

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 20, 2012

TO: SHERYL GORSUCH, CHAIR, ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD
JOHN KOMOROSKE, CHAIR, PLANNING COMMISSION
VINCE LaPOINTE, CHAIR, ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMISSION
PETER PENNINGTON, CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMISSION
BERNIE SCHULZ, CHAIR, HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

FROM: JUDY-GUSE NORITAKE, CHAIR, PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
ERIC WAGNER, PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: **POLICIES AND PLANNING FOR THE CONTINUED PROTECTION OF THE CITY'S OPEN SPACE**

Ten years ago a group of dedicated citizens and city staff brought forward an innovative plan to protect and preserve Open Space in the City of Alexandria. In 2003 this Open Space Master Plan was adopted by the City Council in conjunction with a dedicated open space fund. This group of citizens comprised the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC), and included representation from the Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Environmental Policy Commission, Archeological Commission, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT), and several citizen members. The Open Space Advisory Group succeeded the OSSC, adding members from the Beautification and Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. Since that time, City staff has worked with citizens, property owners, developers and other interested parties to achieve the 15 goals set forth in the plan, including the acquisition of valuable open space acreage identified in the planning process.

In order to continue the successful implementation of the Open Space Master Plan, and in response to a number of recent policy issues and questions related to open space, the Alexandria Park and Recreation and Planning Commissions, in partnership with the other involved groups and City staff, propose to hold a Stakeholder Round Table on April 11, 2012 to be followed by a public Open Space Summit 4-6 weeks later. The Stakeholder Round Table will include representation from those commissions and other citizens involved in the original development

and implementation of the Open Space Master Plan, as well as representation from NVCT and the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS).

By means of this memo, we would like to invite your commission or board to participate in the April 11 Stakeholder Round Table at 6:30 PM (location to be determined).

Please send a recommendation for a representative who will actively participate in the sessions and RSVP to Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator with the City at:

laura.durham@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.5493.

For more information about the two meetings, an outline of these two sessions and a proposed timeline is provided below.

ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE STAKEHOLDER ROUND TABLE – APRIL 2012

A 2-3 hour evening session is proposed for this invitation only session. Key stakeholders from the Park and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Environmental Policy Commission, Archaeological Commission, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT), and past citizen members of the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) are invited, with staff from associated departments and the Alexandria City Public School Board also asked to participate. In order to make best use of the group's time, the previous Co-Chairs of the OSSC, Judy Noritake and Eric Wagner, will facilitate the discussion.

The goal of this round table session is to assess the City's achievements under the Open Space Master Plan over its first decade and to identify important policy issues emerging as we move forward with the Plan into the next decade; to produce a list of these policy issues for stakeholders to discuss with their respective boards & commissions; and to commit to ongoing discussion on these issues in advance of the larger public Open Space Summit. Policy issues to be considered include, but are not limited to the following:

- Meeting open space requirements on newly developed properties through zoning;
- Value and contribution of green roofs, roof top "open space", and other constructed open space;
- Use of the Open Space Fund (OSF) and protection of properties bought with OSF monies;
- Voluntary conservation easements on private properties, including institutional properties;
- Protection of open space on public lands, including ACPS properties;
- Impact of "trade-offs" (affordable housing, new public facilities, transportation/roadways, etc.);
- Providing and requiring open space through Small Area Planning;
- Review of the Open Space Master Plan's fifteen goals;
- Alternative Open Space Funding streams; and

- Update of inventory of lands for open space.

Following the Stakeholder Round Table, attendees are asked to report back to their respective groups, pursue a continued dialogue on these issues, obtain feedback and prepare position statements. Staff will continue to explore best practices related to open space policy, especially from nearby and/or similar jurisdictions.

ALEXANDRIA PUBLIC OPEN SPACE SUMMIT – SPRING 2012

In the spring of 2012, four to six weeks out from the Stakeholder meeting, a public Open Space Summit will be held that will include briefings from the stakeholders, a presentation on best practices, and a facilitated discussion on next steps and appropriate open space policies for the City of Alexandria.