

City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting

Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street

Thursday, November 20, 2025
7 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order: Dana Colarulli, Chair
2. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items
3. Commissioner Reports & Announcements
 - a. Staff Report – Commissioner Comments
4. Action Items
 - a. Approval October 16, 2025 Minutes
5. Items of Information
 - a. Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Jose C. Ayala, Principal Planner, Park Services
 - b. Powhatan Park Improvements
Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner III, Park Services
6. Next Meeting: January 15, 2026
 - a. Location to be Determined
7. Adjournment

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Jack Browand at
Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.5504, Virginia Relay 711. We request that you provide 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements can be made.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2025
TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS
FROM: LAURA DURHAM, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION
SUBJECT: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE ITEM

OSTP School Year Update:

Current 2025-26 School Year Enrollment: 1323

Out-of-school time programming is offered at 12 Afterschool Power-On sites, including two specialty programs—Youth Achieving Greatness (YAG) and TR Achieving Greatness (TAG)—as well as three LINK Club locations (Patrick Henry Recreation Center, Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, and Francis C. Hammond Middle School) in partnership with ACPS.

Partnerships & Collaborations:

We are proud to partner with ACPS, UpCycle, Momentum Collective Inc., 4-H Cooperative Extension, and the Buddie Ford Nature Center, all of whom provide valuable enrichment, academic support, and specialized programming at our Afterschool Power-On locations

Program Wrap-ups:

- On October 23, the City of Alexandria's Recreation Department joined communities nationwide in celebrating Lights On Afterschool, the annual event that highlights the vital role after school programs play in supporting children, families, and communities. Since its launch in 2000, it has become a signature nationwide effort generating broad awareness each year.



This year, each Out of School Time Program (OSTP) location marked the occasion with unique activities showcasing the value of safe, engaging, and enriching afterschool spaces. In partnership with ALX Beyond, sites highlighted their impact—and as a special tribute, the George Washington Masonic National Memorial was illuminated in blue.



Highlights From OSTP and Recreation Center Celebrations

- **Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center**
Hosted a two-day celebration with Director **Hashim Taylor** reading to youth on October 22, followed by a **Glow Party** with music, crafts, art stations, and special guests **Dr. Michelle Rief** and **Deputy Fire Marshal Darryl Stanton**.
- **John Adams Elementary School**
Welcomed guest speaker **Michael Johnson** (RPCA) and held a fun **Glo Party** for students.
- **Charles Barrett Elementary School**
Featured an **Appreciation Station** where families completed themed prompts and took photos to share on social media.
- **Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School**
Offered hands-on activities including STEM, face painting, music and movement, and creative writing.
- **Douglas MacArthur Elementary School**
Hosted motivational speaker **Reggie Morris** and held a **Harvest Fest** with craft, STEM, and game stations.
- **Francis C. Hammond Middle School**
Received visits from **Alethea Predeoux** and **Steven Ramdilal** and provided enrichment such as cosmetology, robotics, soccer, and drone activities.
- **Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center**
Students created **Light Bulb Crafts** expressing what afterschool means to them, displayed on the “Our Lights Shine Bright” bulletin board.

Lights On Afterschool – Citywide Celebration



- October activities included trips to Fish & Grill (Oct. 10) and Bowlero (Oct. 16); new programs such as Chair Tai Chi and a monthly Hispanic Senior Group; ongoing offerings like Coffee Social Hour, Zumba, Line Dance, Arts & Crafts (pumpkin carving on Oct. 21), and Senior Club Meetings; and the SAC Annual Masquerade Party at the Lee Center on Oct. 31.



- On October 18, the Patrick Henry Recreation Center hosted the 10th Annual Spooky Mad Science Expo in partnership with Zohreh Khoshnamak of the Chrysalis Development Group, the City of Alexandria, RPCA, and Patrick Henry K–8 School. The event featured numerous vendors, a lively DJ, and a festive costume parade that traveled from the recreation center to James K. Polk School and back, with staff and volunteers ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all.



- On October 24, the Patrick Henry Recreation Center hosted its annual Family October Fest. The event featured arts and crafts, spooky activities like musical chairs and freeze dance, carnival games, a moon bounce, and the House of Screams Haunted House. The program was a great success, drawing more than 350 participants.



- On October 24, Patrick Henry's OSTP program hosted its **Trunk for Treats** event in the front parking lot. Volunteer parents supported the celebration by handing out candy from their decorated car trunks as youth paraded through in their costumes, trick-or-treating safely at each vehicle.



- On October 30, the Leonard Armstrong Recreation Center came alive with Halloween fun as OSTP participants enjoyed snacks, crafts, puzzles, games, and a lively dance party in the gym. Parents joined in with donuts donated by Good Company Restaurant, and every child left with a Halloween goody bag and a big smile.



- On October 31, the Patrick Henry Recreation Center held **PatCon** drew over 200 attendees. The event featured vendors, hands-on crafts, workshops, and games. For participants and artists, “Art at PatCon” offers a space to showcase creative work, connect with fellow artists, anime fans, and cosplayers, and explore art inspired by fandoms, animation, manga, and costume culture.



Program Updates:

- On Saturday, October 25, Chinquapin hosted a successful Floating Pumpkin Patch. Families enjoyed 45-minute swim sessions while searching for pumpkins in the shallow lanes, then received candy and pumpkin stickers for decorating. This annual favorite continues to attract both returning families and new participants.



- On Friday, October 10, 2025, the William Ramsay Recreation Center celebrated World Pickleball Day by welcoming players of all ages to try the country’s fastest-growing sport. Instructors from Advantage Tennis led fun exhibition games, giving participants a chance to learn new skills and enjoy friendly competitions. It was an exciting event, and we look forward to making it an annual tradition.



- On Thursday, October 23, 2025, the William Ramsay Recreation Center lit up the night with a Glow-in-the-Dark Dance Party in celebration of Lights On Afterschool. OSTP participants enjoyed music, dancing, crafts, snacks, and glowing trinkets that added extra sparkle to the evening.



- On Thursday, October 30, 2025, the William Ramsay Recreation Center and William Ramsay Elementary School hosted a lively pre-Halloween Pep Rally with more than 250 attendees. Families enjoyed food, games, prizes, and a festive costume showcase before heading to the Trunk or Treat event.



- On Friday, October 31, 2025, the William Ramsay Recreation Center hosted its annual HalloTeen event, offering teens a safe, fun Halloween celebration with music from DJ Jerome, cupcake decorating, pumpkin carving, and other activities. Papa John's Pizza and Chick-fil-A provided food, and staff joined in to help create a lively, welcoming atmosphere.



- On October 24, Mt. Vernon Recreation Center hosted its annual Family Masquerade Ball. The community came out for an evening of dancing, crafts, games, and a costume contest.



- On October 14, Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center hosted its “Pinkalicious” Breast Cancer Awareness Happy Hour, celebrating strength, hope, and community support. Participants wore pink to show solidarity and enjoyed food, drinks, and conversation in a warm, welcoming setting.



- Our **Big and Little Dippers** program has returned and continues to make a positive impact through adaptive swim sessions at Minnie Howard and Chinquapin. This therapeutic recreation program builds social and adaptability skills while offering an inclusive, enjoyable aquatic experience. Each Friday, participants take part in activities that promote confidence, connection, and coordination, ensuring everyone can fully engage regardless of ability.



- On October 30 and 31, Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center hosted a festive **Trunk or Treat** and **Halloween Parade** that brought together families, staff, and RPCA for a fun, community-building celebration. Children enjoyed a lively costume parade, decorated tents with treats, games, and face painting, thanks to the great work of Lee Center staff and volunteers. Special thanks to Old Town Alexandria Dental, Alexandria Children’s Dentistry, and G&G Dental for donating toothbrushes and oral care items, adding a healthy touch to the festivities.



- Our Sensory Mobile partnered with Lily’s Corner at Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center, featuring the **Blue Honeybee Sensory Play Corner**—a fun, inclusive space that supports sensory development and creativity. The event offered a great opportunity to connect with families and highlight how sensory play supports learning and regulation for young children.



- On October 31, 2025, participants in the Patrick Henry **Link Club Enrichment Program** enjoyed both technical and musical learning experiences. Link 1 students took part in Cybertech Academy with Ms. Amy, while Link 2 students participated in a hands-on music class.



- The 2025 **City of Alexandria Employee City Cup Series** wrapped up with two exciting championship events celebrating teamwork and friendly competition. DCHS won the Volleyball City Cup after defeating City Hall, while City Hall claimed the Kickball City Cup with a win over RPCA. Both finals showcased strong participation and camaraderie across departments. Thank you to all players, volunteers, and staff for making this another successful year—we look forward to an even better series next year.



Upcoming Events:

- On November 21, William Ramsay Recreation Center will host a **Parent's Night Out – Friendsgiving Edition** for its OSTP participants. The event gives parents a well-deserved evening off while youth enjoy games, activities, and Friendsgiving-themed fun.
- On November 21, Douglas MacArthur will host an exciting **Family Game Night**, with more than 50 families already RSVP'd. The evening will feature group games, table activities, arts and crafts, and light refreshments, offering families a fun opportunity to connect.
- On November 24, John Adams will hold its **Friendsgiving event**, bringing families together for relay races, family-friendly games, and a holiday craft to kick off the festive season.

- On December 13th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Mt. Vernon Recreation Center will host **Breakfast with Santa**. Participants will enjoy breakfast, photos, and crafts with Santa.
- On Saturday, December 14, at 2:00 p.m. at Alexandria City High School, the Sports Department will host its **Annual Youth Cheer Competition**. With 12 teams already confirmed, this year's event is set to be a lively and spirited showcase. Families, friends, and supporters are encouraged to attend, cheer loudly, and celebrate the hard work of our young athletes.
- On Friday, December 19, 2025, the Patrick Henry Center will host its **Senior Ugly Sweater Party** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will feature cookies and cocoa, bingo, crafts, line dancing, games, raffles, and an Ugly Sweater Contest.
- On Saturday, December 20, from 6–8:30 p.m., at the Minnie Howard Aquatics Facility, teens can dive into the **Teen Winter Pool Jam**—an indoor pool party with music, games, food, prizes, and plenty of water fun.

Special Features:

- In November, the **Minnie Howard Aquatics Facility**'s competition pool experienced a filtration issue. Aquatics Manager Bailey Stapleton and the team quickly coordinated warranty repairs with overnigheted parts and specialists, while Minnie Howard and Chinquapin adjusted schedules to accommodate programs, rentals, and the ACHS dive team. Minnie Howard also extended training-pool hours to minimize disruptions—great work by the RPCA Aquatics team for their fast, responsive support..



- The Rotary Club of Central Alexandria, founded in 2017, is a community-focused organization making an impact locally and beyond. Charlie Garlow (right) co-leads the club's PLANT team, now partnering with RPCA on a citywide tree well inventory. James "Smiley" Richardson (left) chairs Systems Planning and Analysis' GoGreen Employee Resource Group, which supports environmental volunteer efforts. Led by Park Planner Daniel Unkle, the team recently saved the City \$1,000 in contractor costs by planting 30 Gray Owl Juniper bushes in about an hour.



- Recreation Leader, **Ahmadzia Ahmadzia** developed a training to support staff in connecting with our Afghan community members.



Workshop Objectives

- Understand historical & cultural context of Afghan refugees.
- Recognize challenges and trauma refugees face.
- Learn culturally sensitive ways to provide support.
- Build confidence in fostering an inclusive environment.



Staff Updates:

- We're pleased to share that **Ron Rust** has accepted the part-time Recreation Leader II position at the William Ramsay Recreation Center. Ron has supported multiple centers during his time with the City, and in this role he will help expand programming through strong planning, facilitation, and exceptional customer service the RPCA way.
- **Katie Stohs** joins RPCA as Partnership and Development Manager with 25 years of public service experience, including leading governance and development work at USAID. A longtime Alexandria resident, she co-founded the local Blessings in a Backpack chapter and brings strong skills in partnerships, program management, and community engagement, including work with the U.S. Department of the Navy. She holds an MBA from UMGC and a bachelor's from the College of Charleston and enjoys reading, baking, running, and exploring Alexandria's parks.
- The Youth Activities Section welcomes **Ms. Jaylynn Rodriguez** as the new part-time Recreation Leader II at Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School. She brings valuable experience to the City of Alexandria and will strengthen the great team already in place.



- On October 11, OSTP held its annual School Year Staff Training at Lee Center, starting with a Breakfast Color Party and team escape-room challenges focused on communication, incident reporting, and teamwork. Staff learned new cooperative games, received lapel pins, and were recognized for their hard work. A highlight included a video of Program Coordinator Jametta Pettaway presenting “Youth Have Ideas Too! Let Them Lead” at the NRPA Conference. Eighty OSTP staff attended and earned four hours of youth development training.



City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2025

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: JACK BROWAND, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES *98*

ITEM 3.a.: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE
PARK SERVICES

PARK PLANNING & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Bethany Znidersic, Division Chief

Capital Improvement Project Summary Update

- November Park Planning & Capital Development Report, Park Services (*Attachment 2*)

Sites Currently Closed or Partially Closed to Public Use for Capital Projects

- Colasanto Park (active construction)
- Holmes Run Trail Site 1 (construction)
- Joseph Hensley Park (active construction restrooms only)
- Oronoco Bay Park boardwalk (closed for inspections and structural repairs)
- Four Mile Run Park Rectangle Field (turf renovation)
- Eugene Simpson Stadium Park (active construction)
- Four Mile Run Park – Commonwealth Ave. - Kayak Launch construction (partially closed)
- Fort Ward Playground (construction)
- Upcoming Closures:
 - Hoofts' Run Park between Oak and Walnut includes a tennis court - (winter/spring 2026 – storm sewer culvert replacement)

Fort Ward Park Playground Accessibility Construction

In early November, Stevens Construction Corp. mobilized on-site, started initial demolition, and began installation of erosion and sediment controls. The project is scheduled for completion in summer 2026. Major construction activities scheduled for the next three months involve removal and restoration of the existing play area, including reforestation plantings and installation of the stormwater management systems. Consistent with the park's rigorous ground disturbance protocols, disturbed areas will be monitored by Alexandria Archaeology staff. The project's primary goal is to create a more inclusive and accessible play experience for the community by relocating the playground uphill and closer to the main

circulation path, while protecting Fort Ward's sensitive cultural and natural resources. This relocation also provides a unique opportunity to restore and enhance the park's natural resources, including a reforestation component that will improve ecological connectivity and increase biodiversity within the park.



Habitat Expansion at Four Mile Run Park



On November 6, a small natural habitat expansion project kicked off with the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists, Four Mile Run Park Conservatory, and the Alexandria Beautification Commission. This project elicited significant coordination with internal staff. Two sections along the riparian buffer at Four Mile Run Park were selected to expand the natural area and will be known as habitat restoration areas. Methods used include natural regeneration and assisted restoration, with annual assessments to measure the success of each management strategy. This pilot program is aimed at

advancing the ecological restoration goals outlined in the Four Mile Run Master Plan that was approved by the City Council.

Powhatan Park Open House

The Powhatan Park Open House was held on Saturday, November 1, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Community members and nearby residents had the opportunity to engage with the Park Planning team, ask questions, and share feedback on the upcoming 2026–2028 park renovations. Representatives from the Office of the Arts were also on site to discuss the public art process and answer questions about the public art that will be incorporated into the park's new design.



RPCA Blower Equipment Transition



Alexandria City Council passed an ordinance banning gas-powered backpack blowers for City personnel effective May 26, 2026. In preparation for the transition, RPCA Park Service and Transportation and Environmental Services have been testing several vendors. On November 5, 2025, Greenworks came and did a demo and left blowers for the City of Alexandria to test.

Thorn Bush Removal at Powhatan Park

Park Services District 1 staff removed a large thorn bush that had been growing within the playground area of Powhatan Park. The bush was unsightly and disrupted safe and enjoyable play in the playground and park. The removal was successful, the park is open, and the site is now prepped for upcoming fence repairs necessary in response to recent vehicle damage to the existing perimeter fence.



Chinquapin Park Walking Trail Expansion

Park services completed trail maintenance this week to improve accessibility and expand walking space along the Chinquapin Forest trail. Over the summer, the trail had become overrun with vegetation and brush that was impeding pedestrian walking and hiking access. Visitors can now access the full length of the trail with ease. These ongoing maintenance improvements reflect the City's ongoing commitment to making public spaces accessible to everyone.



cc: Derek Claytor, Division Chief, Park Maintenance
Oscar Mendoza, Division Chief, Natural Resources
Tonja Walls, Division Chief, Park Support
Bethany Znidarsic, Division Chief Park Planning & Capital Development

Attachment: Active Projects Report

Park & Recreation Commission -Park Planning Report



November 20, 2025

Project	Project Description	Monthly Update	Status	Planning District	Target Completion Date	Assigned To
1 Powhatan Park Improvements (Phase 1)	Implementation of the Neighborhood Park Plan recommendations #3, #6, #7, #8 and #9. https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/recreation/parks/neighborhood-plan-powhatan.pdf	The Design Services task order has been awarded and the purchase order has been issued. The design consultant is working on the project design and stormwater management approach. Community engagement is planned for this fall and will be posted on the project webpage. https://www.alexandriava.gov/parks/project/powhatan-park-improvements-project	Design	District 1	01/25/27	Daniel Unkle
2 Old Town Pool Replacement Design	This project will include planning and design for the replacement of Old Town Pool.	Design for the pool replacement project is ongoing. A community meeting was held on September 16 to collect community input. The project will be presented at the Board of Architectural Review in December. Design will continue through summer 2026.	Design	District 1	08/31/26	Jack Browand
3 Lee Center Rear Parking Lot Repaving	This project will re-pave the rear parking lot to include milling, striping and curb and gutter repairs.	The scope of work has been developed for the contract and stakeholder input will be collected to minimize construction impacts. Work is anticipated to occur next spring.	Planning	District 1	06/01/25	Jesse Van Wick
4 Colasanto Interactive Fountain Construction	This project phase includes funding for construction of interactive fountain.	Construction is in progress with completion of the fountain vaults anticipated in November and final concrete work in late November into December. Utility coordination with Dominion Energy and Virginia American Water is ongoing. Please see the project website for more information: https://www.alexandriava.gov/rca/project/del-ray-gateway	Implementation	District 2	12/19/25	Bethany Znidersic
5 Four Mile Run Water Access	This Community Matching Fund project, with the Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation, will provide a new accessible water access (kayak launch) at the end of Commonwealth Ave.	Major construction is now complete, and structural inspections are ongoing. An initial walkthrough has been conducted, and a punch list has been created. The contractor is addressing these items, with the facility anticipated to open later this fall. The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of this community partnership project. New signage will also be installed outlining the rules and regulations for use of the kayak launch, which is designed for small, non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks.	Implementation	District 2	12/01/25	Judy Lo
6 Mount Jefferson Park Improvements	This project includes the City responsibilities per the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) conditions.	Double entry gates for the Raymond Avenue dog park entrance were completed. Invasive plant control will resume this fall to treat english ivy, tree of heaven and mulberry. Replacement plantings are on-going throughout the fall planting season.	Close-out	District 2	12/17/25	Judy Lo
7 Simpson Park Renovation Construction	Construction of the Simpson Park Renovation Project	The contractor is preparing to install the park retaining walls. Approvals have been received for utility work and those components will begin in the coming weeks. Please see the project website for more information regarding portions of the park that will be closed and project updates: https://www.alexandriava.gov/parks/project/eugene-simpson-athletic-diamond-fields-renovation-plan	Implementation	District 2	09/30/26	Bethany Znidersic
8 George Mason Recreational Space	This project will fund a full sized gym, dedicated RPCA storage and office space, as well as outdoor accessible restrooms for the new George Mason facility.	Alexandria City Public Schools is currently in the construction phase for the George Mason Elementary School Modernization Project. Please see the ACPS website for more information: https://gm.acps.k12.va.us/about/facility-modernization-maintenance	Design	District 2	08/03/26	Bethany Znidersic
9 Fort Ward Park ADA Parking	Upgrade existing parking to meet ADA requirements	Construction is complete and the ADA parking spaces, the access ramp, and signage are installed. Pavement striping and walkway handrails will be installed in late November.	Implementation	District 3	12/31/25	Daniel Unkle
10 Hensley Park Renovation Phase I	This project will renovate Hensley Park based on the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan concept (2014).	Construction is in progress. The lower field, parking lot, upper field, playground and batting cages are open for community use. The park restrooms will be complete in late 2025 and will be fenced for safety until complete. Please see the project website for more information: alexandriava.gov/rca/project/joseph-hensley-park-renovation	Implementation	District 3	12/31/25	Bethany Znidersic
11 Ewald Park Improvements	This project will implement the 2025 Park Improvement Plan recommendations	The Public Art Task Force finalized the public art workplan for Ewald Park. Procurement for the park design services was completed and design will begin this fall.	Design	District 3	02/16/27	Judy Lo
12 Fort Ward Park Playground Construction	This project will construct the approved playground renovation design	In early November, Stevens Construction Corp. mobilized on-site and started initial demolition and installation of erosion and sediment controls. The project is scheduled for completion by summer 2026. Major construction activities scheduled for the next three months include removal and restoration of the existing play area, including reforestation plantings and installation of the stormwater management systems, including drainage lines. Consistent with the park's rigorous ground disturbance protocols, disturbed areas will be monitored by Alexandria Archaeology staff. Construction updates will be available here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/parks/fort-ward-implementation-projects	Implementation	District 3	03/13/26	Judy Lo
13 Holmes Run Trail Repairs Construction	This project includes the restoration of four sections of Holmes Run Trail damaged and closed following July 2019 heavy rains.	Site 1, Dora Kelley Park, is under construction. The site access ramp was installed, trees removed and culvert repairs completed. Shoreline preparation to begin. Anticipated completion is October 2026. Site 2 (west I-395 bridge) and Site 3 (Ripley crossing) were opened to the public September 22.	Implementation	District 3	10/30/26	Jack Browand