, some thing?

Supporting Organizations

Bryce Wilk provided an overview of the organizations that support the James River Park System and the nature of their work.

- James River Outdoor Coalition (JROC)
- Friends of the Pump House
- James River Advisory Council (JRAC)
- Invasive Plant Task Force
- Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
- James River Association (JRA)
- RVA More
- Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities
- Richmond Regional Tourism

- Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
- RVA H2O
- Plan RVA
- Maymont Foundation
- Surrounding Government and State Government

What is the Role of Friends of the James River Park System?

- James River Park System Stakeholder Communication
- Coalescing/coordinating efforts
- Building/Maintaining strong partnerships with groups to get the work done
- Learn from partners and be a voice for them all
- Be a unified voice for the collective efforts of these groups.
- Encourage everyone to help with their strengths
- FOJRP can be the “great organizer,” “music director,” and “Swiss Bank” for the park system
- Orchestrate, know who to tap for what

Strategic External Goals

I. Advocacy and Grant Writing

1. Identify partner orgs based on their special expertise and strengths
2. Manage process to work collectively, not competitively with partner groups via enhanced communications and coordination
3. Identify the best resources for advocacy and grant writing, fundraising

Action items:

1. Reconvene the steering committee of the master plan (MP)
2. Identify members of the steering committee to support advocacy and grantwriting efforts.
3. Determine role of FOJRP advocacy committee
4. Identify and engage gifted grant writers from support groups and within PRCF
5. Develop a database of existing corporate and foundation contacts

II. Coordinate/Drive Master Plan Implementation

1. Identify stakeholders (start w/MP steering committee and consider others)
2. FOJRP MP action team to work with Bryce on draft plan for short-term goal implementation and FOJRP roles.
3. Meet with stakeholders/steering committee to get feedback/buy in on plan
4. Come to agreement with stakeholders about who is doing what in the meeting
5. Develop a process to keep our stakeholders informed, engaged, coordinated, accountable and credited.
6. Plan a shared critical path document to track progress of implementation of MP
7. Study other master plans and how they were implemented
8. Communicate successes and completions achieved.

Strategic Internal Goals*

I. Leadership Development

1. Fill six FOJRP Board spots with people who can help accomplish our internal and external goals
 - a. Create a Board Matrix to determine what skills are needed (6 spots open)
 - b. Look at significant current and future stakeholders
 - c. Diversify board to align with current and future stakeholders
 - d. Look at skills sets of folks rolling off to anticipate voids and needs
2. Develop a plan to continually educate and engage current board
 - a. Educate and communicate via shared drive that houses FOJRP information.
 - a. Improve board effectiveness with greater adherence to bylaws with meeting attendance and participation in committees, events, volunteering.
3. Hire Executive Director (year 2 or 3?)
 - a. ID capacity grant funding source
 - b. Develop job description
4. Identify key stakeholders and develop cultivation strategies to engage them.

II. Communications Goals

1. To have an awesome brand that is reflective of our brand personality, work, and the Park that distinguishes FOJRP from other support orgs.
 - a. Get three bids to do this work (should we do this after we've decided on Governance structure)
2. To develop a three-year marketing/communications plan
 - a. Develop messaging around Master Plan implementation, the Park, FOJRP
 - b. Communicate in the Park
 - c. Consider events to host and participate in that help us reach our goals
 - d. Digital media plan (enews and social media)
 - e. Consider other opps in radio, TV, podcasts
 - f. Cultivate media and pitch stories

III. Finance Goal: Have a financial system that is transparent and aligns with generally accepted accounting practices

- a. Conduct an independent financial review/audit annually
- b. Finance committee meets at least twice per year
- c. Consider creating an annual report
- d. Write down financial systems
- e. Continue using QuickBooks

IV. Membership and Revenue

1. Develop a membership plan to increase members by ____ (Committee decide the number).
Ideas:
 - a. Solicit volunteers (Goal: # of volunteer hours for the year)
 - b. Create member levels w/ benefits (recognition in enews, annual report, in the park, swag, events, special experiences)
 - c. Attend events like Que Pasa Festival or 2nd Street Fest to reach diverse audiences

- d. Purchase database software for targeted marketing and better reporting/tracking of members and donors.
2. Increase revenue by ___%. Ideas include
 - a. License plate sales plan
 - b. Donation boxes in the Park
 - c. P&P Marketing—perhaps to financial advisors
 - d. Catalogue?/Auction
 - e. Adopt-a-Park (Scott Dickens)
 - f. Race or signature event for Park lovers

**What are Strategic Goals?*

- *What should be achieved? What does the outcome need to be?*
- *What should be different in three years' time?*
- *Specifics, measurables, by when, How much?*

Proposed Committee Structure

1. Fundraising
2. Membership
3. Advocacy
4. Finance
5. Communications
6. Board Development
7. Action Teams/Task Forces

*Branding Task Force

* FOJRP Master Plan Steering Committee *Creation* Action Team

* Reconvene Master Plan Steering Committee

*Marketing/Communications Plan Action Team

*Executive Director Task Force

Align board meetings with strategic plan action items

Visioning Exercise—did not do