

City of Alexandria, Virginia

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 19, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

William Ramsay Recreation Center

5650 Sanger Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22312

Summary Minutes

Commissioners Present: Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs; Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Brian McPherson, Alexis Browand.

Absent: William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Catherine Poulin, Emma Schutzius.

RPCA Staff Present: James Spengler, Director; William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services, Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts; Oscar Mendoza, Division Chief, Park Operations-Facilities and Operations Support; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events, and Waterfront Operations; Lyndon Murray, Regional Program Director, William Ramsay Center, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant. **Other City Staff:** Jeffrey Farner, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning, Juliana Villabona, Urban Planner II.

Absent: Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects.

Guests: Boy Scout Troop #1076, 7701 Beulah St. , Fairfax Co. Virginia; Lori Kelly, Andrew Heymann, Matthew Heymann, James Meador, Tracy Meador, Sam Snoots, Yonathan Menbero. Jeanne Gardner, City resident.

I. Call to Order: by Jennifer Akins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs. Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 and welcomed members of Boy Scout Troup #1076.

II. Items for Information:

A. Chinquapin Feasibility Study Update: Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator provided verbal update. She said a public meeting was held on February 25, 2015 to update the public on the project, and to provide them with an opportunity to ask questions of the consultants regarding the updated cost estimates; Commissioner Baum attended. Since that time, Acting City Manager Jinks has submitted the City's proposed budget for FY16. The same amount (from the FY2015-2024 budget) of funding for Chinquapin pool remains in the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget, but has been moved out to FY 17/18, in order to provide more time for the feasibility study to be completed, as well as time for staff to respond to ideas raised by Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA), regarding looking at alternatives. This will be looked at

over the next few months. A CIP Budget Work session will be held on March 23 with City Council and will include a discussion on aquatics (Warwick and Chinquapin pools). Atkins said she is working on drafting a letter on behalf of the P&RC, based on additional information and input. She said that a suggestion was made by AAA and others, that the City continue moving forward with the feasibility study, and also consider alternative sites for a 50 meter pool. During the public meeting, AAA suggested that the City consider using alternative materials, instead of bricks, which are a significant part of the cost. Using different materials had not been previously considered. A Richmond facility uses a dome facility that is less expensive. Baum said there were some questions regarding the 30 million dollar cost estimate and that she researched a Reston Virginia aquatics program where the cost was also around \$30 million.

Action: Atkins said she will be refine the draft letter and send around for review.

B. Public Comments:

Andrew Heymann, Boy Scout Troop #1076, said he does facilities work for the Smithsonian Museum. He asked how the cost estimate was obtained for the proposed 50 meter pool at Chinquapin; if a cost-benefit analysis was completed, what it would take to restore the current facility, and the name of the Architectural & Engineering firm.

Atkins said the City hired a firm to complete a multi-step feasibility study, and that a cost-benefit analysis was completed. Durham said the Hughes Group Architects (HGA) is the consultant firm, and their team includes Kimley Horn, Engineers and Brailsford and Dunlavey to provide the market analysis. She said a significant amount of information is available online, including the cost estimate and feasibility study reports. (See <http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=78867>)

III. Presentations:

A. Cultural Activities Presentation – Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the

Arts:To view a copy of presentation go to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCArtsPresentation19Mar2015.pdf>

The Commission previously asked for a briefing on various aspects of the City's Cultural Activities work. Spengler introduced Deputy Director Ruggiero, who came to the City in 2012, from Asheville North Carolina, and brings a long history of arts experience. Ruggiero gave a brief presentation on the Office of the Arts, which currently has 6 staff (2 full-time, 4 part-time). The Alexandria Commission for the Arts, is composed of 16 members, and meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday. Ruggiero said the Arts Commission recently had a change in organization structure, following approval of the Public Art Implementation Plan. The Public Art Policy was approved in October 2012, and the Public Art Implementation Plan was approved in December 2014. The Office of the Arts manages the following programs: the City's Public Art Program (20 pieces of public art), Public Art-in Private Development (or payments in lieu of art); Community Programming: new Mobile Arts Lab Launched (September 2014); Poet Laureate (Tori Lane Kovarik, 2013 to 2016); Community Arts at the Durant Center; Community Arts Grants (\$169,000 available in recent grants for local artists, 27

applications received totaling \$250,000; a meeting is planned for April 10, for scoring /voting by a review panel.) Upcoming Projects include Traffic Boxes Vinyl Wraps; 12 boxes will be wrapped along the Duke St. Corridor, unveiling will take place May 17, to celebrate National Public Works Week. The vinyl wraps are removable with a life expectancy of 7-10 years, and are warranted for 4 years. A goal of the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan (SAP), is to put an artist on the team to help facilitate discussion of public art in the plan area. Spengler noted that the Deputy Director of Art also serves as the City appointee to the Torpedo Factory Art Center Board, and that this year City Council approved \$25,000 in the budget to go towards work at the Torpedo Factory. Atkins thanked Ruggiero for her presentation. For more information go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/arts>.

- B. **Environmental Sustainability Management System (ESMS), Oscar Mendoza, Division Chief, Park Operations:** To view a copy of presentation go to: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/ESMSPresentation.pdf>

Spengler introduced Mendoza, who is the Management Representative for RPCA's Environmental Sustainability Management System (ESMS). Mendoza also manages RPCA's fixed assets, median right-of-way contracts, ACPS maintenance projects, and was recently assigned to oversee custodial services.

Mendoza said the Director of RPCA asked staff to take the Environmental Sustainability Management System (ESMS), ISO14001 training in partnership with Virginia Tech in order to implement an environmental management system within RPCA. A team of staff completed four training workshops, October 2013 to July 2014. RPCA is now in the process of completing the ISO14001 Certification and implementing the ESMS system.

The ESMS is a set of management principles that allows an organization, to analyze, control and reduce the environmental impact of its activities and services, and also increase its operating efficiency, and is based on the ISO14001 International Standard. The system has many benefits such as: improved environmental performance, compliance, pollution prevention, resource conservation, and improved efficiency (See presentation). Mendoza reviewed the Basic Elements of the ESMS, and the ESMS Core Components, consisting of 17 elements (see presentation). Two components of the ESMS involved creation of an Environmental Policy for RPCA, and determination of RPCA's significant Environmental Aspects. RPCA selected four significant aspects as their initial focus: Hazardous Waste, Agrochemicals, Water Usage and Water Quality (See slide). RPCA's ESMS system will be integrated with other department initiatives to create synergy (See presentation), and the Eco-City initiative (See presentation).

Mendoza said the current state of RPCA's ESMS is 90% complete, and that staff completed its final audit with Virginia Tech on March 13, 2015. Staff is working on finalizing completion of work instructions, training modules, and implementation of a Training Awareness Program for contractors in coordination with the City's Purchasing Department. The next steps are a formal RFP for DEQ/E-3 Certification and will be done in 1-2 months, the second step will be the ISO14001 certification.

Questions/Comments:

Q. Have best practices been identified for contractor training.

A. Mendoza said yes, we have water/oil separators and anti-spill emergency programs in place, but more training needs to be done for employees on oil spill procedures, and being able to provide more records for inspectors before DEQ and ISO14001 certifications. Staff needs to ensure that contractors complete environmental awareness training, and operating equipment is in good condition.

Q. Is environmental training part of the contractor hiring process.

A. Mendoza said the ISO14001 system requires contractors to meet certain environmental standards. The goal is to be able to incorporate environmental requirements into the contractor bid process; staff is discussing this with the City's Purchasing Department. The Commonwealth of Virginia procurement process is a very price-sensitive and competitive process; there is some concern that adding environmental certification procedures may increase costs.

Q. Is there is an acceptable unified certification that can be used for contractors.

A. Mendoza said other jurisdictions create training and departments certify contractors as to environmental awareness. He would personally like to request DEQ certification but this could be very expensive. It is better to provide internal training to contractors, so that they are aligned with ISO14001 requirements.

Q. Is this funded by the state?

A. Mendoza said no, it will be internal training.

Q. Do the questions asked of contractors ask about specific equipment?

A. Mendoza said yes, for instance, it is easy for contractor to use low concentrations of herbicide, but this creates problems such as herbicide resistance, staff needs to do calibrations and inspections of tank mix procedures and application, and also check equipment and sprayers to ensure they are in compliance with the ISO14001.

- C. **Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Plan-Planning and Zoning:** Jeffrey Farner, Deputy Director, Juliana Villabona, Urban Planner II. To view the presentation go to: http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Oakville_Triangle/OakTriParksRecreation03192015opt.pdf

The City is working in conjunction with the Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor planning process to develop a plan for Mount Jefferson Park & Greenway between Raymond Ave. and Route 1. Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, said that a full presentation was given to the P&RC last summer, and monthly updates have been provided. The City hosted a community meeting on March 12, and staff will come back to the P&RC in May for a public hearing on the park.

Farner provided a broad overview of the Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor Plan (see presentation). He discussed the context of what has happened from a land use prospective, and related open space. The existing Target retail building is in Potomac Yard, near Potomac Ave. and Mt. Jefferson Park is east of this. A developer owns the entire 13-acre site and approached staff about redeveloping the site. Staff is trying to be proactive in what is occurring on the West side of Route 1, and is discussing planning options and best uses for the commercial industrial spaces there to design as one system with Potomac Yard, with integrated uses and open space.

Farner said the Oakville Triangle, as Durham noted, the entire property fronts along Mt. Jefferson Park. The advisory group and others are looking at improvements to the park. Staff is working with the developers on funding the Plan, and is conducting an economic analysis, including looking at how to capitalize on zoning and increased density for public benefit. The goal is to improve the entrance along Route 1, and make it more attractive, and pull the buildings back. For the buildings adjacent to the park, staff has been discussing with the developers ways to get “eyes on the street,” as well as “eyes on the park.” One way to do this is to build townhouses in character with the Del Ray neighborhood, with porches, small front yards, and green spaces, while maintaining some of the industrial character of other buildings. A variety of open space is planned for the area including: ground-level and rooftop open space (including publicly accessible spaces on rooftops).

Farner said one of the challenges is that a lot of the area is zoned industrial with no requirement for open space, and some buildings encroach into City-owned land (yellow area). Staff will discuss moving these buildings with developers, and pulling buildings away from Mt. Jefferson Park (see slide). The Advisory Group discussed looking at other ways to get more open space. Farner said there is some tension between retail space, maker space and open space. Staff is discussing with the developer doing a shared space concept, which will be the first private shared space in the City. In addition to expansion and enhancement of Mt. Jefferson Park, Ruby Tucker Park will also be expanded, using existing right-of-way.

Questions/Comments:

Q. McPherson asked if the roof top spaces be open to the public and available for public use

A. Farner said retail will be on both sides of the street, up to 20 ft. of building height Staff discussed creating a way for pedestrians to access the rooftop areas, for example using stairs as a design feature as an amenity with seating area. The range for other building heights is listed in presentation. In response to Baum, Farner said the Time Life Building on Duke St. is about 90-100 ft. high.

Q. Beggs asked for the current cost estimate for Mt. Jefferson Park improvements.

A. Durham said the preliminary cost estimate based on square footage is approximately \$3-4 million at minimum; staff is refining the design and cost estimates.

Q. Baum asked if the space is similar to Potomac Yard space, and if there is a way to do a mini-field for tots.

A. Durham said it is more natural, the community desires to maintain the existing character to the extent possible, with natural areas, enhanced plantings for buffer, and to create entrances and improved connectivity. One of the biggest cost items is improving drainage. She said the P&RC will be provided with a full presentation in the near future. Durham said it is a very narrow trail through the park. There is a section along Stewart Avenue that staff is trying to maintain as an open passive area. The plan is to preserve the uses there now, passive non-programmed uses.

Q. Atkins said her perception is that the Oakville Triangle area is primarily residential and retail; she asked where will the maker spaces be located.

A. Farner said Swann Ave. and Calvert Ave. Staff is discussing with the developer the possibility for an area for destination retail (mostly restaurants), and having an anchor tenant. The community also discussed making some of these local brands and not chains. Office tenants have said that in addition to Metro, they desire amenities to attract the best and brightest talent, and increase economic development.

On Calvert Ave., the discussion with the developer is more neighborhood-serving, e.g. maker spaces. The Crossfit Gym has relocated to an existing building. The developer also owns a single-story warehouse building; staff is discussing possible conveyance of this to the City. Farner said there is a lot of demand in the City for small start-up entrepreneur spaces, and there is some grant money available. Route 1 would have more repair-type shops, uses such as auto repair which would require a Special Use Permit.

Q. Beggs asked would the auto repair services be in newly developed buildings; he wonders how this would be done cost effectively.

A. Farner said one idea is to limit maker and retail spaces to certain percentages, because retail will always pay more. In staff's economic analysis with reduced parking ratios, staff believes that ROI will not be an issue in light of Metro access.

Q. Beggs asked if P&Z conducted a comprehensive study of the loss of industrial spaces in the City, and its impacts. He said this is one of the last areas of dense industrial space in the City, and that Eisenhower Ave. has been rezoned.

A. Farner said that P&Z has prepared a Citywide industrial study as directed by City Council, and information is available online. He said it would take some time to redevelop this area, the Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Plan is about 20 years out, and the Eisenhower West is 30 years out. Farner said even with the plan some existing buildings will remain. The City currently has an 11% vacancy rate of industrial space for various reasons, and when you look at Alexandria as a region, the available industrial land is about 32,000 acres. Staff looked at what are some of the things people need in the City to have a good quality of life, i.e. gas stations, laundromats, etc., and discussed short-term vs. long term needs. For Business Center Dr. and Wheeler Ave., staff discussed keeping these as industrial areas, and in zones such Duke St. where there are auto repair shops, allowing some of these uses elsewhere.

Q. Beggs said a better way to look at this is as affordable commercial space. Once this area is redeveloped the cost will be very high for small businesses to come in.

Businesses such as Crossfit gym, kids play gyms, this is what is going into industrial in Alexandria, there is no light manufacturing anymore. He asked what type of value will it be when it is rezoned.

A. Farner said these are good questions, this will be a challenge, the way staff is trying to mitigate this is through the zoning. Coffee shops, banks, and other businesses that tend to pay higher rents are the ones driving out other uses. Staff also found that daycare is also moving to industrial spaces, due to larger spaces, open floor plans and lower rent. It comes back to rents and how much people are willing to pay. Regarding value, Farner said P&Z is going through process now. Developer contributions that would come back to the City are estimated at more than \$10 million. One of the challenges in setting contribution amounts is establishing the starting value of the existing zoning.

Villabona said information is available on line for Oakville Triangle via Google.

Durham said see link in packet, (Park Planning info.) on Oakville Triangle/Route 1 Corridor - Planning Process and Advisory Group meetings at:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/planning/info/default.aspx?id=76672>.

Information on the adjacent Mount Jefferson Park which is occurring on a parallel track can be found at:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=83168>

IV. Items for Action:

A. Approval of Summary Minutes: January 15, 2015, February 19, 2015:

January 15, 2015: Action: Brune moved to approve the minutes, Beggs seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

February 19, 2015: Action: Brune moved to approve the minutes, Beggs seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

V. RPCA Staff Updates:

A. Director's Report – James Spengler.

FY16 Budget and CIP Update: The Director briefed the Commission on the proposed FY16 budget and answered questions. To view presentation go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCMARCH192015COMBINEDREPORTS.pdf>.

B. Division Updates: To view full staff reports go to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCMARCH192015COMBINEDREPORTS.pdf>

1. Recreation Services: William Chesley, Deputy Director, See Staff Report.

Atkins said she has received good feedback about the Family Fun Night recently held on February 27th, attendance reached 350.

2. Park Operations: Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, See Staff Report.

3. Public Information, Special Events, Waterfront Operations: Jack Browand, Division Chief, See Staff Report.

4. Park Planning, Design and Capital Development: Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, See Staff Reports. A question was asked about the status of Jefferson Houston field. Durham said the field is on schedule.

VI. Commission Business: Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs. The P&RC discussed adding an additional meeting in April due to workload. Suggested dates based on the survey poll were April 6 or April 23rd; the consensus was April 23rd, location to be determined. The P&RC discussed upcoming items for April and May meetings.

VII. Reports from Commissioners by District (verbal updates):

a. Planning District I (Baum, Cromley, Poulin):

Waterfront Commission: Baum said that there is a big discussion over how dirt and debris will be hauled to and from the waterfront redevelopment sites. An estimated 7000 trucks will be hauling dirt/debris out of the City, and there is some opposition to this, particularly the route to be used and potential disturbance to surrounding neighborhoods, which includes some historic homes. Some opponents want the City to use barging to haul the dirt.

b. Planning District II (Atkins, Beggs, Forbes): Mt. Jefferson Park- Atkins said she attended the public meeting, it was well attended, and the design presentation was very good.

c. Planning District III (Brune, Coleman, McPherson):

Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB): McPherson said that Dr. Alvin Crawley, Superintendent, ACPS attended the recent meeting. McPherson provided the YSAB with a brief overview of the Cameron Run Regional Park proposed improvements, and lease renewal issue; few people seemed aware. McPherson asked to be kept informed, so he can update the YSAB.

Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center: Brune said that Patrick Henry had a second meeting and the consultant presented multiple options. McPherson said all three options presented suggest inclusion of an indoor multi-function field, depending on budget. There was a presentation where the architect showed a recreation center, in Prince Georges County that had an option for a raised walking track above the floor so activities can continue below. The architect indicated tear down may be easier than adding to current structure, the topography of the site is such that the flattest area of the land may determine field location. One of the suggested school construction options is a 2-3 story building. The next meeting is April 22, 2015.

From the P&RC prospective there will be a field and potentially an indoor field if attached to the recreation center. The field is slated to be grass for now. Baum asked how to get it to be a synthetic turf field. Spengler said there are two different things the outdoor field for the school, which will be synthetic turf, and the indoor field. McPherson said the presentation did not show a synthetic turf field. He said what he liked about the indoor field is that it can have lights. Spengler said similar to Jefferson Houston, ACPS proposed a grass field at first, and later City Council appropriated money for a synthetic turf field. Baum said a lot of teams use the field and it should be synthetic turf; she asked if RPCA will push for synthetic turf field. Spengler said it is has to come from the community.

For more information go to www.acps.k12.va.us/facilities/ph/.

VIII. Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be held April 16, 2015. The P&RC has tentatively scheduled a second meeting for April 23, 2015.

IX. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.