

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Lee Center

1108 Jefferson St.

7:30 a.m.

Summary Minutes - Approved

MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug Gosnell, Vice-Chair

Jay Atkinson

Engin Artemel

Michael Geissinger

Nathan Macek

Peter Pennington

Pete Petersen

Willem Polak

John J. Renner

Robert W. Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Henry Brooks

Mel Fortney

Charles Hamel

Susan Pettey, Chair

Councilman Paul Smedberg.

STAFF

Roger Blakeley, RPCA

Aimee Vosper, RPCA

Kathleen Beeton P & Z

Jim Hixon, RPCA

Rich Josephson, P & Z

Craig Perl, T&ES

Julie Rasmussen, RPCA

Laura Seidler, RPCA

David Huchler, Police

GUESTS

Susan Cohen, Public Art Commission

Harry Harrington

Carolyn Dabney Bell

Sean McCabe, National Park Service

Susan Merritt Nelsen

Joanne Platt

Sarita Schotta, Waterfront Alliance

Van Van Fleet

Matthew Whitestone

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Doug Gosnell called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m, announced that Chair Pettey was out of town and unable to attend. Committee members, Department staff and guests introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 17, 2008 Meeting

- **Chair Gosnell** reported that the quantity of Committee mailings increases - and is becoming more costly. In part this is related to the Summary Minutes' length; the level of detail, greater than for other Commissions' minutes
 - **Mr. Gosnell** will recommend to Chair Pettey that all correspondence be sent out via e-mail rather than print mail to make them more timely and to reduce costs.
 - Committee's goal: To develop a refined e-mail address list by end of spring so that the move to e-mail can be made when meetings resume in Fall 2008.
 - **Member Artemel** thanked Ms. Rasmussen for "exhaustive" summary minutes.
- **Follow-Up Action:** Committee members not already receiving mailings via e-mail were asked to provide their e-mail addresses to Ms. Rasmussen (RPCA) or advise her if they do not have an e-mail address.

- **Action Taken:** February 17, 2008 minutes approved unanimously by voice vote.
- 3. **National Harbor Task Force - Update: Vosper (RPCA), Josephson (P&Z)**
 - **Lighting - Aimee Vosper**
 - **Ms. Vosper** reported that first phase would be completed by the next week, with much work to be completed prior to April 1, including:
 - Kiosk installation about March 25.
 - Water taxis' arrival for April 1 start-up.
 - Trolleys to arrive the next week.
 - Ms. Vosper reported that Gaylord's first convention is at month's end.
 - **Railings - Aimee Vosper**
 - The marina's new custom-designed railings are expected to be installed mid- to late-April.
 - A temporary railing is in place.
 - Chair noted the safety improvements that had been installed in recent years, recalling that years back the Marina did not have ladders or life rings in place for use by those who fell into the water.
 - **Parking and Transportation: Rich Josephson (P&Z)**
 - Briefing was provided in response to Committee's request for information about parking to accommodate increased traffic related to Waterfront activities.
 - Mr. Josephson's presentation is provided as an Attachment at the conclusion of Summary Minutes.
 - **Discussion**
 - **Member Pennington** noted his preference for the bottom of King St. being pedestrian only, and that most residents used parking in front of homes, asked how many visitors come into the City each evening.
 - A: (Mr. Josephson) City study did not look at residential neighborhoods; only at parking within one block either side of King St. City actions encourage visitors to park away from residential areas.
 - Because many people prefer not to use garages in evenings, issue isn't the number of visitors, but whether there are enough spaces to accommodate visitors. and whether City can provide inducements for people not to drive and/or to use available spaces - which are sufficient.
 - Mr. Pennington noted parking availability near Federal Courthouse in Carlyle.
 - A: (Mr. Josephson). This is a garage parking option being considered.
 - Figures on revenue generated from parking were unavailable.
 - **Chair Gosnell** inquired about valet zones.
 - A (Mr. Josephson) Valet zone status: An idea not a proposal. Other jurisdictions have instituted an overlay valet zone, with valet parking every other block. ACVA considering ideas.
- 4. **Flood Mitigation Study Update - Craig Perl (T&ES) & Mary Roman (URS Corp.)**

- **Information Provided:** URS Corp. briefing posted to City Web site within a couple weeks.
- Project consultants **Mary Roman** and **Peter Chaput** updated Committee on Potomac Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project.
 - URS Corp. has been working on the City Study almost 2 years.
- Briefing highlights:
 - Reviewed map of the study area.
 - Project tasks: identifying problem, cause of flooding and possible solutions.
 - Solutions are being evaluated; recommendations for best solutions to follow.
 - Areas affected by flooding ranging from 1-foot to 13.2-foot elevation were highlighted for the Committee.
 - Study area's western border is approximately N. Pitt St., with flooding between Lee and Fairfax Streets.
 - **Chair Gosnell** asked how the 100-year-flood plain was factored in.
 - **Ms. Roman** noted FEMA's flood insurance study projected an "astronomical tidal elevation", higher than predictions for a 100-year storm event flooding.
 - **Member Pennington** asked about a recently revised FEMA flood analysis 18 months ago mentioned to City's Citizens Corps.
 - **Ms. Roman:** Unaware of a new FEMA technical analysis along the Potomac River, but just re-looked at Holmes Run and Cameron Run. More details are awaited. FEMA's calculus for flood insurance was reviewed.
 - June 2006 flooding up to 3.3-foot elevation, and Hurricane Isabel's 8.8-foot-elevation flooding were reviewed.
 - 27 general solutions have been developed
 - Addressing floods ranging from nuisance to extreme flooding levels.
 - cursory assessment of possible solutions has been conducted; including:
 - Property protection (measures to protect a specific property).
 - Structural projects
 - Flood prevention solutions - such as sewer backflow preventers and enhancing floodplain ordinances.
 - Emergency services
 - Public education and awareness.
 - Detailed evaluation criteria were reviewed; examples included
 - Cost considerations, aesthetics, constructability. cost of flood insurance, cost to property owners, environmental impacts, regulatory requirements, and state/Federal funding
- **Discussion:**
 - **Ms. Roman** invited Committee input re: potential solutions which the project has not yet considered.
 - **Ms. Roman** emphasized that URS would make certain that all key pieces of information are reviewed during project review.
 - Impact of debris in Marina is not within this study's purview.
 - Q: Is elevating Prince St. a potential solution in light of its having been raised after Isabel?

- A: Project engineers recognize that further actions might create additional problems; “First, do no harm” is approach being followed.
- **Schedule:** Study expected to be finished within a year.

- **Follow-Up Action - Briefing Posted to Web site:**
 - Briefing PowerPoint to be posted to City’s Website within a couple weeks.
 - Julie Rasmussen to e-mail Committee members when briefing has been posted.
- **Follow-Up Action - Project’s Next Steps**
 - Engineering feasibility
 - Environmental/cultural assessment
 - Benefit/cost analysis.
 - **Note:** Within 3 months, an additional field survey is to be conducted by The Engineering Group.
 - Public Involvement:
 - A public meeting, publicized by T&ES via wide-scale mailing to residents and businesses in affected areas, will be held.
- **Follow-Up Action- Committee Members:**
 - E-mail questions/suggestions to Craig Perl (T&ES)

- 5. **Chamber of Commerce Position Paper on Waterfront - Mr. Geissenger**
 - **Information Provided/Hand-out:** “Waterfront Vision Statement”, Adopted September 19, 2007 by Board of Directors, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

- **Member Geissenger**, Alexandria Chamber’s Waterfront Committee representative, invited Members’ feedback on Chamber’s “Waterfront Vision Statement”.

- **Discussion**
 - **Member Geissenger** noted the complications that had been created by delays starting City’s Waterfront Study.
 - **Member Artemel** indicated his satisfaction with the paper’s sensitivity to a variety of Waterfront-related issues, beyond those ordinarily considered by a Chamber of Commerce.
 - Noted similarities between Chamber’s paper and the Old Town Civic Association paper.
 - Committee members indicated their interest in receiving a response from City Manager James Hartmann to the Committee Chair’s March 11, 2008 letter advising that Committee Members are “extremely disappointed to learn that efforts to revise the City’s Waterfront Study have once again been delayed.”
 - A response from the City Manager had not yet been received.
 - **Follow-Up Action:** Committee Members encouraged the Chamber to support the Waterfront Committee letter’s recommendations that the City accelerate hiring staff needed for the Study, provide funding for the Plan’s revision, and restore the Study to a priority place among Planning & Zoning projects
 - **Member Geissenger** to convey Members’ sentiments to the Chamber.
 - **Member Macek** indicated satisfaction with the Chamber’s having addressed a variety of community interests beyond traditional business concerns.

- **Susan Cohen**, Public Art Commission member, indicated she hoped Public Art Commission members would be able to meet with the Chamber to discuss ways in which public art could be incorporated into the Chamber's Waterfront vision.

6. Old Town Civic Association Waterfront Standards - Deferred to April

7. Announcements

- **Chair** announced the next meeting is set for April 15, at 7:30 a.m. at the Lee Center.
- **Member Pennington:** On May 10 the Eco Summit to be held at TC Williams H.S.
 - Committee members were urged to attend.
 - The draft Environmental Charter will have its final discussion prior to being submitted to City Council.
 - An Action Plan is to be submitted to the City at the end of the year.
 - Plans are for the Environmental Charter' design to encourage changes in City and resident perspectives and actions affecting the environment.
 - City Council will take the lead implementing its recommendations within bounds of budget constraints.
 - Charter is designed to address the next 20-30 years' of actions.
- **Member Polak** commended the police for their timely response during the previous evening's partial power outage along the Waterfront.
 - 150 young people had returned to the Marina to find a lower King St. / Strand power outage, including the area behind the Charthouse. Once called, police arrived quickly with lanterns and made possible people's safe passage through a darkened Waterfront area.
 - Ms. Vosper reported that emergency lighting is included in the new lighting currently being installed.

6. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Note: Parking Attachment follows