

Item II-P&RC deferred to May 15, 2014
from April 17, 2014 –Approved 5.15.14.

City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Charles Houston Center
901 Wythe Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Summary Minutes

P&RC Members Present: Judith Coleman, Vice Chair; Jennifer Atkins, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Ripley Forbes, Secretary.

Absent: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair, Brian McPherson, William Cromley, Emma Schutzius.

RPCA Staff Present: James Spengler, Director; William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning Design and Capital Projects; Laura Durham, Principal Planner, Open Space Coordinator; Dana Wedeles, Park Planner; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

Guests: Jim Durham, Chair, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

- I. Call to Order by Vice Chair, Judy Coleman. The meeting was convened at 7:03 p.m. by Vice Chair Coleman.

Items for Action:

- II. Approval of Summary Minutes: February 20, 2014 - deferred to May 2014.
- III. Letter from the P&RC Endorsing the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan- Coleman said the Chair circulated a draft letter for consideration and later emailed additional comments to be included in the letter. The Chair will finalize the letter after receiving Commission comments. Coleman noted language at bottom of first page, "Most people understand the need to accommodate more use and more uses," and stating comments at the hearing reflected that understanding. Coleman said she interpreted comments at the hearing differently and these sentences might require revision. Beggs said the Needs Assessment should be referenced in the letter – especially the need for a much broader look at large parks and fields. Coleman agreed. The Director said that the Needs Assessment showed that RPCA has a higher than national average percentage of people who visit RPCA's parks annually and who participate in RPCA's programs. He said the challenge moving forward will be how to accommodate the higher demand given the existing facilities. He said a reason for the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan is to consider design improvements that will accommodate more usage in each location. Forbes noted that the Commission had approved the Chair's drafting the letter at the last P&RC meeting.

Action: The P&RC approved the Chair's draft letter endorsing the Citywide Parks Improvements Plan with the changes discussed.

Vice Chair Coleman said she would forward Commissioners' suggestions to the Chair and asked when the letter would be needed. Wedeles said budget meetings begin with City Council and the Mayor next week and it would be useful to have the letter by then. She noted that the document is actually called the Citywide Parks Improvement Plan, Coleman noted this change. Wedeles said the next phase is neighborhood parks.

Items for Information and discussion:

- IV. **Update on the Draft Fort Ward Park Management Plan:** Ripley Forbes said the Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) has finished the draft and circulated it for public comment and held two public hearings. He said attendance was small and no big issues were raised. The Advisory Group will meet in April 2014 and review public comments received since the draft was released in December 2013. Durham said the original goal was to bring the draft to the P&RC, Environmental Policy Commission and Historic Alexandria Resource Commission in April 2014. This was delayed to June 2014 due to issues related to the stormwater management plan. The revised plan will be going out for comments. Durham said the goal is still to hold a joint public hearing on the modified draft plan in spring 2014; she advised the group to review the plan. Forbes said he expects P&RC to receive the draft for review in summer 2014. Durham said Linda Reiss will step down as a member of the Advisory Group, and that the P&RC will need to decide if it wants to fill this vacancy and when. She noted that the P&RC has three positions on the Advisory Group, and that Brune serves but not as a P&RC representative. Forbes said he thinks there will be no final decisions made at the April 2014 meeting because there are still decisions pending about whether the City survey to identify possible gravesites at the park has been adequately completed. He said he did not think actions can move ahead until the descendants groups agree the gravesite survey is complete. Durham said the draft Park Management Plan recognizes the need to do additional archeological and interpretative work that is related to the park management plan but is not part of it. Coleman said the P&RC looks forward to seeing the draft plan in May or June 2014.

- V. **Division Updates: To view full Staff Reports go to:**
(<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCStaffReportsCombined20March2014.pdf>).

- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley, Deputy Director - **See Staff Report.** Nannie J. Lee Center Programming - beginning next fall, RPCA will provide a new Inclusion Program comprised of Therapeutic Recreation and traditional recreation program for children. Staff will clarify to the community that the community recreational and the after-school programs will continue. Chesley said inclusion programs are offered in other communities, and that parents have expressed an interest in the program. The program is being designed with input from ACPS, the Therapeutic Recreation Board and Nannie J. Lee Center parents. The Therapeutic Recreation Program will be relocated to the Nannie J. Lee Center, from the West Wing of Lee Center. The Charles Houston program will continue as a traditional program and there is also the availability of the City's Campagna Center. Baum asked if the fees increased for the after school program. Chesley said the after-school

program fee is proposed to go up to \$325 from \$300, and the proposed fee for the summer 2014 program is \$100. Staff is still evaluating fees relative to programming costs, and all fees will need approval by City Council.

- B. Park Operations Report – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director - **See Staff Report**. Staff is moving forward with new garden plot policy as shared with the P&RC. Most garden plots have been renewed, tomorrow is deadline, afterwards plots will open up to people on the waiting list, with priority given to City residents.

- C. Marketing, Special Events, Waterfront Operations - Jack Browand, Division Chief- **See Staff Report**. Browand reviewed next steps to be taken following the previous week's joint meeting of the Waterfront and Park and Recreation Commissions that received a status report on the Olin design team's Waterfront landscape design and how the flood mitigation plan is being fit into it. He said Olin work sessions are set with the Planning Commission April 1, 2014 and City Council on April 8, 2014. The Planning Commission plans a public hearing on June 3 and City Council's public hearing is set for June 14.

- D. Park Planning, Design & Capital Development Reports – Ron Kagawa, Division Chief and Team. **See Staff Reports**.
 - Kagawa reviewed the Ghezzi-Poillucci memo to Commissioners about upgrades to Rec Center HVAC systems - completed, ongoing, or planned - for the FY12-FY17 project being done by the Departments of RPCA and General Service. Ghezzi said the HVAC upgrades will improve patron and staff health and safety, and increase the comfort of those using the recreation centers.
 - CIP Update: Kagawa reviewed highlights of a memo to P&RC by the Director and Beth Carton that compares the FY14 CIP plan and proposed FY15 CIP changes. He said there will be public input until Council adopts the FY15 budget. Kagawa said the challenge is how to balance the best investments for the future with return on investment (ROI), the Needs Assessment, operational impacts and safety and health issues. He said these factors will help set priorities for the park planning process.

- E. FY15 Proposed Budget and CIP Summary - James Spengler, Director RPCA - **See Staff Reports**: 1. FY2015-2024 Capital Improvement Program Update – Summary of Changes from FY2014-2023; 2. RPCA FY15 Budget Summary Reductions and Increases; 3. FY2015 Department Budget Summary; 4. City of Alexandria, Virginia Forecast Scenarios. The Director reviewed the reports with the Commission. See reports for details.

VI. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. Waterfront Commission - Gina Baum: said a meeting was held Tuesday, discussed Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) options, and members of the ODBC attended. Two presentations were held for Robinson Terminal North and South. She had a picture of the new Blackwell Hitch restaurant that will soon move to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).

- B. Youth Sport Committee - Brian McPherson - absent.

- C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes- no report. Wedeles said there is a joint task force and Arlandria Implementation Advisory Group April 23, 90% design for Four Mile Project. Staff will also be discussing Alexandria Renew Pump Station and Mt. Vernon Village and implementation on park, playground and Four Mile Run
- D. Freedmen's Cemetery- no report.
- E. ACPS & Capital Improvements - Judy Guse-Noritake- absent.
- F. Ft. Ward - Ripley Forbes - See update above -Item IV.
- G. ACPS School Projects - Judy Guse-Noritake - absent.
- H. Jefferson Houston School - William Cromley- absent.
- I. Open Space - Judy Guse-Noritake - absent.
- J. Braddock Plan Park- Judy Guse-Noritake - absent.
- K. Patrick Henry School Update – no update.
- L. Aquatics Update - Jennifer Atkins said she will provide update at next meeting.
- M. Eisenhower West - Judy Coleman, Vice Chair. Coleman said the meeting was cancelled for this month. They are running an on-line survey. Durham will send link for survey.

VII. Public Comments Received:

- Elizabeth Wright thanked the P&RC for its letter on King Street bicycle lanes project.
- Jim Durham Chair, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), thanked the P&RC for their support and said when he met with the Chair (Noritake) Twenty-two years earlier she had started a P&RC sub-committee that grew into BPAC. He discussed with her the idea of the BPAC reconnecting with the P&RC and a concerted effort for BPAC to become more pedestrian focused around Four-Mile Run and Mt. Vernon Avenue. On April 21 there will be a Complete Streets and Pedestrian Safety Meeting is at the Lee Center. The Bicycle Master Plan that will be updated soon and the P&RC will be invited to comment.

VIII. Agenda items for April 17, 2014, meeting and location are to be determined.

IX. List of upcoming public meetings - a list was submitted as part of the package.

Brune motioned to adjourn the meeting, Adkins seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.