City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Patrick Henry Recreation Center – 4653 Taney Ave.
Thursday, February 21, 2019
7 p.m.

P&RC Members:
Present: Jennifer Sands Atkins, Chair (District 2); Brian McPherson (District 3); Stephen Beggs (District 2); Gina Baum (District 1); Barbara Marvin (District 1); Judy Coleman, Vice Chair; Matthew Walsh, Secretary (District 2); Abby Froemming (District 3)

Absent: Liz Birnbaum (District 1); Connor Rex (HS Youth rep); Abby Froemming (District 3)

RPCA Staff: James Spengler, Director; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Ops.; Laura Durham, Division Chief, Recreation Services; Tiffany Marbury, Executive Assistant; Bob Williams, Division Chief, Park Ops.; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Park Planning; Beth Znidersic, Principal Planner.

Other City Staff: Jesse Maines, T&ES; Ashley Labadie, Planning and Zoning; Brian Meli, Project Implementation; Syed Imran, Project Implementation; Sara DeGroot, T&ES; Danilo Nunez, T&ES.

I. CALL TO ORDER
Jennifer Sands Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS
Bonnie Petry, of the Wakefield Tarleton Civic Association, addressed the Commission and discussed the area around Lake Cook. She urged Commission members to support City staff in returning the area to a wildlife habitat.

Jane Seward, City resident, stated that she agreed with Ms. Petry’s statement. She also stated her support to naturalize other areas in Alexandria.

Sally Burmeister, City resident, stated that she shares the same sentiments of Ms. Petry and Ms. Seward. She also mentioned how natural areas are not just good for plants, insects and animals, but also improve the wellbeing of its visitors.

III. COMMISSION REPORTS (verbal reports by District)
DISTRICT 1: Barbara Marvin had nothing to report. Gina Baum reported that Waterfront Park is now open, and that a small-ship will visit the waterfront soon. A proposed waterfront café will be presented to Planning and Zoning in the next few days. Jennifer Atkins participated in the late-night event at the Torpedo Factory, and it was well attended.
DISTRICT 2: Matthew Walsh and Stephen Beggs had nothing to report.

DISTRICT 3: Brian McPherson and Judy Coleman had nothing to report.

IV. INFORMATION & UPDATES

a. Ben Brenman Pond Retrofit Upgrade posted at:
Brian Meli, Department of Project Implementation, and Danilo Nunez, Transportation & Environmental Services, gave a presentation on the retrofit upgrade at Ben Brenman pond. The presentation discussed the phases of the project, and how it will impact foot and vehicle traffic in the surrounding area.

Commission Discussion:
Coleman requested a copy of the presentation. She also stated the importance of notifying the Community prior to starting the project. Browand stated that there is currently a mailing list for that community, but he is working with the City’s Office of Communications to create an eNews category on the subject.

b. Landmark Mall Re-planning Process – Open Space:
Ashley Labadie, Planning & Zoning, presented the re-planning process of Landmark Mall to the Commission. The presentation included plans for residential and commercial real estate, and open space for the 51-acre Landmark Mall site.

Commission Discussion: One of the main concerns echoed by the Commission was the amount of open space proposed, and what is defined as open space. The minimum requirement is 3.5 acres of open space, with an additional 25% open space per development block.

Action: Atkins declined endorsing the current plan as presented. She requested further discussion during the next Commission meeting.

c. Open Space Initiatives: Jack Browand, Division Chief, Park Planning
   i. NVCT Partnership
Browand introduced Alan Rowsome and Rentz Hilyer from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT). Browand stated that the City has worked with the Trust for a number of years. Rowsome and Hilyer gave a presentation on their company’s mission, and how they have partnered with the City on past projects.
Commission Discussion: Baum asked if NVCT could manage stormwater sites, both City owned and privately owned. Rowsome stated that it is possible, but more discussion is required to determine if NVCT would be the best fit for the project.

ii. Open Space in New Development & Environment Action Plan
Browand stated that the Landscape Guidelines update is going to Council this Saturday. He stated that it is expected to be adopted and asked the Commission if they had any questions. There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

iii. Publicly Accessible Open Space Policy Plan
Browand distributed a large handout that detailed three types of open space in Alexandria (Public, Public/Private, and Private). Characteristics were listed for each type, and Commission members were asked to review the handout and answer questions listed in red text. He mentioned the reestablishment of the Open Space Steering Committee and asked the Commission to think about what role they want to play in the process. Browand stated that he will add this item to next month’s agenda.

V. ITEMS FOR ACTION:
   a. Approval of Minutes: January 17, 2018
Baum moved and McPherson seconded the approval of the January minutes. The Commission approved the motion by unanimous voice vote.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
   a. FY 2020 Operating & CIP Budget
James Spengler, Director, RPCA, stated that the City Manager recently released his budget recommendations. City Council will vote on the final budget adoption in May. Spengler discussed the following items with the Commission:
   • Developer Tree Landscape Contributions
   • Park Operations Ben Brenman
   • Funding received for maintenance of Lake Cook.
   • Six new parks
   • Emergency clean up
   • Private school use of City fields as private rental ($115 per hr.)
   • New marketing position.
   • Reduction of youth sports scholarship fund.
   • NOVA Parks membership payment out of general fund.
   • Deduction to Open Space fund in Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
VII. DIVISION/PROJECT UPDATES: Recreation Services; Park Operations; Park Planning, CIP & Marina
Division updates (staff reports) posted at:

VIII. NEXT MONTH MEETING ITEMS – Working Draft Attached

IX. NEXT MEETING
March 21 – Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St.

X. ADJOURNMENT
At 8:28 p.m., Baum moved and Froemming seconded meeting adjournment. A unanimous voice vote approved the motion.

*Please note that meeting minutes are a brief summary of topics discussed during each Commission meeting. Meetings are voice recorded in their entirety. Recordings are available upon request.