CALL TO ORDER
Jennifer Sands Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

PUBLIC HEARING

FY 2019 Community Matching Fund
Dana Wedeles (Principal Planner, Park Planning) explained what the Community Matching Fund is, and how it is used. Established in FY17, the fund is part of the PARKnership Program. It provides one-to-one matching dollars for groups that offer fundraising for recreation improvement projects. There is a total of $100,000 of City funds available each year. The City will match anywhere from $5,000 to $25,000 per project which allows a minimum of four projects each year. The community groups that apply must live or work in the City. They must show that they provide a public benefit, and that the benefits of the
Project are available to all community members. Projects must be on City owned property, and the group must show that they can raise their portion of the funding within one year. The community match can be through volunteer hours if they can demonstrate that those hours equal the monetary match. This year, the program received ten applications, which is the most to date. After the review process, six of the ten proposed projects received a recommendation. Wedeles went on to state that we will review the six recommended projects, before briefly discussing the other four. She proceeded to introduce the following projects:

**Project: Simpson Triangle**
**Applicant:** Del Ray Citizens Association – Annie Ebbers & Kathleen Kerty
Wedeles stated that the project is the triangle site located at East Bellefonte Avenue and Route 1. The proposal is to add trees, a meadow, planting of wild flowers and seating. The project is consistent with the 2014 Simpson Improvement Plan. Wedeles invited representatives of the project to address the Commission.

**Commission Discussion**
The Commission asked Ms. Annie Ebbers about the source of funding. Ebbers stated that much of the funding would include volunteers hours, however, they are confident that fundraising would be successful as well. Beggs asked if there was gate access from the soccer fields to this area currently. Ebbers stated that there is no current access, and adding access is not included in the project. Wedeles stated that one of the reasons for not having access from the soccer fields is to discourage field users from parking in the neighborhoods. Atkins asked about a water source on the property. Wedeles replied that there is not a water source, but one of the maintenance considerations would be to set up a contract for watering via watering trucks. Atkins asked about the cost associated with providing water to the area. Wedeles stated that to have a water fountain, there would need to be a water meter, which is a significant expense. The plants and trees in that area would be low maintenance and would only need two years of water before they are self-sufficient. Coleman asked how this project differs from the Park Plan. Wedeles indicated that the Park Plan calls for a plaza, and proposes a pathway to connect bus commuters through the park and the neighborhood. This project does not preclude either of those options. Atkins asked if there were a reduction in the contribution, would the project still go forward. Ebbers stated that it would.

**Project: Lee Center Playground Improvements**
**Applicant:** Kelley Cares Foundation – Lindsay Swanson
Wedeles explained that this project includes improvements to the playground located behind Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center that would then make it wheelchair accessible. The proposal is to add tack tile walls, new equipment, a new play surface, wheelchair ramps, and a widened walkway. Wedeles invited representatives of the project to address the Commission.
Commission Discussion
Atkins asked Ms. Swanson if the project required removal of existing equipment, and what was the lifespan of the current playground equipment installed in 2004. Swanson stated that the plan would consist of removal, but the goal is to repurpose and kept as much as possible. Wedeles stated that the lifespan of equipment is 15-20 years. Coleman asked how frequently the playground is used. Swanson stated that the Nannie J. Lee afterschool program, Therapeutic Recreation program, mommy and me groups, and families in the neighboring community use the playground. Coleman asked how many people participate in the Therapeutic Recreation program. Swanson stated that its approx. 50 throughout the week. Atkins asked if there were a reduction in the contribution, would the project still go forward. Swanson stated that it would.

Project: Powhatan Park Improvements
Applicant: Northeast Old Town Civic Association – Rick Cooper and Mary Jane Kramer
Wedeles stated that the project consist of removing the shrubs along the alley and replacing them with a different shrub. It also asks that the city provide tables and benches in the concrete area, along with a fountain and water meter. Wedeles invited representatives of the project to address the Commission.

Commission Discussion
Froemming wanted clarification on the number of shrubs that need replacement. Mrs. Kramer stated that the project requires removal of approximately 180 shrubs. Mr. Cooper stated that the park is not welcoming or inviting. Removing the large thorn bushes is the number one priority in improving the site. The association will use neighborhood volunteers as well as an inmate work detail to assist with the project. This is the only open space in the immediate area. The removal will take up to four weeks. Atkins agreed that the park is much needed space in that community.

Project: Ramsey House Visitors Center
Applicant: The Garden Club of Alexandria – Virginia Rocen and Vicki Boguess
Wedeles stated that the visitor’s center is located on King Street. The area is popular for welcoming tourists to the City. The 1956 garden is in need of renovations, and the Garden Club has put together a planting plan that also includes additional seating, water fountains, and cellphone charging stations. Wedeles invited representative of the project to address the Commission.

Commission Discussion
Ms. Rocen stated that staff at the Ramsey House Visitor Center asked for the Garden Club’s assistance. The last known renovation of the garden dates back to 1956. Many of the boxwoods are over grown and out of control. The total cost of the project is $109,000. The Garden Club has paid $20,000 to the landscape architect. The remaining cost is $89,000. The Club plans to use as many of the existing boxwoods as possible. The plan does call for irrigation, which is critical in keeping the property hydrated. There has been an agreement made that the City will take care of the hardscape and mulch, while the Club will take care of the plant material, including trimming and replacement. Baum asked about possible removal of literature bins. Wedeles responded that
literature boxes could be a challenge to remove. Baum asked if the existing stonewall is sturdy. Ms. Rocen stated that it was. Atkins asked if there were a reduction in the contribution, would the project still go forward. Ms. Rocen stated that it would.

**Project:** Hunter/Miller Park Playground  
**Applicant:** Hopkins House – Glenn Hopkins

Wedeles stated that this project includes upgrades to playground equipment to ensure that they meet regulations for preschool participants. Wedeles invited representatives of the project to address the Commission.

**Commission Discussion**
Glenn Hopkins, President of Hopkins House, stated that in 2016 a licensing inspector indicated the playground equipment is not appropriate for children under age 5. Mr. Hopkins introduced Mark Solomon and Allen Irwin. Mr. Solomon is a parent of a preschooler at Helen Day Academy, and he stated that the park is frequently used. This playground is the main playground for preschool-age children. Mr. Hopkins stated that he has been working with the city to look at modifying the current equipment to make it safe for younger children. The total cost is $13,000, and the parents in that community have raised $3,200 toward that amount. Atkins asked if the suggested upgrades to the playground would continue to serve neighborhood kids as they grow. Mr. Solomon indicated that the playground would continue to serve the neighborhood children for year to come.

**Project:** Monticello Park Improvements  
**Applicant:** Alexandria Country Day School - Elizabeth Lockwood & Chris Ros  
**Video Presentation:** [https://vimeo.com/269664343](https://vimeo.com/269664343)

Wedeles stated that project proposes to work with the City to inventory the trees and plant species in the park, add educational signage, help clean the streambed, and make improvements to the picnic areas. Wedeles invited representatives of the project to address the Commission.

**Commission Discussion**
Both Ms. Lockwood and Mr. Ros stated that the park is heavily used. Three seventh graders from Alexandria Country Day School addressed the Commission and shared why the project was important to them. Mr. Ros stated that many different types of birds that come to the area. There is also a unique eco-system in the park, which is a huge educational tool. The project would include the use of QR codes that walkers could use to access the work that the kids are doing, as well as educate the public on the types of tree species in that park. Mr. Beggs asked if the group has conducted a preliminary survey. Mr. Ros stated that they have conducted surveys. Atkins asked when the project would commence. Ms. Lockwood stated that they plan to start the planning process over the summer, hit the ground running at the beginning of the school year, with a completion date in the spring.

Wedeles stated that four projects did not receive a recommendation for an award this year. They include:
**Project:** Simpson Garden  
**Applicant:** Master Gardeners  
Wedeles stated that the project included drainage improvements in the garden as well as replacing an existing bench, adding a new bench, and replacement of park signs. Wedeles states that a playground is in the preconstruction phase in that area. The recommendation is that improvements take place after construction is complete. The new bench, replacement bench and signage can move forward as planned.

**Project:** Kayak Launch  
**Applicant:** Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation – Kurt Moser and Kevin Beekman  
Wedeles stated that this is a very large project, and it is included in the Park Plan and the Four Mile Run Restoration Plan. The City will continue to work with the applicant on how to design the site and work through the permit process. The project may be eligible for CIP funding and/or grants. Wedeles invited representative of the project to address the Commission. Mr. Moser asked for a show of hands of people that enjoy kayaking tubing and water sports. Of those that raised their hands, he went on to ask how many of have done that activity launching from the City of Alexandria. He noted that there are not many locations in the area to launch. Mr. Moser offered to take any interested Commission member out for kayaking at Four Mile Run. Wedeles thanked him for all of the work he has done to activate the site, including programming and cleanups at the park.

**Project:** Lyles-Crouch Inclusive Playground  
**Applicant:** Lyles Crouch PTA  
Wedeles indicated that the Lyles-Crouch Project is not eligible because it is on school property and that only playgrounds attached to recreation centers are eligible for the Community Matching Fund.

**Project:** Garden Fencing  
**Applicant:** Chinquapin Garden Advisory Board  
Wedeles stated that the Chinquapin Garden project included putting up a fence around the garden. The group must complete additional outreach efforts by contacting all garden members for feedback.

**Commission Discussion**
Atkins wants to challenge her District 3 representatives to locate needed projects in the area. Baum would like to see a project at Ewald Park. Wedeles markets heavily to all of the community groups on the West End, and met with the West End Business Association about the Matching Fund. Atkins noted that she appreciates the changes in the Community Matching Fund process that catches issues early on, and that groups are utilizing volunteers. Coleman asked about any process improvements for next year. Wedeles stated that one applicant brought in their technical group, and it would be nice to meet with them earlier in the process. She also plans to have Planning & Zoning reviewing specific projects at an earlier stage.

**IV. REGULAR MEETING BEGINS – PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATION**
a. **King Street Park at the Waterfront Activation Update**

Jack Browand (Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and CIP) stated that the current waterfront plan includes a specific role to activate the waterfront. The City has a Special Events Policy that limits the amount of activities within the waterfront district. This district runs from the south of Jonas Point Park, north to Oronoco Bay Park, and west to Washington Street. The policy states that within that district you can have one major event per week and not back-to-back weekends. This limits the area to two events per month. As part of the FY19 budget process, the City Manager recommended a public/private partnership with Visit Alexandria and a number of organizations. The City contributes $175,000 in the general fund, and Visit Alexandria raises $175,000. These funds are to enhance the King Street Corridor as well as the waterfront. Browand stated that they are proposing a one-year pilot to present to City Council. The pilot would allow increased activation within the new King Street Park. Browand introduced Patricia Washington (Executive Director of Visit Alexandria), who stated that there would be large signature events, but the majority of the programs would be ongoing activation programs for residents and visitors. Browand plans to present this to City Council on June 13, followed by a public hearing. If successful, planning for next year would start immediately.

**Commission Discussion**

Baum confirmed with Browand that the Waterfront Commission is writing a letter of support. Atkins asked if Browand requests a letter of support from this Commission. Browand stated that it would be helpful.

**Motion**

Baum moved and Beggs seconded a motion to write a letter to City Council in support of the pilot program and further addressing a change in the special events policy in the near future, as did the Waterfront Commission. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

V. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**

a. **Approval of Minutes: April 19, 2018**

Baum moved and Beggs seconded the approval of the April minutes. The Commission approved the motion by unanimous voice vote.

VI. **PROJECT UPDATES**

a. **Potomac Yard Metro**

Jack stated that the Washington Post ran an article that was accurate in mentioning the reduction in scope concerning the Metro, but a little less than accurate when discussing the effects on the park. The article was misleading suggesting that as part of the budget reduction, improvements to the park would not occur. Browand stated that the effects due to the recommended change in scope are unknown at this time. The effects may lessen the impact, affecting a smaller portion of the park. He will keep the Commission up to date. Browand noted that Stephen Beggs is the Commission Representative on this project, and Dinesh Tiwari and Beth Znidersic are staff liaisons.
Commission Discussion

Froemming asked for timeline on the project. Browand stated that a timeframe of two years.

b. Waterfront Projects
   i. Founders Park
      Browand indicated that there has been an ongoing problem with a storm water drain at Founders Park. T&ES has designed a workaround that involves placing a short piece of piping in a new manhole that will collect the water and get it out to the river. In addition, funding will repair the trails that frame the southeast corner of the City Marina, as well as its entranceway.
   ii. King Street Waterfront Park
      Browand stated that construction is ongoing, and the project is on schedule for completing in mid-fall. The marina utility will undergo its upgrade soon. It will not affect the utilities that are currently in use. Construction of the new system will take place while the current system is running and a switch over will happen in the fall.
   iii. Windmill Hill Park
      Browand stated that the Park is close to completion. Scope and a northern pier component are now part of the work plan. There will be three water access points within the park (northern water access off the dog park, water access in the north, and the northern pier). The addition of the pier has extended the project, but it is possible the park will open in phases for earlier access.

c. Cameron Run Regional Park Planning Process
   Browand stated that the group met last week to continue to refine what activities could occur that are consistent with the seven principals. The Commission will review a formal summary report and the next steps in July. A Public Hearing with the Commission scheduled for September, with a formal recommendation to City Council this fall. The next meeting is in early June and it will include a site visit.

d. Warwick Pool Update
   Browand stated that the final walkthrough is Monday. The dedication and open house is Thursday, at 6pm, and the pool will be fully open to the public Saturday, May 26.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
a. Proposed FY19 Budget Operating & CIP Budget
   James Spengler (Director, RPCA) announced that the FY19 budget process is complete. None of the proposed reductions was accepted. There were only additions made to the current budget. Important items to note are:
   - The new Patrick Henry Recreation Center received full funding at the amount requested. The center is currently under construction, but projected to open for operation on January 2.
As a full-service center, it will be open 9am-9pm, Monday-Friday, as well as weekend hours.

- 2-years’ worth of reductions to landscaping and mowing were added to the FY19 budget. This has allowed for additional mowing cycles, which the City Manager has asked to start immediately.
- An addition includes hanging baskets placed on King Street from the Metro station to the waterfront starting next week.
- Renovating Market Square is a project that has been in the works with the Beautification Commission and OHA. This would involve new landscaping.
- The waterfront and the new King Street Park received additional funds for maintenance.

Spengler mentioned that a significant change to keep in mind is that this year was a two-year CIP, next year will be a ten-year CIP. The Commission will need to think about what projects they would like to see in relation to parks. The Recreation staff will submit projects of interest, while the Commission advocates for them.

**Commission Discussion**

Coleman asked how the hanging baskets became a subject of the budget. Spengler explained that every year there is a request to do something for King Street. Usually the requests require 3-4 million dollars, and include items like planted tree wells, holiday lighting, outdoor dining, and hanging baskets. Hanging baskets are the fastest and least expensive way to add décor to King Street year-round. The same contractor that maintains the hanging baskets around Market Square is managing this project.

**b. RPCA Department Strategies**

Spengler announced that the RPCA Strategic Plan is complete. He explained that staff had their first opportunity to view the Plan at a recent Town Hall. The group is now working on a strategy to deploy the Plan to all staff. He then referenced the final brochure, and praised Dana Wedeles and her committee for their hard work. In addition, the Committee recognized Wedeles for being named one of 2018’s “40 under 40” by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

**VII. DIVISION UPDATES: Recreation Services; Park Operations; Park Planning, CIP & Marina**

Division updates (staff reports) posted at:

Dinesh Tiwari (Deputy Director, Park Operations) stated that due to heavy rains, there have been some temporary closures of playgrounds, and there may be additional closures over the next few days. Coleman asked about the status of the Natural Resources Plan. Tiwari stated that it is in its final stages, and should be complete by next month. Tiwari also reported that the Ben Brenman Pond Retro Project is out for bid, and that there is a construction delay until September. He ensured that once they secure a contract and a definitive construction start date, they would contact the public with details on construction impacts.
William Chesley (Deputy Director, Recreation Services) stated that the City Track and Field Meet has been moved to Sunday at 1pm due to weather. Registration for summer camps is open and the department is working with ARHA to distribute information.

Wedelles stated that NBC 4 News mentioned the Community Garden project at Dale Street. Over the past two days, the project has had 100 volunteers each day. A community organization is forming and they are working on bylaws to oversee the garden.

VIII. COMMISSION REPORTS (verbal reports by District)
DISTRICT 1: Barbara Marvin had no information to report. Liz Birnbaum Gina Baum

DISTRICT 2: Stephen Beggs had no information to report. Jennifer Atkins reiterated that the FY19 budget results went very well, and thanked staff for keeping the Commission informed throughout the process.

DISTRICT 3: Judy Coleman reported that the next Eisenhower West meeting is on May 24. Brian McPherson and Conner Rex had no information to report.

IX. NEXT MONTH MEETING ITEMS – Working Draft Attached

X. NEXT MEETING
June 21, 2018 at Patrick Henry Recreation Center.

XI. ADJOURNMENT
At 9:05 p.m., Baum moved and Beggs seconded meeting adjournment. A unanimous voice vote approved the motion.