

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
Park and Recreation Commission**

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.
Mt. Vernon Recreation Center
2701 Commonwealth Avenue

SUMMARY NOTES

As there was not a quorum of Commissioners present at the meeting, the items on the published agenda were presented and discussed but no action was taken on any item. The notes that follow are a summary of the discussion that occurred. Items that required action by the Commission were deferred to the following month's meeting".

Commission Members: Chairperson, Judy Guse-Noritake, Bob Moir, Rich Brune, Ripley Forbes and Jeffrey Murphy.
Absent: Henry Brooks, William Cromley, David Dexter, Stephen (Clark) Mercer, Anthony Zamora, Mollie Timmons.

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

Guests: Bob Larson and Annette Whitehurst of Architects Anonymous, Thomas Fulton, Chair Ft. Ward Advisory Committee, Jennifer Hovis, EPC, Sharon Annear and Mark Barton.

- I. **Call to Order by Chair:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Chair noted that a number of members (6) were absent: Brooks, Cromley, Dexter, Mercer, Zamora, and Timmons; therefore there was not a quorum.

- II. **Public Hearing on Concept Plan for Four Mile Run Park Expansion -Open Space Properties 4109 - 4125 Mount Vernon Avenue-** Laura Durham, City Open Space Coordinator.
 - **See Staff Report - background:** presentations previously held on the approval and conversion of the old Duron paint store building, which is now Four Mile Run Community Building; this is the second part of that process. Construction drawings for the community building are finished, and the project will go to bid shortly. The City purchased four sites with open space funds and allocated an additional \$100,000 from the Open Space Fund for the project.
 - The Alexandria Commission for the Arts is submitting a grant application to the state to fund the purchase of a stage and awning (See docket item #9, 2/22/11).
 - The four parcels acquired in June 2007; for \$4.5 million (includes acquisition and remediation work). A Voluntary Remediation Certification received from state for expansion of the Four Mile Run Park, the process took 1.5 years. Impervious section kept for the plaza area. To date the site has remained vacant. Park planning done pro-bono by Architects Anonymous, represented tonight by Bob Larson and Annette Whitehurst.
 - **Bob Larson** - of Larson Architects gave a brief presentation on the project.
 - The site is located at Mt. Vernon Ave on the West; Four Mile Run to the North; existing park and soccer field on the East; and the commercial part of Arlandria to the South. The goal is to create one linear space that can function as one large open space or broken up into smaller spaces.
 - The Community Building has an attached stage for performances. The design on the opposite end can be used as an amphitheater area, complimented by an organic area with rocks; used for a seating area, children climbing area and performance area.
 - On the W. & E. sides, open space is flanked with trees: blacktop will be resurfaced, permeable pavers installed, synthetic turf, painting medallions on asphalt, and seating areas under trees on both sides, to allow people to sit in the shade and still participate.
 - The Farmers Market will continue to operate and the new space will allow for future expansion.

- Parking and off-loading area (2 entries and exits) Maintaining 2 existing parking lots N. & S (of former Duron paint store).
- Original plan was to pull in curb line along Mt. Vernon Avenue for additional parking. Rich Baier, Director of T&ES suggested options for additional parking and traffic calming measures including reducing the lane to three at this location with parking along the east side.
- Trees will provide a buffer, but trimmed up branches will allow views into and out of the site.
- Annette Whitehurst - Rhodeside and Harwell, Landscape Architects (Architects Anonymous)
- Pathways connect to the site and Four Mile Run Park area.
Spectators for the athletic field could have grass covered berms to sit on. Larson-Area behind the building can be used for movies or performances with grassy areas or boulders to sit on. Children can play in the area when not in use.
- Rain garden at east side of the site to collect storm water.
- Chair Noritake- commented that regarding berms on sides of field- a nice feature to let people sit up a bit high to have a better view of the field.
- She suggested that area on the other side (to the northwest of the field) be open for children to play and practice soccer.
- The Four Mile Run master plan envisioned the community plaza in a more formal way. Now both the building and site is proceeding as an interim five-year plan. We cannot afford to do large-scale right now, but will phase in a more refined version over time. This is a different approach for the community.
- **Public Comments:**
- **Jennifer Hovis** - Chair City Environmental Policy Commission (EPC):
Written Comments: As Chair of the EPA, she is here to support the plan, which directly supports the City's Eco City Charter and Environmental Action Plan. The EPC is pleased to see expanded space for the Farmers Market, as well as valuable open space that are a great benefit to the community. EPC requests that, consistent with Eco City, the plan include low impact landscaping (e.g. native plants, minimal fertilizer/pesticides), rain gardens and other green storm water management approaches, and new tree canopy. EPC also supports reuse of the existing building as an environmental education center with displays storm water BMPs on display as a resource to citizens. Ms. Hovis commented that in the early days staff discussed re-uses involving environmental components: i.e. displaying a rain barrel, they will be supportive of this.
- *The Chair commented that environmental concerns and elements are essential to the plan as it has been conceived to date.*
- **Kevin Beekman** - Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group
- Background- the Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group (SAP) was put into place in 2003. Money was donated for streetscape improvements. The SAP process 1998 - 2003 gave a vision for the Arlandria neighborhood. \$500,000 was given for streetscape improvements along Mt. Vernon Ave. Money has been available for some time; some funds will go for pedestrian improvements. \$200,000 has been available since 2007 and carried over year to year. At its' February 16 meeting, the Advisory Group agreed by consensus to recommend use of existing Arlandria CIP Funds \$200,000 for the Four Mile Run Park Expansion project. Laura Durham said money has already been allocated by City Council for use in Arlandria, and the request to use the funds for the park will now go to City Manager. The Chair said a preliminary cost estimate has been done; staff will obtain drawings for site and plan to use funds. There will be lots of opportunity for sweat-equity (the building will be painted bright red.) May 6 is the City's "Spring for Alexandria" community day. Durham -hope to have the basic building improvements made by then.
- Mr. Spengler- on the City Council docket next Tuesday (2/22/11 Item #9) there is a Grant Submission to the Virginia Commission for the Arts for \$20,000 for planned improvements to the Four Mile Run Community Building. The grant requires a one-to-one match for a total of \$40,000; funds will be used toward the design and installation of the stage.

- **Update on Farmers Market, Arlandria** - Kevin Beekman- the Farmers Market has recently been approved to accept food stamps. DHS – Richmond will provide technical assistance on processing payments. The Chair said this is an important step able to help bring fresh and local produce to the Arlandria neighborhood.
- The Chair asked if there were any other comments; there were no comments, the public hearing was closed.

REGULAR MEETING

The Chair began the regular meeting with the Director’s Report, Item VI-A on Ft. Ward Park Stakeholders Advisory Report and Recommendations, since a number of people came to hear this item. Due to lack of a quorum, the P&RC will hear items, but not vote on issues tonight.

III. Approval of Summary Minutes from January 20, 2011- deferred to March.

IV. Vote on Officers for the Coming Year – nominations were held February, vote deferred to March.

V. Division Updates: To See Full Staff Reports go to: www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation/Commission reports.

- A. Recreation Programs and Services Update - William Chesley
- B. Operations & Park Planning Monthly Report - Roger Blakeley
- C. Office on the Arts Update - Alisa Carrel
- D. Park Planning Updates - Ron Kagawa See Staff Report
 - Witter Field- a pre-construction meeting was held yesterday, groundbreaking is scheduled for March 12, 8:00 a.m. Information was sent to City Council. There are no residents around the site. The land was purchased with settlement money from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. No City funds were used. Anticipated beneficial occupancy date is March/April of 2012. General Contractor is Avon Construction Co.; Avon has previously constructed Minnie Howard, Fort Ward and Ben Brenman synthetic fields in Alexandria City.
 - P.Y. Landbay - breaking ground in March. Staff will work with team to ensure standards for Construction Administration are met. The City will maintain the park upon completion and acceptance.
- E. Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events - Jack Browand
 - *Note: there were no major comments on staff reports.*

VI. Director’s Report - James Spengler

- A. **Ft. Ward Stakeholders Advisory Committee Report**: (See Staff Report Item V1-A, and Recommendations.) Background: In June 2009, City Council established an Ad Hoc Ft. Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholders Advisory Group to advise City staff on Ft. Ward Park and Museum use and management. The group ended in January 2011 and has now submitted their report and recommendations for the future management and planning of the park. Director James Spengler asked Laura Durham to provide an update on project. The Chair noted that this was not a public hearing item. Mr. Spengler said a work session with City Council is tentatively scheduled for 5:00 p.m., March 22 on the Ft. Ward Park recommendations. Staff will work with Tom Fulton, Chair of the Ft. Ward Advisory Group, to develop a presentation for the work session. The agenda will also include presentations by the History and Archeological groups. Staff from RPCA, OHA and T&ES is in the process of reviewing recommendations; making comments and developing a list of cost estimates, some information is still pending (See Attachment). Staff anticipates completing the report in the next two weeks.

- Laura Durham - said tonight's information is very preliminary; some information is still pending (See attached chart.) The chart shows recommendations and some cost estimates, in order to get a range of possible requests through CIP budget process. T&ES is working on an estimate for storm water improvements; \$35,000 has been received for the study and next steps. Pam Cressey, City Archeologist is working with staff on recommendations. Cost- One-time costs based on estimates is \$1.1 million (not including storm water improvements), annual cost estimates are \$80,000 a year (plus any new trees). One recommendation made was to re-establish trees lost from storm damage. Any work will have to be sensitive to the cultural resources management plan that is being developed.
- Pam Cressey- the 1st Stage of archaeological work has been in specific areas where there were expectations of burial areas with unmarked graves. A great deal of investigation was done in the maintenance yard, where oral history from previous residents provided information that graves were in at least three general areas. Another area of inquiry was the parcel associated with the earliest African American family, the Shorts, and their expected home. This parcel is northwest of the Oakland Baptist Cemetery. A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) study was done first, and then excavation was conducted to "ground-truth" these findings. The investigation documented that GPR was marginally useful, since correlations were not one to one. Over half of the GPR readings showed no graves, and thus were false positives. In other cases, graves were identified through excavation, which were not recognized by GPR technology. Thus, while GPR can assist in locating graves, field excavation is needed to identify all graves positively. Shovel testing across the maintenance yard and the Shorts provided concrete information regarding location of the Shorts home and other features associated with the African American neighborhood, "The Fort." The next stage of archeology would cost \$75,000. This work would include shovel testing most of the park and conducting historical research in order to complete a history report. These products would update the Cultural Resource Management Inventory, which would be a baseline for master planning). Depending on how T&ES designs stormwater mitigation measures or daylighting streams, additional archaeological assessment and treatment may be needed (approximately \$15,000 to \$75,000).
- The Chair said that storm water improvements seem to be the priority. Spengler- In terms of the proposed City Manager's budget next year. There is no funding for the recommendations in budget for FY 2012. Items will have to be done through add and delete budget process.
- Commissioners comments: (Brune, Forbes, Moir- members of Advisory Group)
- Q. Brune- asked what the direct costs estimates are.
- R. Durham- they are looking at getting more information.
- Q. Forbes- can you elaborate on decommission of the maintenance yard, what is involved.
- R. Durham- there is a grading plan, archeology oversight, and then minimal grading near gravel and some plantings will be done.
- Q. Moir- what is timeframe for archeology work?
- R. Durham- timeframe is based on availability of funding (there is no funding).
Mr. Spengler said we could not submit until Archeology work is completed. The plan for decommission will be submitted as part of budget process for FY2013. In response to a question from Mr. Brune, he said most areas are archeologically sensitive. In RPCA's CIP budget, there are no funds to do improvements other than normal maintenance items (mowing every 14 days and trash pickup). Durham- the Manager on Duty (MOD) is still funded. Spengler- staff has requested funding for a master plan.
- Thomas Fulton, Chair Ft. Ward Advisory Group (See Written Statement):
Mr. Fulton thanked the P&RC for appointing Commissioners Rich Brune, Ripley Forbes and Bob Moir to the Advisory Group; their contributions were significant. He also thanked the Chair for recommending that the City conduct the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) study, which was undertaken. While the hits and accurate showing of graves was less than 50%, this was higher than

the statistical average for GPR, which is about 20%, it is about 40% accurate. GPR is a useful tool; its use should continue to help locate the many graves in Ft. Ward Park. Citizens have expressed concerns regarding the management of Ft. Ward Park, and the possible effects on marked and unmarked graves in the park. Mr. Fulton hopes the P&RC will support the recommendations made by the Ft. Ward Park Advisory Group. He stated that although, many changes have been accomplished in the last year, e.g. RPCA revamped its picnic reservation system to reduce very large gatherings in the park, much still remains to be done. RPCA Director James Spengler and OHA Director Lance Mallamo have pledged to work together to resolve problems and to have joint management of the park.

Next Steps: the archeology work needs to be finished, and a storm water plan needs to be devised and implemented. In addition, a park master plan needs to be developed for Ft. Ward Park with citizen input. A City Council work session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22 to consider the Advisory Group's recommendations. Mr. Fulton and staff of RPCA, OHA and T&ES will attend and give a presentation.

- **Chair Noritake:** asked if the P&RC needs to write a letter to City Council for work session. A follow up discussion will be held at the next P&RC meeting March 17.
- **Spengler-** yes- to be on the record, for the P&RC to hold a public hearing.
- **Master Planning for Parks:** Discussion: In response to Mr. Fulton's comments regarding the need for a master plan for Ft. Ward Park, the Chair said that a master plan should be developed which would incorporate the large City parks, each would have a specific chapter in this Large Park Master Plan. The uses for these larger parks will continue to grow over time and those uses need to be allocated across this set of large parks. In her opinion, use at Ft. Ward will not become intensified but if some uses are moved elsewhere that needs to be accommodated as a part of a Large Park Master Plan. A consultant has been hired to update the needs assessment done in 2002; questions are being developed including historical resources of parks, including Ft. Ward. The results of the needs assessment will be used to make recommendations to City Council to do a Large Park Master Plan which will include Ft. Ward.
- **Ripley Forbes-** he sees Ft. Ward as unique and special; he would not be opposed to a master plan for Ft. Ward. He asked how much a comprehensive master plan would cost.
- **Mr. Spengler-** most communities have a comprehensive plan for the whole city, which includes parks, transportation, utilities, etc. The City of Alexandria, does things differently, it uses Small Area Plans (SAP). The current needs assessment survey will cost \$25,000 to update. The estimate for a master plan for Ft. Ward is \$150,000. Durham - this does not include cultural resources study, which would be needed. Director Spengler said if done comprehensively with other parks, a comprehensive master plan may cost 0.5 million, depending on the scope. **Judy Noritake, Chair** commented that as staff looks 5 years down the road, we are not planning to intensify uses at Ft. Ward. The pressure for a master plan will come sooner on the parks where uses must be intensified to accommodate increase recreational pressures, e.g. Four Mile Run or Chinquapin Parks. Mr. Spengler explained as uses are moved from one park to another, staff will get concerns from other parks where uses are intensified if have not done planning in those to appropriately address increased use. The community at large wants places to hold large picnics and year-round sports, this intensifies uses in certain areas of the City. The Chair said the only way to solve this is to define the uses for each park and have a broad community discussion about the shared needs and solutions. We have to look at recreation resources and develop a plan for all parks.
- **Bob Moir, Vice Chair** commented that unlike other parks, Ft. Ward is historical, and has been around since the Civil War; now celebrating its 150th anniversary. We need to make funding for the gravesite study a priority. He said the P&RC should consider writing a letter to City Council to obtain funds for the gravesite study.
- **Tom Fulton-** The City Manager put forward two high priority items to City Council in the budget. One was \$75,000 for archeology work at Ft. Ward Park. A letter from the P&RC will help.
- **Action Item:** The Chair asked Mr. Fulton to email her the information and she will draft a letter in support of that funding. The P&RC members present were largely in support of a writing letter.

This item will be put back on agenda for March 17. A work session will be held with City Council on March 22.

- Mr. Fulton thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak; his statement will be entered into the record.

Regular Meeting (continued):

- **Commissioners Appointments-** Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair
The Chair noted that several members are up for reappointment (Henry Brooks, David Dexter, Richard Brune). Henry Brooks and David Dexter will not seek reappointment; the Chair will ask David Dexter to remain a liaison to the P&RC for the BRAC project. Richard Brune has submitted his letter for reappointment; the P&RC members present recommended approval of Mr. Brune's reappointment. The Chair will write a letter of endorsement.
- **Recreational Needs Assessment (RNA) Update** - James Spengler, Director
Director Spengler reported that staff is working with Leisure Vision, Inc. to develop parameters for an updated RNA (done by L.V. in 2002). Leisure Vision does similar reports for other jurisdictions nearby. RPCA staff held a meeting on Feb. 16 to define a list of questions for the survey. Mr. Spengler asked for volunteers from the P&RC to work with Laura Durham and Dana Wedeles (RPCA project leads) to develop a final list of questions. Target date for completion is the last week in March. Rich Brune volunteered. The Chair reviewed the list of proposed questions and will forward comments to staff. She said the last report did not adequately define athletic fields as our City uses them. Also a question should be added: What doesn't the City provide that patrons go elsewhere to use, and what would people like to see in the community that is currently not present? The report will provide a roadmap for the future, it is important to ask the right questions. Laura Durham - recommendation from Leisure Vision is to break out items and report them in aggregate, this will be discussed further. Ms. Durham said report is limited to six pages due to cost. Dana Wedeles, RPCA and Ron Wise of L.V. are updating report based on Feb. 16 meeting.

B. RPCA FY 2012 Budget and CIP- See Attachment: The Director reviewed the budget and CIP.

- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** for FY2012 to FY2011 is Net \$75 million for RPCA function:
Highlights: Patrick Henry Rec. Ctr.- numbers shown are for renovation existing recreation center and gym; Miracle Field- funds moved from FY 2020 to FY 2014, YSAB would like it moved to FY2013. Ron Kagawa said estimated planning time is one year for construction; window for site work is summer.
- Open Space Acquisition- City Manager added \$16,000,000 for the 10-y ear period for land acquisition.
- Q. Chair- where will money for replacement of athletic fields come from over time as the "rugs" wear out?
- R. Spengler-currently funding shown in any year is for both conversion and replacement. Cost for replacement of carpet on turf fields is not broken out as a separate item.
- **Operating Budget for RPCA** is \$20,444,374.
 - General fund expenditures increased by net 3.1%; RPCA down 35 positions from 2007; Loss of 2 FTE (transferred to Central ITS Dept). Mowing schedule changed from seven to 14 days. Level of facilities upkeep-deferred scheduled maintenance.
- **Comments from Commissioners:**
- Moir- regarding turf replacement at Minnie Howard (built in 2001).
- Kagawa- last night all lights were replaced at Minnie Howard. Lights are still under warranty.
- **Action Item:** The Chair will write a note to the City Manager regarding replacement of turf on the first synthetic turf fields which will be due around 2019. She will ask for funding and about setting up an endowment or reserve fund.
- Mr. Spengler- commented- on the ongoing Fields Matrix List. Need a priority list and matched to years. Show first field as another replacement of existing field.
- Spengler- the updated RNA will inform us on community needs.

- Laura Durham said RNA back 1st week of May. Judy Noritake suggested a discussion on results in June or July.
- **Action Item**- Judy Noritake, Chair will send a short note on budget to City Manager with copy to Mark Jinks.
- **Alexandria Waterfront Public Art Proposal**- The Chair submitted a letter (dated 2/17) on behalf of the P&RC in support of the proposal to the Director Planning & Zoning (copy distributed).
- **Project Nest** - James Spengler- (See flier) - Local art centers and groups will build 12 outdoor temporary nests, made from natural/recycled materials. Nests installation will occur along the Waterfront beginning April 10. The Waterfront Committee and Art Commission endorsed the project.
- **Open Space Forum**- Barbara Ross was instrumental in establishing the original Open Space Steering Committee and Master Plan. Barbara, Judy and Laura will outline a proposal for large committee/commission/boards meeting to be followed by a public open space summit to discuss policy issues and opportunities, i.e. locations. Chair - we need to have a public discussion about these open space policy issues, including how the fund is used and reimbursed if open space property is not used for open space. Bob Moir- commented that land will only become more valuable; he does not favor selling it. Noritake- if a business wants to do a ground lease at market rate, money could go back into the open space fund.
- Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator- stated we need to look at the code on how open space accounting can apply as the fund is to be used only for acquisition and improvements to new open space.
- Durham-2/28/11- meeting on Open Space by Developers in the West End, 6:30 p.m.- location TBD.

VII. Retreat Action Items:

- A. Next steps on Draft Bylaws – deferred to March.
- B. Next steps on creation of a Youth Sports Advisory Board - deferred to March.
- C. Other Items for discussion.

VIII. Reports From Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. Youth Policy Commission - Stephen (Clark) Mercer – absent.
- B. Waterfront Committee - William Cromley- absent.
- C. Youth Sports Committee - Jeffrey Murphy
- D. Four-Mile Run- Ripley Forbes
 - Chair- the next meeting of the Four Mile Run Task Force is 2/28/11.
- E. Charles Houston Memorial Project -William Cromley- absent.
- F. Freedman’s Cemetery- Bob Moir- no report.
- G. Beauregard Corridor - David Dexter- absent.
- H. ACPS & Capital Improvements - Henry Brooks (absent), Judy Noritake- no report.
- I. **Jones Point Liaison Group** – Judy Noritake
See attached JPP Liaison meeting minutes dated February 3.
 The Chair said concerns are very specific regarding fence appearance and location. VDOT and NPS will respond to outstanding questions. The group appears to be working well.
- J. Other.

IX. Agenda items for March meeting and location.

Follow-up from February: Minutes of January 20; Election of Officers; Adults Sports Advisory Board, Ft. Ward Park Discussion, Approval of the Four Mile Run Park.

X. Upcoming Meetings: List of upcoming meetings distributed at the meeting.

XI. Adjourned: 9:05 p.m.

2/17/11
PFC

**Parks Commission Consideration of Recommendations about
City Management at Fort Ward Park
a Statement by
Tom Fulton
Thursday, February 17, 2011**

First of all, thank you for allowing me to say a few words about this important issue. The Commission is to be thanked for appointing Bob Moir, Ripley Forbes and Rich Brune to the Advisory Group during its consideration of City management issues at Fort Ward. Their contribution to the effort was considerable and much appreciated. I would also like to thank the Chair, Judy Noritaki, for her recommendation to the City that ground penetrating radar be employed to learn more about the historic and cultural resources that abound at Fort Ward. This effort has proved to be extraordinarily useful.

Area citizens had been expressing concerns about city decisions at Fort Ward for months before the city council formed by resolution a citizens group to provide it recommendations about management at Fort Ward. Problems such as city work trucks parked near and on marked and unmarked graves in a so-called maintenance yard had led to ad hoc citizen meetings and attracted considerable press attention.

After a year of consideration the Advisory Group has sent to the City and City Council its recommendations. It is those recommendations that you are being asked to consider tonight.

Much has been accomplished in the past two years. The Parks Department has, for instance, revamped its picnic permitting process to eliminate instances where an application would indicate a gathering of 35 which would actually result in upwards of 900 people attending. Jim Spengler, of the Parks Department and Lance Mallamo have pledged to work closely together to solve problems that arise as a result of the joint management of the Park.

The archaeological and historic investigation at Fort Ward has led to a new understanding of the African American neighborhood that lived at Fort Ward from the Civil War to its creation as a Park in the 1960's. That community still exists in the Woods Avenue section of Alexandria near T.C. Williams High School. They have formed a non-profit descendants group to further explore and understand the cultural contributions of the Fort Ward community to Alexandria at large.

The City has undertaken an archaeological examination of areas within Fort Ward Park and is rapidly moving ahead with a much greater understanding of the cultural and historical resources of the Park. The last time archaeology was employed at Fort Ward was in 1961 when the Civil War earthen fort was first acquired by the City to prevent its loss to developers. That work led to Alexandria making perhaps one of the most significant contributions to the American Civil War Centennial.

Fort Ward preserves for all Americans the best example of the Forts built by the Union to protect Washington during the Civil War.

Now, fifty years later, the City is once again using archaeology to understand events at Fort Ward just in time for the Sesquicentennial, the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Now, the focus is not on the generals and their battles but rather on the common man whose life was so up-turned by the events of the Civil War. It was the work at Fort Ward that the National Trust for Historic Preservation cited when designating Alexandria one of its "Desirable Destinations for 2011." Alexandria is the only city with such a designation in Virginia.

Much has been done. And the City is to be commended for taking action. But much remains to be done at Fort Ward. The archaeology needs to be finished. A storm water runoff mitigation plan needs to be devised and implemented and a Park Master Plan needs to be developed for Fort Ward that emphasizes Citizen input.

On Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at 5:30 PM, the Alexandria City Council has scheduled a Council work session to consider the Advisory Groups recommendations. Deputy City Manager Mark Jinks has asked Jim Spengler, Lance Mallamo and the Advisory Group to be prepared to speak before that City Council Work Session.

Fort Ward is not a Park where where citizens today can have picnics but might in the future be given up for development. It is rather a place where history resides in virtually every square foot. Those of us here tonight have an obligation to protect Fort Ward not only for our benefit and enjoyment, but to ensure that it is preserved for our children and their children, now and into the future. We must commit to work to restore Fort Ward Park to the cultural jewel it is for now and into the future.

Thank you.