

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

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, September 20, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Lee Center
1108 Jefferson Street, Gold Room 1

Summary Minutes

Commission Members: Chairperson Judy Guse-Noritake, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Richard Brune, Judith Coleman, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson, Robert Moir.

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler; William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services; Robert Taylor, Division Chief, Park Operations/Natural Resources; Jack Browand, Division Chief Marketing, Special Events, Waterfront; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning, Design and Capital Development; Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator; David Ghezzi, Architect, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

Absent: Cheryl Anne Colton, Acting Deputy Director, Office of the Arts, Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director Park Operations.

Guests: Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning; Sandra Marks, Division Chief, Transportation and Environmental Services, Transportation Planning, and Amy Slack, resident.

The PRC and RPCA staff toured the Miracle Field at Lee Center at 6:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Chair introduced Judy Coleman, new Commissioner, Planning District III.

II. Union Street Corridor Presentation - Sandra Marks, Division Chief – Transportation & Environmental Services, Transportation Planning. Sandra Marks, Division Chief of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Transportation Division gave a presentation on the Union Street Corridor. For a copy of the presentation go to:
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/UnionStParkCommSep2012.pdf>

Marks-A meeting was held with the Waterfront Commission last month to discuss the Union Street Corridor project, which is being coordinated in conjunction with the Waterfront Plan. More traffic is being anticipated for this area. The Plan is currently open for comments. Issues discussed:

Mt. Vernon Trail Connection Issues-focus is how to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists both short-term, mid-term and long-term. Recommendations are to formalize the mid-block crossing where cyclists come out and the left turn for people entering the trail. The roadway in front of Robinson Terminal N. is wide enough in short term. Create a safe zone for pedestrians in the short term, midterm improvements-create a pedestrian passageway temporary with flex post ultimately formalize site with curb. Long term, when Robinson Terminal is redeveloped will include landscaping and sidewalks.

Mid-section King and Union St. Improvements– There are conflicts with a lot of pedestrians gathering. One recommendation staff is looking at is improving the crosswalks - widen them and using a material that is more attractive and visible to help in delineating pedestrian zones. The

second is left turn restrictions. A major conflict exists with pedestrians and cars. Staff can operationally do some improvements in the short term.

Windmill Hill Park- None of the speeds on Union St. are high. There are a number of different options for improvements in this area- all options will include raised intersection at Gibbon St. There are three alternatives for the mid-block crossing where the tunnel comes out and connects to the park. The top would be a raised crosswalk - which is essentially a speed bump for cars. It would be designed with a bump-out along the curb. The middle would be a center median opportunity or landscaped median which would allow pedestrians to cross one lane of traffic -to slow cars down. The third option - is a chicane- which is a yield condition between cars. It also shortens the distance for pedestrian crossing - they would only have to cross one lane at a time.

Park and Recreation member comments:

The PRC agreed that the overall goal should be to slow the traffic down in the area of Union Street, and near Windmill Hill Park. The option of shutting the street down entirely at certain times was discussed; however several members expressed objections to this idea. Three options to slow down the traffic were discussed: raised crosswalk, center median and a chicane. Of the three options proposed, some Commissioners did not feel installing a chicane was a good idea. Marks explained that the chicane is a three inch curb (similar to a median strip); she said it is unfamiliar to people in this area. The Chair said these are popular in Seattle Washington.

- **Baum**-said there are other avenues/arteries people can use to navigate around this area.
 - **Chair**- said that when there are roads in parks, the nature of the road needs to change so that people are highly aware that they are in a park. The park has to have primacy in this location.
- Cromley**- said there are hundreds of people who live near here that will be impacted by what is done.
- **Coleman**- asked what the timing on the decision is, and said she would like more information, including examples of where it has been done successfully. She would like to see cars slow down, not sure about the chicane.
 - **Chair**- there may be different opinions, but we all agree with the goal to slow traffic down. It is not just about crossing the street at the two obvious crosswalks, but about the entirety of the street. The street must be subservient to the park. This calls for a different treatment on this part of Union St.
 - **Marks**- said she has captured Commissioner comments, some options to accomplish this. They discussed raising it. For now we need to remember this is a road. From a safety prospective she wants people to understand there are two safe places to cross. T&ES' prospective is they want to focus pedestrians on where to cross, and not encourage people to cross in the middle of the street.
 - **Brune**- asked if the chicane option had been addressed with the Fire, Police and Emergency Services Departments. He said it would be difficult for emergency vehicles to go around a chicane, this may also pose a hazard for pedestrians nearby. **Marks**- This is still at the Concept Plan stage. The chicane has been designed to accommodate police and emergency vehicles.
 - **Chair**- an RFP is going out for design of Waterfront Plan. How much input will they have as plan is developed? **Marks**- said everything will be tweaked and modified. **Moritz**- said scope of landscape architecture includes the entire Waterfront Plan, and both sides of Windmill Hill Park.

- **Marks**- clarified recommendations shown for Windmill Hill Park are short term intermediate. If the landscape plan is long term, there could be recommendations in the future that would change this.
- **Chair**- Since this is a traffic view of the road in the park, having landscape architecture design input will give her more comfort.
- **Marks**- There is a lot of different pieces, flood mitigation work that can't be done until the park is done, and park work can't be done until street design is decided. Staff will try to address all avenues.
- **Baum**-regarding bikes and having a thru street on N. Royal St. Now that we have bike lanes will this encourage people to want to go down Union Street more? **Marks**- Staff did a survey. Information was gathered about what would cause people to go through Union St. vs. Royal St. Information has been taken into consideration so people going on Mt. Vernon trail will have signage. People going to Union St. will have bike parking, ideas are not mutually exclusive.

III. **Braddock Small Area Plan- Park Planning/Open Space**- See Staff Report.

Durham- the open space property is located at 600 N. Henry St., in the block including the Wythe St. Post Office. The site was acquired in 2010, and has been discussed over the past two years. Durham: The 2008 Braddock Rd. Metro Area Plan recommends a one acre community park. The recommended location is the block currently occupied by the Wythe St. Post Office (1100 Wythe St. & 600 N. Henry St.). Since the plans approval by City Council staff has proceeded with the implementation, including the acquisition of 600 N. Henry St. in March 2010 and are now initiating the park planning process for the site. One factor for consideration is any possible architectural significance of the building.

- **Cromley**-When Parker Gray was put on the National Register of Historic Places - the only contributing factor regarding this building's significance was that it was built before a certain time.
- **Chair**- building is in general plain but reflecting a "streamline" character; the architectural characteristic is called Streamline Modern and is from the period 1935-1940's.
- **Durham**- Although the building is listed as a "contributing structure" on the NRHP, it is not officially a historic building, and can be demolished. It's important to remember when the building was acquired, a public hearing was held. It was clear that the building would be acquired in order to demolish it and convert it into a park. No comments against that were received at that time.
- **Chair**- Nor did City Departments comment at that time that the building could not or should not be demolished. The historical survey was developed after the building was bought with the intent to tear the building down. It came up at that time as a contributing building. Some buildings near Charles Houston were also designated as contributing, and were torn down. There is some debate remaining about the building.
- **Durham**- The intent of acquiring the site was to contribute towards the creation of a one acre park in this part of the City. Staff is working jointly with Planning and Zoning and General Services which is currently managing the property. The one acre park may not end up in this exact location on the block, but may be reconfigured within the block once it's fully redeveloped. The building is not in good condition. Staff is looking at phasing if the building can be torn down. Next Monday a community meeting will be held for the Braddock group. Staff will explain that the building was purchased as open space with the intent to put a park there and that there is some architectural value in the building. The community has a strong desire for a park here.

- **Chair**- the Post Office's timeframe to relocate is yet to be determined. The PRC goal should be to remain flexible to get the best outcome for the open space. The Chair asked staff to let her know if they have ideas or suggestions for programming, she said the Braddock Implementation Advisory Group (BIAG) will have some suggestions.
- **Durham**- On September 24, the Braddock Implementation Advisory Group will hold its first meeting since June. One of their topics is to consider the design of the park. The meeting is open to the public. After the next few meetings, the group will host a series of community meetings. The target is April 2013 for a hearing before the P&RC. Two elements: long term vision for a one-acre park, and what to do with the one-half acre site currently there.
- **Moritz** – said he has been working with the US Post Office, they have hired a commercial real estate broker; they have also reorganized and have said that they are focused on this issue, but this may still take some time.

IV. Jefferson Houston K-8 School Site Plan & Schedule. The Youth Sports Advisory Board, President Jim Gibson, submitted a letter in support of the proposed plans for the new Jefferson Houston School (dated 10/10/12). The Park and Recreation Members were in support of the project and were pleased with the gains of a full-size synthetic turf field, and full-size gymnasium with fixed bleachers, and playground. The new school is schedule to open in fall of September 2014. It will take some additional time to tear the old school down and install the field (field may be useable summer 2015).

Future Meetings: Thursday; November 08 - Planning Commission, and Saturday; November 17 - City Council.

Action: The Chair will prepare a letter to the Planning Commission in support of the Jefferson Houston project; she will attach the letter from Jim Gibson, President, YSAB.

Regular Meeting:

Civic Engagement Discussion: See Presentation and Director's report Item VII-A:

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/CivicEngagementUpdatePRC20Sep2012.pd>

Durham - In September 2012-Action Alexandria opened a poll on civic engagement (130 responses received to date), the survey was released today. The City Manager has formed an interdepartmental team to review how the City practices civic engagement, Ms. Durham was appointed to represent the DRPCA. The objective is to engage and improve the dialogue with the community; develop common elements and shared understanding of planning process; third expand/improve engagement toolbox so people can participate more easily in multiple ways, instead of just meetings, social media may be an option.

Future Meetings: November 2012- Community meeting with keynote speakers to discuss poll results; best practices; strategies and principles of engagement, January 2013 - Community Forum to discuss key planning topics.

V. Approval of Summary Minutes from July 19, 2012: Moir moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Brune and Baum. The minutes were approved.

VI. Division Updates: Please See Full Staff Reports: **To view copies of full staff reports go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation/Commissions/Reports>**

A. Recreation Programs and Service Update - William Chesley.

- **Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA) permit issue**- Baum asked a question -Windmill Hill Park ASA did not initially get their permit for this fall. The Chair was contacted by Councilman Krupicka and also Justin Wilson inquiring why ASA was not practicing at Windmill Hill Park. Director James Spengler said this summer there were problems at

Windmill Hill and other Waterfront Parks with cell phone leagues and vendors running instructional clinics for fees in the park. Working with staff and Police, we temporarily did not permit the parks for use. This helped Police distinguish proper activities. Unfortunately, conflicts in internal coordination led the Sport Office to think that RPCA was barring ASA permits as well. Once the Director received the call the issue was resolved within 24 hrs.

- **Update on Program Fees:** Director reported that since OSTP fees increased this year from \$50 to \$250 a year, enrollment is the same as last year. The fee is still \$1,000 less than surrounding jurisdictions.
- **Aquatics Swim Classes Follow-up:** – Baum noted that additional swim classes are available through Rec Trac; she said there is still a great need for learn to swim classes and encouraged staff to continue to expand these opportunities.
- **Other-** Cromley-complimented RPCA staff Marvin Elliot- field lights did not come on and he was called while on vacation and helped coordinated the repair.

B. **Park Operations Report** – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director was absent. Robert Taylor, Division Chief Natural Resources gave the update - See Staff Report:

Storm water Management Coordination:

The Chair commented on the report (pg. 2) which states: “These long-range storm water management plans are of particular interest to RPCA since an initial focus by T&ES is to explore the use of parklands for storm water detention ponds”. The Chair said she disagrees. Under the current City code, storm water detention ponds are classified as open space, the PRC needs to work to get this changed. As an example, at Potomac Yards there are two storm water detention ponds which are counted as open space they take up a lot of acres. These were designed before requirements for LEED were put in place: better low impact designs options are available now. The Chair will speak with Director, T&ES Richard Baier and others about this.

C. **Office of the Arts Update-** Cheryl Anne Colton, Acting Deputy Director - See Staff Report pg. 3. - former Duron Paint Building, Mt. Vernon Ave. - Arlandria, mural proposal. The Chair said that the priority should be to do the medallion first, and the mural later. Durham said this has been discussed. The Chair noted that the building will be officially named soon. Cromley mentioned that today’s Kodjo Nnamdi show featured a segment on graffiti: Public Vandalism - or Public Art. While some people see graffiti as a public nuisance, others see it as art. A growing number of cities are allowing places for public murals.

Other- The Chair noted that National Public Radio (NPR), “All Things Considered”, featured a segment – “On the Farmers Market Frontier, its Not Just About Profit”. The segment talks about the positive affect farmers markets are having in urban areas, by providing healthy produce and a sense of community. Kevin Beekman, of Alexandria, Virginia was featured talking about the Four Mile Run Farmers and Artisans Market in Arlandria. Since the plaza and building were improved the surrounding area is being better maintained, litter has decreased and there is perceived increase in safety. Farmer markets also help provide food assistance to low income families using the SNAP program.
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/08/30/160303008/>

D. **Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations Updates**– Jack Browand - See Staff Report.

- **Windmill Hill Park Safety Fence - See Staff Report:** The Windmill Hill Bulkhead is deteriorating and steps are being taken to replace it, in the interim a safety fence is being installed. Browand - four additional design options for a temporary fence were proposed and sent out for public comment. Staff recommended Option 3: Nautical Post and Rope design consistent with the option favored by the public The Board of Architectural Review (BAR), approved Option 4: Split Rail- fence at its September 5 meeting. This decision of the BAR is being appealed by members of the community, and a public hearing before City Council is scheduled for November 17. Therefore, the fence installation is on hold pending Council Action. In addition, warning signs installed by the City have been removed by members of the community and have been scheduled for replacement.
- **Waterfront Naming Policy Diagram-see attachment:** Baum- The Waterfront Commission tasked the Arts and History team to develop a formal process to consider proposals to name and/or rename public properties and assets along the waterfront- See diagram. The process allows for a vetting process and verification of historical naming of properties. The proposal includes an appeal. Browand encouraged members to send comments to Baum PRC liaison to the Waterfront Commission. The Commission will make a recommendation on the policy. The Chair noted that the PRC is not specifically listed in the naming scheme process and asked members to bring any requests for naming parks before the PRC. Baum said the PRC may fall under: Application review by Art and History Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee (AHWPC) or other committees or city agencies (see chart). Browand said individual Commission and other City agency involvement will be determined based on the request.
- **Jones Point Park Dedication Ceremony** – Saturday, September 22 at 10 a.m. on site.
- **Miracle Field** – On September 15, 2012, City Council approved the naming of the Lee Center ball field to The Kelley Cares Miracle Field, the PRC supported this request.
- **Marina Assessment Study-** Forbes asked when the assessment study at the marina will be completed. Browand said the assessment will be used as a management tool to prioritize annual maintenance activities and planned CIP improvements at the marina. Kagawa-second quarter of next year.
- Baum said the Waterfront Commission has reinstated the Marina Committee, and the committee will meet the second Thursday of each month at City Hall.

E. **Park Planning Updates – Ron Kagawa and Division Team**
Division Updates: See Staff Reports.

- **Active Park Planning Projects including Capital Improvement Projects-**Brief Update: See Staff Report. Kagawa said the report has been condensed and focuses only on high priority items, includes major projects including the new Large Park Planning.
- **Active CFMP Projects Report- Brief Update-** See Staff Report. This report focuses primarily on Recreation Centers and Facilities projects improvements.
- **Aquatics Briefing Memorandum-** See Staff Report.
- **Aquatics Alternatives Overview-** See Staff Report.
- **RPCA/ACPS Athletic Fields Exercise with Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB)-**See Staff Report.

- On May 14, 2012 the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) participated with RPCA staff in a feedback exercise to identify all maintenance and site issues at the City's fields. The original fields study completed in 2009 focused on the development of fields and open spaces, the updated study focuses primarily on maintenance of existing spaces. Many of the suggested maintenance actions have already been taken or are underway; the results are summarized in the report. Jim Gibson, Chair, YSAB wrote a letter in support of the updated Fields Report dated 9/15/12.
- **Dora Kelley Park Trail Resurfacing Survey-** See Summary Report - August 22, 2013. **Kagawa** pointed out results of paving project completed at park. 60% porous material used flexible. Dana Wedeles and Jack Browand worked together to help set up the survey and QR Codes. Although not a lot of responses received, responses were very positive; people said they were not inconvenienced by the construction.
- **Press Release for Large Park Planning Initiative-** See Press Release. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will gather input on its six large parks beginning in October. Durham said that six meetings (by Park District) are scheduled at this time; October 10, 17, 24, 29, and November 7 and 14, 2012. People desiring to give feedback may do by visiting www.Alexandria.gov/Recreation/Parkplanning
- **Other- Discussion of Commission Workload** - Baum – expressed concern that commission members are getting stretched with additional responsibilities outside of the monthly meetings. She said the PRC needs to think about adding another person from each of the Planning Districts due to requirements to attend ACPS meetings and Waterfront Commission meetings and others, the ten hours of service is growing. The Chair asked that a list of Commission member's liaison assignments be developed in order to gain a sense of each member's workload and time commitments.
- **Aquatics Briefing Memorandum** and **Aquatics Alternatives Overview: See Staff Reports.** Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator gave brief update. An Aquatics meeting was held, September 19, 2012 at the Lee Center. The consultant's recommendations are summarized in the attached memo of April 19, 2012. RPCA Architect David Ghezzi, Architect, worked with staff on developing additional aquatics supplemental alternatives which were presented and discussed at the September 19 meeting. Attendees felt the consultant's recommendations particularly for Old Town Pool was the first priority. For Chinquapin, it was discussed for that renovations of the park, Recreation Center and pool should run on a parallel track. Feedback for aquatics process can feed into the Large Park Planning process for Chinquapin. Ms. Durham said that additional outreach may be done as there were not a lot of attendees at the meeting.
- The Chair, said that Bill Rivers wants to help swim groups set up a 501C3 organization to help raise funds to help with aquatics, primarily to build a therapeutic pool at the existing Nannie J. Lee pool site (estimated cost \$3M). Rivers helped raise funds to build the Miracle Field, at the Lee Center, scheduled to open in the fall. Baum said feedback from last night's meeting was similar with that of the PRC to move ahead with a competitive size pool as a priority at Chinquapin and/or Old Town or at two sites. She would also support pools that include fun leisure activities that help draw people to the pool. Cromley said focus should be to teach children how to swim. Beggs said programming can also help draw people to pools. The Chair said that the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) plans to make significant upgrades to the Cameron Run Park Regional Park water park on Eisenhower Avenue in Alexandria. Durham said one or two large features will be added, there will be some challenges.

- **Other-Tennis Courts at T.C. Williams H.S.**- the Chair discussed the tennis courts at T.C. Williams. Moir expressed concern that competitive tennis teams have no place to play in the City, high school students are being bused from City to other counties, ACPS should be involved in helping to accommodate needs. The Chair said that ACPS has \$400,000 in their budget but this is not enough. Staff is looking at different locations at T.C. Williams H.S. and discussion is ongoing with Jim Gibson, Chair, YSAB, including location courts near the existing parking garage. **Kagawa**- staff received a study last week from ACPS Facilities Office and is reviewing, issues on approval process are not clear. Chair of School board told Judy that they may have some unspent funds to put towards the project. Chair PRC said the alternative to do two more courts at the school to add to the existing 4 that are on the Chinquapin side (to make six courts total) may not be a good idea as it will restrict planning options for a potential competitive pool at that location.

VII. Director's Report - James Spengler: See Staff Report.

- Civic Engagement:** this item was discussed previously- see above.
- CIP alignment to Strategic Plan:** The City Manager has formed an interdepartmental team to look at the CIP process. Goal to get greater alignment between CIP projects and the strategic plans. The group is just beginning work and recommendations are due by end of October. Beth Carton, RPCA, Park Planner has been appointed to the committee and will update the Commission as things develop.

VIII. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum** - reported that the Waterfront Commission is scheduled to meet regarding the Union St. Corridor Study September 27th at 5:30 pm, City Hall, room 2000. The Marina Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for October 11th at 5 pm City Hall, room 2000. In conjunction with Arts & History, Archeology and members of the Parks and Recreation Dept., the Waterfront Commission is developing an application process, guidelines/procedures, and an approval process for naming possible future waterfront objects and sites. The new process includes the current park naming process and expands it to include an application and review analysis by appropriate historians/experts to assess the merit of the application.
- Youth Sport Committee - Bob Moir**, the YSAB is reviewing aquatics recommendations as previously discussed.
- Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes**. The Chair reported that a joint task force meeting will be held in October, date not announced yet. Will discuss that they have gone from the original bridge design to a second design due to contract negotiations.
- Freedman's Cemetery - Bob Moir**. The Chair said the project is progressing a lot of work has been done. Kagawa said expected completion is May 1, 2013, staff will hand-select trees soon.
- ACPS & Capital Improvements** - Judy Guse-Noritake. Jefferson Houston School discussed – see above. She understands that ACPS will be sending out a RFP for consultant services for Patrick Henry in the fall.
- Jones Point Park Liaison Group** - Judy Guse-Noritake. The ribbon cutting for Jones Point Park is scheduled for Saturday at 10 a.m. Elected officials will attend along with participants from the National Park Service, and Congressman Jim Moran.
- Community Gardens Policy** - Judy Guse-Noritake.

- H. **Ft. Ward- Ripley Forbes, Bob Moir.** Forbes- The search for graves has unearthed many artifacts.
 - I. **ACPS School Projects-** Judy Guse-Noritake. Ongoing.
 - J. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley- this item discussed previously- See Item IV. Kagawa - Phase I archeology study uncovered the remains/grave of Baggett who was a contemporary of John Carlyle.
 - K. **Beauregard Corridor Plan Task Force-** Stephen Beggs- the Beauregard Advisory Group's next meeting is on October 1 at 7 pm at the Buddie Ford Nature Center. We will be discussing the Open Space Evaluation and give our recommendation on how to spend the \$1.5M given by the Developer and the Federal Government to cover loss of Open Space. Eight sites were selected but three have risen to the top: 1.Town Center; 2. Seminary Rd. and Echols; 3. Polk and Pelham. Seminary/Echols is not a traditional choice needing additional easements from neighboring landowners. Polk/Pelham is over 2 acres with a mature canopy, but not within the Beauregard small area plan and valued by the owner at \$2.5M. Town Center is well located but small. After taking the survey questionnaire Mr. Beggs felt that the Town Center location had a slight advantage because of its location.
- IX. Public Comment Period on Other Topics:** Amy Slack, resident of Del Ray, Randolph Ave. - Ms. Slack is an active member of the Del Ray Citizens Association; Ms. Slack raised concerns about the lack of public awareness about PRC decisions affecting her neighborhood and the local community despite being proactive. She stated that there have been several actions taken in her neighborhood that neither she nor the local citizens' association was made aware of. Amy suggested the PRC use outlets such as the City E-news and local newsletters to better inform the public about public meetings and other decisions that would affect the community.
- Director James Spengler suggested Ms. Slack follow-up with Robert Taylor, Division Chief of Natural Resources, who has been meeting with residents in that neighborhood and he explained that even when community input is given on a particular issue it is still possible for neighbors to be on opposite sides.
- The Chair explained that the PRC as an advisory group and as such cannot make decisions, but rather makes recommendations to Council. She said in the future as the PRC makes recommendations they will try to do a better job of going back to the Del Ray Civic Association for their input. The board agreed that more could be done in this regard.
- X. Agenda items for October 18, 2012, meeting and location. Location, Charles Houston Recreation Center, agenda items to be determined.
 - XI. The list of upcoming meetings was distributed.

Meeting adjourned 9:55 p.m.

October 10, 2012

Ms. Judy Guse-Noritake
Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

Dear Judy:

The Youth Sports Advisory Board fully supports the proposed plans for the new Jefferson-Houston School. The sports and recreation features associated with the project strongly indicate a commitment to maximizing the resources to the greatest good for our children.

We totally support the installation of an artificial turf field at the school site, the new outdoor basketball court with lights, a full size gym with an indoor basketball court, and a new playground. The lack of open space remaining in the City makes it a necessity that we maximize use of whatever space is available. The above actions precisely do that. While we understand that we may lose some use of the recreation facilities during the school construction, the added benefit of new and better features will more than offset that temporary sacrifice.

The full size gym will be a great asset and benefit to the school and the City. Even so, it may not satisfy the demand the proposed school population will generate. Any and all means should be made to add even more indoor exercise room where possible.

We look forward to the completion of this new facility and adjoining recreation areas. Please let me know if the Youth Sports Advisory Board can further support this effort.

Sincerely,

Jim Gibson

Jim Gibson, Chair

Youth Sports Advisory Board

September 15, 2012

Ms. Judy Guse-Noritake
Chair
Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

This letter reflects the support of the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) for the Field Study recently completed by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (DRPCA) and the Alexandria City Public School System (ACPS).

In spring of this year, the YSAB expressed concern over the confusing process as to how improvements can be made to fields in Alexandria. Some fields are under the authority of ACPS while others are under the control of DRPCA. In addition, DRPCA supplies the maintenance to a number of fields under the control of the ACPS. It was unclear to us who was responsible for what fields and how to suggest improvements to the fields.

In response, DRPCA and ACPS personnel combined to work with the YSAB on a Field Study. They actively sought input from the various youth sports, including an innovative idea of having pictures of every field in the City on a wall and having the sports representatives apply comments directly to the field picture so there could be no confusion as to what field was being discussed and what changes were recommended. The City working group then took those comments and organized them into a comprehensive listing of what is needed at each field, who is responsible for enacting those changes, and what the timeframe is. This is the first study that many of us on the YSAB have seen that sets things out in such an easy to understand fashion.

The Study is organized into sections on maintenance improvements needed vs. capital improvements needed; fields under the control of ACPS vs. DRPCA; and what actions are short term, long term, and unfunded. In showing the usefulness of the study already, many of the maintenance actions suggested have already been taken or are underway and can be clearly seen and tracked.

The Field Study is a significant step forward in tracking and responding to changes needed for our fields. While we endorse the Study, we also realize that priorities may change over the years so something listed as being planned for FY 2017 may move forward or backwards depending upon changes in circumstances.

The YSAB is and has been positioned well to provide first-hand accounts of the positive effects of the upgrades and improvements in recent years. At the same time we are equally sensitive to the need to press forward to take full advantage of every useable square foot of land. To that end, there are opportunities to continue or create public/private partnerships to help fund some of the changes and that we at the YSAB need some formal assurance from ACPS before supporting any controversial changes on fields under their control after the situation involving lights at the Hammond Upper Field. However neither of those observations takes away from the quality and the usefulness of the Field Study.

We endorse the Field Study and express our appreciation to both ACPS and DRPCA for their efforts in putting a comprehensive study together. The YSBA is poised to assist in any way we can to accomplish the goal of providing the best possible use of our recreation land and facilities.

Sincerely,

Jim Gibson
Chair
Youth Sports Advisory Board