

**Approved Summary Meeting Notes**  
**ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT PLAN WORK GROUP**  
**Community Forum**  
**September 14, 2011**  
**Mt. Vernon Recreation Center**  
**6:30 PM – 9:15 PM**

**MEMBERS - Present**

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

**Bert Ely**, 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.

**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.

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

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

**CITY STAFF:**

**Faroll Hamer**, Director, P&Z; **James Banks**, City Attorney; **Karl Moritz**, Deputy Director, P&Z; **Barbara Ross**, Deputy Director, P&Z; **Tom Canfield**, City Architect, P&Z; **Nancy Williams**, Principal Planner, P&Z; **Ben Aiken**, Urban Planner, P&Z; **Jack Browand**, Deputy Director, RP&CA

**I. OPENING**

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

- Councilmember Smedberg called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**B. Old Business**

- WPWG members to receive draft September 7 draft Meeting Notes the next day.
- WPWG's September 28 West End community meeting at Cameron Station Community Center had been tentatively rescheduled for October 19. All WPWG meetings take place on Wednesday.
- Mr. Smedberg reviewed the City Council resolution authorizing the WPWG and its mission, which includes balancing the community's many interests and aspects. The Community Forum's purpose was to provide WPWG members the opportunity to hear public comments on all aspects of the Waterfront Plan.

- The first group of speakers, with five-minute time limits, were larger organizations involved in the waterfront planning process over time and who had been invited to address the forum.
- The second group of speakers, with three-minute time limits, included any additional City groups and individuals wishing to speak.
- WPWG members introduced themselves.

### **C. Rules of Engagement**

- Though the Rec Center closing time was 9 p.m., WPWG's planned to hear as many speakers as possible, scheduled and unscheduled speakers
- Council Member Smedberg would recognize each speaker; speakers were asked to identify themselves with either their organization or their address. Audience members were expected to be respectful of all speakers with no approving or disapproving reactions to speakers' remarks.
- A member indicated he would move to schedule an additional meeting if there were not enough time to hear from all the evening's speakers.

## **II. GROUP 1 – ORGANIZATIONS**

### **1. Alexandria Planning Commission – H. Stewart Dunn, Jr.**

- The Planning commission supports the Plan, as indicated by its 6-1 vote for approval; noted that all plans can be improved but would like to move the process forward, citing the Plan's vision for the waterfront that is a balance between parks and private development.

### **2. Alexandria Commission for the Arts - Matthew Harwood**

- Supports the Plan concept and its many arts-related community benefits; citing Plan's inclusion of the great majority of the recommendations of the Alexandria Waterfront Public Art proposal
- Urged an implementation plan that includes direct funding of at least one Art Walk element, and that the arts community stakeholders continue to be involved in the process as it moves forward.
- Stressed the importance of a permanent location for the Art League

### **2. Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC) - James McCall**

- Reviewed AAC involvement in the planning process, including its writing of the Waterfront History Plan, and recommended that the Plan's arts and history components be formally unified.
- Urged that funding for cultural elements be further studied and that the implementation for cultural elements not be wholly dependent upon economic viability.
- Supported integrating the GenOn site into the Waterfront Plan.

### **3. Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) - Val Hawkins, (President and CEO)**

- Supports the Plan and its prompt approval, and opposes delaying the Plan until GenOn site possibilities can be incorporated into it.
- Explained AEDP is a public-private partnership funded by the City but governed by an independent board which has, over time, supported and opposed City positions based on AEDP's own assessments of economic development issues affecting the City.
- Cited as an important benefit of a Waterfront Plan is providing certainty to stakeholders with respect to redevelopment; urged the waterfront be regarded as an economic asset for the entire City.

**4. Alexandria Chamber of Commerce - Tina Leone & Mike Anderson**

- Supports the Plan without modification, and urges its approval as quickly as possible without delaying it to address the GenOn site; reviewed the Chamber's involvement in the two-year planning process.

**5. Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) – Stephanie Brown (President & CEO)**

- Supports the Plan's immediate adoption; reviewed the participation of ACVA Board members in the planning process.
- Noted that implementation of the Plan's art and history elements is important for attracting visitors to the City.
- Viewed hotel development as a low impact strategy to generate revenue the City needs and questioned whether a museum would be self-sustaining financially.

**6. Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan – Boyd Walker**

- Opposes the Plan and delivered over a thousand petitions with signatures from all over the country opposing it; sees the Plan as leaving questions unanswered.
- Disappointed that little attention appears to have been given to the Parks and Museum Alternative submitted to City Council June 11; and questioned the City's \$220 million estimate for this alternative.
- Reported that CAAWP will release its own Waterfront Plan on October 5
- Provided a CAAWP report "Traffic, Circulation, and Parking" that discussed the importance of the City's taking immediate steps to improve the transportation of Old Town.

**7. Environmental Policy Commission – Peter Pennington (Chair)**

- Supports the Plan as meeting EPC's requirements to date.
- Noted the Environmental Action Plan calls for a vibrant city and that without the means to generate revenue the City will lack funds needed for parks, arts and other activities.
- Noted that the GenOn site, with a 1948 building, would likely require significant remediation, delaying any development actions for at least 5 years.
- Supported more activities for young children on the Waterfront.

8. **Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) - Bernard Schulz**  
(Chair)
  - Focused on the Plan's historical preservation aspects and HARC's focus on historical interpretative planning, historical landscape and living history, and emphasized the visitor appeal of the City's rich historic character;
  - Urged full integration of the Waterfront History Plan, especially in relation to the "Character and Theme Areas".
  
9. **Old Town Civic Association – John Gosling** (President)
  - Urged that the Waterfront Plan or related text amendments not be approved until and unless its fundamental elements are clear;
  - Concerned that the Plan does not fully consider impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and retail business, and that parking management has not been resolved.
  - Urged WPWG to take time to consider possibilities related to the GenOn site.
  
10. **Park and Recreation Commission - (PRC) Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair**
  - Supports a version of the Plan that includes an open public square at the foot of King Street where the Old Dominion Boat Club parking lot is now located;
  - Commission does not support options that leave the private parking lot in place, and strongly urges the City to pursue an agreement with ODBC to make it possible.
  - Suggested that implementation for the Plan include an accounting of open space funds, and a method for repaying funds for the Beachcomber if that site is to be used for commercial venture.
  
11. **Waterfront Committee – Peter Pennington, Vice Chair.**
  - Supports the Plan generally but has identified several elements needing to be resolved prior to the Plan's adoption;
  - Provided a July 2011 Committee statement providing comments on the Plan's main elements, including each of the three Plan Alternatives
  - Supports the Plan's balance of economic vitality with quiet spaces, the focus on history, and its balanced and sustainable approach to funding.
  - Urges the immediate implementation of the Plan's proposed parking plan – before the Plan's approval – to test its effectiveness.
  
12. **Waterfront for All - Lynn Hampton**
  - Supports the Plan as a compromise that includes many needed waterfront improvements such as flood mitigation, continuous public access to the waterfront, and additional open space, and providing the means to fund them without increasing taxes;
  - Introduced Waterfront for All as a loosely organized group formed the past summer by people supporting the Plan's process and proposals who were

concerned by the attacks on the Plan and by Council's decision to delay its action on it;

- Supports hotel development as proposed by the Plan

### **III. GROUP 2 – OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS and INDIVIDUALS**

#### **1. Van Van Fleet - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan, concerned that the impact of waterfront hotels would be congestion of Old Town's local streets and parking, concerned that parking attention was focused more on visitors than residents' needs, and urged the City to conduct a traffic study focused on Old Town's street grid with special attention to the Union Street corridor.

#### **2. Poul Hertel - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan, urged that it give more priority to historic preservation and, to illustrate the importance of preservation, reviewed analyses including a 1966 US Conference of Mayors report that the post-War building boom had left Americans with "a sense of rootlessness" and a 2010 Financial Times article reporting that successful cities build on their past.

#### **3. Mark Mueller – Resident**

- Opposes the Plan as "too big for Old Town"; urged a more detailed analyses of technical issues such parking, traffic, flood risks, and environmental and sewage issues; and urged that more attention be given to the potential economic benefits of parks, arts and museums; opposed the principle that the waterfront should be economically self-sustaining and urged that creative financing and funding sources be explored more fully.

#### **4. Katy Cannady - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; was disappointed by the City's two years of outreach because she felt that the community's positions are not reflected in the draft.
- Said that higher density zoning would be inconsistent with preserving one of the few remaining Colonial seaports.

#### **5. Hugh Van Horn - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; urged the City to learn from the waterfront development experiences of cities such as Baltimore, San Francisco, Seattle and Wilmington, Delaware

#### **6. Denna de Montigny - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan's inclusion of hotels; urged more emphasis on history, parks, art and using historical preservation to enhance the waterfront's authentic sense of place; concerned that "massive buildings" would not fit Old Town's antique scale; and concerned about the Plan's parking impact.

#### **7. Nancy Jennings - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; urged the City to draw on waterfront development experiences of other cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Delaware and Glasgow, Scotland.
- Urged that the City draw conclusions for the Waterfront from lessons learned from BRAC.

**8. Nancy Morgan - Resident**

- Regarded access to the waterfront as a health benefit countering stressful living, urged compromise among the varying visions and interests affected by the waterfront development, and encouraged WPWG to learn from other cities' successful and failed waterfront developments;

**9. Katherine Papp - Resident**

- Urged that the public realm elements such as parks, art, flood mitigation, parking and traffic provide the context within which private development is considered;
- Noted that her review of the full available public record showed, for example, that 86% of comments focused on public realm elements.
- Urged that more detailed financial, environmental, and traffic analyses be completed.

**10. Algis Kalvitis - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; offered an assessment that waterfront redevelopment could have a negative impact on nearby residential property values.

**11. Margaret Wood - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan and zoning amendments that would allow hotels to be built in a flood zone; concerned that commercial uses would threaten public use of the waterfront.
- Would like greater analysis for and import placed on public amenities
- Urged more analysis of flooding, traffic congestion, and infrastructure issues.

**12. Joe Demshar - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; works in the development industry; concerned about the urban design of redevelopment projects in flood plains.

**13. Roger Waud – Resident**

- As a North Old Town resident living near the GenOn power plant and co-chair of the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, discussed his concerns about the implications of the American Clean Skies Foundation's recent proposal for high-density development for the GenOn site .

**14. Martin Walsh - Resident**

- Opposes the Plan; urged preparation of a new comprehensive waterfront plan that incorporates development possibilities for the GenOn site.

**15. Jody Manor – Resident**

- Supports the Plan as a means for addressing the Waterfront's failure as a source of vibrancy, civic pride, and tax revenue, its lack of programmed activities, its poor maintenance and the eyesore-condition of the near-vacant Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion;
- Owner of Bittersweet, with King Street and Torpedo Factory Pavilion locations; urged City to take back the Food Pavilion's long-term lease to enable its revitalization..

**16. Charlotte Hall – Potomac River Company (PRC)**

- Supports the Plan and highlighted the need for a fully functioning marina, with full-service staff, more amenities, security, and more dock space available for local and transient boat use, and which utilizes the Food Court and Chart House in attracting visitors.
- Urged the City to continue its work with stakeholders on implementation activities related to the marina and parking
- In response to a question, said PRC, which operates water taxis, has no comment on the GenOn idea locating water taxis at the site.

**17. Dennis Auld - Resident**

- Supports the Plan, is a member of Waterfront for All, and saw the Plan's proposed hotels as a way to generate revenue to pay for waterfront amenities;
- Opposed adding parks and a museum; since current waterfront parks are under-utilized; and
- Expressed concern that development without a Plan will encourage property owners to develop their sites under by-right and lead to condo and office building development absent the public amenities envisioned by the Plan.

**18. Alvin Boone - Resident**

- Supports the Plan as a fair and equitable plan for the future of the waterfront.

**19. John Chadwick -Resident**

- Supports the Plan and worried that delays in approving it would lead to private development without funding for amenities.
- As an architect who moved to Alexandria for its history, walkability, and access to public transportation, he supports the proposed rezoning, especially for the Robinson Terminal sites and supportsboutique hotels as both low-impact and a means to attract visitors to the City, its restaurants, businesses and museums.

**20. Allison Silberberg - Resident**

- Urged the Plan preserve the City's historic beauty, uniqueness, architecture, charm and warmth; and urged that the economic benefits realized by other cities' successful waterfront developments be considered.

**21. Miriam Ellsworth - Resident**

- Supports the Plan alternative calling for additional park space and museums and opposes the plan's hotel development;

- Urged the Plan to consider that she and other people are drawn to travel destinations that offer history, culture and scenery and avoid destinations that have traffic and density.

**22. Michael Porterfield - Resident and commercial property owner**

- Supports the Plan; a life-long resident; proposed adding access points to enter the water - for canoes and paddle boats - to let people enjoy the Potomac the way they did historically.

**23. Eric Nelson - Resident and President, Del Ray Business Association**

- Supports the Plan, reported that the Del Ray Business Association's Board has endorsed the position of Waterfront for All.
- Considers the waterfront an asset for all Alexandrians and urged that it serve as a vehicle for economic development and as a gateway to the City's arts, history and other elements.

**24. Andrew Duncan - Resident**

- Supports the Plan, considers its outreach process thoughtful and inclusive, and viewed the Plan as a compromise between interests, including economic viability, respect for history and enhancement of open space.
- Concerned that continued delays in approving the Plan will put the public improvements at risk if property owners decide to move ahead with development in the absence of a waterfront plan.

**25. Elizabeth Bigney - Resident**

- Urged that the Plan be revised to allow consideration the GenOn site; concerned about waterfront parking saturation, especially for special events.

**IV. CLOSING – Smedberg**

- Meeting ended at 9:15 PM with Mr. Smedberg thanking people for their participation and noting that all who asked to speak were able to do so.

**V. NEXT MEETING**

- A working meeting to be held September 21, 2011, 8:00-11:00 AM, in City Council Work Room.