

Advisory Council Minutes

Date: May 9, 2018, 4 P.M.
Location: Main Library, Gellman Room
101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23219



Members Present: Mr. Jonathan Bibbs
Mr. Rodney Poole, Chair
Mr. Max Hepp-Buchanan, Vice-Chair
Mr. Burt Pinnock, Vice-Chair
Mr. Bernard Harkless
Ms. Ashley Hawkins
Ms. Joyce Knight
Mr. T. Preston Lloyd
Ms. Louise Lockett
Ms. Monica Lozano
Ms. Jennifer Mullen
Ms. Gray O'Dwyer
Mr. Damian Pitt
Mr. Ted Ukrop
Ms. Meredith Weiss
Ms. Olivya Wilson

Members Absent: Mr. Jer'Mykeal McCoy
Ms. Latoya Gray
Ms. Elyana Javaheri
Ms. Kendra Norrell

Staff Present: Ms. Tasha Chambers, Justice and Sustainability Associates (JSA)
Ms. Kim Chen, Planning and Development Review (PDR)
Mr. Don Edwards, JSA
Mr. William Palmquist, PDR
Ms. Maritza Pechin, AECOM/PDR
Ms. Marianne Pitts, PDR
Ms. Yessenia Revilla, PDR

Staff Absent: Mr. Mark Olinger, PDR

3:30 PM Room opens

4:00 PM Call to Order

Mr. Edwards called the meeting to action at 4 p.m. Mr. Edwards asked for the public gallery to introduce themselves.

Mr. Poole greeted guests and asked members about the comfortability of the location. Council members stated they liked the location.

Mr. Edwards asked the group if there were any corrections to the minutes. Ms. Pechin answered that it was requested that last names be used for the minutes and noted that moving forward, this will happen. No other corrections or edits were presented by the AC.

Director's Report

Ms. Pechin gave a report on Mr. Olinger's behalf. Ms. Pechin noted the Director will be present at future meetings of the AC.

Ms. Pechin gave an update on the parking study. She stated that there will be 7 meetings in 7 locations the week of June 11th.

Mr. Poole shared that there would be an expansion of the parking study area for the Libbie/Grove area, which was done at ask of the public.

Ms. Crump asked how the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will impact the current count of the parking study. Ms. Pechin added that the parking consultant has the updated information to complete the analysis. This information also takes into account of new development and transportation projects.

Mr. Poole asked if PDR is following new development and is there a cut-off point for adding to the study.

Ms. Pechin added they do have a pipeline of projects that do not have permits.

Presentations & Discussion

I. Master Plan Legislation

Ms. Pechin gave a presentation on legislation related to the creation of a Master Plan. She shared the sections of the Richmond City Charter that outline components of the Master Plan (also known as Comprehensive Plan).

Ms. Pechin shared with the AC and gallery that the vision for the Master Plan will be developed jointly with the community and shared examples of vision statements.

Ms. Pechin shared examples of goals to include – health, land management, connectivity, etc., and of strategies for organizing the document – vision, goals, strategy and action.

Ms. Pechin shared with examples of the organization of other master plans including Philadelphia's Master Plan and Charlottesville's Master Plan.

Ms. Pechin shared with the AC examples of professionals who actually use the Master Plan in their work.

Mr. Lloyd added that Richmond can only do the things that the General Assembly has allowed us to do and that per the code, Transportation and Land Use must be addressed in the Master Plan. There is a legal aspect of the work the AC must do to create the plan and to inform the implementation. He noted the importance of the plan if City Council's action is questioned in

court as their action would be interpreted as arbitrary and capricious if they acted not in keeping with the adopted Master Plan.

Ms. Lozano asked if the community will be involved in the visioning statement. Ms. Pechin said yes.

Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Lloyd to expand on the process. Mr. Lloyd explained how this plan is the blueprint on how the City moves forward.

Mr. Poole asked how much involvement should City Council have in the public meetings and the process.

Ms. O'Dwyer said that their involvement could muddy the waters.

Mr. Hepp-Buchanan added that after having worked on plans, it is important to brief Council as much as possible. If not, it will be challenging to have the plan adopted.

Mr. Poole added that the AC should share what the community's vision is and take it back to City Council. The AC cannot take a foreign document and get the document adopted.

Ms. Pechin added that Councilwoman Roberts suggested that the AC brief Council as often as possible and that she attended City Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee in May.

Mr. Pitt added that it would be productive to have City Council sit in the gallery – at least.

Mr. Edwards added that the AC can suggest that the meeting room is a “no influence” zone.

Ms. Crump shared that the AC can post information about the AC meetings and additional meetings through City Council newsletters.

II. Master Plan Update Process

Ms. Pechin shared with the AC group the revised Richmond 300 process. (Handout provided to AC members and included in public binder).

Ms. Pechin shared with the AC that she recognized some concerns about having one (1) big initial meeting and proposed the AC may wish to consider smaller meetings for Community Consultation #1 vs. one (1) big initial meeting.

Mr. Pitt and Ms. Lozano asked for clarification on the current hardcopy of the Richmond 300 handout re: Community Consultation #1. Ms. Pechin stated the most up to date version was the one on the screen. The one large meeting is now being proposed for only Community Consultation #2.

Mr. Ukrop added that he preferred the revised approach – having smaller meetings followed by the larger meeting #2.

Mr. Poole agreed with Mr. Ukrop.

Ms. Weiss added that starting small is preferred. She recommended providing the community with some ideas of a vision instead of a blank sheet.

Ms. O'Dwyer said revised process helps more people feel heard.

Ms. Lozano added that she prefers the community be more involved in the vision setting, but it would be helpful to provide some guidance for the community. She suggested bringing draft examples to the community, but the community needs to shape the vision.

Mr. Ukrop said prompting is good but the AC should not limit the community's feedback.

Ms. Pechin referenced the Transit Network Plan community engagement process as a model for what the AC seeks to accomplish.

Mr. Poole added that suggesting three or four examples of what the vision could be and then the community could add to it might be helpful.

Ms. Hawkins stated that the community should be engaged to set the goals as well as the vision.

Mr. Pinnock added that the AC should create diverse populations to see the range of responses to issues. Mr. Pinnock added that the first option for the initial large community meeting is still his preferred choice.

Mr. Pitt said the AC can use community meetings to gather information that will inform the plan.

Ms. Lockett added that there are "Two Richmonds" so she was hopeful that having the "One Richmond Under One Roof" to help change this sentiment. The One Richmond meeting would set the tone.

Mr. Edwards added that what the group is experiencing now is part of the Advisory Council's role – meeting design. He added that most of the AC members made it clear that they liked the idea of one big meeting as no one said the original proposal was a bad idea, but there was major uncertainty. This new proposal merges both the "one meeting" and more engagement and lower risk.

Mr. Edwards encouraged the group to decide within one week.

Mr. Harkless said that "meeting" may not be the right word for this task. He asked if the AC can create an event where Richmonders get together -- more like a social.

Mr. Poole asked Mr. Pinnock to elaborate on his "dream". Mr. Pinnock said it was his dream to strategically place diverse groups in one space.

Ms. Hawkins asked what resources does the AC have to make a "meeting under one roof" truly

happen?

Mr. Edwards and Ms. Pechin answered that the AC would not be able to do multiple meetings of that size but could do one.

Mr. Poole asked how the AC could reach consensus in short time.

Mr. Edwards and Ms. Pechin stated that the AC had one week to make a final decision through the homework process.

Mr. Bibbs said that it is very important for the AC to warm up the idea of diverse populations talking to people who typically do not engage with each other. The AC needs to empower these groups, first, in small meeting sessions verses one large community meeting.

Ms. Lozano asked what is the goal of the visioning meeting.

Ms. Pechin answered: 1. A vision. 2. Goals. 3. Review of the maps/areas of change. 4. Volunteering for the working groups.

Ms. Wilson asked what is the role of the ambassadors and is that sufficient enough to make the September one meeting successful?

Mr. Edwards transitioned to the ambassador program overview.

5:00 PM III. Ambassador Program

Mr. Edwards shared that the ambassador program is an offspring of the Advisory Council. This is a cadre of volunteers to do a few things – inform and educate people on this process.

Mr. Edwards added that some of the ambassadors would be trained as facilitators. (Edwards referred to Ambassador Program Overview document)

Mr. Edwards shared that the vision is to have as many groups represented so that Richmonders see themselves in this process. This ambassador approach allows more people to be touched.

Mr. Poole asked if the ambassadors will be used to establish the comfort of certain demographics.

Mr. Edwards said that many people have not been engaged before – especially by someone they knew.

Mr. Poole added that the training is important to a successful engagement process.

Ms. Lozano asked if the ambassador program ever been launched before.

Ms. Pechin stated that this is the first engagement.

Ms. Lozano added that if the AC can share that via communications platforms.

Mr. Bibbs stated that social media assets are important in sharing information.

Ms. Pechin said that she would post and also engage the Mayor's social media team and platforms for updates.

Mr. Edwards added that the AC and PDR have to come out of the closet on this process – the Media Day – is one idea.

Mr. Poole asked if the mayor can be involved. Ms. Pechin stated that she will do her best.

Ms. Crump asked for clarity – Will PDR send an ambassador email that can be forwarded to the AC and also, copy for social media posts? Ms. Pechin said yes.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the main charge of the AC is to assist in creating the plan. Second to that, what is the AC asking the community to speak on?

Ms. Pechin answered that the community would help provide the vision and be encouraged to join working groups.

Mr. Lloyd agreed that community engagement is a secondary role of the AC, but noted that it is important to focus on the legal responsibility of the AC as the primary role.

Ms. Pechin discussed the meeting topics for the remainder of the year with the AC. (Document on screen and handout in AC binders).

Mr. Edwards stated that the purpose of framing the meetings is to help build the AC's capacity – so that each individual AC member feels competent and empowered to inform the plan and give guidance.

IV. Stakeholder Groups

Ms. Pitts encouraged the public and the AC to inform the stakeholder groups list.

Mr. Palmquist showed the civic association web page on the City's website to the AC and the public gallery that was created to prepare for the Master Plan process.

V. History Presentation

Ms. Kim Chen provided a history on Richmond discussing redlining, past and present transportation and how infrastructure was positioned through certain communities and disrupted these communities.

Public Comment

Ms. Alicia Zatcoff, a member of the public gallery and the City's Sustainably Manager, shared that RVAgreen 2050 will explore the actions taken in the community to impact greenhouse gas emissions and how does this affect certain vulnerable communities using an equity lens. She noted that the communities that were redlined are mostly impacted by extreme heat. As the AC

moves through the Richmond 300 process, she encouraged that the AC think about greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Omari Al-Qadaffi, a member of the public gallery, shared that the website did not have the updated meeting time. It currently reflects 4 – 5:30 p.m. He stated that he appreciated the AC members' comments regarding public engagement but was concerned about the overall engagement strategy. He stated that the Transit Network Plan discussed during the meeting should not be used as a model process for Richmond 300 because it was problematic.

He added that to a certain demographic of the city, it looks like only one demographic of the city is benefiting from the city's planning and development. He added that there was no mention of how development impacts marginalized communities. He encouraged AC members to review minutes.

Mr. Edwards suggested to Mr. Al-Qadaffi to submit his concerns in writing.

Ms. Pechin added that there are office hours outside of AC meetings and that the Richmond 300 team is available for meetings as well.

Ms. Morgan Carey, a member of the public gallery, added that barriers to access of public meetings such as accessibility, child care, transportation, and work schedules should be addressed in planning the community meetings, and the AC should think about what questions all types of people care about.

Ms. Suzanne Miller, a member of the public gallery, added that she wanted clarification about working groups as she does not feel volunteering as an ambassador would be a good fit. How can Richmonders learn more about the working groups and when will they receive a description? It was suggested that this happens sooner than later for people to get involved.

In response to the history presentation, Ms. Elizabeth Theriault, the public gallery and the Chronic Disease Prevention Supervisor for the Richmond City Health Department, contributed that there should be opportunities to have a dialogue about race and history as it heavily impacts the City.

The meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.