

Friends of the James River Park Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 6:30 pm
Forest Hill Park

Board Members in Attendance:

Mark Kay Martin, President
Jake Savage, Vice President
Justin Doyle, Secretary
Cat Anthony
Byron Chafin
Scott Dickens
Jean Linnell
Mel Smith
Greg Velzy
Brooks Whitten

Staff Members in Attendance:

Josh Stutz, Executive Director
Shawna Shade, Office Administrator
Michael Burton, Trails Superintendent

Guests in Attendance:

Christian Bear
Scott Ross, Riverside Outfitters
Shamar Young, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities

The meeting was called to order by Mary Kay Martin, President, at 6:35 pm.

Meeting Minutes

Scott Dickens motioned to approve the minutes from the March board meeting as amended. Jake Savage seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Josh Stutz

Josh Stutz shared Friends of the James River Park branded swag with board members in attendance.

Josh reported the benches of the outdoor classroom were installed and Blue Sky Fund has already used it. Water access and a kiosk will be added in the near future. The project is well under budget. Penelope and Tyler may make some additions to the space.

Wood River Run is next Saturday, April 16, at 9:00 am. Volunteers are needed by 8:30 am. Josh is hoping to reach 200 registrants. Proceeds from the event will support scholarships to Passages Adventure Camp and park projects.

Josh is working with Kevin Tobin, past board member, to convene businesses doing business in and around the park. A water rescue summit is being considered. More information will be provided at the May meeting.

50th Anniversary event planning has begun. Scott Dickens shared 50th Anniversary logos with Josh for consideration.

Friends of the James River Park's beer, Raging James Pilsner, will be released in May and an event will be held at Legend Brewing. Board members were asked to spread the word about the beer. It will be available through the summer months. Josh hopes it will be available at Riverrock and the 50th Anniversary event.

Josh discussed fiscal sponsorship and formally sponsoring the James River Park System Invasive Plant Task Force and Friends of the Pump House. Both organizations have similar missions and Josh is working with them to draft documents. Cat Anthony inquired about charging a fee for fiscal sponsorship. There are no plans to charge a fee initially.

The Christian Wood Scholarship Fund has been moved from Enrichmond Foundation to Friends of the James River Park. The fund supports scholarships to Passages Adventure Camp.

The next ParkStar video features Dominion Energy Foundation and their support of the James River Park System.

Josh presented prospective summer projects to the Executive Committee and has gotten initial feedback from committee members and Michael Burton, acting Superintendent of the James River Park System. Josh has been working on securing estimates for the projects. One of the projects is a trail to bypass the parking area at Reedy Creek/Park HQ.

Josh reported StreetLight Data will cost the organization \$40,000 to \$50,000. Data will allow the organization to track visitation to the park system. Josh is seeking a funder to cover the cost of the data.

Josh reported Scott Dickens shared a link to the updated website with him. Select board members will be given the opportunity to review the website.

Park Report – Michael Burton, Acting Superintendent

Michael Burton, Acting Superintendent of the James River Park System, shared visitation data for the month of March with meeting attendees.

- Park Visitation: 157,658 visits
- Trail Use: 58,000

Michael reported railings at the new Pump House Park observation deck are being installed and the new outdoor classroom at Reedy Creek/Park HQ is coming along nicely.

Riverside Outfitters donated stone for a river access site since the Huguenot Flatwater project is incomplete. The Huguenot Flatwater project has been delayed by high water.

Work on the Pony Pasture parking lot continues and the project is nearing completion.

Shamar Young, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

Shamar Young, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, expressed his gratitude to the organization and is looking for ways to partner with organizations like Friends of the James River Park. Shamar spoke about the proposed park ranger pilot program that would support the James River Park System and other parks across the city. Rangers will have the power to issue citations for violations and will not carry firearms. If funded, the pilot program would begin this summer. Friends of the James River Park was asked to support the program and associated funding.

- **Action:** Scott Dickens motioned to formally support the park ranger pilot program and it was seconded by Mel Smith. The motion passed with unanimous support.

Treasurer's Report

Dean Brunson, Treasurer, was absent. Josh reported more money is coming in than going out. A proposed budget will be presented to the Executive Committee in May and the full board in June.

Committee Rosters

New committee rosters were shared with board members via email. New committees will convene in the next few weeks. Josh will facilitate meetings and work with committees to draft charters. New committees include Programs and Projects Committee, Development Committee, Community Engagement Committee, Governance and Finance Committee, and Executive Committee.

Advocacy Updates

Josh is scheduled to have lunch with Councilmember Lynch to discuss funding for connecting trails.

Old Business

Dumping Debris in the James River Park System: Giles Garrison, Superintendent, drafted a letter about dumping debris in the James River Park System that will appear in Brooks Whitten's neighborhood newsletter.

Graffiti: Greg Velzy shared photos of recent graffiti at the Belle Isle quarry. A discussion about graffiti ensued. Cat Anthony suggested drafting a press release to bring attention to the issue. Scott Dickens suggested creating a public service announcement with local artists.

New Business

Transforming the James River in Richmond by Ralph Hambrick: Greg Velzy shared copies of Ralph Hambrick's book with interested board members. Friends of the James River Park purchased copies of the book for board members.

Adjournment: Jake Savage motioned to adjourn the meeting. Scott Dickens seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Justin Doyle, Secretary of Friends of the James River Park.