

Summary Meeting Notes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT PLAN WORK GROUP
SEPTEMBER 7, 2011 Meeting
City Hall
8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

MEMBERS - Present

Christopher Ballard, At-Large Member. Principal at McWilliams/Ballard.

Bert Ely (By conference call), At-Large Member. Head, Ely and Company; Board member, Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan (CAAWP) and Old Town Civic Association.

Mindy Lyle, At-Large Member. Vice President Client Development, Haley & Aldrich, Inc.; and President, Cameron Station Homeowners Association.

Nathan Macek, Waterfront Committee Chair and Representative, and Transportation Consultant.

David Olinger, Old Town Civic Association Representative. Realtor; and Senior Foreign Service Officer (Ret.) with a background in urban planning.

Elliot Rhodeside, At-Large Member. Principal, Rhodeside & Harwell, a firm offering urban planning and landscape design with a focus on revitalization and sustainability.

Councilman Paul Smedberg, Non-voting City Council representative and Work Group Convener.

Lt. Gen Bob Wood, (USA, Ret.). At-Large Member. Alexandria resident and business owner.

FACILITATOR - Sherry Schiller, Ph.D., (President, Schiller Center)

CITY STAFF:

James Banks, City Attorney; **Rich Baier**, Director, T&ES; **Faroll Hamer**, Director, Planning & Zoning (P&Z); **James Spengler**, Director, RPCA; **Joanna Anderson**, Assistant City Attorney; **Emily Baker**, City Engineer; **Sandra Marks**, Division Chief for Transportation Planning, T&ES; **Karl Moritz**, Deputy Director, P&Z ; **Barbara Ross**, Deputy Director, P&Z; **Tom Canfield**, City Architect, P&Z; **Al Cox**, Historic Preservation Manager, P&Z; **Nancy Williams**, Principal Planner, P&Z; **Ben Aiken**, Urban Planner, P&Z; **Faye Dastgheib**, Parking Planner, T&ES; **Brian Rahal**, Engineer, T&ES; **Sharon Annear**, Aide to Councilwoman Alicia Hughes; **Andrea Blackford**, City Communications Officer; **Jennifer Harris**, City Communications Officer.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES (Who signed-in):

Engin Artemel, **Gina Baum**, **Katy Cannady**, **Deena DeMontigny**, **Rick Dorman**; **Linda Hafer**, **Michael Hobbs**, **Tony Kupersmith**; **Janice Magnuson**; **Skip Maginnes**; **Sandy Northrop**; **Kathryn Papp**, **Ann Shack**, **Van Van Fleet**; **Boyd Walker**; **Christa Watters**; **Margaret Wood**; **Mike Young**; **Patricia Ryan Branca**.

I. OPENING

A. Welcome and Introductions – Councilman Smedberg convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. and the Waterfront Plan Work Group (Work Group) introduced themselves. Mr. Smedberg advised he would need to leave early due to an unexpected change in his flight departure time, apologizing for the unavoidable change but noting that he would review the tape and follow-up with the facilitator. Mr. Ely participated by conference call.

GenOn site - Mr. Smedberg commented on the City's announcement the previous week that the GenOn coal-fired power plant is likely to end operations within the next year or two. He indicated he does not believe the Waterfront Plan should be deferred to accommodate the GenOn planning process for these reasons: (1) It is not certain that the plant will close, but if it does it will require substantial and long remediation; (2) the site is quite a distance away from the waterfront core planning area in the south, noting existing pressure to redevelop the remaining development sites in the core area and also the opportunity to bring amenities to the area; (3) the Clean Skies plan raises a number of concerns: (a) Clean Skies -- a natural gas industry-funded organization -- does not own the site; and (b) Clean Skies has not worked with the community or the City; and (4) at the urging of the City Council, the Waterfront Plan includes placeholder language regarding future redevelopment of the GenOn site.

Discussion included several members citing the size of the GenOn site and a desire to hear from Clean Skies or Pepco to explore their intentions and how those intentions might affect the existing waterfront planning process; others members suggested moving forward with the Work Group's charge of focusing on the core waterfront area and noting that GenOn will be its own planning process. It was noted by the City that any future process relating to the GenOn site would be community-based.

- **Follow-Up:** Mr. Smedberg asked P&Z to email the Work Group the Plan's placeholder paragraph regarding the GenOn site.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS - Outcomes

A. August 10, 2011 Meeting Notes Approval - With Mr. Olinger and Mr. Rhodeside abstaining, the notes were approved by consensus with these additions on page 3: (Section II-a) language that the Work Group should discuss how to incorporate public comment into its final report, and (Section III B) clarifying language under the second bullet stating the idea was raised regarding a committee chairman. The WPWG accepted the proposed changes.

B. Update on Work Group Meeting Schedule with Road Map Topics

- The September 28 meeting will be rescheduled to avoid a conflict with Rosh Hashanah.
- A request was made to add environmental issues to the agenda for an upcoming meeting and staff concurred.
- An inquiry as to whether settlement agreements will be discussed and staff indicated they will be covered in the private realm discussions.

C. Comment Board Summary – It was noted that the Comment Board summary for the period August 10-28 has been included in today’s meeting packet.

D. Update on Community Meeting scheduled for September 14, 2011

- Mr. Smedberg reported that almost all organizations invited to participate in the public hearing have responded.
- Some members were concerned that the meeting’s posted 8:30 p.m. end time might be insufficient to allow all members of the public to offer comments who wished to do so. Staff indicated that the room could remain available beyond 8:30 p.m. (the facility hours extend until 9:00 pm). There was some discussion of whether the 5 minutes planned for invited organizations’ statements might cut to 3 minutes to offer more time for individual comments. No change was made.

E. Strategic Questions for each Road Map Topic – It was noted that staff has been asked to identify strategic issues for each topic area, based on the City Council’s charge to the Work Group, and to create a set of corresponding strategic statements for review by WPWG as each topic is discussed.

III. ROAD MAP – Public Realm I

A. PARKING

○ **Briefing - Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, P&Z**

Mr. Moritz provided an overview of the parking recommendations contained in the detailed *Old Town Parking Study* (2010) and those generated by the Old Town Parking Work Group in fall 2010. He mentioned that the several of the recommendations are currently already underway such as greater enforcement, new meters, wayfinding and increased trolley service, while others that will help with the effort to guide more cars into garages would occur through a Parking Implementation Plan to be initiated following plan adoption. He noted the analysis, undertaken by the *Old Town Parking Study* was very detailed and indicates that the parking problem is not one of supply, but one of parking management, with the challenge being how best to encourage drivers to utilize fully all available parking, especially garage parking.

- **Questions and Answers Regarding Parking** – A Series of questions were raised and addressed during the presentation with a request for additional information from staff relative the following:
 - **P&Z to provide information from AEDP regarding its study results relative the impact of increased trolley services on Upper King Street businesses.** *The 2009 King Street Retail Study notes that a small number of Upper King Street businesses reported decreased sales in the summer of 2008, which is the summer after the Trolley began operating. Overall, however, the study attributed to the Trolley a “significant” increase in sales due to the Trolley, based both on sales data as well as interviews with Trolley riders. A separate Trolley riders survey found that 76% of non-resident riders of the Trolley said that it increased the number of restaurants and businesses they visited and 24% said they would not have made the trip to Old Town if not for the Trolley. There was strong support for the increased trolley service that went into effect this summer.*
 - **P&Z to share estimates of parking demand likely to be generated by alternative plan options, including how the parking ratio might vary with the uses.** *Parking demand for alternative uses: The “parks and museums” alternative includes a performing arts center, a new maritime museum, an expanded Archaeology Museum and History Center (located in existing historic warehouses on South Union Street), expanded space for the Art League and Seaport Foundation, and a civic use for the small historic warehouse on the Robinson South property. The required parking rate for a performing arts center is based on the size of the auditorium with 1 parking space required for every 4 seats (a 500-seat theater would require 125 spaces). The standard requirement for museums is 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Parking for schools is based on seats (1 space for every two seats). The main parks and museums alternative presented to the City Council included an 87,000-square foot performing arts center (which suggests a theater in the 500-seat range, which is average for a “legitimate drama” theater); about 56,000 square feet for the Art League and Seaport Foundation, and about 42,000 square feet for museums and the History Center. (Staff also discussed smaller alternatives).*
 - **Concern expressed over the parking ratio used for the RTS marina. More information requested.** *As staff noted in our presentation, the Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) marina parking generation rate was based on one sample site in Seattle (consisting of 1,753 berths*

with 36,000 square feet of restaurant and retail spaces). That rate is 0.27 spaces per slip on weekdays and 0.35 spaces per slip on weekends. To better inform the Waterfront planning process, staff reviewed parking studies for other marinas –a particularly helpful one was conducted for a project in Vancouver because it included additional marina parking counts and developed parking generation rates for marinas (separate from retail and restaurants). Those rates are 0.21 spaces per slip on weekdays and 0.25 spaces per slip on weekends. Staff used those rates to estimate parking demand for the proposed marina at Robinson Terminal South. For that parking analysis, the assumed marina size was 112 slips, which is a 50-slip net increase. Applying the parking rates to the 50-slip net increase results in an estimated increased parking demand of 11-13 parking spaces. The Waterfront Plan Work Group asked if there would be room on the site for parking spaces for the entire marina and there would be. For the full marina, these rates suggest that 28 parking places would be needed. Staff conducted a detailed analysis of the parking on Robinson Terminal South and found there is room on one underground level to provide parking for the entire proposed development program including spaces for the marina. Staff also contacted the Annapolis Harbor Master who noted that they do not provide any dedicated parking spaces for their patrons, but there are approximately 1000 metered public parking spaces within 500 yards of the marina. Staff talked to the Sealand Marina & Yachting Center in Miami, FL. They, too, do not provide any designated parking spaces for boaters. All patrons park their vehicles in privately owned but publicly available parking facilities for a fee (e.g., church and hotel’s parking lots).

B. Statements Approved - Parking

- The Work Group approved, with an understanding they can later be fine-tuned, the following placeholder report statements as reflecting principles it recommends be reflected in a plan.
 - **P-1: Surface parking lots will be discouraged along the water’s edge in favor of parks, plazas, and public spaces.**
Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, and Ely.
Note: Mr. Ely agreed with the qualification that the ODBC parking lot should stay where it is and voiced concern about the neighborhood impact of eliminating the parking lot across from Chadwick’s.
 - **P-2: New development will provide the parking it needs onsite and below grade.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

Note: Mr. Ely agreed after P&Z confirmed that it would be the developer's responsibility to address situations where the water table makes constructing underground parking expensive.

- **P- 3: City will implement initiatives to encourage visitors to park in both public and privately-owned garages, including making it easier for visitors to find garages.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

- **P-4: City will take steps to manage parking garage capacity – through valet parking programs, technology, and by opening private garages – when monitoring shows that garage use is approaching capacity.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

- **P-5: Upon adoption of a plan, the City will use a Stakeholder Group to help implement the plan's parking recommendations, including evaluating increased residential parking protections.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard.

Note: Mr. Ely agreed with the qualification that the City should not rely only on resident-only parking restrictions.

- **P- 6: The City will make parking outside the core area more desirable and accessible through steps like pricing differentials, shuttle service, added signage, and technology applications.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

Additional Comments: Members noted the importance of addressing handicap parking, perhaps via a set parking fee at all garages. Also, the Work Group will return to the parking analysis as needed, especially as it relates to the private realm and each of the four Plan Alternatives, recognizing that adding parks and public amenities would also have an impact on demand for parking.

C. Circulation and Traffic

○ Briefing – Sandra Marks, T&ES Division Chief, Planning

- Reviewed the *2010 Traffic Analysis* undertaken for the Waterfront Plan and its key recommendations pertaining to: (a) vehicular circulation, such as improving wayfinding and optimizing signals on Washington Street; (b) transit circulation, such as creating a multi-modal hub at the waterfront and increasing trolley service/hours; (c) pedestrian circulation, such as closing the unit block of King Street and increasing pedestrian safety; (d) bicycle circulation, such as increasing safety and facilities; and (e) water-based circulation, such as moving and expanding taxi slips to a more visual and accessible location.
- It was noted that for the *Traffic Analysis* six signalized intersections were studied - First St, Cameron, Prince, King, Duke, and Franklin – plus non-signalized

intersections, with special attention to the high volume of peak hours and pedestrian traffic in the core area.

- **Work Group Comments, Questions & Answers Regarding Traffic and Circulation** - A series of questions were raised and addressed during the presentation with a request for additional information from staff relative the following:

- **Consideration should be given to adding multiple water taxi stops, perhaps in north and central area, along with the south.** *Multiple stops were discussed during the planning process and, although not explicitly referenced in the plan, are in no way precluded by the Plan. Staff agrees that this is a good idea (but subject to market conditions) that can be explored in the next phase when marina engineering and more detailed design activities are undertaken.*
- **Consideration should be given to more north-south bus and trolley service at the waterfront and it was requested that it be confirmed whether DASH service currently includes stops along the actual waterfront or near the waterfront.** *There are six Alexandria DASH bus routes that provide regular and reliable east-west and north-south service through the waterfront planning area and including stops at the Braddock and/or King Street Metro Stations. Moreover, WMATA provides regional bus services to the greater Alexandria, Fairfax and Arlington county areas as well as to the District of Columbia, supplementing the Metro which also provides service to those areas.*

Shuttles or an expansion of the trolley service can be explored if and when development and tourism supports its operation, and may be part of a route for connecting the waterfront to the Braddock Road Metro station, the future Potomac Yard development and/or Del Ray, provided it can be done without harm to existing neighborhoods. Until that time, existing bus transit service appears adequate to serve the north-south routes near the waterfront and can be enhanced during special events to garages outside the core Plan area.

- **Consideration should be given to exploring smaller delivery trucks for Old Town.** *Exploring the potential for encouraging or requiring smaller delivery trucks in Old Town is a good idea. Staff suggests that this is an implementation activity and could be combined with the study of Union Street recommended by members of the Work Group.*
- **Bikesharing should be explored for the Metro stations.** *The City is exploring a pilot bike sharing program that would link the King Street Metro to the water.*

- **Ways to further reduce pedestrian/bicycle/car crashes of any degree should be identified.** *Pages 109-110 of the Plan outlines recommendations for reducing pedestrian/bicycle/vehicular congestion and conflicts:*

Pedestrian Congestion Recommendations:

- 4.9: *To improve pedestrian safety in general and, in particular, between pedestrians and bicyclists and pedestrians and vehicles, the City regularly improves sidewalks, signs and markings, and installs ADA accessible ramps and encourages the use of City-designated bicycle routes by cyclists. Further, the Plan recommends pedestrian safety improvements at high conflict intersections, with specific locations identified in Figure 37: Crash Map. In terms of pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, crash analysis shows that injuries tend to be minor because of the slow speeds occurring at the conflict intersections reflected in Figure 37.*

Pedestrian Safety Recommendations:

- 4.10: *Add pedestrian facilities including pedestrian signals where appropriate and accessible curb-ramps where missing.*
- 4.11: *Implement pedestrian safety improvements at high-conflict intersections, with specific locations depicted in Figure 37: Crash Map.*
- 4.12: *Accessible pedestrian infrastructure should be incorporated into new pedestrian facilities and the current practice of inclusion of the Commission on Persons with Disabilities at 30% design should be continued in the design of public infrastructure, public art and historic interpretation to make sure that persons who are vision, hearing and mobility impaired have full access to interior and exterior public resources, including the marina. Such access plans need to be coordinated with federal boat standards.*

○ **Statements Approved - Traffic and Circulation**

- **T-1: A plan will improve options and the safety of people arriving at the waterfront by means other than the automobile, especially by trolley, by boat, by bike and on foot.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

Abstained: Olinger.

Note: Mr. Ely agreed with a statement regarding the importance of stricter enforcement of traffic regulations for bicyclists.

- **T-2: A plan will keep drivers away from the most congested streets and intersections (such as King and Union Streets) and from circling neighborhoods by directing them to “interceptor” parking locations (garages and valet stations).**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Ely, Macek, Lyle, Ballard.

Abstained: Olinger.

- **T-3: A plan will further address traffic congestion by exploring a variety of solutions – such as closing the unit block of King Street to vehicular traffic - that promote safety and activity.**

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Ely, Macek, Lyle, Ballard.

Abstained: Olinger.

- **T-4: Conduct a study of traffic and circulation on Union Street, including how it functions for users of all modes of travel.**

- **Agreed:** Rhodeside, Wood, Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard, Ely.

Disagreed:

- **Proposed amendment to Statement 4: Add Gibbons Street to Statement 4.**

- Failed on a 3-4 vote:

Agreed: Rhodeside, Wood, Ely.

Disagreed: Olinger, Macek, Lyle, Ballard.

Additional Comments: – Those opposing adding Gibbon Street to this statement noted, among other issues, that Gibbon Street is more of a regional commuting issue than a waterfront issue; also, it is not the only additional street traffic that might be affected by a plan.

Mr. Olinger noted that while he voted yes to several of these, there are some where he questions whether they have been addressed in the Waterfront Plan. Also, Mr. Olinger abstained on several votes because he ‘had difficulty’ with the process of drafting what he considered overly generic placeholder statements for the report

D. FLOOD MITIGATION – WRAP-UP

1. In preparation for the Work Group’s consideration of flood mitigation placeholder statements at the next meeting, staff will send members (a) the Q&A included in Work Group’s August 10 meeting notes; and (b) draft flood mitigation statements to consider. Mr. Olinger also asked for the information which he discussed with Emily

Baker in a meeting. She subsequently indicated that she will provide the information to the Work Group verbally.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret WOOD (Resident) – Asked to clarify how the City will enforce the parking ratios at hotels? Staff responded by saying that today’s discussion did not go into that level of detail but instead mainly related to placing parking onsite and below ground.

Tony KUPERSMITH (Resident) - Encouraged a comprehensive traffic analysis, underscoring concern about the capacity of King Street.

Van VAN FLEET (Resident) - Suggested City Council delay the plan until the potential impact of closing the GenOn plant can be incorporated so that Clean Skies does not dictate what goes on the site; expanding the number of meetings to allow a more detailed issue review; a full traffic analysis of all transportation modes at the waterfront and more police traffic control; and enforcement of bicycle traffic regulations.

Gina BAUM (Resident) - Inquired as to whether public comments at meetings can be restricted to Agenda topics.

Katy CANNADY (Rosemont Resident) – Indicated streets that feed into the waterfront need to be part of any waterfront traffic circulation study; and expressed concern over whether “free” traffic analyses by developers for individual development sites are sufficient and asked that the City be very careful about potential impacts of interceptor parking on neighborhoods.

Denna DEMONTIGNY (Resident) - Expressed concern over traffic congestion and wanted more information about impacts of delivery trucks, hotels, and the financial viability of underground parking for hotels. Staff indicated that underground parking is required under the Plan and the Lorien and the Monaco have 100 percent underground parking.

Boyd WALKER (Co-Chair of Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan) - Expressed concern over whether the proposed density can be absorbed within the core 8-block area; suggested a pedestrian zone for lower King Street; indicated there is insufficient police enforcement of traffic regulations for all modes of transit at the waterfront; indicated that the potential traffic impact of parks and museum options was not discussed.

V. PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETINGS

A. Community Meeting: Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 6:00 – 8:30 PM

- To be held at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.
- In response to Members concerns that an 8:30 PM end-time might not offer enough time to hear all speakers, staff advised that the meeting space would be available beyond 8:30 PM as needed.

B. Regular Meeting: Wednesday, September 21, 2011, 8:00 – 11:00 AM

- In preparation for the wrap-up of Flood Mitigation, the following information will be sent to WPWG:
 - Q & A included in the August 10 WPWG Meeting Notes

- Draft placeholder statements on flood mitigation.

C. Meeting Schedule:

- The September 28 public meeting will be rescheduled due to a conflict with Rosh Hashanah.