City of Alexandria, Virginia

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 17, 2016, 7 p.m.

Park Operations
2900A Business Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22304

Summary

Minutes

Commission Members: Jennifer Atkins, Chair; Judith Coleman, Vice Chair; Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Jesse O’Connell, Catherine Poulin. Excused: Brian McPherson

RPCA Staff: James Spengler, Director; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design & Capital Development; Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations, Dan Roush, Park Operations, Margaret Orlando, Division Chief, Recreation Services. Absent: William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services.

Guests: Dawnielle Miller, Executive Director, Casa Chirilagua, Angie Alvarado, Casa Chirilagua, and Mathew Walsh.

I. Call to Order: Chair Jennifer Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Presentations:


The presentation is posted at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRC17Nov2016OpenSpaceNPY.pdf

The current shopping center in North Potomac Yard was designed to serve the community for approximately 20 years. In 2010, a Small Area Plan (SAP) was completed for the 70 acre site. The current property owners are requesting some changes to the 2010 plan, which has triggered a public process to update the SAP. The update will focus on the movie theater site east of Potomac Avenue. Changes to the Open Space network include additional square footage for the Potomac Yard Park extension, a new Retail Park with public access and private maintenance/programming, and a new Metro Plaza adjacent to the metro station to accommodate the pedestrian, bike, and transit uses. The planning process is exploring modifying the stormwater management pond in the existing Potomac Yard Park at East Glebe Road, and the potential impacts of a new Pump Station adjacent to Four Mile Run. In order to place a pump station in the park, significant work will need to be done with the developer and Alexandria Renew to integrate it into the park fabric and minimize the impact. The Open Space
network was discussed at the North Potomac Yard Advisory Board Meeting. The commission members highlighted the importance of bikes and bike infrastructure, different types of desired uses in the parks, limitations of active programming, and emphasized connectivity to the larger park network.

**Commission Comments:** Atkins said RPCA staff has done a great job on the project and the Plan includes many of the Commission’s ideas including connectivity. She is pleased to see this come together before the Advisory Committee although more discussion is needed on parks. Brune said that there are no dog areas in the plan or waste receptacles, and that a water source is also needed. Atkins said discussion about the Park Road is to not to make it an actual road, but to have different types of paved uses, with the ability to close it down for events. She said the developer is in favor of this. Baum suggested using similar paving options as in the Waterfront Plan as a way to help define transition spaces.

Znidersic said dog runs are listed as a possible use. The existing Potomac Yard Park has a deed restriction that limits the use to open space in perpetuity. Staff is discussing with Planning & Zoning, T&ES, and the Developer about adjusting a proposed roadway so it does not cross the property line. RPCA does not recommend this road connection and is working with its partners on a solution. In response to Beggs’ question about the storm water detention pond, Znidersic said it will remain, and some additional improvements may be made when the Metrorail station is built. The Advisory Board will continue to meet in 2017, the P&RC will be updated in April 2017, and a public hearing is planned with City Council and Planning Commission in May/June 2017.

III. **Items for Information**

a. **Public Comments – non-agenda items:** None.

b. **Updates:** Jack Browand, See Staff Report:

   i. **AlexRenew/Limerick Field:** Since the last P&RC meeting staff has met twice with AlexRenew who continues to make repairs to the field, however some punch-list items still need completion, expected by end of 2016, or early 2017. The field may be available early spring 2017.

   ii. **Windmill Hill Park Restoration:** The City was involved in a lawsuit after Award of the Contract. That has ended and efforts are being made to rebid the project. The City is planning to begin construction around March 2017.

   iii. **Warwick Pool Rebuild:** The design was completed and is within budget. The City plans to release the bid by the end of the month. Bids and estimates are expected by the end of January. If bids are within budget, construction can begin and the pool can be built and open by summer 2017.
Other: **Fitzgerald Square Update:** As a result of poor soil conditions where the Beachcomber building was located, the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) is behind schedule completing their new building by a few months. Construction was anticipated to be completed by summer 2017. However, the City may begin demolition in early 2018 with delivery of new park late summer of 2018 or early fall. Refined designs will be brought forward to the P&RC and Waterfront Commission in early 2017. They are moving forward with the Special Use Permit (SUP) Application.

iv. **CASA Chirilagua/Conservatory Center:**

Dawnielle Miller, Executive Director, and Co-founder of Casa Chirilagua gave the presentation. The presentation is posted at: [https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRC17Nov2016Chirilagua.pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRC17Nov2016Chirilagua.pdf)

Casa Chirilagua, a local non-profit has partnered with the City’s Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) to lease the space at the Four Mile Run “Conservatory Center”, 4109 Mt. Vernon Avenue to establish a permanent home for the Center, and to provide community based programs, i.e. (After School Programs, Youth Development Programs, Mentoring Programs, Parent and Family Engagement Activities, Summer Programs for Youth, Community Activities, Leadership Development and Family Strengthening Programs - See Presentation).

**Background:** Miller said many years ago she and some friends were motivated by their faith to move into the diverse community of Arlandria where they could make a difference. They listened to and engaged the community to see what their needs were. They found that many parents wanted their children to get the education they did not receive. Miller said one of the co-founders was a teacher, and together they started a reading program in their apartment (See Presentation). Angie Alvarado, now a sophomore at T.C. Williams H.S. was one of the first children in the program. Miller said they met and established a formal mentoring relationship, and have been meeting over the last eight years. Miller said Casa Chirilagua is committed to helping the Arlandria community and its people and being a relational bridge. She said their organization consists of parent committee officers (4), staff members (10), board members (12), churches (20+) and many other partners, (90) children and young adults and 50+ volunteers city-wide. In the future, one goal is to develop and empower more community leaders. She said the new Center will serve as a permanent home for Casa Chirilagua which has been operating programs out of homes, apartments, rented space, local churches, etc. She said the challenge with not having a permanent space was having to set-up and tear-down each day and end programs by 6:30 p.m. The new Center will allow for expanded programming on evenings and weekends. The new facility will be built out and retrofitted with an HVAC system. Miller said the lease will begin in September 2016 and their construction permit was approved in October. She reviewed the two proposed design layouts for the Center (See Presentation). The Center will be designed as flexible space to allow for a variety of programming and will be ADA accessible, and will be made
available to the public and other partners when not being used for programs (See Presentation). Angie said her dreams for the new Center are to see more support provided to high school students with homework, and encouragement for teens to attend college. She said “Casa” can help and is a safe place for middle school children. Miller said construction is scheduled to be completed by January 27, 2017, and a grand opening will be scheduled after construction.

Atkins thanked Ms. Miller for coming and said the P&RC supports this Partnership with the community.

IV. Items for Action:

a. Approval of Minutes: September 15 and October 20, 2016.

September 15, 2016: O’Connell moved to approve the minutes, Brune seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote with Baum abstaining due to not being present at this meeting.

October 20, 2016: O’Connell moved to approve the minutes, Brune seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

b. Special Meeting: Planning Process for Cameron Run Regional Park:

Browand said an Offer of Award was recently made to a contractor to manage the process, and the review group is awaiting a response, which should occur within a week or so. Discussions are underway with the City Manager’s Office about the date of a potential City Council meeting. RPCA staff will provide an opportunity for the P&RC to comment on the planning process prior to the January 10, 2017 meeting. Browand recommended the P&RC hold a special meeting in early December to discuss the project, following contractor acceptance of award. The P&RC reached consensus to hold a meeting on December 15th, 7 p.m. Browand said the consultant Michael Baker Group will attend.

c. Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center Update: Browand said the Patrick Henry plans will go to City Council and Planning Commission in December 6 and 12 respectively. Information was presented to the P&RC in September 2016. Browand said some residents are concerned about parking and the location of the Recreation Center entrance on Latham St. Other concerns are programming hours and potential increased noise. Browand said the new Center will have designated parking during operating hours. He asked that the P&RC provide a Letter of Endorsement of the Recreation Center Plan. MOTION: Beggs moved that the P&RC write a letter in support of the new Patrick Henry Recreation Center Plan, O’Connell seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Chair Atkins will draft the letter.

V. Director’s Report: James Spengler, Director.

a. FY18 Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP): The Director briefed the Commission on the FY18 Budget process and Planned Capital Projects Holds per City Manager (See Attachment: FY2018 Budget Adjustment Instructions, Morgan Routt, Director OMB). Capital Improvement Program
(CIP): The CIP has a 10 year current approved Projects Plan. Departments were asked to rank each project by the highest priority. RPCA Project Holds: The City Manager has placed a hold on the “Chinquapin 50-meter” pool project. The $1.4 million contract with Hughes Group for the schematic design prior to bid phase is on hold. The other CIP issue is ACPS’ request to use the Lee Center to build another school or as swing space. ACPS has two requests: 1. To use the entire Lee Center site, or 2. To add modular classrooms to house 800 students, while allowing RCPA to continue operating in the Lee Center. The City has hired a consultant to study the situation and General Services is the lead agency.

Operating Budget: 5% target reduction target ($1,077,000). Spengler said the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved use of revenue to offset budget reductions.

VI. Division Updates:


Park Planning updates: Marina/Spanish Ship Galleon Visit and Tours: Browand said the ship’s visit and was very successful. 6800 tickets were sold, earning RPCA $5100 in revenue after expenses. In addition, 500 complimentary tickets for youth were donated, and the business community paid he ship’s docking fees. Commissioners Baum and O’Connell said the event was well attended.

The Annual Tree Light Ceremony: is scheduled for Friday, November 29th at City Hall - Market Square, and the King Street tree lights will be placed on this weekend.

VII. Commission Business:

a. Verbal Reports from Commissioners by District:

District I: Baum, O’Connell, Poulin.
Old Town North: O’Connell said the group recently met (he was unable to attend) and feedback was that they have the draft Open Space Plan. Browand said he will share the draft Open Space, Recreation & Cultural Activities chapter with the P&RC. To view plan go to https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Old_TownNorth_SAP_2015-2017/OTNSAPUpdateOpenSpaceWorkingDraft110716.pdf

District II: Atkins, Beggs.
Atkins said she is pleased that RPCA’s Park Plans are being discussed when she attends Advisory Committee meetings.

District III: Brune, Coleman, McPherson (absent) No updates
VIII. **Next Meeting:** December 15, 2016, special meeting to discuss the planning process for Cameron Run Park, tentative location Charles Houston or Mt. Vernon Centers.

IX. **Adjourned:** 8:48 p.m.