

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

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, June 21, 2012, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Charles Houston Recreation Center**  
**901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia**

**Summary Minutes**

**Commission Members:** Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Robert Moir, John Sullivan. **Excused Absences:** Richard Brune, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson, Mollie Timmons, Caleb Vogt. A quorum was not present.

**RPCA Staff:** William Chesley, Deputy Director, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant; Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director Park Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning, Design and Capital Development; Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, Bethany Carton, Park Planner, Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Director, Office of the Arts.

**Absent:** James Spengler, Director, Cheryl Lawrence, Acting Director Special Events/Marina, Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director, and Office of the Arts.

**I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. Aquatics Facilities Work Session follow-up discussion:**

- **Laura Durham-** Reported that a decision had not yet been made on creating a stakeholder aquatics advisory group. The Chair that an advisory group should be a sub-committee of the Park and Recreation Commission like the Youth Sports Advisory Board. This will allow P&RC to consider aquatics recommendations as part of its policy and budget recommendations to City Council and the Department, similar to Youth Sports, etc. The Chair recommended setting up a small group of stakeholders from the swimming community to work with one to two members of the P&RC on the aquatics issues. The Director RPCA is looking for feedback over the summer to help shape recommendations for the budget in the fall. An effort will be made to get this small group together over the summer.
- **Durham-** The Consultants' recommendations are not set in stone but should be used only as a guide. Two factors to consider are, (1) the City spends a lot of money on its aging aquatics facilities to keep them open in the summer, and (2) that there is an active group of aquatics stakeholders that would like to work with staff on aquatics planning. Currently the City is in a maintain/repair mode. An advisory group could consider smaller improvements to improve aquatics facilities in the City short-term until a longer term plan is agreed and funded.
- **Moir-** Because Chinquapin's renovation could cost over \$28 million, the P&RC should be involved in developing recommendations about the aquatics plan moving forward.

- The Chair said the Aquatics Plan must be considered together with other City-wide recreational priorities.
- **Q: Beggs**- said active users and stakeholders of City pools could offer useful insights into community needs, and from their input a list of concerns could be developed that would allow the P&RC to see how their concerns match up with the current aquatics study.
- **A: Durham**- said there is a large group of competitive and recreational swimmers who attended the aquatics meetings, others have sent emails, and are becoming more active.
- **Chair**- said stakeholders are welcome to contact City Council members directly but it is the P&RC's role to consider aquatics and other issues in the context of overall recreation resources/priorities and funding. The P&RC has for a long time recommended having a large competition-sized pool, however because this is a large cost item, the recommendation stayed in the forefront during the budget process. In response to Baum, the Chair said the role of the advisory group would be to provide input to the P&RC.
- **Moir**- asked Ms. Durham to send a copy of the Consultants' report to Commissioners.
- **Chair**- said the Consultants have met with the swimming community a number of times and their report's recommendations reflect stakeholder inputs the Consultants' have experiences with other communities the size of Alexandria, and information was benchmarked with RPCA 2011 Needs Assessment. Adequate information is available for P&RC to discuss short and longer term aquatics recommendations. The Chair said that for example, if Chinquapin is to be expanded, how should aquatics fit into the Chinquapin master plan for the park behind and which should come first?
- **Q: Beggs**- asked how much money is set aside in the budget.
- **A: Durham**-currently \$3 million is set aside through 2017 for spraygrounds and \$6 million for improvements/maintenance at Chinquapin. The estimated cost for full renovation. The City will also consider smaller short-term options that would not cost as much.
- **The Chair** commented that City residents may prefer a different set of recommendations and priorities than those in the Consultant's report, including spray parks. When Charles Houston pool was built the P&RC wanted to replace the dilapidated pool with a spraypark. Sprayparks are a less expensive option over the long term, have lower maintenance cost, would not require a lifeguard, and would add diversity to the City's pool system. The community, however, wanted a pool rebuilt and Council supported their choice.
- **Q: Sullivan**- asked if RPCA has an equipment assessment and breakdown on maintenance and replacement schedules, and asked if there is money allocated for this.  
**A: Durham**- said a facility study was recently completed by RPCA staff and there is a small operating budget.

- **Kagawa**- the Consultants worked at length on how to reduce the cost per visit and finding ways to keep existing systems together. New facilities have significantly lower costs per visit and operating costs. **Durham**- currently the City is subsidizing each pool visit by \$9.17.
- **Chair** in response to Sullivan's question about Chinquapin's useful lifespan, said a Structural Engineer would have to look at the building's shell to determine if the shell could be maintained.
- **Sullivan**- the problem he sees is if small pools are shut down and sprayparks are put in, these may not serve the need to provide swimming lessons.
- **Chair**- there are many Alexandria children, who do not know how to swim and need basic swimming lessons for safety. **Beggs** said access could be a problem with only one large City pool.
- **Chair**- At the time T.C. Williams was being designed being built there was a plan to expand Chinquapin with a second pool (competitive sized) to increase overall capacity.
- **Kagawa**- As the drafts have come to the P&RC questions have evolved about forming some kind of group.
- **Chair**- It was agreed that between now and the CIP budget recommendations the P&RC will convene a small group of advocates from the swimming community to act as a subcommittee and meet with the P&RC over the summer to get input and feedback. The Chair will be part of this group.
- **Baum**- The advisory group should include parents. She raised the problem of Chinquapin having a long waiting list for swim classes, especially classes for infants, this needs to be addressed. She said demand for infant swim classes is much greater than their availability. People wake up early to get on line as soon as the Web's registration opens up. Baum offered to work with staff to develop ideas for creating a non-traditional schedule for classes, such as very early morning. **Chesley**- has asked staff to look at non-traditional times because everyone wants Saturday morning. There are 300 people on the wait list for Learn to Swim Classes currently at \$75 each; this represents an estimated \$22,000 in potential revenue.

**Public Comments: Roisin Lakings**, an active swimmer and member of Chinquapin who has three children in swim classes, said she does not want to see the pools close and she has been frustrated with the lack of availability of Chinquapin swim classes.

The Chair recommended that she talk with Deputy Director Chesley about specific management issues related to accessing swim classes. In response, Mr. Chesley said he does not think lack of instructors is the issue. He thinks the primary issue is balancing class schedules to maintain some opportunity for recreation and lap swimmers. He will consult with staff on the matter. When asked if there were an opportunity to rent private pools in the West End for City classes, Mr. Chesley said this option could be explored. Ms. Durham said the majority of swimmers are recreational not competitive users; and

that the Needs Assessment points out there are unmet needs in sprayparks, and for indoor and outdoor aquatics facilities; and that City swimmers include competitive, therapeutic, lap and recreation.

**Action:** The Chair asked Ms. Durham to develop a list of five to six people including her and Baum so that an initial meeting could be scheduled. It was suggested a spraypark enthusiast also be included in the group.-

III. **Approval of Summary Minutes from May17, 2012.** Bob Moir moved to approve the May minutes; the motion was seconded by Gina Baum. All were in favor; the minutes were approved

IV. **Division Updates: To View a Copy of the Full Staff Report go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation/CommissonReports>**

A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley- See Staff Report.  
Two highlights.

- **Community Transformation Grant (CTF) funding.** The Director submitted a Letter of Intent to apply for this grant on June 15. If awarded RPCA may receive up to two million dollars in grant funding to address three priority areas: 1. tobacco-free living, 2. active living and healthy eating, and 3. healthy and safe physical environments. The grant application is due by July 31, 2012.
- Staff is working with Carrie Fesperman-Redman, of the City's Health Dept., and also collaborating with the Departments of HHSS and ARHA. The item is on the City Council Docket for June 26, 2012.
- **Hershey Track and Field Meet**- RPCA hosted and coordinated the District Hershey Track and Field Meet at T.C. Williams HS on May 1. More than 200 youths competed in the event. 15 youth are going to Charlottesville, VA. Non-high school ages.

B. **Park Operations Report**- Jack Browand - See Staff Report.

- Distributed map of rain gauges. As a result of flooding due to Hurricane Irene, the City and T&ES have installed a flood monitoring system that will give the City an early warning system for potential Holmes Run flooding.
- **Other Updates:**
- **Windmill Hill Bulkhead** - proposed safety fence. Staff testified at the BAR meeting on June 20, a decision was deferred. Staff will plan to return to the BAR in July after working with the community on a redesigned fence.
- **Freedman's Cemetery Update:** **Kagawa** said delay is due to a decision on naming, e.g. whether the cemetery should be named "Contraband and Freedman's Cemetery" or "Freedman's Cemetery". Moir said there is a difference of opinion in the advisory group over the word Contraband being included in the title.

- C. **Office of the Arts Update**- Cheryl Anne Colton - See Staff Report.  
Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director is leaving on July 6 to go to Michigan, Ms. Colton will serve as Acting Deputy Director of the Arts.

Additional Updates:

1. **Charles Hamilton Houston Memorial Public Art Project fundraising efforts**- meetings are being held on a regular basis. A gala is planned for fall, tentative dates are October 20 or 27, the Committee is hopeful to raise funds for the project.
2. **Freedman's Cemetery**- The three finalists will make their presentations on July 7 from 1-5 p.m. at the Lyceum, following the presentation there will be a public reception 5-6 p.m.

**Other:** Three Summer Temporary Public Arts Projects: 1). Planning District 3:, Jane Franklin Dance Company- host a "Happy Endings" performance June 21 and July 24. A "Cute Animals" performance will be held on August 2. These performances will be held in the rotunda of the Charles Beatley Library. 2) Planning District 1: Mathew Harwood will have a temporary installation in Oronoco Bay Park by 7/7. This installation is interactive, and invites people to touch and sit on the sculpture/bench.

Planning District 2: Linda Hesh will be creating 3000 doorknob hangers to be placed in Del Ray area; hangers will say "Art is to see, to do, and to feel." The installation of these doorknob hangers will occur the week of July 30 and all doorknob hangers will be installed by August 2.

- D. **Park Planning Updates** – Ron Kagawa and Division Team:

- i. **Division Updates:** - See Staff Reports:
  - **Active Park Projects including Capital Improvement Projects – Update:**  
See Slide.
  - **Active CFMP Projects Report – Update- See Staff Report.**
  - **Fort Ward – RFP- See Staff Report.**
  - **Jones Point Park** – See Staff Report- the park will be completed June 25, and will be open to the public July 5. The National Park Service (NPS) will be responsible for maintaining and programming activities in the park once opened. For concerns about off-leash dogs residents will need to call the U.S. Park Service Police, not the Department of RPCA. Information will be put onto the RPCA website. The Chair, noted that last Saturday City Council moved to make the use of electronic dog collars illegal in the City. While warnings will be given now, tickets will not be given until September, allowing people to become accustomed to new regulations.

- **Summer 2012 Interns- See Staff Report.** Beth Carton and Dana Wedeles will be managing the summer intern. See bios in packet.
- **Other Updates:**
- **Hammond Field Update-** ACPS managing project- 40% complete. No lights planned at this time.
- **Miracle Field at Lee Center- Kagawa-** The Miracle Field lights SUP was approved this past Saturday. The project is out to bid, prices back July 29. 9/22 is opening day. Groundbreaking was held last Saturday- 75 people including City Council attended event.
- **Potomac Yard Park North Pond Amendment: See Presentation by Bethany Carton, Park Planner.** To view presentation go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation/CommissonReports>
- The park project was approved in 2008 by City Council. Construction on the park began in June 2011 and considerable infrastructure work has been completed. Most of the vegetated geoweb walls and poured in place concrete walls are expected to be completed soon. Potomac Yard Development, LLC (PYD) will submit a major amendment to the north pond in response to changed circumstances. The previously approved plan combined PYD's pond with the existing storm water management pond serving the retail center to the north. Due to coordination issues between ownerships, PYD will submit a new plan to install a separate pond for the park, resulting in two ponds next to each other.
- **The Chair** – voiced a concern that the existing south pond is unattractive and requires a lot of designated open space.
- **Carton** said the contractor is working to install the vegetation and storm water infrastructure. The north pond would be reconfigured with the new design as proposed by PYD. It would maintain the wetland shelf filtration system and other design components. The pond would be deeper with a bigger plaza space instead of planted area. The pier would rotate 90 degrees to be oriented parallel to the pond edge.
- **Sullivan** asked what the hardscape would be; he said if stormwater management were a concern, pervious pavers should be used to help mitigate run off.
- **Carton**-there is concrete and pervious pavers in the Belvedere/plaza.
- **Kagawa** said pavers on the promenade had been approved a long time ago and some are pervious. The proposed pavement matches the rest of the park.
- **Carton**- Some of the large concrete will be benches - See slide- and perspective views of the new design concept were reviewed.
- The major amendment plans will be submitted to the City in July and the amendment is anticipated to be presented to Planning Commission and City Council in the fall. The park is still anticipated to be complete summer 2013.

- **Presentation by Duncan Blair, Attorney for the Potomac Yard Development LLC (PYD):** Kagawa introduced Duncan Blair, who made a brief presentation on the project.  
**Discussion:** Blair said the property is zoned as a Coordinated Development District (CDD) a zoning category that often requires two entities to work together, but it had become clear that joining the two ponds and maintaining them in perpetuity would be impossible. Because Landbay K is scheduled to open in a year, it appears that an agreement with the owners on the other side could not be reached in time. Mr. Blair said the adjacent Landbay G will be more urban with a Giant store and offices to be built near the Potomac Yard Metro Station and a park that would serve more urban-passive uses. Blair said that, from his client’s standpoint, it would have been easier to have built the original design but in order to complete the park in the time period needed, the design modification was needed. The Potomac Yards Design Advisory Group (PYDAG) has found the modification to be consistent with the original design.
- **Commissioner Moir-** asked if a design exists that would allow the two ponds be able to be combined in the future. **Mr. Blair-** said the property owners north of the park have changed. The design includes a potential option for the pond to be extended and flexibility for the north group to relocate their part of the storm water management. **Kagawa-** said a redesign would be difficult due to the storm water infrastructure proposed.
- **Chair to Blair-** She recognized that over time changes can occur with large projects such as this one, especially in this changing economy, and that Blair’s clients had made a commitment made based on triggers in the development’s stages. She noted the City had ended up with two grass fields instead of two artificial turf fields at Simpson because the City had been unprepared when developers’ plans changed and the City needed to cover the cost difference. She said the City is investing significant funds in the PY Park, she would have preferred a different design, but that in the end “it would be fine”. The Chair asked what PYD is seeking from the Commission. **Blair-** asked for the P&RC to endorse PYD’s proposed modification.
- **Action:** Moir motioned, and Baum seconded, that the P&RC approve the reconfigured design as presented by Attorney Duncan Blair. The Chair said that because a quorum was not present, a revote will be taken at July meeting. The majority of those present supported the proposed redesign.

**Potomac Yards Metro Station Update:** In response to Baum, Ms. Carton said three location options are being considered and Park Planning would provide graphics of the alternatives.

- E. **Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events** – Cheryl Lawrence (absent). Jack Browand gave updates - Comcast will hold a Film Festival at Waterfront Park, two movies: Friday, July 13, “Mission Impossible, Ghost Protocol”, and Saturday, July 14, “We Bought a Zoo”. The Chair asked that this information be added to the RPCA website.

V. **Director's Report - James Spengler (absent)**: RPCA staff gave updates.

A. **Beauregard Corridor Plan-Update**: Durham - City Council established a Beauregard Corridor Rezoning Advisory Group "Advisory Group" on June 26, 2012. The goal of this group is to provide recommendations to City staff on the rezoning within the Beauregard Small Area Plan. The group will have 11 members: including 1 member from the Park and Recreation Commission. Other members are: Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (1), Community and At-Large members (5), Developer representative (1), Environmental Policy Commission (1), Planning Commission (1), Transportation Commission (1). The duration is undefined at this time; the group will remain in effect through the rezoning process. Developers plan to bring this forward in November. The first intended topics are location and programming of open space to be purchased using the \$1.5 million from the Department of Defense/BRAC; the community wants to be involved in where this is spent. Other discussion will be regarding the proposed Ellipse alternatives, and transportation options. The Chair appointed Commissioner Stephen Beggs as the P&RC liaison to this group; she will serve as back-up. Durham said the group's first meeting will be held in July. Durham will have a brief discussion prior to the first meeting about pending issues so Mr. Beggs can represent the P&RC position to this new group.

B. **Project Implementation Office**: Kagawa gave update. The 2013 budget process identified the idea of establishing a Citywide Office of Project Implementation. The role of the office is anticipated to focus on capital project execution for major City initiatives. At present the office is expected to be staffed by a Project Director that will report at Deputy City Manager level and staff from P&Z and TES respectively. Director Spengler will keep the Commission updated on the status of this new office.

VI. **2012 CIVIC Award Nominations** - Jack Browand - See Staff Report. The Park and Recreation Commission will hold its annual Civic Awards ceremony on Saturday, July 7 at the City of Alexandria Birthday Celebration at Oronoco Park at 7:00 p.m. The Chair encouraged P&RC members to make their way to the stage at 7:00 p.m. The nominations this year were fewer than other years. Ripley Forbes and Richard Brune served on the nomination sub-committee. The members discussed that one nominee Donnie Simpson previously received an individual award and another was given to his company, and so the sub-committee recommended setting aside that nomination, though deserving. The sub-committee was in agreement on other the nominees: Laura Fries (swimming advocate), Joseph LaMountain (M.V. Big Flee Market fundraiser). Brian Marquis (Holmes Run Park advocate), and Pat Miller (for contributions to the Arts and Community and work on Miracle Field fundraising)

**Action**: The Chair moved to accept the slate of nominations as recommended by the P&RC sub-committee. All were in favor.

VII. **Reports from Commissioners (verbal updates)**:

A. **Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum**: the Bikeshare Program is moving forward and a new location to park bikes was chosen. Browand said the original proposed location, at Union and Cameron Streets, was not approved. The location has been moved to the N.E. corner of Union and Prince Streets. A recent meeting

was held on the Union Street. Corridor Study- almost 3800 pedestrians cross Union and King Street between 6 and 8 p.m. on Saturday . Other- A presentation was given by Mathew Harwood on Arts Bench, a kinetic sculpture to be unveiled at the City's Birthday July 7 at Oronoco Park.

**Windmill Hill Park**- There is an ongoing concern that drivers are accelerating as they approach Union Street. Speed bumps are being discussed. Browand- said traffic mitigation was discussed but staff thought it best to defer until the Union St. Corridor Study is approved. Chair- for a number of years she has spoken with Rich Baier advocating Union Street at Windmill Hill Park to be closed during certain times. There are design options using pavers and other items to slow traffic when the road is open. If designed as such, this section of the street could become a plaza that is part of the park during weekends when the road might be closed. The crossing is currently dangerous.

**Browand**- in response to Baum, said that there is allocated money, \$1.3 million, being held for future work on the bulkhead. A million dollars being held in reserve for future work on the bulkhead (design concepts and studies) money would be available in 2016 and 2017. An additional \$333,000 is earmarked for additional improvements. The Union St. Study will come out with recommendations in the fall. Chair- said Baum does make a good point, that at a recent on-site meeting (several months ago) the Director of RPCA and some P&RC members discussed installing kayak launch at this site using existing funding. Browand- said there will be a kayak launch at Jones Point Park and no need to duplicate here, so close.

B. **Youth Sport Committee** - Bob Moir.

The issues discussed were the Miracle Field to be built at Lee Center in the summer, swim issues, in addition, the Field Study was discussed (study was done about four years ago.) Kagawa- said the ACPS Facilities Director attended the May YSC. meeting. The discussion addressed outstanding issues related to the fields on both City and ACPS property. Information is being put together for a comparison with the Needs Assessment. The outcome will inform how staff moves forward with the CIP budget. The Chair asked that the presentation given to YSC be given to the Commission at its July meeting. Kagawa agreed.

C. **Four Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes (absent): The Chair said they are still waiting to hear about issues regarding allowable flow capacity for the channel set by federal legislation. Congressman Jim Moran was willing to offer the necessary proposed legislative change but there was no Water Resources Development Act in Congress this term. He tried to offer it in the Appropriations Committee mark-up but the majority party members are no longer allowing appropriations "riders". Despite the fact that this would have only changed the required flow in Four Mile Run and had no money attached to it, the Appropriations Committee would not let it be offered. An Arlington-Alexandria agency team is pursuing other avenues to have the stream's flow capacity changed.

D. **Freedman's Cemetery** - Bob Moir - this item was previously discussed under Item C.

- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements** - Judy Guse-Noritake.  
Jefferson Houston School redevelopment is moving along. A New ACPS Facilities Director, Bill Finn, will begin on July 2, and will oversee design and construction. Kagawa- said that RPCA continues to work collegially with ACPS staff in design and construction.
- F. **Jones Point Park Liaison Group** - Judy Guse-Noritake. The Jones Point Park Community Liaison Group will continue after the construction of the Park concludes in July. The goals of this group will change. The land is owned and will be managed by the National Park Service.
- G. **Community Gardens Policy** - Judy Guse-Noritake. One meeting was held to date, the Chair will follow-up on a future meeting.
- H. **Ft. Ward**- Ripley Forbes and Bob Moir-See Staff Report. Moir- A draft RFP for Fort Ward Park & Museum Area Management Plan is in process, 4301 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA. Durham said the draft version still needs to go through the City's Procurement Office. The Chair said this is good news and that the Management Plan will come back to the P&RC for discussion, comment and approval.
- I. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake.
- J. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley (absent). Kagawa said the Plan will be submitted to the BAR next week. The Chair asked Kagawa to send images of the Plan and Elevations to the P&RC as the project evolves. Kagawa –said plan is changing and that at time of preliminary plan submission, sometime over the summer, images will be provided. Timeline for completion is 2015. Land Use Attorney Duncan Blair was hired by ACPS, and Turner Construction hired as construction manager.
- K. **Beauregard Corridor Small Area Plan**- Stephen Beggs will be liaison representing the P&RC. The group will begin meeting over the summer.

**P&RC Annual Report and Attendance Report**. The Chair received a letter from the City Clerk Jackie Henderson, that it is time to complete the Annual Report and the Attendance Report for 2012. City Code requires 75% attendance at meetings. Excused absences are now not counted toward the 75%.

**VIII. Public comments on any other topics.** Roisin Lakings commented during the Aquatics Discussion on the need for more swim classes, particularly for babies.

**IX. Agenda items for July 19, 2012 meeting and location.** Location-Charles Houston Community Center.

Meeting Adjourned 8:45 p.m.