

Friends of the James River Park Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 6:30 pm
Meeting Minutes

Board members in attendance:

Katherine Mitchell, President
Mary Kay Martin, Vice President
Dean Brunson, Treasurer
Justin Doyle, Secretary
Byron Chafin
Scott Dickens
Jake Savage
Kevin Tobin
Greg Velzy
Brooks Whitten

Staff members in attendance:

Bryce Wilk, Park Superintendent
Shawna Shade, Friends of the James River Park

Guests in attendance:

Eric Croska
Brian Finkle, board candidate
Elizabeth Gregor
Cassie Patterson

Introductions

Greg Velzy called the meeting to order in Katherine Mitchell's absence.

Meeting Minutes

Jake Savage motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the February board meeting. Greg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Friends of Pump House Update - Cassie Patterson

Cassie Patterson of Friends of Pump House provided an update to board members in attendance. Tours of the pump house are scheduled for March 14. SpringFest is scheduled for April 18. SpringFest will feature tours of the pump house, kayak tours on the canal. Walking tours of the canal are a possibility. Friends of the Pump House is seeking vendors.

Friends of the Pump House is focused on repairing the roof. It costs \$8,000 to assess the slate roof. They are working on repairing the main door. The bridge was recently repaired.

Bryce Wilk, Park Superintendent, praised Friends of the Pump House. The project is upwards of \$10M. Friends of the Pump House will play a role in James River Park System Master Plan implementation. Shawna Shade suggested sharing project concepts developed by 3north.

Master Plan Implementation Action Team Report - Katherine Mitchell

Katherine Mitchell thanked committees for meeting. The Master Plan Implementation Action Team is tasked with kickstarting implementation of the James River Park System Master Plan by organizing stakeholders. The action team met with Bryce to review short, mid, and long term actions. The action team is scheduled to meet again on April 2 at 4:00 pm. Chris Frelke,

Director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities provided Bryce with guidance regarding plan implementation. Greg suggested using the organization's communications to share progress.

Park Superintendent's Report - Bryce Wilk

Bryce Wilk provided an update on volunteer activity in the James River Park System. National Invasive Species Awareness Week was last week. The Invasive Plant Task Force is working on creating a top 10 least wanted plants in the park system flier. Boogie for the Biosphere concluded the week. The Beirne Carter Foundation is interested in supporting invasive plant removal at Dogwood Dell in Byrd Park. Peter Toms asked Katherine Mitchell if Friends of the James River Park can serve as the fiscal agent for the project.

Bryce shared events scheduled in the park system during the month of March. Camps are scheduled in March and April. He intends to tap the special revenue account to fill the gap.

A Brown's Island Improvement Plan stakeholder meeting is scheduled at Venture Richmond next week.

Bryce will be away from the country March 11-25.

Bryce met with water rescue yesterday. Two fatalities and five dog rescues last year.

Greg suggested posting informational signage when herbicides are used to manage invasive plants in the park system. Herbicide was recently used to manage fig buttercup at The Wetlands. Adrianna Clinton is coordinating invasive plant removal and outreach at The Wetlands.

Bryce reported the James River Park System is going to run out of payroll by the end of this quarter.

Homeless encampments in the park system include North Bank Trail, south end of the Potterfield Memorial Bridge, Dogwood Dell, and Forest Hill Park. Bryce is working with the homeless relocation unit.

Events recently attended include Shiver in the River, music and poems at Blue Bee Cider, and fireside chat at Country Club of Virginia.

Treasurer's Report - Given by Shawna Shade

Shawna reported memberships and donations are coming in. The Beirne Carter Foundation requested financial information. The Finance Committee is working on improving financial reporting.

Committee Reports

Membership Committee: Scott Dickens reported he met with Cat Anthony. They discussed strategies for increasing membering such as signage installed on park kiosks encouraging park users to text to donate. They also discussed software platforms to track donors, members, and volunteers. What can we provide in the near term to recruit members at events we attend? Scott said the committee is seeking ideas from board members. Promotional item ideas include dog toys, dog leashes, and seed coasters. Bill Draper's James River Park System photography book is coming out soon. Proceeds will benefit Friends of the James River Park. Upcoming events

include Crestwood Elementary School's nature festival and Party for the Planet. Cat is stepping down as Chair of the Membership Committee. Mary Kay Martin would like to serve as Chair. Brooks agreed to join the committee and play a big role. Scott Dickens motioned for Mary Martin to serve as Chair of the Membership Committee. Dean Brunson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Leadership Development Committee: Greg Velzy reported five openings on the board and five pending applications pending. There is no diversity in the applicant pool. All white males. The committee is encouraging folks to serve on committees. Goals of the committee include diversifying the board, developing a plan to educate board members through participation in programs, improving meeting and event attendance, established Executive Committee meetings and reports to the board, and hiring and executive director.

Advocacy Committee: Mary Kay Martin reported its budget season. Advocacy strategies include drafting letters to councilmembers, organizing river trips with influential people, and meeting with Chris Frelke every September.

Communications Committee: The committee report was emailed to board members in advance of the meeting. Scott Dickens reported the committee is seeking content for the monthly newsletter, content for social media, and blog ideas. The committee has regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The organization's board member application is online and the Google suite is ready to use.

Communications Committee: Scott Dickens reviewed the Communications Committee Report with board members. Volunteers are needed for Friday and Saturday of the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour. Pump House Springfest is April 18. Invasive Species Awareness Week is in February. Scott is seeking nominations for ParkStar videos. Scott is interested in scheduling headshots of board members to be added to the website. Communications Committee membership includes Byron Chafin, Mike Doerr, Scott Dickens, and Shawna Shade. Scott suggested creating a signature beer for the park that could benefit Friends of the James River Park. Suggestions include "Park Porter" and "Park Pilsner."

Finance Committee: No report.

Old Business

Conservation Easement Monitoring

Greg Velzy reported annual monitoring of the James River Park System conservation easement is complete.

New Business

Upcoming Events

SpringFest is April 18

Riverrock is May 15-17

Branding Action Team

The Branding Action Team will mee soon.

Friends of the James River Park FY 2021 Budget

Committees should begin considering the FY 2021 budget.

Next Meeting: April 7, 2020 at 6:30 pm