

## MEMORANDUM

To: Alexandria Waterfront Commission Members  
From: Agnes Artemel, Chair, Committee on Bylaws, Mission, and Membership  
Re: Committee Report  
Date: March 11, 2026

Since our February 17 meeting, the three working groups of the committee have been refining their recommendations, based on oral comments received during the meeting and on written comments received after the meeting. The working group submissions included in the draft bylaws that follow are as presented, other than some formatting and ministerial changes.

The document is intended to serve as our first-ever set of written bylaws, after approval by the Alexandria Waterfront Commission and completion of any processes defined by the City Clerk and the City Council. The bylaws document reflects the Alexandria Waterfront Commission's current operating procedures and offers recommendations for your consideration on the Commission's mission, activities, and membership.

The document indicates where new material is proposed. In the Mission and Membership articles, the headings "Current" and "Proposed" make clear where there are recommendations for the Commission to discuss and vote on during its March meeting (proposed text is also highlighted in green). Once recommendations have been adopted (or not), the bylaws document will reflect the Commission's latest thinking and will be subject to a vote of final approval in April. The document will be sent to Commissioners in advance of the April meeting for redline comments.

I anticipate substantive discussion at next Tuesday's meeting on-

- ✓ **Mission statement (Article III, Section 1)**
- ✓ **Activities of the Commission (Article III, Section 2)**
- ✓ **Membership of the Commission, including ex officio role (Article IV, Section 1), and transition process to convert from current categories to future categories**
- ✓ **Election procedures (Article IX, Section 2), and in particular whether we should have a Nominating Committee and if so, how would it operate.**

The document also includes some items highlighted in yellow – these are items for which we don't have information yet (e.g. the number of the ordinance) or where there is a question for the Commission to discuss.

**Please review the material in advance of our March 17 meeting and be prepared to ask questions, suggest changes (on any provision of the bylaws, not just the sections noted above), and vote!**

## **BYLAWS OF THE ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION**

### **ARTICLE I – AUTHORITY**

The Commission was established under [Title 2, Chapter 4, Article E](#) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and is governed by the authority of the Alexandria City Council as a public agency.

### **ARTICLE II -- NAME**

The name of the Commission shall be the Alexandria Waterfront Commission. When appropriate, “AWC” or “the Commission” will be used.

### **ARTICLE III – MISSION, FUNCTIONS, POWERS, DUTIES**

#### **CURRENT**

Section 1: The function of the Commission shall be to advise City Council, the City Manager, and appropriate City departments on matters pertaining to:

- The use of the Alexandria waterfront by commercial and private vessels; and
- Implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

#### **PROPOSED**

##### **Section 1: Mission and Purpose**

The Alexandria Waterfront Commission serves as the principal advisory body to the City Council and City Manager on the stewardship, enhancement, and strategic management of the Alexandria waterfront. Acting from a citywide perspective, the Commission synthesizes varied public interests into a forward-looking vision. As one of our most valued public assets, the waterfront serves as a shared amenity for all Alexandrians and a vital economic driver. By advising on preservation, public artwork, visual and pedestrian amenities, recreation, events, and activities that attract visitors and investment to the city, the Commission helps the City ensure the waterfront remains a resilient, well-managed and accessible destination that reflects Alexandria’s unique character and serves the collective interests of the entire community.

The Commission shall coordinate its activities with those of other relevant public advisory bodies within the City.

For the purposes of these bylaws, the term “Alexandria waterfront” shall include the area within the boundaries of the Waterfront Small Area Plan and shall include all waters of the Potomac River located within the boundaries of the City and all piers, docks and other structures located on such waters that are or may be used for the docking of commercial or private vessels.

Section 2: Functions, Powers, Duties: The Commission shall accomplish its mission through a variety of activities and actions that include but are not limited to the following:

#### **PROPOSED**

## 1. Community & Broad Perspective

- **Community Perspective:** Understand the public's perspectives regarding waterfront planning by seeking the input of neighborhood/civic associations, community organizations, and community interest groups
- **Collective Synthesis:** Evaluate the waterfront from a holistic perspective to provide the City with well-rounded, recommendations.

## 2. Infrastructure & Environmental Resiliency

- **Flood Mitigation:** Review and provide recommendations on the development and implementation of waterfront flood mitigation projects.
- **Shoreline Assets:** Review and provide recommendations for improvements to waterfront infrastructure, including bulkheads, boardwalks, piers, the marina, and utilities.
- **Green Spaces:** Advise on the improvement and maintenance of parks, landscaping, and the preservation of the urban tree canopy.

## 3. Development & Cultural Stewardship

- **WSAP Alignment:** Review all planned development and redevelopment projects for alignment with the Waterfront Small Area Plan (WSAP) guidelines.
- **Special Projects:** Evaluate and provide guidance on redevelopment opportunities for cultural landmarks including the Torpedo Factory Art Center, Jones Point Lighthouse, Canal Center, the Mount Vernon Trail, and the African-American Heritage Trail.
- **Public Activation:** Review and provide recommendations for the integration of public artwork, history programs, and community events to maintain a vibrant cultural destination.

## 4. Multimodal Access & Maritime Management

- **Comprehensive Connectivity:** Recommend initiatives that would improve accessibility to the waterfront by residents and visitors from the land and the water.
- **Vessel Management:** Advise on the management of commercial and private vessels to optimize harbor use.
- **Non-Motorized Access:** Advocate for expanded access for small watercraft (kayaks, canoes, paddleboards) from Jones Point to Daingerfield Island.

## 5. Safety & Fiscal Oversight

- **Public Safety:** Review and make recommendations regarding measures that would promote safety along the waterfront.

- **Fiscal Guidance:** Provide strategic recommendations for City capital improvement budgets, operating budgets, and funding priorities.

## ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

### CURRENT

Section 1: The Alexandria Waterfront Commission shall consist of 21 members to be appointed by the City Council. The composition of the Commission shall be as described in [Title 2, Chapter 4, Article E](#) of the City Code.

### PROPOSED

Section 1: The Alexandria Waterfront Commission shall consist of 13 voting members and 5 ex officio members to be appointed by the City Council. The composition of the Commission shall be as described in [Title 2, Chapter 4, Article E](#) of the City Code.

Current Membership	Proposed Membership
<i>Representatives of Other City Bodies</i>	
City Council Member	City Council Member <i>(ex officio?)</i>
Planning Commission	Planning Commission ???
Visit Alexandria	Visit Alexandria <i>(ex officio)</i>
Park & Recreation Commission	Park & Recreation Commission
Commission for the Arts	Commission for the Arts <i>(ex officio)</i>
Archaeological Commission	
Environmental Policy Commission	Environmental Policy Commission <i>(ex officio)</i>
<i>Representatives of Other Organizations</i>	
Alexandria Chamber of Commerce	Alexandria Chamber of Commerce <i>(ex officio)</i>
	Retail/Restaurant East of Washington
	Commercial Building Owner East of Washington
Marina Pleasure Boat Owner	Pleasure Boat Lease Holder at Alexandria Marina
Alexandria Seaport Foundation	Maritime-Related Nonprofit East of Washington
Founders Park Community Association	
Old Town Civic Association	Old Town Civic Association
Historic Alexandria Foundation	Historic Alexandria Foundation <i>(ex officio)</i>

<i>Citizens</i>	
Park Planning District I	
Park Planning District II	
Park Planning District III	
Citizen East of Washington/South of King	Citizen East of Washington/South of King
Citizen East of Washington/North of King	Citizen East of Washington/North of King
Citizen East of Washington/North of Pendleton	Citizen East of Washington/North of Pendleton
Commissioner at Large	2 Citizens from Any other Area of Alexandria

Ex officio participants do not have voting authority but would have a speaking segment on the agenda.

Section 2: Members of the Commission shall be appointed in the manner prescribed in [Title 2, Chapter 4, Article A of the City Code](#). Members who are representatives of a City board or commission or other organization shall be nominated by that organization and confirmed by City Council. These members should keep the AWC apprised of matters discussed by their primary organization that are relevant to the mission of the AWC. Members shall serve for a term of three years. A member who is a representative of an organization shall cease to be a member at such time as s/he shall cease to be a member in good standing of the organization for which s/he serves as representative.

Section 3: Resignations: When a commissioner deems it necessary to terminate their participation in the AWC, s/he shall tender a letter of resignation in writing to the City Clerk, with a copy to the Chair.

#### **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

Section 1: Meetings of the Commission shall generally be held on the third Tuesday of each month beginning at 7:30 am. There will generally be 10 regular meetings each year. In the event of inclement weather, the AWC will follow the Alexandria City Government closing and delay schedule or meet virtually. The Commission shall follow the [Electronic Participation Policy for Remote Participation and All-Virtual Public Meetings](#), which allows no more than two meetings or 25% of meetings held per calendar year, whichever is greater, to be held virtually. The Commission shall not hold consecutive all-virtual meetings.

The Chair or designee shall provide each Commission member by email in advance of each meeting of the Commission the meeting agenda and available documentation.

Section 2: Members of the Commission are required to attend at least 75% of the regular monthly meetings. Remote participation may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair when the member is unable to attend due to a personal matter, a medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance, or when the member is more than 20 miles from the meeting location. Attendance at the Commission meetings will be reported to the City Council as required by City ordinances and regulations and in conjunction with the submittal of the AWC Annual Report. As a courtesy, the Chair will reach out to members who have missed two meetings to remind them of the policy and to ascertain if there were

mitigating circumstances related to the absence. Proxies are not allowed for attendance, nor for conducting any Commission action.

Section 3: A quorum of a majority of the voting non-vacant seats on the Commission shall be required for the full Commission to transact business.

Section 4: Written minutes shall be taken for all public meetings.

Section 5: All meetings of the Commission and its committees shall be open to the public to the full extent required by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Commission's agenda, minutes and bylaws shall be made available to the public.

Section 6: Special meetings may be called by the Chair, or at the written request of five members of the Commission to the Chair.

Section 7: The public has a statutory right to access to AWC meetings, including meetings and work sessions during which no votes are cast or any decisions made. FOIA open meeting requirements must be met when more than two AWC Commissioners get together formally or informally, in person or electronically and public business is discussed or transacted.

Section 8: The WC welcomes public participation during its meetings, as time permits. At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may be invited to speak on topics covered by the Commission agenda following Commission member and City staff discussion of the topic, but prior to Commission action on any motions. At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may provide comments or ask questions on an issue within the purview of the Commission that is not included on the agenda for that meeting during the agenda's last discussion item. A member of the public must limit his or her comments and questions to no more than 3 minutes, except when the Chair permits a longer speaking time.

#### **ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

The Commission may establish committees as necessary to carry out its mission, functions, powers and duties. Chairs of the committees will be determined by the AWC Chair.

The Chair may establish a task force to collectively research and report on a specific, time-limited issue or project. A task force will sunset after its report is issued to the AWC.

#### **ARTICLE VII – CALENDAR**

The Commission may develop an annual calendar of meetings, activities, etc., at the end of each fiscal year to guide it for the next fiscal year.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – REPRESENTATION**

Representation on behalf of the Commission shall only be done by the Chair, Vice Chair, or designee(s) as determined by a majority vote of the Commission members.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – ANNUAL REPORT**

The Commission shall provide the City, by the deadline established by the City Clerk, an annual report detailing the activities and accomplishments of the Commission during the year.

## **ARTICLE IX – DUTIES AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Section 1: The Chair is responsible for setting the agenda, running the meetings, assigning committees or Commission tasks as needed, and general leadership of the Commission.

The Vice Chair serves in the Chair's absence if necessary and provides counsel to Chair.

Section 2: In April of each year the Chair shall ask for nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair and ascertain the willingness of those nominated to serve. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected at the May Commission meeting. Voting shall be by a show of hands.

Section 3: Successful candidates for the officer positions shall be announced immediately and shall assume their duties on the first day of the fiscal year.

## **ARTICLE X – COMMISSION AND OFFICER VACANCIES**

Section 1: Should a position or positions on the Commission become vacant for any reason, the City Clerk's office shall advertise the open position(s).

Section 2: Should the Chair position become vacant, or the Chair be unable to perform the duties of office, the Vice Chair shall serve in that capacity until the end of term or until the Chair is able to resume his/her duties or office.

Section 3: Should the Vice Chair position become vacant or the Vice Chair be unable to perform the duties of office, the Chair shall canvas the Commission members to identify a member or members willing to temporarily serve in that capacity until the end of term or until the Vice Chair is able to resume his/her duties of office.

## **ARTICLE XI – AWARDS**

The Commission has the authority to recognize the contributions of the public (including individuals, groups and organizations) in support of the Alexandria waterfront and to create new awards.

## **ARTICLE XII -- AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS**

The AWC bylaws should be reviewed periodically to determine if changes are required.

Any proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be submitted at the regular monthly meeting preceding the meeting at which the vote to approve the amendment(s) takes place.

## **ARTICLE XII – CITY STAFF LIAISON**

The City Staff Liaison to the Commission shall be a designee from the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs. (or designee of City Manager)

Adopted by: The Alexandria Waterfront Commission, City of Alexandria, on [date]

ATTEST:

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Chair

Article III Section 1 and Article IV Section 1 take effect only upon City Council approval of revisions to the City Ordinance setting forth the Commission's mission and membership.