

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Park and Recreation Commission

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, April 22, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

Room 2000, City Hall

301 King Street, Alexandria VA

SUMMARY MINUTES

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

**RPCA Staff:** James Spengler, Director, Roger Blakeley, William Chesley, Jack Browand, Ron Kagawa, Beth Carton, Robin DeShields.

**I. Welcome: The Chair opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.**

- The Presentation on the City of Alexandria Waterfront Plan by the Director of Planning and Zoning- POSTPONED to the next meeting. **A public presentation on the Concept Plan will be held in early May by the Planning Commission, after that a series of presentations will be made including one to the P&RC.** The Chair and Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA viewed parts of the Concept plan. The overall plan looks good. There will be further discussion in May.

**II. Approval of Summary Minutes from: March 6, 2010 and March 18, 2010.**

- Minutes of March 6, 2010 - P&RC Retreat.  
Rich Brune motioned to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by David Dexter. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.
- Summary Minutes of March 18, 2010.  
Henry Brooks motioned to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by David Dexter. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

**III. Division Updates (See Staff Reports):**

[www.alexandriava.gov/Department/Recreation/Commissions](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Department/Recreation/Commissions) and Committees

**A. Recreation Programs and Services Update - William Chesley**

- See Staff Report. Mr. Chesley thanked the Chair and Jeffrey Murphy for their attendance at the **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual City-wide Cheerleading Competition, Saturday, April 10 at T.C. Williams, H.S.** The Mayor and Director, RPCA also attended. Feedback has been positive. The Chair said it was a great event and a good representation of the City of Alexandria. She requested that next year a row for handicapped seating be added and reserved. Mr. Chesley will ensure this is done next year.
- "Power On" 2010 after school and summer program
- Q. Henry Brooks- How many children are enrolled in the "Power On" summer program. R. Mr. Chesley-data is not available at this time, just started in March. Approximately 1,240 children are enrolled in the school year program. The program is being promoted at different locations throughout the City, with the goal of starting strong. "Power On" is the new brand for the Out of School Time Program for elementary school children. "Power Up" serves middle school children. Information on each program can be found in the ENews, school website, and the RPCA program brochure.

**B. Operations and Park Planning Monthly Report - Roger Blakeley**

- See Staff Report: Discussion:
- Adams Field - is about 75% complete. Irrigation and back stop fencing will be done over the next month; the turf will be installed later. Out of 43 fields-Adams Field is moving along well. The Little League provided \$20K for the project and the schools also made a donation.

- Water fountains – Chair reported that the water fountain on the dockside of the Torpedo Factory has both upper and bottom fountains for use by dogs. Some Planners asked if this is something the City should be doing. The Chair stated that anytime a public outdoor fountain is installed in Old Town it needs to have both a top and bottom fountain, due to the increasing number of dog owners in the City. Mr. Blakeley said that fountain was paid for/donated by someone who loved their dog.

C. Office on the Arts and Arts Commission Update - report by Alisa Carrel

- See Staff Report- Director, James Spengler gave the report. Prior to Memorial Day Weekend, the Rocky Versace Memorial, 2701 Commonwealth Ave - Mt. Vernon Rec. Center will be getting a clean-up. The project is being funded by “Friends of Rocky Versace”; further info can be found in the staff report.
- Mt. Vernon Avenue-Duron Paint Site Building- The Chair reported that the Public Arts Commission has asked for a presentation on the Duron paint site bldg., this will be given next week.

D. Park Planning Updates - Ron Kagawa and Beth Carton

- See Staff Report- Mr. Kagawa- a number of projects as highlighted in yellow (35) – have been affected by the vacancy of the Urban Planner III position, formerly held by Mary Stephenson. The position is being advertised with a target fill date of August 2010.
- Ben Brenman Athletic Field SUP for Lights- Beth Carton provided a brief presentation on the Ben Brenman synthetic field turf conversion with lights. The SUP #2010-0006 for lights only goes before the Planning Commission May 4<sup>th</sup>. The Chair will attend and give a brief statement of support on behalf of the Commission. Beth - The project was identified by Mary Stephenson as part of the 2009 Athletic Field Study Matrix report, the project has now moved into the Capital Projects and implementation phase. Two fields (rectangular field and little league field) will receive athletic field lighting. The lighting system will have full cut-off, timed lights that will be consistent with the Dark Skies Initiative that will have minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Similar lighting is used at other fields in the City such as Fort Ward.
- Next Steps:
- Public Meeting – on site at Ben Brenman Park- Monday, April 26.
- Planning Commission - Tuesday, May 4. (On Consent Calendar).
- City Council Public Hearing - Saturday, May 15.
- Once approved the Project will move into the construction phase in June.
- The Chair commended RPCA staff for their work and said the project can be used as a good example of process for other places in the City.
- Upper Francis C. Hammond School Update- Mr. Kagawa-it is included in the schools CIP for next year. Intent is to construct a field, walking track and athletic field lighting. RPCA anticipates working with ACPS staff on this ACPS project.

Four-Mile Run Pedestrian -Cyclist Bridge Design Competition Update-

- See Staff Report. A presentation was held on March 27, at the George Washington Masonic Temple by the top three finalists, each gave a 1.5 hr. presentation. The jury met and chose the winner.
- **Ist Place Design Proposal: Grimshaw/Arup/&Scape.**
- Mr. Kagawa showed a brief power point presentation to the Commission and staff showing the top three bridge designs. All three are fine proposals from internationally recognized architects and engineers. All moved the bridge to the west of site, due to existing power lines and all were interested in capturing the view of the bridge at night from US Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway. The Four Mile Run bridge project has funding for the construction documents. The City will work with partners, NVRC and Arlington County to seek funding for construction.
- In response to questions/comments regarding the designs and selection process. Mr. Kagawa said the winning concept was selected based on the most qualified team. The full presentations along with a portfolio of design teams’ past work can be found at: [www.fourmilerun.org](http://www.fourmilerun.org)

- Mt. Vernon Avenue-VEPCO Site Update- Ron Kagawa
- The homeowners group has come together and asked to be allowed to do some improvements to the site. The group will be signing an Agreement with the City to hold the City harmless. The work will be temporary in nature. The City retains rights to develop the site as needed in the future. The group will be responsible for the maintenance of site and providing staff with periodic reports. Laura Durham is the Coordinator for the project.
- The original request was to use the site as a dog park; another request was for use as a community garden. City Council directive is to do minimal improvements to the site. The Chair and Bill Cromley met with the community and discussed lighter-touch alternatives for the site. The project is now moving forward.
- “Friends Groups” do not have the authority to act unilaterally; need coordinate work with RPCA staff on any planned efforts.

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

- Woodrow Wilson Bridge Half Mile Marathon Race Proposal –
- See Staff Report: The race proposal is on the City Council Docket for Tuesday, April 27, 2010, deferred from 4/13. The race is scheduled to occur, September 19. The route and to what extent the race will impact the City will be determined. The group wants to use 2.5 miles of roadway in Old Town Alexandria. This will impact Washington St. and other adjoining streets in Old Town.
- The National Park Service (NPS) is looking at developing a formal race policy which will clearly define the process for races which impact G.W. Washington Parkway and how often it can be closed; this may help the City in the future.

25<sup>th</sup> Annual 2010 Park and Recreation CIVIC Awards Update.

- See Staff Report: Update Dave Dexter- The subcommittee met to discuss the award process. The Announcement should go out in a week to 10 days; the nominations process will last about 6 weeks; afterwards the Subcommittee will review the nominations. Awards will be presented at the City’s birthday celebration July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The P&RC voted and selected Logo Design #2 unanimously. The Logo will be added to the announcement and awards. Awards: Members discussed several options for awards including plaques, medallions, etc. Options are to go with more economic award, due to budget concerns, or to maintain the quality of the award that is visible to the community. Jeff Murphy commented that he received the Civic Award last year (plaque). The ceremony and was very nice and made him feel special, like “king for a day”. Ripley Forbes- said that the awards/plaques given out in the past have been very elegant; he urged the Commission to try to maintain the quality of awards if possible. David Dexter- these are good points, the subcommittee will investigate further options before making a decision and report back. An alternative may be to give different types of awards to individuals vs. groups. He encouraged staff to help get the word out by sending the announcement to Civic Associations, other groups and individuals. The Commission typically receives only 5-10 nominations a year; the goal is to try to increase this. Mr. Browand suggested setting up a quarterly nominations process; so that nominations are received throughout the year. The qualifications had been narrowed and tailored more to the P&RC. Nominations received that are more appropriate for other Commissions, i.e. Beautification, etc. will be forwarded to those groups.
- Earth Day- is Saturday, April 24, 2010 in Ben Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

IV. Retreat Action Items:

A. Review and prioritize Consolidated List of Action Items from Retreat- March 6.

- Retreat Action Items List-See summary minutes of March 6, 2010.
- Categories:
  - Schools, Open Space, “Friends of Groups”, Park Planning, Community Gardens.
  - Top Priorities for next 12- 24 months.
    - **Administrative Procedures- P&RC Bylaws in progress.**

- Waterfront Plan- in progress.
- Cultural Resources- Freedman Park and Ft. Ward Park underway.
- Citizen Engagement with Parks.
- Adult Recreational Needs Assessment-discuss at another meeting.
  
- Open Space Plan- The focus now is to put this back on the front burner with City Council. The Chair asked Dave Dexter to help develop an outline on steps to be taken between now and June and for the fall.
  
- “Friends of Groups” - The Chair asked Henry Brooks to do some research on procedures for “Friends of Groups”. He is a member of Friends of Huntley Meadows (Fairfax Co.) and also Dyke Marsh (under the NPS). He will review their rules/regulations for use in developing the framework on how these groups are formed and operate and do a comparison. Mr. Brooks will also look at what groups are currently in place at the City of Alexandria and how they function. The goal is that these groups, once formed will support the City and Parks and Recreation Dept. in a positive way. This will also help citizens understand what the rules and procedures are so that they will be able to take the lead in forming groups, raising money, and become more involved. Clark Mercer said that the “Friends of Chinquapin” group is another good example. Action Item: Jack Browand will send Henry Brooks information on the City’s “Adopt-a-Park” and “Adopt a Garden” programs which have formal criteria to look at.
  
- Community Gardens and Dog Park Master Plan - Hold for discussion in the fall. The Chair will ask Kirk Fedder to come and help with dog park discussion; he has a lot of knowledge on the history and logic on dog parks in the City.
  
- Coordination between the Schools and Recreation –Priority- add Schools to list.
  - Expansion of schools and new facility at Patrick Henry to include a new Recreation Center.
  - Development of public/private partnership at Jefferson Houston school.
  - The Chair recently attended the meeting the Schools had on Community Schools. There is a growing movement in the country, N.Y. and Chicago targeted at improving inner city schools that are under-performing and where children face many challenges. Services are being brought on-site at the school to help the children and remove all barriers to learning: doctors, dentists, mental health, family counseling, and nutritional services, etc. *Alexandria Schools are energized; brought in a speaker from N.Y. to talk about their successes. Looking at targeting several schools in the City (William Ramsey, T.C. Williams).*
  - Karen Parker Thompson has formed a group to see how this can be implemented in Alexandria. The Chair of P&RC recommended Henry Brooks be appointed liaison for this group.
  - This is viewed as a Partnership between human services delivery and the ACPS. Park and Recreation needs to be more involved.
  - Chair- families are not moving out of the City as much now as they had in the past. The paradigm is shifting towards more urban school models. Families will be staying in the City limits longer-need to plan differently for these changing demographics. *Judy recently met with the Chairs of the School Board and Planning Commission; they will continue to meet and share information.* Spengler-there is a meeting next week with the Planning Dept. on Jefferson Houston concepts.
  
- B. Develop list to address at P&RC meetings from April through July 2010.
  - In progress/ongoing.
  
- C. Discussion of Draft Bylaws-Operating Procedures for Commission – Dave Dexter and Henry Brooks.
  - The Chair and Commission members discussed and reviewed of the first Draft of the Park & Recreation Commission Bylaws.
  - Sections Reviewed: I. Membership, II. Officers, III. Election of Officers,

- IV. Meeting, Quorum and Voting. (Note item J. Commission Findings should read Annual Report). Changes will be made as discussed and agreed upon by the majority of members and re-incorporated into the Draft Bylaws. The Chair asked Commissioner Bob Moir, who is a practicing attorney to review the language in the document. In some areas the Commission may need to defer to the City of Alexandria rules and regulations as appropriate. In other areas it was suggested not being too prescriptive and to allow some flexibility, in order to accommodate staff workload/schedules, while still ensuring adherence to P&RC guidelines and other policies and procedures.
- Review of Draft Bylaws will be continued at the next meeting.

V. Director's Report - James Spengler (verbal update)

A. Update on Ft. Ward Park Progress.

- Next Tuesday, April 27, City Council, RPCA, OHA power presentation on Ft. Ward Park progress (10-15 minutes). The Ad Hoc Committee has cancelled their meeting and will attend the Council meeting. See Docket Item, #16-Consideration of Update on [Ft. Ward Park](#) and Museum Area Activities and Planning. The history group has done a good job of putting a timeline together.
- Landbay K at Potomac Yards:
  - The Director, RPCA received a call from the Attorney of the group that did Landbay K. at P.Y. requesting a meeting with RPCA and Planning in next two weeks. Update at next meeting.
- Warwick Pool:
  - Mr. Gary Carr has written a Contact Us citizen inquiry to City Council requesting that Warwick pool (aka Landover pool) not be closed (copy distributed to P&RC). Warwick pool is on schedule to open on-time this summer. \$300,000 is budgeted in the CIP account reserves for pool repairs as needed. If the CIP is adopted as written- it states that if there is a catastrophic failure at the pool; then the pool may not be repaired and remain closed.
  - The community is concerned about this pool and pools in general. There is currently no Aquatics Master Plan in place. RPCA staff is working to try to find a consultant to do an analysis of pools – as well as the feasibility of spray parks.
- Cameron Station Linear Park near Ben Brenman.
  - Staff is working with the Civic and Homeowners Association. \$20,000 was received earmarked for tree replacement and landscaping. No decision on when project will be done this spring or next fall. Director has a meeting tomorrow on-site with the Association to discuss. This will be a big project.

VI. Reports From Commissioners (verbal updates)

- Ft. Ward Ad Hoc Advisory Commission - Bob Moir, Ripley Forbes, Rich Brune. Mr. Brune-briefed on historical factors and several presentations held. Members will attend the presentation next Tuesday, 4/27/10 at City Council-Docket Item-Consideration of Update on [Ft. Ward Park](#) and Museum Area Activities and Planning.
- Youth Policy Commission - Clark Mercer  
At the last meeting the group voted to combine the Youth Policy Commission and the Early Childhood Commission; unfortunately, some members may lose their seats. Membership will not be open to other committees/commissions.
- Waterfront Committee: Henry Brooks  
Mr. Brooks encouraged P&RC members to attend meetings. Meetings are held the 3rd. Tuesday of the mo. at 7:30 a.m. William Cromley will be the new P&RC liaison to this group. Meetings are well attended by the NPS, Police, Fire, City staff and representatives from other groups. At the last meeting several items were discussed, Rich Baier Director of T&ES and staff did a Flood Control Study. The way to handle nuisance is by building a 4 ft. wall around the street. Nancy Williams, P&Z gave a short presentation on the Waterfront concept plan that was to be given tonight.
  - 106 S. Union St. (formerly Olson's Book Store)
  - Ms. Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, P&Z did a presentation. The plan is to convert space to an informal restaurant with a raised patio level- with the ground floor for and outside dining.

Reduces right-of-way of Wales Alley to 13 feet (from 22/24 ft). The representative of the Old Dominion Boat Club, expressed concern, as this will impact their access to their parking lot by cars with boat trailers.

- **Willem Polak -Potomac Riverboat Company.**
- The Chair of the P&RC will receive a letter No Wake Zone. Letter will be received from Chair of the Waterfront Committee. The Department of Homeland Security wants the ability to run high speed boats on the river in case of emergency and Prince William Co. wants the ability to run high speed Catamarans. This will be coming before the P&RC. The Waterfront Committee gave its approval.
- **Old Town Parking Study**-Rich Baier, Director, T&ES and staff presented the Old Town Parking Study. It was very detailed; those interested should view the study. There are lots of recommendations, some will affect the Waterfront. The number of parking meters will be expanded and hrs. extended. New meters will be installed that use credit cards.
- Mr. Blakeley, Deputy Director RPCA-reports/presentations will be posted- go to RPCA website -Waterfront Committee -April meetings.
- **4-Mile Run**- Ripley Forbes
- The Chair reported that there will be a Joint Task Force meeting sometime in the next couple of months that will focus on the 4-Mile Run Pedestrian Bridge. Staff and the Joint Task Force will start developing the funding strategy for the bridge construction with the help of citizens Joint Task Force.
- **Charles Houston Art** - William Cromley -no meetings recently.
- **Freedman's Cemetery**- Bob Moir
- Freedman's Cemetery will go before the Planning Commission May 4. The Chair will write a letter in support of the project.
- **Beauregard Corridor Plan/BRAC**- David Dexter.
- Mr. Dexter received a call from Congressman Jim Moran (D). Mr. Moran is a great protector of the Mark Winkler Botanical Reserve. The City will be able to maintain the Botanical Preserves. VDOT has deleted all of the road alternatives that would have impacted BRAC and this site-from their project. The Chair was going to write a letter on this but now will not have to.
- **BRAC**- the Project will have a major impact on the West End of the City. Congressman Moran has inserted language into the House Arm Services Appropriations Bill for FY 2011 that would limit the number of cars that would be allowed to park at the Mark Center site to 1000 cars initially. This would remain in effect until a good transportation infrastructure is funded, in place and constructed. Not sure how this will play in the Senate. Other Democrats will probably be supportive.
- **Youth Sports**- Jeffrey Murphy
- Hosting of School Board Chair- Meeting was well attended, School Board Chair-Yvonne Folkerts attended as well as Executive Associate Principal-Steve Colantuoni. A lot of discussion about what is happening at T. C. Williams H.S. They are going to wait until August to bring in the new principle. The new principle will help hire the new Athletics Director. The School Board hires the Superintendent, and the Superintendent hires the Principal, etc.  
Patrick Henry was also discussed-hopefully a field won't go off-line at this location. Jefferson Houston: discussing multiple plans, including bringing in commercial development on-site. Chair-both of these fields may be in jeopardy. The Chair of the School Board understands the gravity of the field situation and potential loss of use.
- **Chairperson Judy Guse-Noritake**
- Reported on discussion with Planning on Potomac Yards. 4000 new residences are anticipated. On the northeast side the plan is looking to place a new urban school. Question is whether it will be a K-5 or K-8-, if it's a K-8 then more outdoor recreation space will be needed.

**VII.** Agenda items and location for May meeting.

- Presentation of the City's Waterfront Plan- Planning and Zoning Director.
- Decision on the Civic Awards and continue review of Draft Bylaws.
- Tentative Location: City Hall-TBD

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

**IX.** Adjournment: 9:20 p.m.