

**Friends of the James River Park Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm**  
**Reedy Creek/Park HQ**  
**Richmond, Virginia**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Mary Kay Martin, President  
Jake Savage, Vice President  
Justin Doyle, Secretary  
Dean Brunson, Treasurer  
Byron Chafin  
Scott Dickens (virtual)  
Bill Draper  
Jean Linnell  
Matt Rigby  
Mel Smith  
Greg Velzy  
Brooks Whitten  
Krista Weatherford

**Staff Members in Attendance:**

Josh Stutz, Executive Director  
Shawna Shade, Office Administrator  
Giles Garrison, Superintendent

**Guests in Attendance:**

Christina Brockwell, Mother of Lauren Winstead  
Gill Sigmon, RVA Environmental Film Festival  
Rochelle Atholz, RVA Environmental Film Festival

The meeting was called to order by Mary Kay Martin, President, at 6:30 pm.

**Meeting Minutes**

Greg Velzy motioned to approve the minutes from the June board meeting as amended. Brooks Whitten seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**River Safety - Christina Brockwell**

Christina Brockwell, mother of Lauren Winstead, spoke to board members about her efforts to improve river safety. She is working to improve pre-trip planning resources, increasing signage on and along the river, and ensuring first responders have the equipment they need to rescue river users in distress. Her focus is improving safety around dams, specifically Boshers' Dam.

She has been in contact with Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources and Richmond's Department of Public Utilities. Josh Stutz reported new safety signage has been installed in the James River Park System and the map on Friends of the James River Park's website now includes river hazards. Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation is working on adding signage at Robious Landing. Greg Velzy distributed safety brochures created by the James River Outdoor Coalition to board members.

### **Executive Director's Report – Josh Stutz**

Josh Stutz reported that new river safety signs have been installed across the park system. The James River Outdoor Coalition's river safety signs have also been installed. Josh is continuing to learn about river safety from Richmond Fire Department.

The fiscal sponsorship agreement is in final draft form. The agreement will allow Friends of the James River Park to fiscally sponsor Friends of the Pump House and James River Invasive Plant Task Force. Organizers of the RVA Environmental Film Festival is seeking fiscal sponsorship.

An end of fiscal year report should be available by the September according to Dean Brunson. Josh reported the organization raised more than it spent during the last fiscal year.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event planning is underway and evolving. Josh is working with Giles Garrison to organize an outdoorsy event on Belle Isle.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Tower fence relocation project is complete. The next project is the Reedy Creek shared use path that will separate pedestrians and cyclists from the gravel drive at Reedy Creek/Park HQ.

Numerous volunteer events are happening in the park system. Josh recognized Shawna Shade's contributions to organizing events with corporate groups and other groups.

The ArtWorks fundraiser is scheduled for August 26, 2022.

Board member candidates will be considered at the October meeting.

### **Superintendent's Report - Giles Garrison**

Giles Garrison thanked Friends of the James River Park for its support of the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Connector project.

Giles reported park system staff members are enthusiastic about the pollinator garden at Reedy Creek/Park HQ. Richmond is pursuing Bee City designation.

Friends of the James River Park supported Teens in Richmond Parks (TRIP) this summer. Five teen students are working on a mural at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. The theme of the mural is natural reciprocity.

Giles shared an update on the James River Park System's Education Intern, Abhay. Abhay is working with the park system's education team to develop high school curriculum.

Giles discussed priority projects and programs in the park system. New interpretive signage will be installed on Belle Isle in the near future.

#### **Committee Charters – Josh Stutz**

Josh presented committee charters to board members. Brooks Whitten motioned to approve the committee charters as presented. Jake seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### **Bylaw Presentation – Mary Kay Martin**

Mary Kay presented updated bylaws to the board members. Mary Kay used the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation's bylaws as a template for updating Friends of the James River Park's bylaws. The Governance Committee will consider the bylaws at its next meeting before they are considered by the board.

#### **RVA Environmental Film Festival – Gill Sigmon**

Gill Sigmon shared information about the RVA Environmental Film Festival and his vision for the annual event. Organizers haven't been able to access funds held by Enrichmond Foundation. RVA Environmental Film Festival is seeking fiscal sponsorship from Friends of the James River Park. Josh Stutz informed board members that fiscal sponsorship is contingent on executing a fiscal sponsorship agreement. Justin Doyle motioned for Friends of the James River Park to pursue fiscal sponsorship of the RVA Environmental Film Festival. Mel Smith seconded the motion. Bill Draper asked about the size of the festival and Gill responded that a few thousand individuals participate. The motion passed with one board member opposed.

#### **Preservation & Protection Fund Request – Josh Stutz**

Josh reported that Parker Agelasto of Capital Region Land Conservancy has been working with the Rodgers' family to add 3.5 acres in the vicinity of the Boulevard Bridge ("Nickel Bridge") to the James River Park System. A trail easement on the property is in the process being dissolved by ordinance introduced at City Council on July 25, 2022. Parker requested a contribution from Friends of the James River Park's Preservation & Protection Fund in the amount of \$25,000.00 to support the donation of the land from the Rodgers' family to the James River Park System. The acreage would be added to the James River Park System conservation easement. Dean Brunson motioned to approve contributing a maximum of \$25,000.00 to secure the Rodgers' property for the James River Park System and the motioned was seconded by Brooks Whitten. The motioned passed unanimously.

**Executive Director Performance Evaluation – Mary Kay Martin & Jake Savage**

Mary Kay reported Josh celebrated one year as Executive Director of Friends of the James River Park in July. Jake Savage reported his annual performance review was good. Mary Kay and Jake approved a salary adjustment for Josh. Cost of living adjustments will be considered in the future.

**New Officer Nominations & Voting – Mary Kay Martin**

Mary Kay informed board members that candidates for officers are Jake Savage for President, David Broocke for Vice President, Matt Rigby for Secretary, and Dean Brunson for Treasurer. Bill Draper motioned to approve the slate as candidates as presented. Mel Smith seconded the motion and is passed unanimously. Mary Kay will remain on the board as Past President into 2023.

**New Business**

Josh encouraged board members to bring ideas and requests to Giles or himself, not park system staff members.

**Adjournment:** Brooks Whitten motioned to adjourn the meeting. Matt Rigby seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 6:30 pm at Mary Kay Martin’s home

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