

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Park and Recreation Commission

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 20, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

City Hall - Room 1101
301 King Street, Alexandria VA

Summary Minutes

Commission Members: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chairperson. Henry S. Brooks, Rich Brune, William Cromley, David Dexter, Ripley Forbes, Robert Moir, Jeffrey Murphy. Excused Absences: Stephen (Clark) Mercer, Mathew Coda.

RPCA Staff: Jack Browand, Roger Blakeley, Ron Kagawa, Laura Durham, Robin DeShields. Absent: William Chesley, James Spengler, Director.

Guests: Faroll Hamer, Director Planning & Zoning, Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, and Nancy J. Williams, Principal Planner. Dottie Marshall and Kate Barrett, National Park Service.

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed staff and guests. She noted that the meeting is not a public hearing, but an opportunity for P&RC members to provide feedback/comments on the Waterfront Concept Plan.

I. Presentation of the City of Alexandria Waterfront Concept Plan - Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning and Zoning and staff.

- Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning gave the presentation on Alexandria's Waterfront Concept Plan. Mr. Moritz shared background information on the process for developing the Concept Plan which started in April 2009. A series of public outreach activities began last summer. In addition, City staff, along with a number of stakeholders, toured Battery and Bryant parks in NYC last summer and participated in a number of local waterfront tours. Topical meetings which addressed the marina, arts and history were held in January/February/March of this year.
- The presentation focused on key redevelopment sites within the planning area such as the Robinson Terminal sites, north and south; the Strand blocks; and the City Marina. In addition, information was shared regarding plans for Oronoco Bay Park, Founders Park, Waterfront Park, Point Lumley Park and the Foot of King Street. The goal is to enhance and expand the amount of parkland and public space in the planning area.
- **Common themes-include enhancing connectivity and public access via a pedestrian walkway extending from the northern end of the planning area (Daingerfield Island) to the southern end (Jones Point Park); activitating the Strand area; extending King Street as a pier; expanding activities for families/children and the public in Oronoco Bay Park; incorporating history and art throughout the planning area; preserving view corridors and opening up alleys; and promoting historic preservation and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.**
- In addition Mr. Moritz said the **public wants more Waterfront dining options.** A recent retail study done for King St. shows that in order to have a successful retail experience there needs to be continuous activities at regular intervals. For that reason, a pavilion and pier have been placed at the foot of King and a restaurant has been proposed for the western portion of Waterfront Park. The restaurant would fit atop a garage that would be built for the ODBC to compensate for their parking that is currently at the foot of King.

- **A Flood Study has been completed by T&ES with provisions for flood mitigation for the Waterfront area and shoreline area.** Flood mitigation measures include the pedestrian walkway which would be elevated at approximately 4.5 feet (around its current level) with other mitigation incorporated in the landscape, buildings and street ends
- **A Marina assessment has been done and it shows a market and demand for more boat slips. The plan would expand the City Marina to approximately 150 slips. The expansion would permeate the DC boundary. The City would need to secure approval from DC and a number of other entities - federal and state - for the expansion.**
- **A Full Copy of the Presentation Can be Found At:**
www.alexandriava.gov/Waterfront
- **Q. Cromley - Are some slips reserved for sailboats and some for power boats?** It is important to maintain calm and noise levels at certain points. *R. Moritz – yes; the marina would include slips to serve a number of vessel types (commercial and pleasure) and sizes; however, the entire plan seeks to be harmonious with the character and scale of Old Town.*
- **Q. Brune - where is fuel for boats going to be stored?** Nothing is shown for boat maintenance or fuel storage. *R. Hamer- Again, the intent is not to change the character of the Marina (not a working marina). Intent is to be on scale with what Old Town is currently. Fuel is currently available at other nearby marinas.*
- **Q. Ripley - Will it be a floating dock?**
- *R. Moritz - We understand the benefits of floating docks, and the use of floating and permanent docks, or a combination, is to be determined.*
- **Next Steps:-** Karl Moritz
- Concept Plan- goes to City Council Work Session Tuesday-May 25.
- Printed document out shortly for the Concept Plan.
- Comments and feedback are welcome.
- Full Plan draft-summer.
- Draft Waterfront Plan to City Council in fall.

Karl Moritz asked for feedback; it will be used for the full plan to be released in summer. The Chair said the P&RC recesses in July and will address what comes out in September.

Questions/Comments:

- **Mr. Cromley-** commented that some people view the Waterfront Plan as the commercialization of the Waterfront. He supports the Plan which will help create a vibrant Waterfront and help pay for improvements. He further commented that the Plan suffers however from views from above; **suggested creating a series of circular paths/that connects areas and helps re-circulate people around the Waterfront.** Stated hotels, if approved may change the character of the Waterfront and said that consideration might be given to allowing the conversion of nearby residential properties to commercial uses. **Torpedo Factory first floor should be opened up-for restaurant, café or retail use to improve space and help bring in revenues.**
- **Mr. Brooks-** asked what will happen to the Washington Post site?
R. Hamer- stated not sure what will happen with this site at this time, other than mixed-use is anticipated. She would like to see active ground floor for retail and to increase the sense of public space. Hamer-Challenges: commercial office space draws traffic, while with residential use homeowners may complain if too much activity going on. Hotel use is

desirable, and is mid-way between residential and commercial. Mr. Brooks further commented that the problem with the retail in the plan is that it is mostly restaurants. There is a need for other small types of retail shops that can thrive in Old Town.

- The Chair- **said that having more activities for families with children are needed**; this should be made part of the design. If more families with children are drawn to the waterfront then that also allows for different kinds of retail shops as well.
- Mr. Moir- **Asked is there a plan to put additional parking along Union St.?** R. Moritz- a detailed comprehensive Parking Study is being done for the Waterfront area by T&ES. Although on-street parking is taken most of time, there is capacity in garages. A new meter system will be installed for the 100 and 200 blocks of King Street. Additionally, a new signage system will be used to direct people to garages. Other measures will also be taken.
- Mr. Dexter- **Where are the designated bike trails?**
R. Moritz- Adding bike trails was discussed. The goal is to make better use of existing trails. There are some conflict points between bikes and pedestrians which need to be addressed. *It was noted that bike riding is currently not allowed along the Waterfront, people need to dismount upon entering the Waterfront area.*
- Chair Judy Guse- Noritake:
Open Space Fund (OSF)- the Chair and Planning staff discussed the importance of maintaining the OSF. The P&RC are the guardians of the fund. The purchase of land using open space funds has specific legal ramifications. By City Ordinance projects... must be 100% open space related unless the fund is reimbursed. The Chair asked P&Z staff to provide numbers on the amount of available open space. In addition the group discussed plans for various areas as it related to Open Space plans.

Faroll- New and existing open space is about 4.5 acres (combination green & open space). Karl Moritz-provided some numbers and will share further information later. He said that planning staff is aware of the issue raised regarding the importance of maintaining open space and how open space funds are used.

Moritz - the Beachcomber property was purchased with public open space funds. The Chair-said there is a question as to if this structure is salvageable- if it is not, may need to be rebuilt. If OSF is compensated at fair market value it would be prohibitive to run a restaurant in the building. This may be problematic.
- **Off Leash Dogs-at Founders Park**- As Plan is developed, the P&RC will need to seriously consider addressing the issue of off-leash dogs at Founders Park. This activity will need to cease or be moved elsewhere for safety purposes. The Dog Park Master plan will be looked at in fall.
- **Park Maintenance Facility Building**- In future, the entire Waterfront may be managed as one budget/area and may require higher levels of maintenance. Will need a storage place for dock area-this currently doesn't exist-this is a design/functionality issue. Additionally, as P&Z staff get into to design details it may be helpful to bring in maintenance staff to look at design and provide suggestions to help improve mowing, cleaning sidewalks and maintenance of the area. May end up with a better design that is more functional and easier to maintain.
- **Other items noted:**
- Year round reception/ special events. (Public Event Accommodations)

Oronoco Bay is a good place to do this. Use of railroad cars in Oronoco Bay for performances/concessions/maintenance is good. Consideration of closing Union near Pendleton for pedestrian activities, as appropriate, is something plan will consider along with keeping foot of King Street closed to pedestrians, except for Trolley. Will also consider opportunities for closure of Union near Windmill Park as appropriate.

Waterfront weddings could be big events at the Foot of King Street – installing a Pavilion. (make possible a temporary structure)

- Art- on buildings behind Oronoco Bay Park is being considered; owners are open to this idea. Adding art through lighting is also a popular concept.
- Public Restrooms- This needs to be seriously considered on the Waterfront. In Urban environment for tourists a big issue is where do you go to use the restroom. Have public restrooms in buildings where there is other activity and uses or near Box Car area.
- End Questions/Comments: The Chair thanked the Planning Director, Deputy Director and staff for coming.

Hand-outs:

- Briefing Paper- Farroll Hamer, Director, P&Z and Dottie Marshall and Kate Barrett, G.W. Memorial Parkway, NPS.
- Goals and Objectives -Waterfront Concept Plan prepared by Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, P&Z.
- For more info. go to www.alexandriava.gov/Waterfront or call 703-746-4666, Nancy Williams, Principal Planner at Nancy.williams@alexandriava.gov

II. Briefing on construction scheduled for Jones Point Park, National Park Service- Dottie Marshall, Superintendent of the G.W. Parkway, and Kate Barrett, Landscape Architect.

- Marshall- the contract will be advertised June 8. Intention is to award contract and begin construction in October 2010. Construction is expected to last 18 months. The park will be closed during construction. However, the Mt. Vernon Trail will remain open, but may be re-routed. As part of negotiations, a verbal agreement was made with the Mayor that NPS will take over maintenance of the park after construction. NPS will continue to police the park and has concurrent jurisdiction with the City. There was a cooperative agreement that expired. Ron lease is our agreement expires 2011. Chair-A new Agreement or MOU is needed.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Q. Cromley- asked were estimates given at that time on how long it would take. Stated 18 mos. is a long time. Is there any possible way the project could be phased in?
 - Suggested providing incentives to contractor to finish quickly and penalties for finishing late.
 - R. Marshall- *This is a major redevelopment -18 months is generous but necessary. The Consultants, who designed the park, believe that phasing-in the work will add considerably to the construction timeframe and dramatically increase costs.*
 - Dottie Marshall gave some information on the history of Park. *She said the park had already gone through design phase and been approved prior to September 11, (2001). Project is already 9 years behind schedule. This was already a difficult negotiation. During the 9 years, contract costs have gone up and down, and up again. There is not a lot of room left in budget to complete the park; we would hate to lose features or element due time constraints. VDOT is responsible for issuing the contracts, not NPS. NPS has a permit to work on the land. They were told if they make any changes to the contract it will be pulled from this*

years' procurement process. This may extend contract out beyond 18 mos. and escalate costs. It is a large park and fencing is expensive. Chair – her observation is VDOT is strict about their process; it is important to spend funds while they are available.

- **Kate Barrett** – provided brief presentation showing a map of Jones Point Park (Alternative 4A) which highlighted the parks major features, Go To: <http://Alexandriava.gov/uploadedfiles/recreation/info/JPPA/Alternative4A.pdf>

Discussion: Fishing Pier –is slipping into the Potomac. There will be major underground construction to try to save the Pier without disturbing archeological sites. Shoreline eroding in places- has to be stabilized. Careful work around D.C. Cornerstone-is needed in order to rebuild the seawall that helps protects Lighthouse. Lighthouse -The NPS received additional money from Congressman Moran for exterior and interior renovations to Lighthouse. Extensive Invasive Plant Removal will be done. Park will have two Athletic Fields. Everything will be done consistent with the original plan and will not warrant new EA.

Chair-The P&RC is aware of the neighborhood concerns regarding park closure, and shares their concerns regarding timing. It is not the purview of the P&RC. The City does not have a role except to listen to concerns and answer questions. The Chair asked that the P&RC be kept apprised of dates and issues.

- Yvonne Weight, Alexandria, VA- expressed concern about the park possibly being closed during construction. She asked that the City talk to VDOT to get an understanding on keeping part of the park open during construction or to phase-in. Stated that the W/W Bridge was built with park being open and inquired if reduction from 4 soccer fields, down to 2 fields saved money. The Chair- responded that money saved from elimination of 2 fields has been allocated. Went to purchase the Mobile station, for Freedman's Cemetery, and to buy the land for Witter athletic field. Offset is that the 2 rectangular fields will be on-line in the fall. Action- the Chair will speak to elected official try to get more information.

REGULAR MEETING

The Chair opened the regular meeting she reported that Stephen (Clark) Mercer is in Iraq and Mathew Coda is graduating from H.S.- both have excused absences.

III. Approval of Summary Minutes from: April 22, 2010.

- Rich Brune moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Henry Brooks. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

IV. Retreat Action Items:

A. Review and prioritize consolidated list of action items from retreat-March 6.

The P&RC discussed the following items from the retreat.

- Community Schools Initiative - Henry Brooks attended a meeting earlier in the month, nothing new to report at this time. Browand - they are moving forward with hearing at William Ramsey. A rally and Needs Assessment is planned for June. This initiative is targeted at Inner City schools that are under-performing; Karen Parker-Thompson is the lead for ACPS.
- Increasing Participation of Youth Sports- The Chair contacted Jim Gibson, President, Youth Sports Advisory Board to let him know that Stephen (Clark) Mercer is interested in being involved with this effort.
- Update "Friends Groups"- Henry Brooks- is reviewing policies and procedures for various groups to help develop "Friends" groups for Alexandria. Information was

given to Laura Durham, RPCA who drafting a “Friends” agreement for the VEPCO site. Chair- there may come a time when a policy decision is needed. She suggested Mr. Brooks and Ms. Durham visit the National Park Association (NPA) website which contains a lot of useful information.

- B. Develop list to address at P&RC meetings for June and July 2010.
In Progress – Ongoing.
- C. Continued Discussion of Draft Bylaws-Operating Procedures for Commission – Dave Dexter, Henry Brooks & Bob Moir.
The Chair suggested discussion of the Draft Bylaws be continued at the next meeting, Bob Moir is reviewing.
- V. DIVISION UPDATES (See Staff Reports):
www.alexandria.va.gov/Department/Recreation/Commission and Committees
- A. Recreation Programs and Services Update- report by William Chesley.
- See Staff Report: **Adult Activities** - of the 85 spring classes offered – 61 (72%) met minimum requirements. Discussion:
 - Q. Chair- what types of classes did not meet the minimum enrollment requirements and which classes exceeded registration? R. *Staff will follow-up with Mr. Chesley and report back to the Commission.*
 - Q. Which pools will be closed this summer? R. *Nannie J. Lee and Nicolas Colasonto pools will remain closed again this year due to budget reasons.*
 - RPCA will notify the public which pools will be opened or closed.
- B. Operations & Park Planning Monthly Report - Roger Blakeley
- See Staff Report: Follow-up **Hensley Park-Theft of Equipment**- Mr. Blakeley reported that staff has recovered the truck and trailer; equipment was found in D.C. The incident is still under investigation.
- C. Office on the Arts Update – report by Alisa Carrel.
- See Staff Report: No comments.
- D. Park Planning Updates- Ron Kagawa
- See Staff Report : Discussion:
 - **SUP for Ben Brenman field (#2010-006)** - addition of lighting to the synthetic turf field was approved by the Planning Commission on May 4. The field will come on-line in the fall. The Chair thanked staff and members for laying the groundwork that helped get this passed.
 - **Freedman’s Memorial Cemetery**- DSUP #2009-0013C- was approved by the Planning Commission on May 4, and by City Council on May 15. Construction Plans completed in fall and begin 2011? Chair-an article was in the Washington Post Living Section today.
 - **Witter Athletics Field Update**- Kagawa-Project is lagging slightly behind schedule, due to document control issues with City Consultant. Expected delivery date is January 2012. Construction process estimated to take 15-18 months.
 - **Linear Park- Potomac Yards** -Kagawa
Park has gone into final site plan phase. A second meeting was held with consultant today. Final site plan to be completed by January- with construction by late Spring/Summer 2011?. No changes to original plan.
Staff will meet weekly with Consultant-Bethany Carlton, RPCA is the lead for project.

E. Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events - Jack Browand

- See Staff Report:
- **RPCA FY 2011 Fee Increases** - Docket Item goes before City Council on June, 8. New fees will take effect July 1, 2010. There have been several questions regarding the new Adult Fitness Fee that are being addressed. Information on new fees will be communicated to staff and public.

VI. **Director's Report** – report by James Spengler

- See Staff Report and Attachments: RPCA Proposed FY 2011 Budget, including CIP by Project Categories. Mr. Browand briefly reviewed the report in absence of Director. RPCA did relatively well this year and received funds back. Money was taken from the Urban Forestry Program in FY 2009. Department asked for and received funds back in FY 2011.

VII. **REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS** (verbal updates):

- **Ad Hoc-Ft. Ward Park Stakeholders Advisory Group**- Bob Moir, Ripley - Forbes, Rich Brune. A community meeting was held last Thursday May 13?; three neighbors attended who are concerned about drainage issues. The next regular meeting will be Tuesday May 25. Rich Baier, Director, T&ES will attend.
- **Youth Policy Commission**- Stephen (Clark) Mercer. Mr. Mercer was in IRAQ - no report at this time.
- **Waterfront Committee** - William Cromley.
- - The Waterfront Concept Plan is being presented to the P&RC tonight.
- - No Wake Letter- The Chair received a letter from Nathan Macek, Chair; Alexandria Waterfront Committee (copy attached, dated April 22). The letter summarized the position of the Committee regarding a proposal to permit watercraft engaged in water transportation to transit the Waterfront at speeds greater than 10 knots. The letter urges the P&RC to join them in supporting this proposal to the City Manager and City Council. **Discussion:** The Chair and members of the P&RC don't really feel that this is within their jurisdiction. Judy-it seems like currently it is a speed regulation issue-technology now available and in the future which makes speed an irrelevant issue as performance criteria for wake. Roger Blakeley- in the future is if there is a National Emergency like September 11, and roads are clogged, there may be a need to move people by boat from Waterfront park areas. **Action Item**- the Chair will write a brief letter in support of the Waterfront Committee's recommendation.
- **Youth Sports Advisory Committee** - Jeffrey Murphy
Councilman Krupicka attended last meeting. Discussed community school usage construction vs. field usage. New Principal has been hired at T.C. Williams H.S. One large Commission will be developed to serve youth. Looking at how schools and RPCA can work more closely together. Theme: All Alexandria children will succeed; raising expectations; having student achievement goals; accountability and metrics. City is almost finished its strategic plan. Looking at other school models (i.e. Montgomery Co.). Next month June 14 - Dr. Morton Sherman, Superintendent, ACPS will attend. Judy suggested members of the P&RC attend to discuss loss of field usage associated with the school expansion.
- **4-Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes
- Trying to get a meeting of the joint committee scheduled, tentative June 16.

- **Charles Houston Memorial Project** -William Cromley
- Four finalists were announced today to develop proposals for the Charles Hamilton Houston Memorial: **For More Info.** go to: www.alexandriava.gov/arts.
- **Block Party-** A community block party will be held, Saturday, June 26th - 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Charles Houston Community Ctr. The goal is to help break down barriers between public housing residents and the general community. There will be food, and information tables. He is a member of the Parker Gray Roundtable group. **Action Item:** The Chair asked that a notice be sent out to members in advance.
- **Freedman's Cemetery-** Bob Moir- item was discussed under **Item D.**
- **Beauregard Corridor** - David Dexter
- - **Chambliss Crossing-Holmes Run project update-** an email from Yon Lambert, Principal Planner T&ES, was sent out to the P&RC May 17. The City submitted a Joint Permit Application and Pre-Construction Notification to the Army Corps. of Engineers for the construction of Chambliss Crossing/Holmes Run Project. Dexter-this is an important connectivity piece along the Holmes Run Greenway. Question: looking at the numbers he wonders why Fairfax Co. isn't paying more of its fair-share (Alexandria 80%/FFX Co. 20 %.) The project is moving forward.
- **CIVIC Awards Update-** The sub-committee is recommending plaques instead of medallions be given out, there is a price differential. Once nominees are selected, awards will be ordered. One nomination has been received to date; deadline is June 10.
- **ACPS & Capital Improvements-** no report.
- Other-The annual **Waterfront Walk** will be held on June 8. The group will meet at Oronoco Bay Park to begin the tour.

VIII. Agenda items and location for June meeting.

- Continue discussion on Retreat Action Items and Draft Bylaws.
- Discussion on Jefferson Houston school project.
- Tentative Location- Durant Center.

IX. List of Upcoming Public Meetings- a list was distributed at the meeting.

X. Adjournment: 9:40 p.m.