WATERFRONT PLAN WORK GROUP
MEETING NOTES
Wednesday, November 16, 2011
5:30 – 8:30 PM
City Council Work Room

MEMBERS
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 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, (Ret.), At-Large Member. Alexandria resident and Business Owner.

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

FACILITATOR
Sherry Schiller, Ph.D., The Schiller Center.

CITY
Councilwoman Alicia **Hughes**; Faroll **Hamer**, Director, Planning and Zoning (P&Z); James **Banks**, City Attorney; Joanna **Anderson**, Assistant City Attorney; 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; Abi **Lerner**, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES); William **Skraback**, Deputy Director,T&ES; Dan **Imig,** Civil Engineer, T&ES; Sharon **Annear**, Aide to Councilwoman Alicia Hughes.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES (list of those who signed in)

Polly Burke **Anderton,** Dennis **Auld,** Engin **Artemel**, Hattie **Barker**, Gina **Baum,** Kevin **Blanchard,** Katy **Cannady** (CAAWP)**,** Susan **Cohen,** Deena **DeMontigny** (CAAWP), Joe **Demshar** (CAAWP), Ann Bay **Goddin,** Harold **Goddin,** Lynn **Hampton,** Michael **Hobbs,** John **Hynan,** Charles **Hulfish,** Al **Kalvaitis,** Tony **Kupersmith** (CAAWP)**,** Brad

Langmaid, Beal **Lowen,** Andrew **Macdonald** (CAAWP), Janice **Magnuson,** Kathryn **Papp,** (CAAWP), David **Marlin** (Gold Works – David Martin Design), Mark **Mueller** (CAAWP), Sandy **Northrop,** Robert **Pringle** (CAAWP), Nina **Randolph,** David **Rutherford,** Sarita **Schotta,** Robert **Taylor,** Van **Van Fleet** (CAAWP), Boyd **Walker** (CAAWP**),** Margaret **Wood** (CAAWP), Tescia **Yonkers**.

MEDIA (list of those who signed in)
David **Hodes** (**Northern VA Magazine**)
Sharon **McLoone (Old Town Alexandria Patch)**

I. Opening – Smedberg welcomed everyone and provided a brief overview of the day's agenda, noting the day's meeting packet includes:

A. Notes from October 26th and November 2nd meetings which will be voted on today;
B. A summary of the most recent comments on the Waterfront Comment Board; and
C. An updated schedule – It was noted that there are 2 meetings remaining:
   1. November 30th 8:00 AM, City Hall
   2. December 8th 8:00 AM, City Hall

A suggestion was made to hold two additional meetings beyond the two that are already scheduled in order to complete the work of the Work Group, i.e., further discussions on recommendations and the Work Group's review and discussion of the draft Report. Smedberg responded by indicating that City Council sent a message last week reflecting they would like to see the Work Group meet its fall deadline, noting that the Work Group has had 5 months to complete its work. Smedberg further indicated that it will be important to meet that deadline in order for the Work Group to have an impact on the process.

A member asked if the draft Report will be available before the December 8th Work Group meeting and staff responded in the affirmative. Another inquired as to whether the current timeframe will give the Work Group time to complete its discussions and give those who are drafting the Report ample time to do so. Smedberg indicated that it will be important not only to meet the deadline, because Council expects it, but also because they need time to review the Work Group's work.

Smedberg indicated that holidays make it difficult to schedule more meetings beyond December 13th and therefore he suggested that the Work Group should move forward and see how much progress it can make toward the current deadline.

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II. Organizational Items

A. A motion by Macek and seconded by Wood to approve the meeting notes of October 26th was agreed to by voice vote:
   1. Olinger indicated that on October 26th the Work Group discussed a need to have further discussion on the nexus between density and amenities, and he noted there has been no discussion on costs associated with the Waterfront Plan and how costs get paid.
   2. Wood indicated he would like to discuss the nexus question and he indicated that a reference was previously made that a review on museums similar to what has been done on marinas, flood mitigation and landscape architecture exists and he is wondering if it can be provided.

B. A motion by Macek and seconded by Wood to approve the meeting notes of November 2nd was agreed to by voice vote:
   1. Wood requested an edit to the November 2, 2011 notes, page 5 at the top, noting that "contemporary design" had been deleted and moved to the end.

C. Members inquired and staff responded that the Work Group would receive a copy of the City's analysis of the Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan Report.

III. Recommendations – the discussion relating to the following recommendation categories will be documented as part of the Work Group Report.

A. Traffic/Circulation (resumed at recommendation 4.15)
B. Public Realm

IV. Environmental Plan Statements Background

A. Staff provided a slide presentation (also included on the website) which gives an overview of several key existing City-wide environmental policies and programs that are also applicable to the waterfront:
   1. Green building policy requirements and priorities:
      a. Enhance energy efficiency;
      b. Increase water conservation and reduce storm water runoff; and
      c. Reduce overall carbon footprint.
   2. Contaminated land program - Prior to final site plan approval developers are required to submit and receive approval for the following:
      a. Site characterization;
      b. Risk assessment;
      c. Soil management plan; and
      d. Health and safety plan.
   3. Resource protection areas/impervious surfaces - Resource protection areas (RPA) are a state requirement, but the specifics are spelled out in the City's environmental management ordinance, article XIII. The RPA is 100 feet from the top of bank. A major element of the program is reduction

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in the amount of impervious surface. Everything proposed under the Waterfront Plan in the RPA is permitted. There will be a large net reduction in impervious surface.

4. Naturalizing shorelines/daylighting -Today Alexandria's shoreline is either bulkhead or rip-rap. The rip-rap is functional; it does hold the shoreline, but debris gets caught in it and it acts as a kind of barrier between people. The Waterfront Plan calls for replacing the rip-rap with a much more natural shoreline. Also, there is an opportunity for daylighting under the Plan -- that is, replacing stormwater pipes at least for a short distance with a combination of a naturalized swale and a constructed wetland at Ralph's Gutt.
5. Sewer and Sewer Capacity - There is a part of Old Town that is still on a combined sanitary and storm sewer, but it is outside the waterfront plan area. All of the redevelopment sites are on a separate sanitary sewer. It is not possible for sanitary sewer flow from the redevelopment sites to be discharged into the river. It goes into the Potomac Inteceptor, which goes to the ASA treatment facility. There are no opportunities along the way for sewage to escape.

B. Discussion, questions and responses (staff responses in italics):

1. **An interest in how the City is progressing towards its goals for reducing the City's carbon footprint.** *City government is doing better than the community as a whole. There are really three greenhouse gas targets: (a) 2012 – a 10% reduction from 2005 levels; (b) 2030 target which is a 30% reduction; and (c) a 2050 target which is an 80% reduction. The City expects to meet its 10 percent reduction goal by 2012, but the Alexandria community is not expected to meet the overall 10 percent reduction by 2012 using 2005 as a baseline. The reason is because government represents only four percent of the greenhouse emissions.*
2. **How are the proposed Waterfront redevelopment proposals likely to affect City efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and increase resource conservation?** *The issue is complicated: any new building would increase the greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint which is why we also have a per capita target measure in addition to the general targets. The per capita targets are now on a downward trend but we are still are not close to meeting the general targets on a local, state, or federal basis.*
3. **Are tourism and the Waterfront Plan eco-friendly?** *It should be noted that the residential component and existing buildings in general add a lot to the problem, approximately 50 percent.*

It should also be noted that the BAR has just recently gone through an exercise of identifying green materials that will help with this.

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In terms of the Potomac River, most of our existing development in Old Town does not have stormwater facilities but new development would be required to have them.

In terms of the runoff at Robinson Terminal North and South, both of which are mostly impervious sites, the runoff now goes into the river untreated. The Plan calls for considerably more green space on those sites than what is there now and under a redeveloped Robinson Terminal North and South the runoff will be treated.

A member also added that residential buildings are much less likely to invest in innovative conservation and stormwater standards, because it is difficult to do that on an individual basis, but commercial entities have more of an ability to adopt and apply new innovative conservation technologies and standards as buildings are developed and renovated through time.

4. **What contaminated land problems are anticipated along the waterfront?** *Any private developer that comes to our City for redevelopment of a site is subject to the City's contaminated land program as described earlier. At any place along the waterfront there is the potential for contamination due to the waterfront's long history of industrial use. But all major redevelopment sites in the City at large are subject to the contaminated land program and, at a minimum, have to undergo the characterization process to find out what is there and then, if necessary, they need to follow the remediation process to minimize any risks.*

5. **The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality have identified two "at risk" sites, namely the Oronoco Pendleton Outfall and Robinson Terminal North.** *In terms of the Oronoco Pendleton Outfall, the City has entered the VA voluntary remediation program so we are doing that remediation under their oversight. There has also been some preliminary site characterization work done based upon the chemical company that was there. In that case, the major contaminate of concern was arsenic and when that property was redeveloped in the 70's they capped it, applied clean fill and built on top of it. In terms of Robinson Terminal North we have not done an environmental assessment recently but there is some historical data from the area from Tobacco Quay eastbound where arsenic has been identified.*

6. **Members had an interest in whether the Chesapeake Bay Protection Act's provisions favor a particular type of shoreline and how the Chadwick's/Dandy shoreline would be affected by the Plan's proposals?** *You want to do the softest shoreline you can paying attention to the need to make sure you have stability and protection from threatening events.*

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7. **Members were concerned whether storm overflows might affect the Combined Sewer Outflow.** *There is no combined sewage / stormwater sewage overflow runoff problem.*

8. **Unrelated additional Item**: Ely distributed to the Work Group a list he compiled of recent commercial property transactions in Old Town and how they compared to the City's property assessments, noting that the prices were generally comparable for about 15-16 examples. Ballard observed that the sale price of commercial properties being sold for development is usually significantly higher than the property's sale price when the property is not being developed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Joe **Demshar:** Currently the maximum FAR under the W-1 zoning is 2.0 and the allowable height is 50 ft. It is unlikely that a developer would need to build a 50 ft. building to achieve a FAR of 2.0; therefore, heights would likely remain at about 30 – 35 ft. under current zoning, but, he indicated that by increasing the FAR to 3.0, maintaining the 50 ft. height limit and allowing hotel use, the City will be faced with the potential of a developer needing to build a 50 ft. building. He raised questions regarding parking ratios, open space requirements, and he indicated that interruptions in the block may discourage pedestrian traffic along Union Street.

Van **Van Fleet**: Encouraged incorporation of the GenOn site into the Plan; and indicated there is no reason to hurry up the process. Stated the Plan should complete a Union Street study before it is adopted. Asked that the Work Group give consideration to CAAWP recommendations before the Work Group completes its Report.

Dennis **Auld:** Relinquished his time and indicated he would put his comments on the comment board.

Katy **Cannady:** By right zoning does not require a SUP; you don't have to go to the Planning Commission but the tradeoff is that your development potential is low. Stated a developer who builds on the waterfront will not come to the City with a by-right plan because the land is too valuable.

Lynn **Hampton:** Time is a factor; the Work Group has been charged with finishing by mid-December and should meet that deadline.

Boyd **Walker:** Concerned about the food court and whether the City can take over the lease to get what it wants on the property and not just accept what the developer proposes. Indicated the City should talk to Robinson Terminal to see if they are willing to sell the properties. Also, he indicated that if Council would give back the one cent for open space, the property could be purchased to create more open space along the water.

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Andrew **Macdonald:** Thinks the discussion tonight and in general has not been at a high enough level. He indicated there is no discussion about the big picture and if the Work Group sends the current Plan back to City Council in its current format, the community will be disappointed.

David **Martin:** Identified himself as a business owner on King Street for the past 23 years. Suggests more trolley stops in the mid-area of King Street.

Kathryn **Papp:** In looking at the website and in talking to people about environmental planning, it is her understanding that the EPC has a mandate to do an environmental impact assessment per a citizen's request and she would like that to be done for this Plan.

Margaret **Wood:** Referenced a Channel 7 news story indicating that the Potomac River is now more polluted than it was 5 years ago. Important to have the river cleaner with more recreation, more restaurants and parks that everyone can enjoy. Identified a planning report and has included the link to it on the comment board; it focuses on the revitalization of urban rivers.

Poul **Hertel**: GenOn should not be the solution to everyone's problem in this City. There is a community adjacent to it so people should not be inclined to put everything on that site once the plant closes. Also, in terms of the George Washington Parkway, there should not be a bridge placed over the parkway. There are 3 properties as part of the Waterfront Plan and it seems like the focus has been on giving the property owners flexibility rather than on planning.

VI. Next Meetings

A. Wednesday, November, 30, 2011, 8-11 AM, City Hall
B. Thursday, Dec 8, 2011 8:00-11:00 AM, City Hall

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