

Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 21, 2022
Monthly Meeting
Sister Cities Conference Room
City Hall
7:30 a.m.

Commission Members

Present:

Agnes Artemel, East of Washington St. and North of Pendleton St.
Sarah Bagley, Member, Alexandria City Council
Eldon Boes, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Robert Cvejanovich, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA) Stuart Fox, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners
Kristina Hagman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Charlotte Hall, Old Town Business Association (OTBA)
Nathan (Nate) Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission
Brian McPherson, Park Planning District III
Louise Roseman, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Barbara Saperstone, Citizen, east of Washington St. and south of King St
Stephen Thayer, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of King St. and Chair, Waterfront Commission
Patricia Webb, Citizen, Park Planning District II
Esther White, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Excused

Trae Lamond, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Robert Weinhagen, Historic Alexandria Foundation

Absent

Judy Heiser, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Lebaron Reid, Commissioner At-Large
Scott Shaw, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce

City Staff

Erin Bevis-Carver, Division Chief, Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)
Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Alfred Coleman, Deputy Director, Department of General Services (GS)
Matthew Landes, Division Chief, Waterfront Program Manager, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Catherine Miliaris, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Katie North, Division Chief, Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)
James F. Parajon, City Manager

Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Terry A. Suehr, Director, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)

Guests

Gina Baum, Resident
Christine Bernstein, resident
Matthew Carroll, Stantec
Clair Sassin, Tall Ship Providence Foundation
Mick Ulakovic, resident

Call to Order – Stephen Thayer, Chair

Chair Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Discussion Items for Action and Information

ITEM 1 - James F. Parajon , City Manager Welcome & Introduction - Stephen Thayer, Chair

Chair Thayer welcomed Alexandria’s new City Manager James Parajon. He introduced himself and identified some of his goals as City Manager.

- ***Council priorities*** - Starting with the next Council meeting, the City Manager will provide quarterly reports on the status of actions related to Council’s six priorities for the City.
- ***Civic engagement*** - Listening to members of the community regarding their concerns and priorities and factoring that information into decision-making is a priority.
- ***Waterfront*** - The Waterfront’s vibrancy, the variety of activities which take place there and the varied demographics of those who enjoy the Waterfront area make the Waterfront area a key City asset. Past weekend’s Portside in Old Town Festival and activities celebrating Juneteenth and the grand re-opening of Freedom House showed the range of City activities.
- ***Funding Waterfront Plan implementation*** – Committed to fully realizing and funding the City’s vision for the Waterfront over time.
- ***Torpedo Factory Art Center*** – An important City asset as an arts center and one that no elected official has indicated to him that there is an interest in selling.
- ***Flood mitigation*** – a top Waterfront-related priority

Commission comments:

- ***Waterfront Plan implementation (Thayer and Macek)*** CIP funding for Phase 1 Waterfront Plan Implementation needs to cover both flood mitigation and parks and amenities. These were all identified by the community as Phase 1 implementation priorities.
- ***Parking/traffic (Saperstone)*** - Traffic flow and parking, including resident parking, are issues needing to be addressed. A: Manager ***Parajon*** – Council discussed parking problems in this area the previous Saturday. Also, staff is working to make wayfinding signage directing drivers to parking locations more visible.

- **Activities (Hall)** - The past weekend’s Portside music festival is the type of Waterfront activity that the City does well and should put on more frequently.
- **Oral histories - (Hagman)** –Founders Park and Torpedo Factory
 - Oral histories should be created to capture the area’s rich cultural history. **A: Parajon:** Agreed. Noted that a documentary on the Torpedo Factory Art Center exists but should be better publicized and made more accessible to members of the community.
 - Residents are concerned that digging up Founders Park to install underground storage tanks for stormwater management might release soil contaminants left from earlier industrial activities. Long-time residents of the Founders Park area, some of whom have lived there since the 1970s, vividly remember being worried about the safety of digging in their gardens at that time.
 - Make historical information about the area more accessible to the public. For example, she was told public access to details of earlier toxic activities in the Founders Park area require filing a Freedom of Information Act request.

ITEM 2 - Approval of April 19, 2022 & May 17, 2022 Minutes

- **Motion:** Macek moved and Hall seconded that the April 19, 2022 minutes be approved as corrected. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- **Motion:** Macek moved and Hall seconded that the May 17, 2022 minutes be approved. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM 3 - Old Town Parking Updates - Katye North, Division Chief, Transportation & Environmental Services

North reported on City Council’s discussion of parking the previous Saturday.

- **Expanding residential pay-by-phone** program that offer residents a process to request pay-by-phone for their block, especially relevant to the Robinson Landing area.
- **Pricing** – Will be changed to make rates more expensive at neighborhood meters than in garages, especially in the Union Street area.
- **Wayfinding** – Staff will be working on improved signage to make garage locations and pricing more visible to help encourage visitor use of garages.

Commission Comments

- Hall – Commended the City for the new \$5 parking rate for the City Hall and Courthouse garages after 5 p.m. weeknights and all day weekends. Asked that a change be considered that would let restaurant workers take advantage of the \$5 rate since many/most evening staff start work by 4:30 pm.
- Saperstone - Better enforcement is needed to address problem of weekend visitors parking in front of resident driveways. Suggested resident-only parking on weekends to address the problem on certain blocks. **A: Resident-only parking** - Will be considered in the future. Macek said the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) participants, who met in 2012 and 2015, had unanimously opposed resident-only parking because it often leaves parking underutilized. OTAPS had instead recommended using pay-by-phone pricing to incentivize visitors to use garage not on-street parking.

- Gosnell – Concerned about the impact of free parking on Sundays. **A: Bridgeman (APD)** – Parking Enforcement works on weekends. He encouraged people to report parking violations when they see them but noted they are understaffed. Enforcement staff is being paid overtime to work the Waterfront area on weekends.

Public Comments

- Baum – Confirmed Bridgeman’s information that Parking Enforcement responds when violations are phoned in. Also, said 200 block of Lee Street needs residents-only parking because on-street parking is one side only. Some residents on the block have moved because they could not find parking near their houses.

ITEM 4 2 King Street Parking/Open Space Property Update - Alfred Coleman, Deputy Director, Department of General Services (GS)

Presentation: “[Future Use of City-Owned Property at 2 King Street](#)”

At Council’s June 28, 2022 meeting the City Manager plans to ask Council to declare the 2 King Street parcel to be surplus property and authorize staff to issue within 90 days an RFP for its sale and development.

- **Background**
 - **2014** - City acquired the parcel as part of its land swap with the Old Dominion Boat Club and leased eight parking spaces on the site. Leases for seven of the eight spaces were terminated when the area was used for outdoor dining during COVID. Mai Thai Restaurant (6 King Street) continues to lease its space for outdoor dining.
 - **June 2019** - City received an offer to buy the parcel. Waterfront Commission was briefed at that time
 - **December 2019** – Public hearing was held.
- **Significant neighborhood changes since 2014** - For example, Waterfront Park is now in place and pedestrianizing Strand Street and the unit block of King Street are being tested through pilot projects.
- **Civic outreach** –
 - Commission briefing was one of several GS briefings reviewing actions taken and planned regarding 2 King Street. GS briefed the Park and Recreation Commission the previous week. GS previously briefed Commission on 2 King Street options in 2019.
 - **RFP** - Feedback on potential uses for the parcel will be reflected in the RFP being developed.
- Staff hopes to issue RFP by the end of summer 2022. Planning Commission will be briefed and a Council legislative hearing held before any sale is approved.

Commission Comments

- Surprised staff decided to recommend the parcel be sold before briefing the Commission on the proposal;
- Concerned they were being given so little time to consider the staff proposal before it is put to Council on June 28.
- **2019** - Noted they did not take a formal position when briefed in 2019 but had proposed

several use options for the parcel.

- **Pilot project impacts** - Wanted to see the results of the pedestrian-only zone pilot projects for Strand Street and the unit block of King Street before taking a position on 2 King Street’s potential uses.
- **RFP** - Council should adopt required development standards for the site, such as including flood mitigation requirements and consistency with the Waterfront Plan. Feedback on the draft RFP’s details should be solicited from the Commission and the community at large.
- **Public services** - A centrally located Waterfront site like 2 King Street should provide public services that support the area, e.g. public restrooms, a visitor information center and/or a satellite office for APD. Concern was expressed that local businesses often have their restrooms used by non-customers.
 - A: Browand – The DSUP for every property considers how development could incorporate community benefit. A variety of potential uses are being considered for 2 King Street, including how the site could support Waterfront open space.

Public Comments

- Bernstein – City should consider whether this site could be an option for underground stormwater storage as part of the flood mitigation options being developed.
- Ulakovic – Concerned Commissioners and residents seem to have been blindsided by the recommendation. Premature to designate site as surplus property. Should another business be added in the flood zone? Consider the area’s existing parking problem. Supported public uses such as park land and/or a police station supporting Waterfront community policing.

Councilmember Bagley –

Council has not declared 2 King Street surplus yet. The GS briefing’s purpose is to solicit public feedback and she will convey the meeting’s comments to Council at the June 28 meeting when staff will present its recommendation for Council action on 2 King Street.

Motion – Macek moved and Hall seconded that the Commission should send a letter to City Council before its June 28 meeting expressing the following:

- The Commission has reviewed and discussed the proposed sale of 2 King Street property and believes it premature to declare it surplus at this time.
- The Commission recommends the next step should be to articulate the benefits of the site’s sale versus public ownership and consider features of the site’s potential public uses and benefits, such as restrooms and other public uses to be listed, to create a clear accounting of possibilities, under either scenario, that can inform the eventual decision. The accounting would consider, for example, consistency with the Waterfront Plan, features of public uses and benefits on the site such as public restrooms, disposition of the site relative to Strand Street potentially opening to pedestrian traffic, and addressing community needs such as flooding.
- If Council decides to sell the parcel, the RFP should articulate the standards the City seeks for the development, consistent with the Waterfront Plan and articulation of public benefits, and then ensure that specific conditions for the parcel’s development are met;
- Any proceeds from the sale of 2 King Street should be reinvested in Waterfront capital

improvements.

- The Commission would appreciate the opportunity to review at its September meeting the benefits evaluation and RFP as they have evolved.

Note: Motion passed by voice vote: No negative votes. Bagley abstained. Fox recused himself.

Fox said his client, Mai Thai restaurant, has been discussing issues related to 2 King Street for several years with the City and groups such as the Old Town Business Association.

Note: [Commission's letter to Council, sent June 24, 2022](#)

ITEM 5: Oronoco Street Outfall Update - Remedial Actions - Erin Bevis-Carver, Division Chief, Transportation & Environmental Services
Project information and Site Map

City's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) - City is constructing a bio-remediation system within the zero block of Oronoco Street. City entered the site into Virginia's Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) in 2000 and considerable progress has been made.

- **Alexandria Town Gas (ATG) History** – The CAP addresses environmental concerns created at the former ATG-Oronoco site near Lee/Oronoco. Coal tar residues were a waste product left in the underlying soil and ground water by the City-owned gas manufacturing plant operated 1852-1946 at Lee Street Square. Some remediation was done when townhomes were developed on the site in the late 1970s but oily residues migrated over time to the stormwater outfall at the end of Oronoco Street.
- **Actions taken** - Bevis-Carver reviewed City actions since 2000 to keep coal tar residues from seeping into the river. Continuing operation and maintenance (O&M) is part of the process.
- **Actions planned - Robinson Terminal North (RTN) pier remediation** –City is discussing with the RTN site owners timing for removing the pier so that remediation can be done where sediments have settled under the RTN pier. Next steps (1) City continues sediment sampling near the pier, with final sampling this summer. (2) RTN pier will be removed; (3) RTN pier area sediments will be remediated, similar to the process used in the Oronoco outfall area.

Potomac Riverkeepers Network (PRKN) lawsuit –

- Bevis-Carver reported that PRKN has filed a federal lawsuit against the City related to the site's clean up. No details related to the case were discussed.

Commission Comments

- Boes (EPC) recommended T&ES present its briefing to the Environmental Policy Commission.
- Hagman (FPCA) asked if the coal tar residues in the ground migrate towards Founders Park.
A: No. Evidence shows that the groundwater migrates towards Robinson Terminal North.

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY – Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD

Parking enforcement

- ***Weekends*** - Enhanced parking enforcement is in effect in the Waterfront area on Friday and Saturday evenings and all day Sunday, with officers working overtime. In response to incidents reported by Commissioners, APD will re-direct enforcement towards loading zones and alleys during the coming weekend to see how it impacts the problem.
- ***Staffing needs*** – APD’s goal is 24 enforcement officers. Currently has only 16.
- ***Reporting problems to APD*** - Recommended people report parking violations when they see them, including pictures when possible, to help APD enforcement.

Commission Comments

Thayer reported noise violations continue, especially on weekends.

COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATES – Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA

- ***City birthday celebration July 9*** – Oronoco Bay Park
- ***Point Lumley Park*** – Area being made more pedestrian-friendly, e.g. trail realignment, rearranging benches, etc.
- ***Robinson Landing railings*** – Planning continues for permanent railings for the pier. Temporary railings remain up. Resource allocation problems continue to create delays.

WATERFRONT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – Matthew Landes, Division Chief, DPI

- **New website-** “[Waterfront Flooding in Alexandria](#) “ - consolidates current and historical information related to Waterfront flood mitigation project -
- **Progressive-Design-Build process (PDB) –**
 - No final decisions on flood mitigation design options have been made. They will be made after the PDB team, once hired, gathers additional information for further evaluation and consultation with the community.
 - RFP for the Progressive-Design-Build contract has not yet been finalized. A number of consultants have expressed interest.
- **Torpedo Factory Art Center Oral History** – Waterfront historian and geological historian have been hired.
- **Geotechnical work** – Consultants’ study is not yet ready.
- **Underground storage in Founders Park**
 - In response to community concerns about preserving mature trees in Founders Park, DPI has promised to identify tree-save areas such as The Grove that will be protected from demolition and construction activity related to either temporary construction activities or, if chosen, underground stormwater storage. Outside the grove area construction staging areas will be chosen to minimize impacts to the park where possible.

Commission Comments

- Hagman asked that careful attention be paid to protecting the tree root balls in The Grove.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES – Catherine Miliaras, Principal Planner, P&Z

- **Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP) application - rezoning Potomac River Generating Station site** – On June 23 Planning Commission will consider the proposal to rezone the HRP site as a Coordinated Development District (CDD). On July 5 Council will consider the CDD proposal and the related concept design plan.
 - **Public input** - Council Member Bagley said Council will only be considering broad CDD design details for approval at their July 5 meeting but is also seeking community input on Hilco’s proposed residential/commercial mix.

- **Vola’s Dockside Grill SUP application** – Alexandria Restaurant Partners (ARP) has applied for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to make Vola’s temporary outdoor seating in the Marina’s Riverside Taco area permanent and to take over management of some of the adjacent City-owned public restrooms. Their SUP request will be considered September 6 by the Planning Commission and September 13 by Council.

Commission comments

- **Solo parking garage** – Timing of its closure? A: Miliaris will find out.

September Proposed Discussion Topics / Items of Information

- TFAC Update
- 2 King Street Update
- Founders Park

Next Meeting: September 20, 2022

Adjournment:

At 9:40 a.m. Hall moved and Roseman seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.