

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
Park and Recreation Commission**

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 19, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Summary Minutes

Commission Members: Chairperson Judy Guse-Noritake, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Richard Brune, William Cromley, Brian McPherson, Robert Moir, John Sullivan, Mollie Timmons, Caleb Vogt. **Absent:** Robert Moir (Excused), Ripley Forbes (Excused).

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant; William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services; Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director Park Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning; Laura Durham, Open Space Planner Park Planning; Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, Judy Lo, Park Planner. **Absent:** Cheryl Lawrence, Acting Director Special Events/Marina, Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts, Bethany Carton, Park Planner, David Ghezzi, Architect.

Guest Speakers: Carrie Fesperman Redden, Health Planner with the Alexandria Health Department, and Co-Chair Childhood Obesity Action Network (COAN), Rashad Friday, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES).

I. Call to Order by Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the guest speakers.

II. Approval of Summary Minutes from March 22, 2012, and follow-up of February 16

Approved Minutes:

March 22, 2012: Rich Brune motioned to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Mr. Sullivan. All were in favor – the minutes were approved.

February 16, 2012: The Chair entered a clarification and “Comments for the record regarding a portion of the Approved Draft minutes from February 16, 2012”, (copy attached). The minutes will be appended to note the Chair’s corrections/clarifications. Rich Brune motioned to approve the amendment to the minutes, Gina Baum seconded. All were in favor.

III. Alexandria Playspace Assessment by the Childhood Obesity Action Network.

Presentation by Carrie Fesperman Redden – Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.

Ms. Fesperman Redden, Health Planner with the Alexandria Health Department, and Co-Chair of the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN), gave a presentation on the Alexandria Playspace Assessment (the Assessment). A-COAN is citizen-led coalition with over 100 partners, including many government agencies, non-profits, businesses, faith organizations, and city residents. In Alexandria, 43.5% of children ages 2-5 are overweight or obese, according to a study conducted by Inova Health Systems in 2007. Many of A-COAN’s partners were involved in reviewing and providing oversight to the assessment including RPCA; a multi-disciplinary prospective was taken. Providing better opportunities for healthy play is one of A-COAN’s strategies to reduce childhood obesity. **See Attachments and information sheets.** www.HealthierAlexandria.org/HealthyLifestyes

- **Purpose-** today’s presentation will focus on improving playspaces for children. When they first started looking at childhood obesity, and how to encourage healthy living, a number of focus groups and surveys were held with playgroups and WIC participants. A reoccurring theme was the need for more playspaces and playgrounds for 2-5 year olds in Alexandria. Given that the

City has invested a lot of money in playgrounds, A-COAN felt it was important to explore this further. In February 2012, a Playground Assessment was completed of all playgrounds both public and private. Its goal was to better understand the City's play environment for toddlers and preschoolers, and to provide recommendations for improving the accessibility, quality, and awareness of Alexandria playspaces.

- A-COAN hired consultants; a firm called Design Concepts who has done park and playground planning for several jurisdictions in the metropolitan area, to inventory and assess all of Alexandria's playspaces, provide level of service analyses, conduct focus groups with users and land owner/playground providers, and provide recommendations to improve play for children ages 2-5.
- In concert with the consultants' work, A-COAN launched a Photovoice project with playgroup parents and childcare providers. The coalition gave cameras to 30 participants, many of who did not speak English as their first language, and asked them to photograph what they considered to be the best and worst playgrounds in Alexandria. Over 20 playgrounds were photographed. Photovoice provided insight into key playground features that users considered important and that would be more likely to draw families to the playground, including shade and benches.
- **Photovoice Project Key Findings:** Safety is a concern, with some perception and nervousness about non-caretaker adults and older kids being in areas with younger children. The importance of shade was highlighted over and over again. Parents showed a definite preference for bouncy surfacing, as well as natural play elements. Age-appropriate equipment for children, seating for adults needed, amenities, and indoor play spaces were highly desirable.
- **Inventory and Level of Service Analysis** – Design Concepts assessed and categorized 86 playspaces (public/private, indoor/outdoor) used by all children. All playspaces were mapped and catchment areas were identified. For example, the catchment area for public playspaces is considered the area walkable within 1/3 of a mile, and for private playspaces the area is confined to the parcel or development. The study reviewed 2010 U.S. Census demographic highlights, including data on where the most Alexandria children live including those areas with the highest percentage and highest number of children in the 2-5 year age group. The assessment's recommendations reflect this data and provided maps and level of service analyses for children ages 2-5, as well as children of all ages. As ACPS playgrounds were not open during the school day, they were not included on playground maps for children ages 2-5. Based on the assessment, the consultants made recommendations on how to improve playground accessibility and quality. They also identified several key areas where less quality play was available, including the West End and the northern most part of Arlandria.
- **Focus Groups**- over 70 stakeholders were included in six focus groups held, including meetings with playgroups, parents and childcare providers, city agencies such as Planning and Development, RPCA, and Transportation and Environmental Services, ARHA, Developers, and other direct service providers.

Key Findings (pg. 6) Issues highlighted were the need for improved accessibility and safety (including concerns about risks of having to cross highways to reach playgrounds), and the lack of playspaces near large apartment buildings, particularly in the West End. Participants talked about the desire for different types of play and play equipment, and the importance of amenities, including shade, benches, water fountains and bathrooms. There is a desire for varied play and playgroups to encourage interaction with children. The need for additional indoor play opportunities was also highlighted. Apartment complexes in the West End were particularly isolated from play opportunities where children are not able to walk as easily to parks and play areas. Fesperman Redden said the Assessment identified that there is a perception of inequity and that wealthy children have more places to play than poor

children. This is felt particularly in the West End.

- **Key Recommendations** – Consultants arranged recommendations into three key areas, improving the quality, accessibility, and awareness of playspaces. Consultants were asked to focus recommendations on all playgrounds in the city, not just public city-owned playgrounds.
 1. **Improve quality** – Focus on improving playspaces in the West End and Arlandria; these are areas that have less access to playgrounds. Overall, try to ensure that the City’s playspaces offer varied components for play that encourages physical activity, social interaction, intellectual stimulation, and includes natural element. Ensure that all playspaces are appropriate for children aged 2-5. Add amenities that draw families to use the playgrounds, including benches and shade.
 2. **Increase accessibility**- Accessibility is particularly an issue in the West End. It is important to increase walkable access to key playgrounds in that area. Consultants also recommended finding ways to add new spaces at areas where lots of children live. Given that there is not as much public park space in the West End, forming creative partnerships could serve to fill this gap. For instance, offer partnering incentives to groups such as homeowners associations and churches that may have available land, or explore the ideas of pop-up and mobile playgrounds, which are growing in popularity.
 3. **Improve awareness of playspaces.** Many playgroup families had trouble finding playgrounds in their neighborhoods. A goal is to inform and improve awareness of playground locations. A website is one idea being considered to serve as a resource to the public. Another idea is to create playgrounds that draw families from across the community, such as destination playgrounds, particularly in areas where there is a perception of inequity. Other ways to highlight locations of playgrounds is to include information about the playgrounds and playgroups in the RPCA Program Guide, and on the Alexandria bike map.

Ms. Fesperman Redden said A-COAN has begun discussing the Assessment with groups like the Park and Recreation Commission, and have formed a Project Play Task Force to study recommendations, and implementation. Several playground initiatives are already underway, such as the ARHA/KaBoom project. The KaBoom playground will be built in Tancil Square in September. A-COAN is also supporting the William Ramsey School PTA.

Questions/Comments:

Q. Chair - What are next steps?

R. Fesperman Redden - The Project Play Task Force is meeting to develop specific recommendations, including developing a website for playground locations, and supporting existing playground efforts, and bringing other groups together to leverage interests and assets. The Task Force is also working with the City’s Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z), RPCA, and T&ES to see how through City policy to continue to support playgrounds. The Chair agreed a broader effort is needed among City departments and P&Z.

Q. McPherson- When was the Childhood Obesity study completed; asked if 6 to 9 year-olds have the same obesity rate as 2-5 year olds 43.5% - no number is listed for this age group. What is considered “walking distance” to a playground?

R. Fesperman Redden-The Childhood Obesity study by Inova Health Systems was completed in 2007; the obesity rate for children aged 6-9 years of age was 23.5%. Regarding what is considered walking distance, this is debatable. Consultants consider one-third of a mile from home as ‘walking distance’; other experts use one-quarter of a mile. When mapping

catchment areas, there was a cut-off at some highways and major intersections and boundaries that are considered “unwalkable”. P&Z and RPCA provided the major pedestrian hazardous roads.

Q. McPherson- What is considered “private”- churches, private schools, we have a lot of fields but they are locked. Around his neighborhood, some churches have signs that say “play at your own risk”.

R. Fesperman Redden- They have not yet explored the feasibility of using private playgrounds. She was referring to private schools, churches and developers. Regarding playgrounds on church property, this is a gray area. Maryland has done some creative work in partnership with the City in order to take liability off private partners.

Chair - This is a litigious issue. For example, this is why sledding has been prohibited at the Masonic Temple. Caution should be used when using private playground equipment, you could run into problems if the equipment is not kept up to code/standard.

Q. Brune: Is there data that shows how much 2- 5 year olds use play areas? As the City looks at redesigning play areas for this age group, it would be useful to know if the costs are justified. From age 0-2 children are increasingly gaining weight, need to look at root causes.

R. Fesperman Redden - from her assessment, there appears to be a lot of interest in this age group. Regarding justification of costs, you would have to look at the number of children – currently there are over 6000 in this age group and the overall health costs of such a young generation being obese for the rest of their lives.

Chair- There are many factors, including underlying sociological ones that contribute to children becoming overweight or obese. For a long time the Park and Recreation Commission has worked to improve park and recreation facilities in the City, including the West End and Arlandria. The RPCA Needs Assessment, completed in 2011 should be used as a supporting document to the Alexandria Playspace Assessment. It should be understood, that no matter what the Commission proposes for use of public land, there will always be some pushback from some sector of the community and we are always required to go through a public process. In some cases, it may be easier to target private land, particularly in the West End. It comes down to incentives and partnerships, however, the process to get this done on public land is arduous, and might require going through a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) process, going before the Planning Commission and/or City Council. In contrast it might be possible to find, for example, a church willing to put a playground on their land. The Planning Department may be able to do more to help, in some recent plans there has been some push back on playgrounds. The P&RC has continuously mentioned the need for more visible destination playgrounds, during discussions of the Waterfront Plan. During the Jones Point Park planning process. Making playspaces a part of the City’s overall Planning process is very important. In the Beauregard Corridor Plan, and at Potomac Yards, the Chair has consistently asked for data on the number of new residents expected to move into these areas, as this would require more athletic fields, dog parks, community gardens, and schools. The Commission will need to be more vocal in future about getting more playspaces. The challenge right now for the Department of RPCA is to have sufficient City funding is to keep current playgrounds maintained and with good equipment. Funds for building new playgrounds is currently backlogged years.

- **The Chair-** thanked Ms. Fesperman Redden having brought this work before the Commission; she said the Commission will help where they can. She cautioned that when working with William Ramsey PTA, that Ramsey will have upgrades at some point. Near the Duron/Four Mile Run building the improvements there will not be in the form of playground equipment, but will be big climbing boulders. Playspaces don’t always have to be equipment,

they could be natural areas.

- **Fesperman Redden**- This is part of the education piece, along with providing better information on the location of playspaces, but also, broadening the definition of the types of playspaces, including natural play areas.
- **Chair**-the City has completed approximately three pocket parks in the last five years. Pocket parks are small spaces, in urbanized environment, amenities here are limited due to their small space. We need to have playspaces and other places that offer primarily passive uses. Pop up playgrounds are a good idea; incentives from private landowners are needed.

Q. Vogt- What are destination playgrounds? He commented that a website showing the location of playgrounds is a good idea; it could also be used for people to leave comments on, to encourage use.

R. Fesperman Redden- said destination playgrounds are really unique playgrounds that people are willing to travel further distances to get to (vs. pocket parks which are more local). There are destination playgrounds in Arlington and Maryland, where parents take children to for weekend play.

Q. Brune- In the study groups with parents of 2-5 year olds, what number are at home during work hours or cared for at a childcare facility during the day - particularly in the West End? . Parents should be aware that children may not always have access to activities during the day, if cared for at a family daycare provider.

R. Fesperman Redden. The numbers are unknown. There are a lot of family day care providers in the West End. A lot of parents can't afford to send children to Day Care Centers.

Baum- said there are a limited number of Day Care Centers in the West End, there are more independent providers. Regarding the website, it would be great if it popped up with a map that would show the locations and information on particular parks.

Chair- City has this information for the public parks but not the private ones.

Fesperman Redden – A-COAN brings together many different groups. The playground website would probably not be a City website, but could link.

Q. Beggs- Is the information updated regularly and does the age range change?

R. Fesperman Redden- This would be a good idea. However, with the Photovoice project, the group is mostly word-of-mouth. They could go back to playgroups.

The Chair thanked Ms. Fesperman Redden for the presentation and asked her to stay in touch with the Commission.

IV. Aquatics Facilities Study briefing. Public Meeting and Presentation to be held on April 25, 2012.

- **See Staff Report/Memo**- Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator gave an update on the Aquatics Facility Study.
- **Background**: The City currently operates and maintains a municipal outdoor aquatic program that includes seven (7) aquatic facilities at the following sites: Chinquapin, Charles Houston, Old Town, Warwick Village, Nannie J. Lee, Nicholas Colosanto, and John Ewald. Of these pools, Nannie J. Lee and Nicholas Colosanto are currently closed due to budget reductions and the pool at Ewald is proposed to be closed in the FY2013 budget. Chinquapin is the only indoor facility; however, it was not constructed in a manner that can

accommodate sanctioned competitive swimming events. Many of the existing facilities have limited opportunities for expansion and are reaching the end of their functional/physical life expectancy with facilities ages of over 25 to 30 years.

- The professional consulting services of Kimley-Horn/Cousilman-Hunsaker were retained with AMEC Engineering as the Prime Consultant to conduct the Aquatics Facilities Study (the Consultants). This team brings internationally recognized expertise in aquatics facilities.
- A brief summary of the key recommendations is provided in the report, including an estimated cost for each facility (See report). The total cost for implementing all options is estimated to be \$48,823,000, including contingencies. A meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2012, 7:00 p.m. at Lee Center with the Consultants to present their final report and recommendations. The goal is to see how to meet community needs within available funding. **See brief synopsis of study in packet – and key recommendations.**
- Phasing the plan in is recommended by the consultants. Phasing recommendations will be looked with various stakeholder groups. The FY13-22 budget, includes a total of approximately \$9 million for improvements to Chinquapin and spray grounds, however, the recommended rebuilding of Chinquapin alone would cost more than \$9 million. Using the budgeted funds to improve other sites is another option. The consultants recommend phasing that would first renovate the Old Town Pool, at a cost of approximately \$5.5 million. The Consultants reviewed all scenarios including costs and revenue. The City Manager and OMB are also reviewing the report. Ms. Durham said the report is a study to provide guidance for the future.
- **Question/Comments:**
 - Cromley- asked what can the \$9 million for Chinquapin be used for; is it roof repair, new HVAC system.
 - Durham- RPCA has been making improvements to Chinquapin. The money would be phased in over years for maintenance to keep the facility operable until it can be replaced.
 - Director Spengler- Currently there is \$9 million in the 10 year CIP. \$3 million is allotted for spray parks, placeholder for outdoor facilities. The Chinquapin estimate looking back several years started out much higher. A Concept Study was completed as part of T.C. Williams rebuilding that was close to \$20 million for renovation of the Recreation Center. A lot is for HVAC replacement, new lockers, equipment is worn out, and infrastructure of building needs to be replaced. The Aquatics study recommends an array of facilities for the Alexandria community. At Chinquapin which is the only indoor facility in Alexandria, the report recommends two options: replacing the current pool with a 25' x 25' meter pool, or 50 meter pool, to include optional leisure elements, renovation of auxiliary rooms for fitness activities.
 - Director- as Ms. Durham mentioned, this study provides some goals. From an engineering, architectural standpoint we have to fill in the gaps.
 - Cromley- commented that both he and his children are swimmers. He said that the Chinquapin facility is beautiful and provides natural light, and that he hopes that they would build a new competitive-size pool before tearing it down. Regarding spray parks, some consider them more of an entertainment type of water activity. The Commission has discussed that the goal should be to focus on life, health, and safety issues. Swimming is an activity that can be done by people of all ages 1-99. We should look at how to serve the most people over the greatest amount of time.

- The Chair- stated that all other park issues need to be considered, along with renovation and/or building new aquatics facilities, balance is needed.
- Durham- the Consultants provided a formula in order to meet broad community needs that includes, having: one indoor pool, one pool in the East End, and one in the West End, where currently there is no public pool.
- Baum- Old Town Pool needs attention because a lot of swim meets are held there.
- Sullivan- asked if the study considered the changing City demographics, and redevelopment in the West End. He stated looking at Pickett, and Van Dorn Streets he doesn't see any new public pools coming on-line there.
- Ms. Durham- responded yes, there is a chapter in the Aquatics Study on demographics, which was completed with inputs from P&Z, ACPS, and Economic Development staff.
- The Chair- said similar to the playground study, there are more private pools in the West End. She would also expect the Beaugard Corridor Plan to contain a number of private pools.
- Baum- in the Potomac Yards development, currently being built, there are no public pools.
- Director- confirmed that there are many private pools in the West End. When staff researched information to draft the budget memo regarding proposed closing of Ewald Pool, the data showed that there were 43 private pools within one mile of this pool.
- Chair- when looking at the Beaugard Corridor Plan she assumed there would be workout facilities as part of their planning process so as not to overburden public facilities.

V. Open Space- discussion of issues from April 11th group meeting. Chair Guse-Noritake:

- The Chair reported that after ten years of implementation of the Open Space Plan, the original group is being re-formed. Members will include representatives of the Park and Recreation Commission, Environmental Policy Commission, Planning Commission, and the Archeology/Historic Resources Commission. They are starting to review a list of issues that have come up, and will likely work over several sessions to craft recommendations. The Open Space Summit that was discussed for May will be deferred if held at all. The group may opt to complete their report and forward it to staff and City Council. The Chair will provide questions for Commission feedback at the next several meetings. This group will look at things like Small Area Plans (SAP) in general, how roof top gardens and fields might count toward open space, if at all. Currently there are no requirements for specific amounts of open space in developments as they come forward.
- Questions include how we protect the financial integrity of the Open Space Fund, particularly in cases like the Beachcomber restaurant that was purchased with open space funds, with the intent that it was to be torn down. If it now stays, will the revenue generated go back into the Open Space Fund? The Group will be meeting soon; the Chair will poll the Commission for comments and questions.

VI. Follow-up Discussion on Beaugard Corridor Small Area Plan Letter: Chair Judy Guse-Noritake:

The Park and Recreation Commission held a public hearing at their regular monthly meeting on March 22, The Planning Commission will hold a Special Public Hearing on May 3, 2012 on the Plan. The Chair will review the relevant minutes of the hearing, draft a letter reflecting the P&RC's comments and send it to the Planning Commission prior to their hearing. Some key issues, not all inclusive are: 1. Request expenditure of the 1.5

million the City received from the DoD/BRAC mitigation funds for use in acquiring additional open space within the next 3-6 months in the SAP area; 2. Support of the athletic field with artificial turf and lights, positioned as far from the stream valley as possible; 3. The new road planned along the perimeter of Dora Kelley Park needs to be designed as a park road and not a neighborhood road; 4. Support the enlarged park area near the Foster Fairbanks Tract at the intersection of Beauregard St. and Seminary Rd. This park is larger and more publically accessible from the first draft plan the Commission had seen. This is a positive step for the development; 5. Storm-water Detention Pond - the Chair will include language in the letter regarding designing this to be as small as possible. In response to question from McPherson, the Chair explained that as the Plan goes forward the technology will improve, likely reducing the area needed for this Storm Water Detention Pond; 6. Commissioner Sullivan also asked for the roads in this planning area to be designed using pervious pavement. The Chair will include this in the letter. Action- the Chair will review relevant notes and draft a letter reflecting the Park and Recreation Commission's position on the Plan. Ms. Durham suggested that the Chair review the revised draft plan for Beauregard Corridor first.

VII. Division Updates: To View Full Staff Reports go to www.Alexandriava.gov/Recreation/Commission Reports:

- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley. See Staff Report. No questions or comments.
- B. **Park Operations Report**- Jack Browand. See Staff Report. No questions. The Chair pointed out that the Four Mile Run Farmers Market will open in May, the site work is proceeding rapidly. Durham said that May 1st is the deadline for the completion of the paving and site work (construction) and that planting will be done over the month of May. The Chair asked that a ribbon cutting and opening be scheduled for June.
- C. **Office of the Arts Update** – report by Alisa Carrel (absent). See Staff Report. The Chair noted that there is a lot going on with the Arts.
- D. **Park Planning Updates** – Ron Kagawa and Division Team.
 - i. Division Updates:
 - **Windmill Hill Park Update**- Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, RPCA, and Rashad Friday of T&ES gave a brief presentation and updates (**See copy of presentation attached**). Wedeles reviewed funding available to implement elements of the Windmill Hill Park Concept Plan as approved by City Council in 2002. The Chair provided background on the project and noted that some of the project's elements involve heavy construction along the waterfront. For example, the plan calls for repair and/or replacement of the seriously deteriorated bulkhead. Over time there have been some complaints from residents and others about the lack of action on implementing the Concept Plan's recommendations. Staff is reviewing the next steps to take. Wedeles said approximately \$1.35 million is available for Windmill Hill Park improvements. Staff has dedicated an estimated \$25,000 to install a safety fence around the bulkhead to bar access to it until repairs can be made. The safety fence was recommended after a March 2012 condition analysis of the deteriorating bulkhead. The fence will improve safety, review of the proposed fence is on the agenda of the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review (BAR) meeting scheduled for June. About \$1 million has been set aside for the study and design of a new bulkhead. Funding for the repair work will be available in FY16. The approved Concept Plan elements that could be implemented now with the funding available include family-oriented park furniture, replacement of park perimeter fencing west of Union Street,

playground renovation, and installation of dog park enhancements and interpretive signage at Lee Street and replacing existing signage with way finding signage. Adding landscaping near the dog exercise area is estimated at \$10,000 to \$15,000 and the playground renovation is estimated at \$300,000. These elements would use up large portion of the budget. Two traffic calming projects have been proposed by the Concept Plan -installing speed bumps at the corner of Gibbon and Union Streets and installing a mid-block cross-walk. This area is included within the Union Street Corridor Traffic Mitigation Study that T&ES plans to be released in the fall. In response to a question about whether the Waterfront Commission favors moving ahead with the crosswalk now, Browand said the Commissioners had discussed the plan to defer any changes until after the Union Street Study had been completed and that Councilman Smedberg and other Commissioners had suggested that installing a pedestrian crosswalk now would alert drivers to pedestrians crossing to the park. The Chair said that while this is important, she thought that a lot of money on improvements should not be spent until the Waterfront Plan had been fully adopted. Since 2003 staff has supported the idea of giving the entire street down to the waterfront a different look that says “park” and there are many options for how to do that, for example, putting brick down, painting, etc. When cars drive there they need to understand that there is a park here with people coming and going. She said this street needs to be treated differently and should be integrated into the Union Street Corridor Traffic Study. Cromley said the concern works both ways since if the street area were too park-like; people will be encouraged to cross anywhere.

• Chair- We have some fencing, look at how to open it up and treat area. Simply, installing three crosswalks is not enough. Wedeles said another recommendation from the plan was to include a brick wall on the top walkway. However, staff didn’t feel this was necessary since the walkway was recently renovated and is in good condition. Two other items underway for FY 12 are renovating the basketball court and replacing the fence along basketball court. Wedeles referred Commissioners to the bulkhead pictures to illustrate the extent of the safety and repair issues there. She reviewed a summary of estimated costs for 2012/2013 actions and noted that the balance available to spend is \$335,000.

Comments and Discussion:

- Cromley- commented that he doesn’t support having interpretive signs.
- Q. Sullivan- asked is the cost of the bulkhead or the cost of the bulkhead design.
- R. Director- said estimate came from T&ES. Wedeles-said staff thought it better to over-estimate here.
- **Windmill Hill - Dog Park discussion**- The Chair and Commission members discussed that the safety of pedestrians be considered at the off-leash dog area. It will be important to ensure that dog owners can control their dogs in this area, or alternatively use other fenced in dog parks. The Chair said dog owners may desire a fence, however the plan for this calls for low shrubs. In the past there have been discussions about relocating the dog park away from here for safety reasons, as it is close to the waterfront. McPherson-who is a new Commissioner, questioned whether the dog park should remain in this area at all. The Chair and Baum said that they have brought up the issue of relocating the dog park at Windmill Hill Park in the past. A concern for some Commissioners is that a dog park should not be located this close to the

waterfront for safety reasons, including safety of pets. Baum- who is a dog owner, expressed concern with the proposed location for new furniture/tables planned near the Windmill Hill Park are, as a critical safety issue and asked that the proposed location be reconsidered.

- Wedeles – said if benches were installed now, they could be moved during construction and relocated within the park afterwards.
- Baum- Reported that replacing the bulkhead had been discussed at length at the Waterfront Commission meeting earlier that week and that some Commissioners had hoped that alternatives to the 2002 design might will be considered, noting for example that technology has changed over the years and interest has also grown in having natural shorelines. The idea of breaking up the bulkhead so that its pieces could be used as rip rap in a natural shoreline had been briefly discussed.

Capital Projects Update: See Staff Reports. Kagawa gave updates. **See Slide Presentation- Selected Projects Updates April 2012.**

- o Four Mile Run Park Expansion- Anticipated completion Phase 1, April 30, plantings to be installed in May.
- o Potomac Yard Park piling- piles have been installed for the belvederes and promenade, 1100 trees total are slated to be installed. The former Simpson restroom building will be replaced with a park manager's office, and new restrooms, etc.
- o Witter Recreation Fields- artificial turf is 75% complete (6.8 acres of turf), on right bathhouse will include control building. The Chair noted that the 85 ft. between the two fields is there to protect a historic cemetery is in between t fields. There is also a walking path around fields. Kagawa- ½ mile field- 10 ft. wide, asphalt.
- o Other- McPherson- asked when the building at Simpson field will be completed. Kagawa- said approximately December.

Capital Facilities Maintenance Projects (CFMP) Recreation Centers –Update March 2012 - See Staff Report.

Capital Project Processes memo dated April 16 to Youth Sports Advisory Board from Ron Kagawa, ASLA LEED AP, Division Chief, RPCA and Monika Szczepaniec, Acting Director of Facilities ACPS.- See Staff Report.

- E. Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events – Cheryl Lawrence (absent).
Jack Browand reminded staff that Earth Day is this Saturday April 21, and that the "Spring for Alexandria" community service days are May 4/5. The Chair reminded staff that the City's birthday party is coming up in July, and that it's time to begin working on the Civic Awards Nominations. Mr. Browand will draft and send out the announcement requesting nominations. The P&RC will appoint a sub-committee to work on this project.

VIII. Director's Report - James Spengler: See Staff Report –Item VIII-A.

- A. FY 2013 Budget and CIP Updates- See Staff Report. The Director gave an update on the FY2013 Budget and CIP and RPCA budget memos submitted: The following budget memos can be found on the City website:
[http://alexandriava.gov/budget/info/default.aspx?id=56546:](http://alexandriava.gov/budget/info/default.aspx?id=56546)
#6, Windmill Hill Park; #11, Ewald Pool closure, #16, Holiday Tree display Market Sq.
#21, Jefferson Houston proposal for turf field as part of new school project,
#25, Recreation Fees- proposed increases to begin FY13, #37, Old Town Pool –operation

during construction of Jefferson Houston School, #40 Witter and Hensley Park repair.

- B. Jones Point Park-Update- See Director's Report. The project is proceeding on schedule and will be completed by June 25. The next meeting of the JPP Community Liaison Group will be Saturday April 28, as a construction site tour.
- C. Cell Tower Request Lockett Field-See Director's Report and map of area.
Background: Crown Castle a cellular tower company has a need for a cell phone tower near the intersection of Wheeler Ave. and Duke St. and has submitted a request to the City. The Director and staff have reviewed the request and sites; at this time staff does not recommend conversion of open space for this request. The Chair agreed saying that open space is valuable and that this would set a precedent for other requests. The Director of General Services is preparing a cost estimate for lease of the property. In response to question from Mr. McPherson, the Director said the City does not currently have a policy on this issue. Cromley- asked what is advantage. The Director said the only advantage is accumulated lease payments, which is not substantial. Brune- asked why they aren't looking at Wheeler Ave. as a possible location near Lockett field. The Chair said the other option is for company to find private land to lease.
Action: The Chair said she will put this on the list to ask the Open Space Committee.

IX. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. Waterfront Commission- Gina Baum. Reported that the Windmill Hill Concept Plan briefing had also been discussed in the Waterfront Commission that week. (See item D.) A question was raised at its meeting regarding the appropriate procedure to consider a Waterfront Commissioner's proposal that Waterfront Park be renamed John Fitzgerald Park in honor of George Washington's aide. The Director said there is a City Naming Committee. The Chair reviewed the history and background of naming parks. She stated that Pat Troy spoke before the P&RC regarding renaming Waterfront Park to John Fitzgerald Park a number of years ago. The Chair said the Commission's position at that time was not to judge which historical figure deserves to have a park or space named after them. It is her opinion now and was the opinion of the P&RC at the time Troy came to them, that parks and places should be named for and descriptive of their location, not after people. Brune agreed and cited as an example 1 & 7 E. Del Ray Ave. Parks, where a proposal was forwarded to name the park after Kevin Shifflett who is deceased. The proposal was declined by the City Council Naming Committee. He asked also for whom Ewald Pool is named. Baum noted that the Waterfront Plan has a Fitzgerald Park proposed at the foot of King Street.
Action: Gina Baum will send the request to Department of RPCA for follow-up.

Other- Bikeshare Proposal- The Commission had discussed T&ES' proposal to locate a waterfront Bikeshare dock in an area near the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and Chart House restaurant near the waterfront. The Waterfront Commission disagreed with placing a Bikeshare dock there and has asked T&ES to review alternative locations, including near the Beachcomber restaurant, and next to Waterfront Park. The Chair commented that if a Bikeshare station is being considered to be placed at extension of Wales Alley there is already a bike shop there. Baum said the Bikeshare bikes differ in type from the bike shop's those more rented by the bike which offers heavier bikes more suited for traveling long distances along the bike path.
Action: The Chair said the Bikeshare proposal would be an item for the new Waterfront Commission to decide.

- B. Youth Sport Committee - Bob Moir (excused absence) - No report.
- C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes (absent) - No report.
- D. Freedman's Cemetery - Bob Moir (absent). Construction expected to begin May 1st.

- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements** - Judy Guse-Noritake. The Chair was unable to attend the previous Tuesday's meeting. The site plan has come together/approved.
- F. **Jones Point Park Liaison Group** - Judy Guse-Noritake. No update.
- G. **Community Gardens Policy**: Request for Braddock Station Gardens. The Chair said that she and Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, have met and had preliminary discussion with the informal group being assembled to work on developing a garden policy for the City. Durham said the intent is to be able to have a response for new requests for community gardens, and to look at how to promote gardens on private land. RPCA staff reviewed a citizen request for a community garden near the Braddock Rd. Metro Station, and determined that this would not be feasible, due to a lack of irrigation and other uses of the site. Durham- sent a response and indicated group is reviewing garden policy. During this process staff also discovered that placing a community garden on park property in the City may require an SUP. The Chair will take this item up with the Open Space Summit. In the interim, she and Ms. Durham may meet with requestor to update them on status of request.
- H. **Ft. Ward**- Ripley Forbes, Bob Moir, (excused absences) - no report.
- I. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake.
- J. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley. It is a huge success to get a turf field approved at Jefferson Houston. The Educational Specifications will drive the design. The Director reported that the other change on project school requires, if the City wants a Head Start class replaced at the school it would cost \$1.5 million. The City Council asked ACPS to do value engineering for classrooms. The Chair- asked the Director RPCA to let her know when the next City/Schools sub-committee meeting will be held. The Chair asked if there were other comments.

Other Discussion:

Francis Hammond Track- Beggs- stated that he feels that installing an asphalt track is substandard; particularly at a proposed estimate of \$200,000 ACPS could possibly include a rubberized surface. There may be ways to value engineer project. He can't recall the cost to install the fence around the field and questions why is there a double fence (one at the field and then another at the site perimeter). Director responded that the issue is whenever the track is open; the field would be open as well.

Beggs- he feels cost is overestimated. There is also a drain around the track, he asked isn't the field itself a drain. The \$200,000 could be spent better. It should cost \$100,000- look at how many kids run track. Expressed concern that there is only one track in the City.

Suggested engineering track now for asphalt allowing for change in the future. There are people who are supportive but there is no money. Discussions are being held with the School Board. Kagawa- one-third of the cost of field is the storm water management system; the cost is folded into field. Currently not in compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Act. In response to the Chair's question on how the Commission could help, Beggs suggested taking it to the School Board members.

Kagawa- they are working with staff.

Action- Beggs will email Mr. Cromley the name of ACPS contacts.

Potomac Yard Metro Update- Baum- asked about the three options for the Metro Station at Potomac Yards, and what is the timing for a decision. Kagawa said process is lengthy going through end of June. There is a meeting tonight for public comments. The Chair said the Commission will weigh in at some point, and asked Mr. Kagawa and RPCA staff to draft a letter for her –to use as a basis to write a Commission comment letter

- X. Public comments on topics not otherwise covered. **None.**

XI. Agenda items for May meeting and location. The Chair noted that she will not be able to attend the next P&RC meeting on May 17. Caleb Vogt noted that he will also be absent, due to taking Advanced Placement Exams at school. The Chair noted that both Caleb Vogt and Mollie Timmons will be graduating from T.C. Williams H.S. in June. She asked that they submit their resignations at June meeting and also asked them for referrals of other youth that may be interested in serving on the Commission. Mollie will attend the University of Washington in Seattle, and Caleb will attend the University of Michigan.

The meeting adjourned: 9:10 p.m.