

City of Alexandria, Virginia

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, October 24, 2013, 7:00 p.m.**

**Lee Center- Exhibit Hall  
1108 Jefferson Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

**Minutes**

**PRC Members Present:** Judy Guse-Noritake-Chairperson, Jennifer Atkins, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Rich Brune, Judith Coleman, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Emma Schutzius.

**Excused:** Brian McPherson.

**RPCA Staff Present:** Director James B. Spengler, 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 Development, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, David Ghezzi, Architect, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

**Absent:** William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services and Programs.

**Guests:** Glenn Christianson, Laura Fries, Jeanne Gardner, Carolyn Griglione, Bill Rivers, Taryn Brice-Rowland, Aaron Rowland.

**Presenters:** Tom Mulchay, ACPS-Facilities Department, Kevin Van Hise, Architect, Kimley Horn and Associates.

- I. **Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake.** The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

**Items for Action:**

- II. **Approval of Summary Minutes: September 19, 2013:** Brune motioned to approve the minutes. Beggs seconded. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

**Items for Information and discussion:**

- III. **Division Updates: To View Full Staff Reports please go to:**  
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCCCombinedReport24Oct2013.pdf>

A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley, Deputy Director (absent) - **See Staff Report.**

- B. Park Operations Report – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director- **See Staff Report.**
- C. Marketing, Special Events, Waterfront Operations - Jack Browand, Division Chief - **See Staff Report.** Browand highlighted two upcoming events: 1. November 4, 2013 – The Olin Studio, will hold a community meeting 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at T. C. Williams H.S. Discussion will center on arts, history and programming in connection with the Waterfront SAP. Browand will send out information. The Chair requested that the Olin Group be invited to make a presentation to the P&RC prior to March 2014. 2. Other: November 7, 2013-Special Waterfront Commission meeting with Old Dominion Boat Club and City 5:30-7:00 p.m. at City Hall. November 19, 2013 Special Meeting with City Council to discuss and have a public hearing to examine City’s options, including use of eminent domain for implementing the Waterfront SAP, and resolving the longstanding dispute with ODBC concerning their parking lot and adjacent areas.
- D. Park Planning, Design & Capital Development Reports – Ron Kagawa, Division Chief and Team. - **See Staff Reports.**
1. Active Park Projects including Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) – Update of Selected Projects- See Staff Report.
  2. Active Capital Facilities Maintenance Projects (CFMP) Report – Update on Selected Projects- See Staff Report and Chinquapin Update below.
  3. Chinquapin HVAC Renovation – Progress Update Memorandum – See Staff Report.
  4. Revised Schedule and Process for Updating Recommendations for Continued Implementation of the Open Space Master Plan – See Staff Report and discussion under Commission Reports, Open Space.
- **Presentation-ACPS T.C. Williams Tennis Courts Update: See Staff Report and Plan.** Kagawa introduced Tom Mulcahy, Construction Program Manager, ACPS, Educational Facilities-Planning Design and Construction Office, and Kevin Van Hise, Landscape Architect, Kimley Horn and Associates. ACPS is seeking approval and a letter of support of the updated tennis courts project design from the P&RC. The project is scheduled to go to the Planning Commission on December 3, and City Council on December 14, 2013.  
Action: Brune motioned in support of the Chair writing a letter of support of the tennis courts project design; Atkins seconded. All were in favor. The Chair said she will also underscore the importance of lights on this and other athletic facilities that either the City or ASPS builds.
  - **Chinquapin Recreation Center Reopening-See Staff Report- Chinquapin Recreation Center HVAC Project Update and Construction Progress Photo Journal.** David Ghezzi, Architect, RPCA said that Chinquapin will reopen on November 1<sup>st</sup> as scheduled. The Final storefront will be installed in 6-8 weeks, in the interim a temporary glazing/storefront will be installed in place, virtually indistinguishable

from the final product. All open tasks are on schedule for completion as scheduled with no foreseeable delays.

IV. Director's Report - James Spengler.

- **City Council Docket Memo-Aquatics In Alexandria (Copy Attached):**  
Spengler Director RPCA reviewed the memorandum from Rashad M. Young, City Manager with Commission members. The memorandum contains information and proposed costs of Consultants' recommendations, and staff developed alternatives for the Warwick Village, West End, Lee Center, Old Town, and Colasanto Pools. A feasibility study is underway for Chinquapin as to whether a 50m pool can be built on site. Following the discussion, the Chair asked if the Commission should set up a sub-committee to review aquatics issues and to look at taking a more comprehensive approach. Action: Atkins volunteered to take the lead on this effort with others.  
The Chair will draft a letter with input from the Commissioners. She requested that aquatics be kept on the agenda, and encouraged Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA) to maintain communication with staff and the City.
- **November 19 City Council Hearing on Waterfront-Special Council meeting.**
- The P&RC discussed the issue of the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC), parking lot and to the ownership of "Wales Alley Extended" pending the outcome of on-going litigation.
- Discussion: The Chair reminded the Commission that P&RC and EPC sent a joint letter requesting Wales Alley Extended (the portion of Wales Alley lying east of The Strand) be reclaimed into the public domain and the fence moved to the north side. She shared a letter dated June 14, 2013, sent to Mr. Eric Desoto, Chairmen ODBC, by Mayor Euille (See Attached), See "*Proposal to Resolve ODBC and City Issues*". She reported no formal response has been received from ODBC to date. The City Council is seeking a solution which may include the use of eminent domain to acquire the parking lot to allow greater public access to the waterfront. ODBC has offered some concessions including allowing a public access a 25 ft. walkway and along The Strand for public access along the water, ODBC would keep parking and boats inside perimeter, along with Wales Alley. The P&RC will comment on this issue at the upcoming hearing.
- The Commissioners held a discussion about possible solutions to the ODBC waterfront access issues. Members reiterated the importance of having public access to this area for adequate execution of the Waterfront Plan. The P&RC wants to urge City Council to reclaim Wales Alley Extended. As discussions continue with ODBC all avenues should remain on the table.
- Action: Baum made a motion to support the Chair testifying at the upcoming City Council hearing in support of continued efforts to secure the ODBC parking lot at the foot of King Street for public open space and resubmitting our original letter underscoring the importance of reclaiming Wales Alley

Extended into the public domain. Beggs seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Commission will remain silent on the use of eminent domain.

- **Update- Joint Meeting held with the Waterfront Commission and Park and Recreation Commission.** Judy Noritake gave update- on October 17, 2013 a joint meeting was held on redevelopment of the Robinson Terminal sites (N. & S.). Architects give a presentation and a roundtable discussion was held with members from both Commissions. Charlotte Hall, Chair, Waterfront Commission, took questions from attendees submitted on note cards. The meeting went well. A lot of people requested that the architects not design brick buildings, but create a design that is innovative and exciting and different than what is traditionally done in Old Town. Christine Bernstein, Founders Park commented that the location of the hotel and residential units should be flipped in the plan. Bernstein said that if residential units rather than a hotel are placed on the east side of RTN's mixed use plan it would make the site feel more exclusive than the Waterfront Plan's original concept which had a hotel on the site's east side. Cromley said we should discourage residential development on the waterfront, and that the P&RC should keep abreast of this; the whole idea is to enliven the area.
- Chair Noritake reiterated that the Olin Group will not be designing the open space for these sites; we need to design the parks through the Olin process underway, and let the design of the building respond to the park designs.
- **Bike Lanes on King Street.** See Traffic and Parking Board Public Hearing Item #4, September 23, 2013. Spengler said a community meeting is scheduled for October 30 - to discuss removing 37 spaces to provide bike lanes along King St. Pavement project is currently underway, temporary markings to be done now, some local residents expressed concern. The Chair will ask T&ES to come to the next meeting to present this issue after the community meeting.
- **Civic Engagement** - Director RPCA said that City Council directed staff to work with the community to development improvements to the civic engagement process, following the Waterfront and Beaugard Small Area Plans. Meetings have been held at the First Baptist Church in Alexandria, for about a year. The outcome was production of a Civic Engagement Handbook, including Principles of Civic Engagement that will go to City Council in December. Laura Durham, Principal Planner is RPCA's representative for the project. Durham said a presentation was made before the P&RC about a year ago, if the handbook is adopted, the principles will apply to all types of public projects, including commitment to the principles of engagement by boards and commissions.
- For more info go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/whatsnext/default.aspx?id=70796>

- V. **PRC Annual Report Update** - Jack Browand: Browand provided a draft of the annual report for the Commission's review-See Attachment. He said it was sent out earlier and that the Chair had minor editorial adjustments. Browand said the report is generally in chronological order, and covers the period of July 2012 through June 20, 2013.

Action: Brune moved to accept the draft annual report as received. Atkins seconded. All were in favor.

**Renewal of Term for Gina Baum Commissioner:** The Chair noted that Baum's term on the Waterfront Commission and P&RC would be expiring soon. There was consensus from the P&RC to renew her term. Action: Brune motioned to reappoint Gina Baum to the P&RC. Atkins seconded. All were in favor. The Chair will write a letter of reappointment to the City Council.

VI. **Report from Commissioners** (verbal updates):

- A. **Waterfront Commission-** Gina Baum: Joint meeting of the Waterfront and Park and Recreation Commissions was held October 17, 2013, discussed above. Food Court Restaurant owner will be called Blackwell Hitch. The new owner/lessee is a restaurateur from Annapolis MD. The Plan design will activate rear of building, alley will be cleaned up, and public restrooms included. Meeting with Laurie Olin, Architect was held on October 15; was very well attended. Browand said there is a link on City's website.

Hotel at Art Center end of Duke St.- sub-committee met to put together a position for the Waterfront Commission. Reviewed Waterfront SAP requirements; which appear to have been met. Some felt that it was not the Waterfront Commission's responsibility to dictate architecture, but that of the Board of Architectural review.

Questions about Olin's scope of work included whether the dog park at a Windmill Hill would be included in Olin's planning. There have been varying responses regarding Olin's purview and it ending at Harborside.

- B. **Youth Sport Committee-** Brian McPherson (absent): Meeting was postponed.

- C. **Four Mile Run-** Ripley Forbes-no report. The Chair reported that the Pedestrian Bridge is underway. The area in between two bridges – a set of steps completed for lower level up. Funds came from Arlington County. City Council voted unanimously to approve the SUP for terminal building with goal of getting it out, and Planning Commission soon. Kagawa said title restoration drawings are at 30% design completion, pedestrian bridge at 60% Atkins noted a Clean-up Day for Four Mile Run will be held this Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to noon. Lunch will be provided by Mom's Organic Market. Meet-up place is the Conservatory at Four Mile Run.

- D. **Freedmen's Cemetery-** Kagawa said completion is expected by Thanksgiving. Materials for the stone base around sculpture are still pending.

- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements**- Judy Guse-Noritake- ACPS continues to meet with the City's long range planning group. Community outreach for Patrick Henry School is underway. A lot of discussion about possible field and recreation space, some residents also desire a pool.
  - F. **Community Gardens Policy**- Judy Guse-Noritake-no update.
  - G. **Ft. Ward** - Ripley Forbes.
  - H. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake. (See Items E, & J.)
  - I. **Jefferson Houston School**- William Cromley: new school is under construction.
  - J. **Open Space** - Chair Judy Guse-Noritake/Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator: **See Staff Report**- Durham said the report shows timeframe. Spring to City Council. Staff is meeting with interdepartmental group through January. An Open Space Summit is planned for February 2014.
  - K. **Braddock Plan Park**- Judy Guse-Noritake. The Chair said she sent out a link this afternoon to the concepts for the interim park. The park is near Braddock Road Metro Station. The City owns .5 acres of the block planned for future redevelopment. The Post Office is exploring relocation. The existing City owned building will be demolished in January/February 2014. Planning and Zoning, and RPCA staff will take three proposals to Braddock Advisory Group and community next week for comments. The Chair and Commissioner Cromley will attend next week's meeting.
  - L. **Patrick Henry School Update**- this item discussed earlier.
- VII.** **Public Comments**: Laura Fries, Youth Sports Advisory Board, and members of Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA), wanted to underscore the importance of having a therapeutic pool at Lee Center for special needs children. She said currently there are 16,000 children in Alexandria schools. If a therapeutic pool was at Lee Center and one at Chinguapin, the Lee Center pool would provide a stepping stone for children before they go to a larger facility-this is a different type of customer. Fries said it would also be more convenient for parents to have a therapeutic pool at the Lee Center.
- VIII.** Agenda items for November 21, 2013, meeting and location. To be determined.
- IX.** List of upcoming public meetings: A list was distributed at the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 9:10 p.m. by Chair.