

Planning Commission Public Hearing – 4/5/2011

- February 2011 Draft Waterfront Small Area Plan
- Summary Testimony from Organizations
- Copies of available resolutions/letters from organizations can be provided to WPWG if desired

Judy Noritake, representing the **Park and Recreation Commission**, spoke in support of the Plan, describing it as a park plan that integrates art, history and commerce. She stressed the fact that the Commission is geographically representative of the entire City, and spoke to the importance of park maintenance and a profitable marina.

Andrew MacDonald, 217 N. Columbus Street, **CAAWP**, spoke in opposition as a private citizen. He thought there should be options such as more parkland instead of hotels and economic models for the options. He criticized the process as not involving residents. As a member of **HARC**, he submitted a letter from that Commission stating support of the art and history components of the Plan.

Nathan Macek, Chair, **Waterfront Committee**, spoke in support of the Plan as necessary to guide redevelopment and City investments, and providing a balance between economic development and parks. He added several recommendations related to parking, balance of uses, density controls, the Waterfront Park building and funding for Windmill Hill Park.

John Gosling, President, **Old Town Civic Association**, spoke in opposition, citing a recent OTCA poll reflecting the need to reduce density and to include more open space, a stronger commitment to civic/cultural uses, limits on commercial uses including hotel rooms, the elimination of the Waterfront Park building and a demonstration that the Plan is revenue neutral.

Andrew Palmieri, Chairman-elect, **Chamber of Commerce**, urged the Planning Commission to approve the Plan and recommend adoption by the City Council, citing a long public participation process, the fact that the Plan is consistent with the City's Economic Sustainability Plan, and that development in the Plan is needed to make it economically sustainable.

Tina Leone, President and CEO, **Chamber of Commerce**, spoke in support. She explained that the Chamber, representing 900 businesses with half of those businesses resident-owned, considers the waterfront as an asset for the entire City and that hotels are good uses because they have lower impacts and higher revenues than alternative uses.

Charlotte Hall, representing the **Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)**, spoke in support of the Plan. She stated it is consistent with the City's Economic Sustainability Plan and the Council's Strategic Plan, and it would create a world class waterfront. She added that as Vice President of the Potomac Riverboat Company she supports an expanded commercial marina, indicating that PRC now docks three boats at National Harbor because the City's current marina lacks space.

Jody Manor, owner of Bittersweet restaurant and **ACVA board** member, spoke in support, citing the extensive public participation and the enhancement of public access and public open space.

He stated that the waterfront today does not serve as the cultural, public or economic asset it should be. He indicated that ACVA urges support of the Plan in its entirety so that the waterfront can achieve its potential as a recreational resource and economic tool.

John Renner, business owner and **Chair of the Public Affairs Committee** of the ACVA, spoke in support of the Plan generally and of the concept of hotel use and tourism specifically. He stated that hotels promote public access to the water, generate 6 times the revenue that residential uses do, and cited the investment of \$400 million by hotels recently in Alexandria.

James McCall, Chair of the History Plan Committee of the **Alexandria Archeological Commission**, expressed AAC's support of the history component of the Plan, and suggested a series of specific additions and changes to the text.

Miles Holtzman, President, **Old Dominion Boat Club**, asked to preserve the right to speak at the May Planning Commission meeting and stated that the City and ODBC were currently in discussion regarding possible options for the foot of King Street.

Lauren Garcia, Vice Chair, **Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)**, indicated the AEDP Board supports and urges adoption of the Plan, stating that the Plan includes unique open space and other improvements that will benefit a variety of stakeholders and will draw investment to help pay for the improvements.

Boyd Walker, Chair, **Alexandria Preservation Alliance**, spoke in opposition, citing a petition that is being circulated against the Plan. He expressed concern relative adding hotels; he indicated history should be the basis of the Plan and that currently the history and art plans have not been integrated. He further expressed concern about the lack of an economic study to address alternative models.

Matthew Harwood, Co-Chair, **Public Arts Committee of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts**, spoke in support of the Plan's incorporation of public art in a meaningful way that expresses Alexandria's unique cultural, history and art, but also expressed concern for finding a permanent home for the Art League and asked that project costs be revised to include the first phase of the art walk and history plan.

Val Hawkins, President and CEO, **AEDP**, spoke in support. He has been a resident of Alexandria for 37 years and noted the monumental work that went into this Plan by staff, citizens and the various involved stakeholders. Stated the AEDP adopted a resolution in support of the Plan stating its consistency with the City's Strategic Plan and Economic Sustainability Plan.

Julie Van Fleet, 26 Wolfe Street, also recommended an alternative from the **Waterfront Alliance** that does not include hotels, but does include flood control and uses the Robinson Terminal South location for a maritime museum, the Seaport Foundation, an art museum and the Archeological Museum. She suggested thinking outside the box on the Cummings and Robinson Terminal North sites.