

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

**Charles Houston Recreation Center**

**Thursday, May 15, 2025  
7 p.m.**

**Commission Members**

**Present:** Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Joseph Fray (District II); Asa Orrin-Brown (District III); Jeffrey Miller (District I); Paul Komelasky (District I). Geoffrey Goode (District II).

**Absent:** Jacques Lecoq (student member), Tookie Organek (student member); David Brennan, (District III); Stuart Fox, Secretary (District I).

**RPCA Staff:** Hashim Taylor, Director; Jack Browand, Deputy Director; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant; Laura Durham, Deputy Director; Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director; Jose Ayala, Principal Planner; Judy Lo, Principal Planner.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Dana Colarulli, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He noted a full agenda and highlighted several key updates and presentations planned for the evening. He also announced the arrival of the new Director of RPCA, Hashim Taylor, and the anticipated attendance of Mayor Gaskins.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No public comments were made on non-agenda items.

**III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**a. RPCA Staff Highlights**

Beth Znidersic shared the following updates:

- **Community Matching Fund:** Applications are open until May 26. Interest has been high with helpful inquiries.
- **Palo Santo Spray Park:** Demolition of the concrete pool is complete. Weather has delayed progress, but work is ongoing. Updates are posted online and through a project email list.
- **Simpson Park:** Project is awaiting contractor confirmation via the procurement office. Decommissioning work has begun, and user groups are being kept informed.

Jack Browand shared the following updates:

- **Seaport Foundation:** Council to review a five-year license agreement that includes a second facility in addition to the marina.

- **George Mason Elementary Project:** Council to consider the project including recreation upgrades such as tennis court improvements and new program space.

Laura Durham shared the following update:

- **NRPA Grant:** RPCA received a grant from NRPA worth \$60,000. The grant supports a mentoring program for middle school students on the west end.

## b. Special Remarks

**Mayor Gaskins** addressed the Commission, expressing appreciation for their work and highlighting three key areas of focus for the department:

1. **Facility Experience:** Emphasis on quality and consistency across all facilities.
2. **Maintenance:** Addressing common resident concerns such as trash, lighting, and equipment repair.
3. **Program Access:** Ensuring programs meet resident needs at accessible times and costs.

She expressed excitement for the direction of the department under new leadership and noted the importance of holistic planning connecting parks and recreation to health and community well-being.

**RPCA Director, Hashim Taylor**, shared his personal journey growing up in Alexandria and his vision to create equitable, safe, and accessible recreational spaces for all residents. He emphasized continuing to enhance programs, facilities, and community engagement.

## c. Commissioner Reports

### District I

**Commissioner Fox** was not in attendance.

**Commissioner Miller** gave kudos to RPCA for clearing out the invasive species in Potomac Greens Park. He stated that it looks like a new park. He noted that his favorite portions of the commission report were the Egg Hunt at Chinquapin Pool, and the formal wear donation program at the Durant Center.

**Commissioner Komelasky** reported that he enjoyed seeing the Mother's Day events offered by RPCA. He was also impressed by the drop-in soccer program offered at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

### District II

**Commission Chair Colarulli** had no additional updates but asked about the RPCA RecFest. Laura Durham shared that the event drew 1,300 attendees, marking the largest turnout in its history.

**Commissioner Goode** the plan for George Mason renovation project passed through the Planning Commission and will be presented to City Council this weekend.

**Commissioner Fray** shared his excitement for the drop-in soccer at Patrick Henry. He noted, “It’s great to see the fields getting used as much as they are”. He also shared that he was able to increase awareness of the Community Matching Fund by sharing its details with a local online newsletter.

### **District III**

**Commissioner Matthews** did not have an update on the Minnie Howard project. She did have an update on behalf of commissioner Brennan. Alexandria Little League will be hosting the junior and senior Softball All-stars Tournament at Witter Field.

**Commissioner Orrin-Brown** attended RecFest and reported that everyone seemed to enjoy the event. He also attended the Community Cookout and received information about the Ewald Park project.

**Commissioner Brennan** was not in attendance.

**Student Members: Commissioner Organek and Commissioner Lecoq** were not in attendance.

## **IV. ACTION ITEMS**

### **a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 20, 2025**

**ACTION:** FY25.5.15.25A

**Motion:** Commissioner Matthews moved, and Commissioner Komelasky seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes. The minutes were approved with one minor, non-substantive correction noted.

## **V. ITEMS OF INFORMATION**

### **a. Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) Open Space “Refresher” Presentation**

Mary Catherine introduced Simon Beer, and he gave an update on PRGS Open Space. The presentation can be found here: [https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc\\_5-15-25\\_prgs.pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc_5-15-25_prgs.pdf)

### **b. Site See: Public Art Update**

Diane Ruggeiro gave an update on the Site See public art for FY26. Alicia Eggert is the selected artist, and links to her work can be found here:

- You Are Magic: <https://aliciaeggert.com/pages/magic.html>
- Your Magic is Real: <https://aliciaeggert.com/pages/yourmagicisreal.html>
- Unimaginable Future: <https://aliciaeggert.com/pages/unimaginable.html>

- This Present Moment: <https://aliciaeggert.com/pages/thispresentmoment.html>

**c. Ewald Park Design Concept Update**

Judy Lo gave an update on the Ewald Park Design Concept. The presentation can be found here: [https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc\\_ewald\\_park\\_improvementsmay2025.pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc_ewald_park_improvementsmay2025.pdf)

**d. Skatepark Improvements & Community Engagement Update**

Jose Ayala gave an update on the proposed skatepark improvements and related community engagement. The presentation can be found here:

[https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc\\_schuyler\\_hamilton\\_jones\\_5.15.2025.pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/prc_schuyler_hamilton_jones_5.15.2025.pdf)

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

June 26, 2025 (Public Hearing) – Patrick Henry Recreation Center

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** FY25.5.15.25B

**Motion:** Commissioner Matthews moved, and Commissioner Komelasky seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.