P&R Commission:

Present: Jennifer Sands Atkins, Chair (District 2); Gina Baum (District 1); Liz Birnbaum (District 1); Abby Froemming (District 3); Brian McPherson (District 3); Connor Rex (HS Youth rep); Barbara Marvin (District 1)

Excused: Judy Coleman, Vice Chair (District 3); Matthew Walsh, Secretary (District 2); Stephen Beggs, (District 2);

Absent: Detriona Johnson (HS Youth)

RPCA Staff: James Spengler, Director; Jack Browand, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design & CIP; Tiffany Marbury, Executive Assistant to Director; Laura Durham, Division Chief, Recreation Services; Bob Williams, Division Chief, Park Operations; Dana Wedeles, Principal Planner, Park Planning; Kelly Gilfillen, Marketing Manager, RPCA; Lindsay Burneson, Recreation Manager, RPCA.

Guests: Katherine Dixon, Rebuilding Together Alexandria; Catherine Corp; Delphine Lee; Deviz Turkren; Andrea Spruch, R.C. Fields & Assoc.; Elliott Waters; Jacob and Susan Parull, Tim Snowden, John and Jane Zimmerman, Terry Wright, Monika Thiele, homeowner; Lore Esfahani, homeowner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Tim Snowden, parent of a participant in the Alexandria Titans Tackle Football league, spoke about his concerns involving the program. His concerns include lack of safety, lack of transparency, lack of consistency, and poor communication.

Chair Atkins stated there are other parents that have shared some of the same concerns. Laura Durham (Recreation Services) verified that there is a public meeting to discuss these concerns on January 30, at the Lee Center.

Follow-Up: Chair Atkins asked that Commission member Brian McPherson attend the January 30 meeting.
III. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATION

a. RPCA Photo Contest Winners
Lindsay Burneson (Recreation Manager) reported that RPCA recently held its first Annual Photo Contest. Local amateur and professional photographers submitted photos that represent scenes from City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities parks, centers, programs, or events. The contest received fifty-one submissions and 256 public votes. Ms. Burneson displayed the winning photos, and presented winners with an award and an RPCA gift certificate.

2017 Photo Contest:

b. Rebuild Together Alexandria Grant Projects
Dana Wedeles (Principal Planner, Park Planning) reported on two projects that are currently underway through a partnership with Rebuilding Together Alexandria. Rebuilding Together Alexandria received grants from Neighbor Works for revitalization projects in Arlandria. Portions of those grants will fund two park sites (Dale Street Garden and 3550 Commonwealth Ave. Park). The next public meeting is January 22, at Chick Armstrong Recreation Center.

i. Dale Street Garden
“Dale Street Garden” posted at:

Wedeles discussed the process in which residents participated in a survey to share their preferences, receiving 85 responses, with 71% of surveyors living within ¼ mile of the site. Through the survey they also viewed 17 different garden options and voted on their preference to serve as a model for design. Wedeles stressed that management of the garden is a top priority, and stated that a partnership with a community organization would be ideal.

Katherine Dixon (Rebuilding Together Alexandria) reported that 100 volunteers would work for 3 days straight to build the garden.

Chair Atkins opened up the floor for guests to comment:
Monika Thiele (Resident) – Recognized Wedeles for ongoing communication with area residents. Ms. Thiele shared her concerns on the large responsibility of managing the garden, and was interested in the management plan once it has been determined. She is also interested in the environmental effects.

Catherine Corp (Resident) – Voiced concerns that the community garden will look like the one in a neighboring jurisdiction that seems mismanaged. She does not want tall corn in her backyard.
Lore Esfahani (Resident) – Ms. Esfahani recently purchased her home that faces the new garden park. She is concerned about management of the area and maintaining her privacy.

The Commission commented that it would be convenient for gardeners to have a pull-up and drop-off area.

Atkins thanked guests for sharing their concerns, and stated that someone from the Commission will be attending the community meeting on January 22. She stated, “Dana has done a great job with other partnerships, and we are happy that she is working on this one.”

ii. 3550 Commonwealth Avenue Park

“3550 Commonwealth Avenue” posted at:
https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/Public%20Meeting%20Presentation_20180118.pdf

Presenters Qiaojue Yu from Rhodeside & Harwell and Andrea Spruch from R.C. Fields discussed the location of the park and the features and amenities the community has requested.

Commission Discussion

The Commission inquired if permeable pavement is a consideration. Wedeles stated that cost is the main factor for not using that option throughout the site, rather than just in the plaza. However, they are always looking for new technology that offers the same benefits at a lower cost. The project will go to Planning & Zoning at the end of January.

Chair Atkins opened up the floor for guests to comment:

Catherine Corp (Resident) - Stated that she was very excited about the site, and that Wedeles has been doing a great job. She mentioned that when she moved to the Hume Springs neighborhood years ago, the area of Commonwealth Avenue was not safe. The City bought the substation and tore it down. Neighbors and community members spent weeks putting the area back together. Over the years, the City and private companies have made it a great place.

Katherine Dixon (ReBuilding Together Alexandria) stated that this project is the fifth partnership with the City. ReBuilding Together Alexandria typically sends volunteers into the homes of low-income homeowners throughout the City of Alexandria to provide free home repairs. Over the last 30 years, they served 20-25 homeowners in the Hume Springs area. The natural step after the home repair is to provide residents with outside spaces that are safe and healthy. They are thrilled to be working on these projects. Many volunteers are engineers and love to tackle these projects.

IV. ITEMS FOR ACTION

a. Approval of Minutes: November 16, 2018

Froemming moved and Baum seconded the approval of the November 16, 2018 minutes. The Commission approved the motion by unanimous voice vote.
V. PROJECT UPDATES

a. **Warwick Pool** - Browand reported that the pool went through the substantial completion walk through. The pool will open Memorial Day weekend 2018. More details are forthcoming.

b. **Waterfront Projects**

   i. **Interim Fitzgerald Square/Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) site**

      Browand reported that there is a lot of progress at the ODBC site, and King Street Waterfront Park (temporary name). Per the agreement with ODBC, the City is to maintain utility service to the piers throughout the process. The City will obtain full possession of the Boat Club property by February 1. Demolition will start in March, and park construction will begin in April. The park should be available by mid-fall, barring any unforeseen setbacks.

   ii. **Windmill Hill Park Shoreline**

      Browand reported that the Windmill Hill Park Shoreline project continues to be on schedule. It’s anticipated that the park will be functional by early spring. The Union Street corridor improvements will fall behind schedule due to the continuous construction activity of the Robinson South neighborhood. Those improvements will likely be a separate project planned 6 months to 1 year from now. Dredging will start at the foot of Oronoco Street in 2-3 weeks. Upon completion of the mitigation project, West Point Park will reopen to the public.

      Other waterfront projects include the Point Lumley connection, a walkway that will stretch from the foot of Prince Street and connect to the 210 Strand open space. This will begin the process of having a continuous waterfront walk. Within 18 months, the plan is to have a continuous walkway from Oronoco Street to Jones Point Park.

c. **Cameron Run Regional Park Planning Process**

   Browand reported direction from the public hearing last December, are to explore partnership opportunities with Nova parks. The agreement would have to meet the seven priorities previously established including year round activity, reducing the size of the property, and providing use of additional spaces to the City. The deadline to create a partnership agreement is September 2018. If the deadline passes without an agreement, the recommendation will likely be to let the lease end and start a planning process for when it expires.

**Commission Discussion:**

Browand noted that participation from both the P&RC and the NOVA Park Board is essential to creating the partnership. Atkins has been, and will continue to be involved in meetings. The next meeting is in two weeks, and will gage interest in what the partnership will look like. Atkins also encourages the Commission and the public to share their ideas for the park space with the planning staff. She agreed with Browand’s mention of the need for regular dialog with the Alexandria representatives of the Board and the idea of having them sit in on P&RC meetings throughout the
year. The Commission agreed that those meetings would help bridge what seems like a “disconnect” between the Board and the Commission.

**Follow-Up:** Atkins will provide contact information for the NOVA Park Board members, and encourages Commission members to contact them. She also noted that monthly Commission meetings would provide continuous updates.

d. **All Veterans Park**
Browand reported that while following up on the incident that happened in the park and speaking with the Alexandria Police Department, the incident is thought to be random and possibly a family issue. However, improvements identified through the planning process begin this spring. Improvements include a seasonal shade structure, picnic improvements, and visibility improvements. Scheduled completion of improvements is fall of this year.

e. **West End Park & Programming Forum**
Browand reported that there is a meeting scheduled for January 31, at Patrick Henry Elementary School to hear from the community and provide the community with updates. Similar meetings will occur yearly for each park planning district. He encourages members of the Commission to attend.

**VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
a. **FY19 Budget**
“RPCA FY 2019 Budget Preparation Process” can be found at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/FY19BudgetPreparationPRCjan2018.pdf

Director Spengler reported that the funding for the FY19 budget process starts July 1, 2018. RPCA has completed internal meetings with the City Manager and Office of Management and Budget. The City Manager is considering everything and will make his recommendation to City Council on February 20. RPCA’s target for reduction is $426,000. Reaching that target involves reductions and/or revenue increases. Park Operations and Recreation Services provide the majority of the reductions. Reductions for Park Operations would include less cycles of maintenance, i.e. less frequent mowing and trash pickup. Recreation Services offered a vacant FTE as a reduction. Park Operations supplemental funding request includes restoring maintenance to open spaces and park areas. Recreation Services supplemental funding request of $524,286 reflects the funding needed for the new Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

“Patrick Henry Full Service Recreation Center Information” can be found at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PatrickHenryRecreationPRCJan2018.pdf

Spengler went on to update the Commission on the new Patrick Henry Recreation Center project. From July 1 to mid-December, Recreation Services will operate out of the old Patrick Henry Recreation Center. The transition will take place over the holiday break, with full services running in the new facility by January 2.
Commission Discussion:
The Commission inquired about cost recovery for the new center, and why budget reductions do not include the Torpedo Factory or Office of the Arts. Spengler advised that cost recovery is 40%, that the Torpedo Factory is self-sustaining, and that all reductions are proportional. The City will hold workshops on the budget process that are open to the public. Notification of workshops related to RPCA will be forthcoming.

VII. DIVISION UPDATES: Recreation Services; Park Operations; Park Planning, CIP & Marina
Division updates (staff reports) posted at:

Broward reminded the Commission that the renaming ceremony of the Cora Kelly Recreation Center to the Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center is tomorrow night.

VIII. COMMISSION REPORTS (verbal reports by District)
DISTRICT 1: Gina Baum had no information to report. Liz Birnbaum reported the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) groups have had two meetings. The City has tried to eliminate raw sewage run out that occurs at four locations after a substantial rainstorm. The legislature has adopted a law that states the problem needs to be resolved in a specific amount of time. Three options are under consideration to resolve the problem quickly. Options include storage tanks, and building conveyance tunnels to AlexRenew. The next meeting will include presentations on cost estimates of the three options and community impacts. All three options include an underground tunnel running under Hoof's Run, which goes under the African American Memorial Park. Other concerns include a rate increase and its effect on low-income communities.

DISTRICT 2: Jennifer Sands Atkins stated that several families pulled their kids out of the tackle football program due to safety concerns and concerns that the program violates the bylaws of the league. She suggested that the notification of the meeting on January 30 reaches a large pool of parents, not just last season’s participants. It is important that the Commission attends the meeting, and follow up is provided at the next Commission meeting.

Commission Discussion:
Commissioners inquired why the football program does not have a board. Staff explained that in the past football was large enough to have its own league. When registration declined, a combined Fairfax tackle football league formed. The goal is to transition from 100% City owned with volunteer support, to 100% volunteer led with the City’s support (similar to an affiliate organization). The transition was initially to be over a 3-year period. However, there are a few challenges that have prolonged the shift. Steps completed towards the transition, include becoming a 501c3 organization and creating a Facebook page and football program website. Challenges that remain are the programs manner of operation, safety concerns, and declining enrollment. From a safety perspective, each coach goes through a certification program and a “heads up” football best
practices program. The Commission inquired if having a staff person that is solely responsible for assisting in the transition would be something to consider. Staff stated there is a group of people that are forming bylaws to create a board. The upcoming meeting will discuss their progress and the concerns voiced by parents.

DISTRICT 3: Abby Froemming and Brian McPherson had no new information to report. Jennifer Atkins attended a meeting on the Dominion transmission line project. Dominion needs to install a new power line to handle capacity issues in the Alexandria area. They are currently reviewing options presented to handle the issue. There is an option that includes running the line along Potomac Avenue. The next meeting will discuss this option in more detail. Conner Rex updated the Commission on the fact that Chinquapin Park visitors bring their dogs to the park and do not clean up behind them. Durham stated that she would arrange to have designated trashcans installed for dog walkers at Chinquapin Park.

Atkins stated that she would schedule a one on one meeting with all Commission members since there was not a January retreat. The one on one is an opportunity for members to share their interests, and ideas of what the Commission should focus on. Broward has provided a working draft of agenda items for upcoming meetings, which is located on the back page of the packet.

IX. FEBRUARY MEETING ITEMS – Working Draft Attached
Follow up on the football program and the outcome of the meeting at end of month.

X. NEXT MEETING
February 15, 2018 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

XI. ADJOURNMENT
At 9:25 p.m., Baum moved and McPherson seconded meeting adjournment. A unanimous voice vote approved the motion.