



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT CITY OF HOPEWELL

TO: Hopewell Planning Commission
FROM: Tevya W. Griffin
DATE: July 27, 2018
RE: Hopewell Riverwalk

The City has discussed the idea of a riverwalk from City Point to the marina for several years to provide public access and an opportunity for recreation along the river. Preliminary discussions included a facility from City Point to the Bluffs. At this time, this area stretch of the walk has been abandoned due to difficulty in gaining easements across private property.

However, last year, the Hopewell City Council approved the riverwalk project from City Park (Patrick Copeland site) to the marina. Through a competitive process, the City has chosen John K. George & Company to build the walk.

The elevated timber walkway will be approximately 1,700 feet long and 8 feet wide along the Appomattox River. The walk will be supported by open piles along the river. There will be no tree clearing and extremely limited wetland impacts. The location of the walk will avoid all wetlands and stays within the intertidal zone. Equipment will be placed within wetland on mats for temporary access purposes only. The project will be staged in a portion of the John Randolph parking lot.

Any development/redevelopment within waterways and within environmentally restricted areas requires review by the Army Corp of Engineers, the State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the local Wetlands Board. For this reason, the contractor has submitted an application to the Virginia Marine Resource Commission (VMRC) which acts as a clearing house for the review by the three agencies.

It has been concluded by the Army Corps of Engineers and DEQ that the riverwalk is not within their jurisdiction to review. Representatives from both agencies have visited the site and spoke extensively with the contractor.

Chapter 27.5-23 of the Hopewell City Code, Wetlands, declares, recreational amenities within a wetland are an exempt activity if certain criteria is met. The Section reads,

Sec. 27.5-23. - Permitted uses and activities.

The following uses of and activities in wetlands are authorized if otherwise permitted by law:

- (1) The construction and maintenance of noncommercial catwalks, piers, boathouses, boat shelters, fences, duckblinds, wildlife management shelters, footbridges, observation decks, and shelters and other similar structures, provided that such structures are so constructed on pilings as to permit the reasonably unobstructed flow of the tide and preserve the natural contour of the wetlands;

The Hopewell Wetlands Board must determine if the disturbance within wetlands obstructs the tide and effects the natural contour of the wetlands. If it meets this criteria, a wetlands permit is not needed and a public hearing is not required. If however, the Wetlands Board concludes that the riverwalk will obstruct the flow of the tide and disturb the natural of the wetlands, a wetlands application must be submitted, a public hearing held, a mitigation plan submitted and approved. It is staffs opinion that a wetlands permit is not required for this project.

Applicant: Hopewell, City of
Locality: Hopewell
Project Description: Riverwalk (Timber Walkway) @ City Park
Date Received: July 16, 2018
Engineer: Mark Eversole

After reviewing the application, please reply to this email and indicate one of the following:

Does not involve wetlands. A letter will be forwarded to the applicant advising that no permit will be required from this Board.

Does involve wetlands and a permit will be required. A public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for _____ at _____.

Does involve wetlands but a permit will not be required because _____

Site inspection conducted on _____.

No site inspection conducted.

Should you have any questions regarding this permit application, please do not hesitate to contact Mark Eversole at (757) 247-8028 or Mark.Eversole@mrc.virginia.gov

Beth Howell
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
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Viewing application and related documents requires Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, or IE 10.0 or greater.