



City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia

Alexandria Waterfront Committee
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



March 29, 2012

James Spengler, Director
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
City of Alexandria
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Spengler:

At its meeting on March 20, 2012, the Alexandria Waterfront Committee discussed your Department's proposal to create a City Marina fee category for historic vessels.

In general, the Waterfront Committee **endorses** the concept as proposed. It would provide a predictable rate structure for commercial and non-profit historic vessels and streamline the approvals process for non-profit vessels. The net effect, we hope, is that more historic vessels would make a port-of-call in Alexandria. We have several concerns, however:

- As conveyed in your memo we believe the application of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation Projects, which defines an historic vessel as: "*A nautical vessel, generally excepting reconstructions and reproductions, is considered historic if it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at a local, regional, national or international level of significance,*" has the unintended effect of **excluding** reconstructed and reproduction vessels from this fee category. We note that most of the "historic" vessels that visit Alexandria are in fact reconstructions and reproductions, which we wish to encourage by adopting this policy. Therefore, to clarify, we suggest adding a sentence reading, "Reproductions and reconstructions of historic vessels shall also qualify under this classification."
- The proposal is intended to apply to short-term docking of historic vessels. We recommend defining the maximum duration of a "short-term" visit, and suggest a period of 15 days. This would permit a vessel arriving on a Saturday to remain docked at the marina until Sunday two weekends later. Thus, a 15 day limit provides somewhat greater flexibility than two weeks (14 days). A stay of greater than 15 days in our view no longer constitutes a short-term visit.
- The proposal only applies to historic vessels. While not frequently the case at the Alexandria City Marina, we can imagine a situation in which a non-historic, educational vessel (such as a scientific or environmental research vessel) would be interested in docking at the Alexandria City Marina to

offer public tours or educational programs on a short-term basis. As the proposed policy as drafted does not apply to such vessels, any waiver of docking fees would require City Council action as is currently the case for all non-profit historical and educational vessels. To streamline procedures and make policies consistent, we suggest adding non-historic educational vessels to this fee category.

We note that the fees proposed for commercial historic vessels and the recently-approved *Minnie V* pilot program apply a slightly different fee structure than has previously been the case for commercial vessels docking at the Alexandria City Marina. Prior to the introduction of any future commercial services, the Waterfront Committee recommends that the City perform a comprehensive analysis of commercial docking fees. The outcome of this exercise will be a Marina fee policy specifying the City's basis for the pricing of various commercial uses of the marina, including permanent docking, short term docking, and touch-and-go services that momentarily dock to pick-up and drop-off passengers. The analysis should consider the revenue impacts of direct payments to the City by docking vessels, and, if appropriate, indirect revenues generated by increased tourism attributable to commercial boating. In addition, the study should consider whether fees provide appropriate incentives for historic vessels. We are eager to work with you regarding this study.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer these recommendations, and look forward to welcoming more historic and educational vessels to our city in the future. On behalf of the Alexandria Waterfront Committee and the broad Citywide constituencies that we represent, thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan M. Macek, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Committee

CC: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Jack Browand, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Cheryl Lawrence, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Jim Hixon, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Alexandria Waterfront Committee