



CITY OF CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA



COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE

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Planning Committee, Chairperson
Planning Commission
Human Rights Commission
Facilities Committee
Riverfront Committee, Chairperson

To: Mayor Jones
Members of Charleston City Council

From: Mary Jean Davis, Chairperson
Riverfront Committee

Date: November 10, 2004

Re: Minutes of the October 12, 2004 meeting of the
Riverfront Committee

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room by Mary Jean Davis, Chairperson.

Committee Members Present:

Mary Jean Davis	Archie Chestnut
Tom Lane	Ed Talkington
Charlie Loeb	Bobby Reishman

Others Present:

Susie Salisbury	Linda Nielsen
Rusty Webb	Barry Cunningham
Rod Blackstone	Jeff Miller
Dennis Strawn	Riley C. Brothers
Mary Jane Vanderwilt	Joe Deneault
Don Booth	Bryan Eads
Brian Estep	Debbie Eads
Steve Branner	Dan Vriendt
Mandy Roarer	Susan K. Johnson
Larry McKay	Linda G. Johnson
Mike Clowser	

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Ed Talkington moved that the minutes from the August 19, 2004 meeting be approved and was seconded by Charlie Loeb.

Chairperson Davis notified the group of 2 telephone calls she had received regarding the riverfront. The first included an invitation from James Massey, International Affairs Office at WVU, to visit Louisville, KY in order to see developments made along that city's riverfront; the other was a call from a gentleman identifying himself as Charlie and voicing opposition to any proposed changes along the riverfront.

Chairperson Davis then went on to reference recent newspaper articles regarding the Riverfront Committee and the public's response to making changes along Kanawha Boulevard. She reiterated that, to date, there are no changes planned. No decisions have been made concerning development and the next meeting scheduled for November 9, 2004 will be a "visioning" session designed to help provide direction for the future of the riverfront. Susie Salisbury and Joe Jones are to oversee the meeting in November.

She asserted that the purpose of the Riverfront Committee is to review all ideas from developers, council members, and the public, as to what steps might be taken to make the riverfront more attractive and useful to the community. Tom Haywood will be the facilitator of the Public Input Committee.

Guest speaker, Mary Jane Vanderwilt, was introduced to the Committee and provided a history of the Kanawha River and Kanawha Boulevard.

Mrs. Vanderwilt opened by stating that prior to Mayor D. Boone Dawson's administration, the Boulevard was lined with shanty boats in which people lived, creating an eyesore on the Kanawha River. In the late 1930's, Mayor Dawson began a construction project on the Boulevard in an effort to create his vision of the riverfront. Old businesses were torn down and houses removed to broaden the roadway, including one home that was relocated by barge to a Kanawha City street. Construction was completed in 1940, at a cost of \$3.3 million, paid through public works funds and bond issues.

Mrs. Vanderwilt shared a number of newspaper articles documenting the various stages of this particular construction on the Boulevard, as well as photographs both before and after.

She then discussed the 1959 beautification project undertaken during the Copenhagen administration and the establishment of the Municipal Beautification Committee in 1963 as part of City code.

Mrs. Vanderwilt shared the history of the memorial ornamental trees planted along the Boulevard, how they were chosen and financed, and their donors recognized. Information was provided concerning the various jurisdictions responsible for upkeep of the Boulevard throughout the years, changes in the types of traffic permitted on the

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roadway, the Perpetual Maintenance Fund established with the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, and different sources of funding for renovations.

Photographs and articles about Magic Island were circulated as Mrs. Vanderwilt told how the island virtually surfaced overnight in 1948 and tripled in sized by 1954. It was shared that interest in Magic Island has ebbed and flowed throughout the years since its appearance to the present time.

The second guest speaker, Susie Salisbury of Charleston Renaissance, spoke about the Central Plan for redevelopment for the City. She gave a description of an interconnecting Greenway Loop System planned for the City and emphasized the major role that Kanawha Boulevard plays in the development of that system. Excerpts from the Redevelopment Plan and drawings depicting possible developments involving the Riverfront area as a part of the overall plan were passed out to the group.

Ms. Salisbury noted that traffic capacity on the Boulevard exceeds current use and that removal of traffic lanes in various portions of the street would allow for expansion of park and pedestrian areas. Mention was made of the task force created during the Goldman administration to implement a 15 Year Plan and receipt of a grant for a traffic study. Ms. Salisbury referred to Scott Day's presentation earlier this year on walkable communities and his suggestions for the City of Charleston regarding ways to make the community more accessible to all citizens.

The third speaker was Dan Booth of Augusta Engineering who went over his proposal for development of the Charleston Riverfront. Mr. Booth presented his ideas for a riverfront marina which would include recreation facilities, restaurants, and offices. The proposed site would be located between Magic Island and Haddad Park and benefits cited were beautification of the waterfront, increase in neighboring property values, additional recreational and conferencing initiatives, an economic boost to adjacent businesses and heightened opportunities for area development. Handouts were provided to the group detailing the proposed city side docks, landscaping, the marina, shops and conference center as well as proposed changes to walkways and traffic patterns.

Councilmember Charlie Loeb inquired whether any market studies had been completed and Booth replied that they had been done and that he will make them available to the Committee.

The fourth speaker was Brian Eads who discussed the ongoing development of the Trojan property, to be known as Trojan Landing. He discussed the benefits of the riverside development of a dry rack storage facility for boats measuring 34 ft. or less. He said that having such a facility would create a market of boaters and that work should be completed by February, 2005.

Susan Johnson presented copies of a proposal previously submitted to the Mayor and asked that copies be made available to council members.

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It was suggested by Chairperson Davis that the size of the Riverfront Committee be enlarged as the need arose in the future.

With no other business to be discussed, the Committee set the date for the next meeting as November 9, 2004 at 6:30 pm in Parlor D at the Civic Center. Councilmember Talkington moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 and Councilmember Reishman seconded the motion.

MJD/lgj

cc: Rod Blackstone, Susie Salisbury, Dan Vriendt