

City of Alexandria, Virginia

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Summary Minutes

Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 16, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

Charles Houston Center – 901 Wythe Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Members Present: Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs; Gina Baum, Rich Brune, Secretary, Ripley Forbes, Catherine Poulin, Alexis Browand and Emma Schutzius, high school members. **Absent:** Stephen Beggs, William Cromley, Brian McPherson.

RPCA Staff Present: James Spengler, Director; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events, and Waterfront Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects; Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator; David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant. **Absent:** William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services.

Other City Staff: Adrian King, Architect, General Services, Susan Eddy, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning.

Guests: Jeannie Gardner, resident.

I. Call to Order: Jennifer Akins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs. Coleman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Items for Information:

A. Public Comments: none.

III. Presentations:

A. **Patrick Henry K-8 School and Recreation Center:** Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Projects and Adrian King, Architect, Department of General Services provided an overview of the project.

To view presentation go to,

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCPatrickHenry16Apr2015.pdf>

Commissioner Comments and responses by Kagawa.

Q. What is the study area of the survey and is it statistically accurate.

A. The survey covered a 1.5 mile radius of the school, and was completed by Leisure Vision consultants. This allowed staff to compare it against citywide data.

Q. What is the timetable?

A. The intention is to go to the School Board in May. The Board will need to make a decision about the school. The next phase would be the design phase, for a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP), the goal is to be ready in 2018.

Q. Do different design options affect the proportional share of costs for ongoing maintenance.

A. RPCA takes care of all ACPS ground maintenance. Spengler said RPCA has total responsibility for outdoor maintenance, and that the largest expense for a school projects is what they determine the shrub beds to be.

Q. Does RPCA have a preferred option?

A. There are pros and cons to each option. Staff is interested in designing interior spaces that are flexible, and move away from single use type spaces.

Q. What is inside the field house?

A. The field house has a turf field with an indoor track on the second level. Staff initially discussed putting the track on the ground floor however this option limits use of both the field and track.

Q. What is the goal for the indoor track? Baum said it is important that there is a revenue component as a priority.

A. The goal of the indoor piece is to support uses in accordance with the Needs Assessment.

Q. Can the outdoor woody area, within the 1.5 mile radius, be used for some of the priority outdoor recreation and walking trails, and is it lighted.

A. Kagawa-yes that piece of land is a separate parcel. Staff's thought is as the site is developed in the future to provide access to it.

Q. Can it include walking trails and more fields?

A. The wooded area is heavily wooded and topographically very steep. It is unlikely that it would be used for fields.

Baum said the estimated amount for the new Patrick Henry School does not appear to be enough, and that Jefferson Houston School cost was \$45 million. Spengler, said this week ACPS released information from their consultant on preliminary estimates of the bubble diagrams.

- B. **Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Update (Planning and Zoning)**: Susan Eddy, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning gave an update. Eddy attended a P&RC meeting in July 2014. Background: She said the Landmark Van Dorn Small Area Plan was completed in 1992; and the Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan was completed in 2009. City Council decided to do a new Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, and established a 12 member Steering Committee; Coleman represents the P&RC. The public engagement process began in February 2014, and to date ten Steering Committee Meetings, and five Large Community Meetings have been held. The P&RC was emailed the results of Community Meeting #5 by Coleman. Following the meetings, Planning and Zoning developed the Draft Concept Plan (See attachment). Eddy said that last month check-ins were done with the Planning Commission, City Council, and the Transportation Commission, and today the P&RC. She said the goal is to test the Draft Concept Plan, including doing a market and transportation analysis.

Eddy said that the Van Dorn Metro Station is considered the center of the Eisenhower West SAP. The community favors high density and mixed use development for the area. Residents desire Eisenhower Ave. to be a great street, with all modes of transit, walkable and pedestrian friendly, with the ability to have flexible uses and a variety of active uses on the ground floor (not solely retail). For the area West of Van Dorn St., there are a lot of industrial uses. Staff approached the community about the idea of flexible uses on the ground floor with residential uses above or a combination of different options. The community seemed supportive of trying to maintain some of these flex uses West of Van Dorn Street. Regarding open space, the number one thing the groups wanted is having an inter-connective green network, centered around Backlick Run, and improving the RPA area. There is huge support for biking and walking trails in the area. Eddy said staff has been directed to make this a very flexible plan. The policy will say within certain areas to have neighborhood parks, with the details to be refined later as development occurs. Another idea that came up is using developer contributions to enhance existing parks (i.e. adding lighting and recreation facilities.)

Questions and Comments:

Q. Coleman asked which parks in study area are thought to need improvement, and which need lights. **A. Eddy** said there are a lot of parks in the study area, e.g. Ben Brenman Park, Joseph Hensley Park, and Armistead Boothe Park. She said the question is whether it is more important to have new parks due to the projected increase in population and density, or to enhance existing parks. **Spengler** said Armistead Boothe Park, and Ben Brenman Parks have lights.

Eddy said this is her last check-in meeting for this phase of the Plan. She said staff is actively in the testing phase, a lot of their work involves transportation issues, and a series of steering community meetings will be held in the next few months. Staff will then go back to a wider community meeting with a draft Plan in July, and come back to P&RC in the fall 2015, and to Planning Commission, City Council in November.

Q. Coleman asked for the rationale for focusing on developer contributions to existing parks instead of to new parks. **A. Eddy** said there will definitely be some new parks, primarily the green network centered on Backlick Run, other things will feed into this, the idea is to get some green fingers, perhaps small trails. There are ruins of Bush Hill Estate, which is largely a Resource Protection Area, there is a stream there, and there are some green fingers leading into the future Clermont Park area (owned currently by Norfolk Southern). The community desires connectivity, and to be able to walk from green space to green space.

Atkins said she agrees with the concept of high density near the Metro station. However, high density residential areas will require more parks and useable open space. She would be very hesitant to have a policy which makes it easier for developers to provide amenities in lieu of green space or public parks.

Coleman said that though she is on the Steering Committee the idea of allowing developer contributions to enhance existing parks was a new addition that had not been previously presented to the steering committee and appeared to be a Planning Commission proposal.

Baum agreed that the green spaces should be usable.

Brune reminded the P&RC that this is a draft concept plan and will be a multi-year project, and will be refined over time. **Eddy** commented that this is a vision plan that may take 20-40 years, although many residents in the City's West End want to see something happen now. The challenge for staff is to find something that can kick-start the development process. The City desires to have a strong development around Metro stations; there is not a lot of commercial development now. The goal is finding a balance for short-term development and incentivize this.

Q. Coleman asked Ms. Eddy to explain the locations of the proposed multi-modal bridges to the Commission, since one proposal would align next to and through Boothe Park. **A. Eddy** said when the City adopted the Landmark Van Dorn Corridor Plan in 2009, the idea arose to build a multi-modal bridge just east of Van Dorn St. The location is yet to be determined. There are five candidate bridge locations, and two are on the plan, but there will not be two bridges built east of Van Dorn, likely to be one. There could be two bridges one east of Van Dorn and one West of Van Dorn to be determined. The City's long range plan includes a proposed Farrington Avenue connector. Another bridge concept is being proposed by a developer west of Van Dorn. Residents desire pedestrian and bike areas and connectivity. There was a lot of community support for pedestrian/bicycle bridges.

Spengler said that there are certain open space types that may be better left as private with access easements so that the homeowners' associations maintain them, instead of the City.

Everything has a budget impact. For example Potomac Yards Linear Park is appropriate for public use/public maintenance, but the green fingers in that community would have been better left as a developer responsibility, because they do not provide true community-wide benefit. **Eddy** said that Steering Committee members are sensitive to budget.

IV. Items for Action:

- A. **Approval of Summary Minutes:** March 19, 2015. Action: deferred to the regular May meeting.
- B. **2015 Annual CIVIC Awards:** Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events and Waterfront Operations-See Staff Report. Browand said this will be the 30th year of the Civic Awards, and that presentation of the awards normally occurs as part of the City's annual birthday celebration, scheduled for July 11, 2015. Forbes proposed separating the awards ceremony from the annual birthday celebration, and presenting the awards at an alternate ceremony in the fall to help make the awards more meaningful to recipients. He said a key criteria is presentation of the awards by the Mayor. Commission members were generally in favor of the request to change the date and event for the awards. Suggestions for alternate events include: the November P&RC meeting; the City's tree lighting ceremony in November, or at a formal City Council meeting. Coleman welcomed Browand's input on alternate events for the awards.

Action: Forbes moved to defer the Civic Awards ceremony to the fall of 2015 upon the recommendation of the volunteer sub-committee, at the May or June meeting. Baum seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Browand said once a new date and event is selected, the information will need to be publicized. He said the cycle for the awards has generally been the City's fiscal year. Emma Schutius, Ripley Forbes and Richard Brune volunteered to work on the Civic Awards Sub-committee.

- C. **Special Events Policy Revisions:** Jack Browand, Division Chief, Public Information, Special Events and Waterfront Operations – See Handout. Staff provided an update to the proposed updates to the Special Events Policy originally presented to the P&RC at the January 15, 2015 meeting. Since that time, staff held several meetings with stakeholders. After further review, it was determined that most of the proposed recommendations were administrative in nature, and that fees can be handled through the City's budget process. However, staff is recommending adjustments to the alternating weekend events policy, prohibiting concurrent weekend events that exceed 500 persons in Old Town District for Waterfront Park. Browand reviewed the Alexandria Waterfront Small Area Plan - Goal 4 - Dynamic, which states a goal "to maintain a living, active waterfront as an attractive destination for all Alexandrians and visitors." pg. 2, item 8, states that "Events in Old Town with anticipated attendance over 500 are limited to no more than one such event every other weekend in a calendar year". Browand said any exceptions to this policy would need to be taken before City Council, and timing may be an issue for some events. Currently most parks falls into the Old Town District (see map), including four newly proposed areas: Robinson Terminal North, Robinson Terminal South, Expanded Point Lumley, and future Fitzgerald Square. The goal is to phase in any increased activity along the waterfront; analyze any potential impacts, before expanding broadly.

Atkins said this does not solve the problem. For example if an individual or group wanted to hold an event at Robinson Terminal South, under the current policy, there couldn't be another event held at Robinson Terminal North the following weekend, even though the areas are far away from each other.

Browand said it will be several years until these properties come online for use. Phasing in the policy change will allow the City to incrementally manage multiple events consecutively and make the changes to limit the potential impact on the community before expanding events. In response to Baum, Browand said that the vast majority of businesses favor increasing event frequency. However, there is concern with events that may cause street closures, such as to The Strand, also access must be maintained to the King Street Trolley, and to the Old Dominion Boat Club private parking lot until construction is completed. Although, some residents are worried about the mass increase of activity along the waterfront.

Baum said that increased activity is already proposed along the waterfront, and said that revenue is needed to help pay for maintenance.

Atkins said that there is a condition in the Robinson Terminal South Plan, approved by the Planning Commission that requires them to host three to five events. She wants to ensure there is no conflict with staff policy. She said that some events may be smaller than 500.

Baum said there have been some events held that exceed 500.

Browand said the dates for the Film Festival and the City's annual Birthday Celebration float based on when July 4th falls, and that these events have been grandfathered in.

Poulin who lives near Old Town said that there is a noticeable parking problem when large events are held on weekends. She said it's not realistic to think everyone will take public transportation.

Forbes asked if RPCA schedules events in Jones Point Park (JPP). Browand said that the agreement between the City and the National Park Service (NPS), expired during construction of the park. He said the original Special Events Policy was drawn up in 1986, and updated in 2010. At that time, RPCA still managed the park, but all uses are now coordinated through the NPS. Forbes recommended Jones Point Park be removed from the Special Events Policy, and that the map be updated. Browand said that NPS is not bound by RPCA's policy, and that when the Special Events Policy is amended Jones Point Park will be removed. He said staff would not actively look at putting a City event in Jones Point Park, as this would violate City rules. Spengler said the policy is for City permitted events, and that the City does not grant permits for events in Jones Point Park.

Atkins noted that the only real change to the Special Events Policy for now is to allow alternating weekend events to occur in Waterfront Park. Browand said the P&RC made some suggestions at the January 15, meeting, but staff wants to ease in any changes. Coleman asked if endorsement is needed by the P&RC. Spengler said no action is required at this time until it goes to City Council.

V. RPCA Staff Updates:

A. Director's Report (verbal updates):

- Chinquapin 50 meter pool: An additional discussion was held with City Council at the CIP budget work session. The current plan is to come back to City Council in the fall with alternatives options for the least expensive 50 meter pool. Staff is working with the consultant on a new concept plan. Jane Rudolph, Director, Arlington County Recreation and Parks were tasked to re-examine the concept of Long Bridge Parks aquatics plan, original bid and budget impacts. She is reaching out to potential partners in the region to explore cost-sharing ideas for a 50 meter pool. The Director RPCA has been directed to work with Arlington County to explore options, and will have information in the fall for City Council.
<http://parks.arlingtonva.us/locations/long-bridge-park/>
- Alex Renew Field: A work session was held with City Council, on Tuesday. The Department of Planning and Zoning gave a presentation on the proposed field which is scheduled to be

delivered in October. As previously discussed with the P&RC, the field will be built on the roof of a storm water and sewage containment facility. Spengler said the facility does not have the infrastructure to support high school sports for various reasons. Staff is moving forward with delivery by October; full use of the field will not be available until 2016.

- **The FY16 budget add/delete process:** begins next week with City Council and the Office of Management and Budget. The Director said that during the budget process a concern arose regarding the closing of William Ramsay Recreation Center on Sundays. Spengler said that rentals and programs would still continue on an as-scheduled basis, even if the building is closed on Sundays, and that Chinquapin and Charles Houston would be the only Recreation Centers open on Sundays, and on the minor holidays.

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

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCDRAFTAgendaApril%20162015FinalDraftCoChairs.pdf>

1. **Recreation Services:** David Miller, Division Chief - See Staff Report.

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

3. **Public Information, Special Events and Waterfront Operations:** Jack Browand, Division Chief, See Staff Report. Browand reviewed the Windmill Hill Park Living Shoreline, Concept-3 Plan (See handout). Staff from RPCA, and the Department of Project Implementation will provide a presentation to the P&RC on May 21. The next step will be to present the Plan before the Waterfront Commission on May 19 and to City Council in June, to approve the change to the Windmill Hill Park Plan. Browand said the next phase would be to complete the design and construction documents. He said \$5 million in funding is proposed for FY16 for a total of \$6 million to complete the shoreline project and other outstanding projects associated with the 2003 plan.

Q. What was the original budget?

A. Approximately \$1.7 million was budgeted for the entire plan including the shoreline. Additional money was added back to the budget around mid-2000, but due to the economy funding was moved further out. It was then set for FY2016 and 2017. The cost for Concept 3 is estimated at \$3.8 million, but there are additional amenities and the design still needs to be completed. This is the least expensive and the preferred option with the regulatory agencies.

Q. Will the project include flood mitigation?

A. Flood mitigation was not part of the original plan. The Living Shoreline will maintain the current conditions, and is a different treatment than a seawall. Some residents wanted the project fortified with flood mitigation, what is down at the southern and northern edge. Browand said erosion will be prevented through planting materials and riprap, etc.

Q. Will the City receive storm water management credits for the project?

A. Yes. The Department of Project Implementation is managing the project, and T&ES is also involved.

Q. Poulin asked about footbridge going across adjacent to the dog park, and if the bike path will go through the dog park.

A. Biking is not allowed on soft trails in City parks.

Waterfront Governance Update: Susan Eddy, Deputy Director, Planning & Zoning, said the City hired consultant BAE Urban Economics to explore governance models for the waterfront and revenue generation. The governance report was recently released and an update was given

to the City Council, Planning Commission and Waterfront Commission. Browand provided a copy to the P&RC by email in March 2015. Eddy said five options are under consideration (See report). Eddy said the information is very preliminary, and she can provide a formal presentation at a later time if needed. The revenue generation report is one month behind, and is being reviewed by the same consultant. To view reports go to [Waterfront Governance Report](#) [Waterfront Governance Presentation](#)

4. Park Planning, Design and Capital Development- Ron Kagawa, Division Chief - See Staff Reports.

VI. Commission Business: Jennifer Atkins and Judith Coleman, Co-Chairs.

Robinson Terminal South Update: **Atkins** said one of the conditions of the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) for Robinson Terminal South requests that the developer EYA provide \$100,000 a year for park maintenance. She said park maintenance costs and their impacts to the Department of RPCA's budget have been an ongoing discussion and concern. This DSUP condition is one solution that has made it through the staff process. However, there is some pushback from EYA, that there is no time limit? The other thing is the whole idea about public funding of private space and who controls it. This is a need for revenue source for maintenance of the waterfront. Getting private funding is key to helping with maintenance costs. The P&RC should keep abreast of this. **Forbes** asked if there is a way to earmark private contributions in a way that they can be used by City Council to offset maintenance costs. **Atkins** said she's unsure this may be part of the Waterfront Governance discussion. **Baum** said that funds coming from the developers need to stay in the Waterfront Plan area. Atkins said this will go before City Council on Saturday and recommended those interested attend the meeting.

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

a. Planning District I (Baum, Cromley, Poulin): Baum said a Waterfront Commission meeting is planned for next week.

b. Planning District II (Atkins, Beggs, Forbes): Forbes said he and Co-Chair Atkins are working on updating the Dog Park Master Plan.

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

Ft. Ward Park: Spengler said that a work session is planned with City Council in May, and the two previous Stakeholder Committees groups will be invited. The P&RC will be asked to appoint a representative for the new Stakeholder Group #3.

Forbes thanked RPCA for closing down the dog park at Fort Ward Park. He said there are still some dog owners who let their dogs run free in the Historic Fort Area and enforcement is needed. He said it would be helpful if Animal Control, or someone could patrol the park each day. Spengler said the Police Department is responsible for enforcement issues, and the Office of Historic Alexandria has overall responsibility of the park. Tiwari said RPCA can include park signage, or inform the Animal Control of violations.

Eisenhower West SAP: See Item III-B previously discussed. Coleman said a group of volunteers being led by Mindy Lyle, will be help with clean-up on Earth Day.

VIII. Next Meeting: April 23, 2015, Lee Center, agenda items will be the Potomac Yards Metro-rail Station DEIS, and Neighborhood Park Plans. Coleman will not attend the next meeting, and will recue herself from the Metrorail discussion.

IX. Adjourned: 8.56 p.m.

Alexandria Waterfront Small Area Plan Goal Statements

Goal 4 - Dynamic:

Maintain a living, active Waterfront that is a destination that attracts all Alexandrians and visitors and should be integral to the visitor experience in Alexandria:

- Expand services and activities for visitors.
- Increase the use, frequency, and effectiveness of public spaces for gatherings and events.
- Emphasize art and history in each new initiative along the Waterfront. Utilize art and history as a unifying element.
- Strengthen the reputation of the area as a regional and national visitor destination by adding uses that complement existing retail, office and tourist attractions.

APPROVAL

Requirements to Obtain Approval

In deciding whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a permit, the Special Events Committee shall determine:

1. The event, as proposed, can be shown to function safely;
2. The diversion of police and fire resources to support the event will not deny reasonable police and fire protection to the City;
3. The special event will not cause irreconcilable interference with previously approved and/or scheduled construction, maintenance or other activities including any sidewalks, streets and parking spaces;
4. The special event sponsor/applicant provides a transportation management/parking plan for traffic control/parking management which may include accommodating transportation demand management measures;
5. The location/route meets the criteria established in the procedures;
6. All costs for City services associated with the event shall be paid by the event sponsor(s) or if approved by City Council, the portion agreed upon will be covered by the City;
7. The special event sponsor/applicant provides an Event Management Plan for security/safety and which may include accommodating security, first aid and sheltering measures;
8. Events in Old Town with anticipated attendance over 500 are limited to no more than one such event every other weekend in a calendar year. A weekend is defined as beginning Friday, 5 p.m. and continuing through Sunday, 6 p.m.;
9. Events in other areas of the City will be scheduled to not overly burden any one neighborhood on a consistent basis;
10. Events will not be approved to be held in Founders Park;
11. The number of foot races in Old Town is limited to those approved by council.
12. The event as proposed shall not severely impact the quality of life within the area it is being held.

GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORING MAJOR EVENTS IN OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

City of Alexandria
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Introduction

To ensure that major events in Old Town are scheduled on an orderly basis and do not intrude unduly upon the merchants and residents of this unique section of the City, the Alexandria City Council established policies and procedures for organizations wishing to sponsor such events in Old Town in June 1986. These policies and procedures were revised by City Council in June 1994 to become effective January 1, 1995.

The scheduling of these events is the responsibility of the City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

For purposes of these policies and procedures, Old Town is defined as that portion of the City lying east of Washington Street, bordered by Oronoco Bay Park and Jones Point Park. Locations include Jones Point Park, Market Square, Oronoco Bay Park and Waterfront Park. A major event is defined as any event, including races and parades, held on City property and open to the public, which attracts 500 people or more.

Policies

1. Major events in Old Town will be scheduled no more frequently than every other weekend.
2. Beginning January 1, 1995, all major events scheduled in 1994 will automatically continue the same schedule through December 31, 1998, unless an existing organization decides to not hold an event. Should a vacancy occur, a new group may apply to schedule an event on the vacant date (see below). Organizations will be notified each September regarding their date for the following calendar year. Organizations may exchange dates among themselves.
3. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities maintains a waiting list (on a first-come, first-served basis) for groups wanting to schedule an event in Old Town during the next five years. When an existing group no longer holds an event in Old Town, the group at the top of the waiting list is considered to be scheduled in its place. Organizations giving up their scheduled event, could reapply by placing their name on the waiting list. To obtain a waiting list request form, please call 838-4343.

APPROVAL

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1. The event, as proposed, can be shown to function safely;
2. The diversion of police and fire resources to support the event will not deny reasonable police and fire protection to the City;
3. The special event will not cause irreconcilable interference with previously approved and/or scheduled construction, maintenance or other activities including any sidewalks, streets and parking spaces;
4. The special event sponsor/applicant provides a transportation management/parking plan for traffic control/parking management which may include accommodating transportation demand management measures;
5. The location/route meets the criteria established in the procedures;
6. All costs for City services associated with the event shall be paid by the event sponsor(s) or if approved by City Council, the portion agreed upon will be covered by the City;
7. The special event sponsor/applicant provides an Event Management Plan for security/safety and which may include accommodating security, first aid and sheltering measures;
8. **With the exception of Waterfront Park**, events in Old Town with anticipated attendance over 500 are limited to no more than one such event every other weekend in a calendar year. A weekend is defined as beginning Friday, 5 p.m. and continuing through Sunday, 6 p.m.;
9. Events in other areas of the City will be scheduled to not overly burden any one neighborhood on a consistent basis;
10. Events will not be approved to be held in Founders Park;
11. The number of foot races in Old Town is limited to those approved by council.
12. The event as proposed shall not severely impact the quality of life within the area it is being held.