

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting**

Patrick Henry Recreation Center

**Thursday, June 26, 2025
7 p.m.**

Commission Members

Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); David Brennan, (District III); Stuart Fox, Secretary (District I). Jeffrey Miller (District I); Geoffrey Goode (District II); Asa Orrin-Brown (District III);

Absent: Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Joseph Fray (District II); Paul Komelasky (District I).

RPCA Staff: Hashim Taylor, Director; Jack Browand, Deputy Director; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Laura Durham, Deputy Director; Oscar Mendoza, Park Services, Division Chief; Judy Lo, Principal Planner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dana Colarulli, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments were made on non-agenda items.

III. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

- a. Jack Browand advised the commission that the Alexandria City Birthday event is Saturday, July 12. The celebration takes place at Oronoco Bay Park and begins at 6pm. In addition, July is Park & Recreation Month. You are encouraged to visit our parks and recreation facilities.

IV. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. RPCA Staff Highlights

Jack Browand shared the following updates:

- **Holmes Run Trail:** This project is progressing and sites 2 and 3 are ahead of schedule. We anticipate a soft opening in early August.
- **Hensley Park Project:** Work is progressing, and the park will be opening in phases. One of the fields will be open in the next few weeks. A formal dedication ceremony will happen in the Fall.
- **Colasanto Project:** Currently on schedule. This project should be completed before the Art on the Avenue event in October.
- **Eugene Simpson:** This project will kick off on July 7. You will notice the decommissioning of areas in the park. We are looking to have the project done by late summer 2026.

Hashim Taylor shared the following update:

- Over the past week, Old Town Pool closed for repairs. During that time, RPCA offered extended hours at Chinquapin and all other aquatic facilities. 500 passes were purchased for Great Waves Park to distribute to community members.

b. Commissioner Reports

District I

Commissioner Fox stated that the Waterfront Commission met last week and elected a new Chair and Vice-chair. They also viewed the PRGS Open Space presentation that the Park & Recreation Commission received last month. The waterfront commission had general questions about the timeline and cost but was overall supportive of the plans. Also, the annual Waterfront Walk took place last week. There were over 100 people in attendance. There were great questions from the community, and they seemed very engaged.

Commissioner Miller shared that North Potomac Yard Park is such a beautiful park and resembles a nature preserve/botanical garden. He also attended one of the online briefings from HRP on the generating station. There is a lot of interest and excitement, especially regarding the additional access to the river and waterfront views. The community is concerned about the disruption of the bike paths that will be closed during construction. Commissioner Miller echoed Commissioner Fox's statements on the impressive attendance numbers for the Waterfront Walk. He went on to say that it was nice to see the representation from different neighborhood communities and organizations.

Commissioner Komelasky was not in attendance.

District II

Commission Chair Colarulli stated that a community member had a question about tennis court reservations at Eugene Simpson Park. Jack Browand stated that courts can be reserved through our R&R office, but many groups come together for dropping use.

Commissioner Goode explained that the George Mason reconstruction project is starting but there are no construction fences up yet. City Council approved the special use permit with a condition that the perimeter fence around the back of the fields is moved up so that the fields are outside the fence. This decision developed from community concern that fields are shared use and a community amenity, not just a school amenity. This may limit access to students during the school day.

Commissioner Fray was not in attendance.

District III

Commissioner Matthews was not in attendance

Commissioner Orrin-Brown attended the 4th annual RPCA Community Spelling Bee. His daughter participated in the event. It was a great experience and had representation from many of the City's after-school program locations.

Commissioner Brennan shared that Jim Gibson recently stepped down from his role as Chair of the Youth Sports Advisory Board. Bill Campbell has unofficially stepped into the

role of Chair. Beth Znidersic attended that last meeting and gave a very informative presentation on current and upcoming projects. Many sports fields will be going offline and coming online simultaneously.

Student Members: Commission seats are currently vacant.

c. Staff Introductions

Oscar Mendoza introduced the 2 recently hired Natural Resources Managers, Raychel Frye and Katrina Napora. Ms. Napora stated that she used to work at the US Geological Survey in Reston Va. She has a strong background in soil, wetlands, and flood plains. Ms. Frye is a New Jersey native but spent the last 10 years in Arizona. Her recent experience involves wildlife and habitat management. One of her main focuses for the City is to develop a wildlife management program.

V. ACTION ITEMS

a. Officer Elections

Commission Chair Colarulli stated that both himself and Commissioner Matthews are willing to continue their current roles as Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioner Fox also agreed to continue as Secretary.

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.A

Motion: Commissioner Miller moved, and Commissioner Orrin-Brown seconded the motion to nominate the slate. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

b. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 15, 2025

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.B

Motion: Commissioner Goode moved, and Commissioner Miller seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

c. Public Hearing - Ewald Park Concept Plan and Neighborhood Park Plan Amendment

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.C

Motion: Commissioner Brennan moved, and Commissioner Goode seconded the motion to open the public hearing. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Judy Lo gave a presentation on the Ewald Park Concept Plan and Neighborhood Park Plan Amendment. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/file/28124>

Public Comment:

Resident, Kursten Phelps, stated that she appreciates all the community engagement around this project. She's eager to see this project begin construction and urges the Commission to give their endorsement.

Resident, Alex Goyette, wanted to mirror Kursten's comments on the project. He discussed the importance of the park resources. He did mention that the community engagement was nice, but some communities feel fatigued with so many survey requests.

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.D

Motion: Commissioner Brennan moved, and Commissioner Goode seconded the motion to close the public hearing. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Commission Discussion:

A question arose as to why the park plan was in discussion 10 years ago and it has still not moved forward. Jack Browand stated that budget cuts and reprioritization over the years have pushed this project back. He feels confident that this project will begin as scheduled.

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.E

Motion: Commissioner Fox moved, and Commissioner Goode seconded the motion to endorse the current plan with a strong recommendation to add restrooms in phase I. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Commission Chair Colarulli and Commissioner Fox volunteered to write a letter of endorsement for the Ewald Park plan.

d. PRGS Open Space Update

Michelle Beaman-Chang, Vice President, Mixed Use Development (HRP Group) and Simon Beer, Landscape Architecture (OJB), gave the presentation on the PRGS Open Space Update. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/202505_-_park_and_recreation_commission_final_lr_0.pdf

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.F

Motion: Commissioner Miller moved, and Commissioner Goode seconded the motion to endorse the PRGS Open Space Plan and to write a letter of endorsement. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VI. NEXT MEETING

July 17, 2025 (Public Hearing) – Charles Houston Recreation Center

VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.G

Motion: Commissioner Orrin-Brown moved, and Commissioner Brennan seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:07 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

These minutes are intended to serve as a summary of the meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript. A complete audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.