

**City of Alexandria, Virginia  
Park and Recreation Commission**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, April 18, 2013, 7:00 p.m.  
Charles Houston Recreation Center  
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia**

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

**Excused:** Brian McPherson, Emma Schutzius and Nick Wagner (H.S. youth representatives).

**RPCA Staff Present:** Director James Spengler, William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services, David A. Miller, Division Chief 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, Open Space Coordinator, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

**Guests:** James Durham, Alexandria BPAC, Elizabeth Wright, Chair, Holmes Run Park Committee.

**Summary Minutes**

**I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake:** The meeting convened at 7:10 p.m.

**2013 Civic Awards Discussion:** See Staff Report - please see **-Item VII** below.

**Items for Action:**

**II. Presentation- Fields Allocation Policy-** William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services and staff. See Staff Report: Chesley provided a brief overview and background of the “Policy”. In 2002, the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) established the Youth Sports Advisory Board. The primary focus of the YSAB is to look at how fields are being allocated, among all the various sports organizations in the City. The YSAB consists of Alexandria based Youth Sports user groups that utilize the athletic fields and facilities. Representatives on the YSAB are from soccer, lacrosse, baseball, basketball, football, local high schools, and girls’ softball, rugby, and the Wahoo Swim Team. The YSAB has been very involved in all athletic projects, including advocating for fields, lights, tracks and in-door rec facilities. RPCA staff has been meeting over the last several months with the YSAB to refine the “Policy”. A key tenant of the “Policy” is that it allows an opportunity for all current user groups, citizens, ad hoc and community programs to participate in sports related activities. The “Policy” allows staff the ability to take care of priority users, primarily City residents, ACPS, and affiliates, with the lowest priority being non-resident users. Staff is requesting endorsement of the Fields Allocation Policy by the Park and Recreation Commission.

**Commissioner Questions/Comments:**

1. Are fields are used to capacity?
2. How are occasional cancellations handled so others may use those fields?
3. What is percent of residents vs. non-resident users?
4. How are schedules for fields determined and managed?
5. Why are the Athletic Field Rental Fees on pg. 27, for residents vs. non-residents the same. Shouldn't non-residents be higher?
6. How many fields are not fully permitted, that can be made available for pick-up play.
7. What about increasing daytime use?
8. Has anyone ever suggested having leagues before work (sunrise leagues?). –this would help meet adult need.
9. Can people be bumped when demand increases?

**Responses Chesley/Slover:**

1. Based on the number of field permits, peak times are probably at capacity. There are some down times, i.e. weekends, and evenings, there is light availability. It's difficult to accommodate groups that need multiple dates.
2. Regarding cancellations, Chesley said this is not always possible. In some instances there may be a wait list, some of the affiliates groups may have someone to take slots.
3. City residents get priority; non-resident use is minimal.
4. Staff holds meetings to establish schedules far in advance. Mac Slover, Director of Sports meets with groups twice a year; in June to determine fall schedule, and in December/January to determine the spring schedule. Time also has to be allotted for group practices, which may be impacted by the weather. Having published schedules may cause more problems than it solves by raising expectations beyond what is actually available. Slover keeps a master schedule and meets with affiliate groups and others to coordinate schedules and available space.
5. RPCA is currently conducting a fee review; Mr. Chesley can look into this further.
6. Slover- every field in spring is permitted. Patrick Henry has space for pick-up games. He will put some information together. If someone calls, he can direct them to open fields.
7. Slover- staff is in the process of doing this (daytime use). Programs are being put in at Witter Field. Alexandria Soccer Association (ASA) has done some daytime programming; also Miracle Field is a possibility. Simpson Soccer field is being used by Commonwealth Academy during the day (private school tier 3). We need to be careful of not overscheduling grass fields, due to maintenance concerns.
8. Slover- Not yet, staff are open to all ideas.
9. Slover- he doesn't recommend bumping, especially for long term groups.

Following discussion, the Chair asked what the desired action from the Commission. Chesley said that staff is requesting the PRC's endorsement of the "Athletic Fields Allocation Policy". This will be an administrative policy of the Department of Recreation, with a goal of reviewing the policy annually. The Chair deferred action until Jim Gibson, Chair, YSAB arrived.

Forbes- asked if endorsement of field's policy could be done pending correction of non-resident fees. The Chair said the Commission could endorse the policy pending further discussion of non-resident fees as discussed.

Jim Gibson, President, and Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB):

Mr. Gibson apologized for being delayed. The "Policy" was presented to the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB). Each sport group gave their prospective; overall they found the "Policy" to be very user friendly. He is involved with the Fairfax County Youth Football Program and has first-hand knowledge of fields and usage issues. He's proud to say, Alexandria is incredibly child friendly for youth sports. In response to question from Chair, Gibson said every sport provides for special needs children, i.e., waivers or scholarships. Fees won't prohibit children from participating in sports in Alexandria. Once a child is deemed to be in financial need they are allowed to stay in programs, with minimal scrutiny. Most programs incorporate fee assistance into their budget; it's very seamless process for children.

Forbes- commented that private organizations provide more scholarships, the City is more restrictive.

Gibson- even with the City's fee structure, compared to closest jurisdictions Alexandria is still family friendly, particularly in football. Once criteria are met, children do not have to pay. All equipment is issued and maintained by the City.

Baum- Lacrosse is extremely expensive, is ALC doing same outreach or scholarships?

Gibson- Yes, staff does outreach, they meet once a month to discuss how to attract children, and keep enrollment numbers up and how to attract more coaches. Every sport is encouraging participation and cross-participation.

Chair- going back to Financial Assistance Policy, do reductions apply to youth sports.

Slover- yes.

Chair- back to Ripley's concern, the youth sports leagues, if a child falls into a program they will not be charged anything, but if they participate in a Recreation Program they may be charged 40%.

Slover- ASA reviewed City policy and mirrored a lot of it in their program.

Forbes- said the City policy is a baseline-a lot of youth organizations go beyond that. For volleyball the team that he coaches fees are \$700, one child was covered 90%. Things are handled privately.

Gibson- in football programs, they have never had a child excluded because they could not pay in the past 10 years, goes back further in basketball. A child fills out form if there is an issue with cost –it is taken care of.

Chair- is there youth hockey.

Gibson- not currently - the City has no ice rink.

The Chair asked if there were any other questions –there were none.

**Action:** Brune moved to endorse the Athletics Fields Allocation Policy. Atkins seconded. All were in favor. The Chair will write a letter endorsing the policy on behalf of the Park Commission. The Chair thanked Mr. Gibson for attending the meeting.

- III. Approval of Green Play Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy**- David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services. Miller said changes were made to the policy per discussion at the March meeting; the changes are highlighted in yellow: 1. Resource Allocation Philosophy section – new language, Process: Programs will be sorted and assigned a cost recovery tier using the Pyramid Methodology “*annually*”. “*The Department’s Fiscal Year fee schedule will be included as part of the annual budget submittal*”. 2. Financial Assistance Policy- new language, Policy: “*Adults without children who have proof of receiving SNAP, or Medicaid, may be granted a 30% fee reduction*”. Miller said staff researched programs in other jurisdictions; and for adults without children, the standard for assistance is proof of SNAP or Medicaid, as these are pre-approved qualified screenings.

The Chair said that RPCA should summarize and communicate the types of discounts or free programs already in place. Discount programs are needed not only for seniors, but for anyone who is less mobile and may have less economic opportunity, as a matter of public health.

Forbes raised the issue of fees for non-resident users, which are the same as residents on pg. 27. The Director said the Department of RPCA made recommendation for changes to the current fee schedule in September 2012 at start of the budget process. The fee resolution for FY14 will go before City Council on May 6. The “GreenPlay” policy and fees are separate and distinct; GreenPlay provides a system for putting programs into fee categories. Forbes- said that perhaps the PRC should send a letter to City Council now; requesting them to adjust discrepancy in non-resident fees, which he feels should be higher.

Baum- asked does this fee schedule eliminate the provisions of scholarships.  
Director-responded, the fee schedule will still include scholarships.

Beggs- is there a formula for fee schedule.

Director- Once City Council adopts the GreenPlay Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy, and then staff will be able to sort programs into their proper categories, and look at fees, in relation to cost structure and market rate. Both have to be more formally set in the future.

Following discussion, the Chair asked if there were any other comments and what next steps are. The Director said once the Commission has approved the GreenPlay Policy, it will be docketed for City Council and a letter of support will be needed from the Park and Recreation Commission. There were no other comments.

**Action:** Baum moved to approve the adoption of the GreenPlay Resource Allocation Philosophy, Cost Recovery Model and Policy. Brune seconded the motion. All were in favor.

IV. **Approval of Special Events Policy Amendment** - Jack Browand. See Staff Report. This item is a follow-up from last meeting. The proposed amendment to the Special Events Policy would be to authorize the use of Founders Park for certain special events. The Chair said Mr. Browand mentioned this at the last meeting. Browand stated the Special Events Committee continues to receive inquiries for the use of Founders Park and is recommending a policy to allow limited events at Founders Park. The Founders Park Community Association (FPCA) Board forwarded a letter of support for the policy amendment to RPCA. Following the letter of support, there was further discussion by the FPCA. The FPCA Board has withdrawn its letter of support and will issue a new letter pending results of the policy discussion at the FPCA annual meeting held in May. Browand will attend the May FPCA annual meeting.

**Action:** deferred.

V. **Approval of Summary Minutes from March 21, 2013-** deferred to May meeting.

VI. **Division Updates:** To view full copies of Staff Reports go to <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCStaffReport18Apr2013.pdf>

A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley, Deputy Director- See Staff Report. Mr. Chesley introduced Ms. Sheila Whiting, Director Charles Houston Recreation Center. The Chair commented on the upcoming Cheerleading Competition Event to be held this Saturday, April 19 at T.C. Williams, H.S. (not the 28th) The Chair said this event is very important to many young girls that participate in it. Chesley spoke on the number of teams.

B. **Park Operations Report** – Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director- See Staff Report. The Chair spoke about the Urban Deck at the beltway which was part of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project had some irrigation problems. Kagawa - said the City is paying for the irrigation, because they accepted the project and will fix cost estimate \$20,000. Mr. Tiwari noted that Earth Day is being held Saturday April 20, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Ben Brenman Park. There is also a spring tree sale planned. The Chair encouraged people to stop by the Four Mile Park; 200 trees were planted last weekend by Casey Trees.

C. **Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations** - Jack Browand, Division Chief- See Staff Report. The National Park Services (NPS) will delay the opening of the Jones Point Park (JPP) ball fields until the spring of 2014, due to limited turf growth. The Chair will write a letter to Congressman Moran expressing the PRC’s disappointment with this delay.

**Waterfront Market Proposal- See Handout Waterfront Market Proposal- See Handout** distributed by Browand on behalf of the applicant. The City is considering a SUP application for the addition of a restaurant at 101 N. Union St. As part of proposal they wish to establish an outdoor seating area in the City Marina. Browand reviewed the area under consideration (the southernmost corner and making outdoor seating area for the restaurant) and the City does not oppose the outdoor dining area. The owner has filed for a Special Use Permit, and the

application will come before the Planning Commission (May 7), the BAR (May 15) and City Council (May 14 & 18). The owner will enter into a license agreement with the City to establish an outdoor dining in the public right-of-way. The Chair and Commission held a discussion about the proposal; the Commission spoke favorably about the proposal, noting that it would add value having additional seating for outdoor dining along this area of the waterfront. Following discussion, the Chair asked what was the desire of the Commission. Browand-said the Waterfront Commission is forwarding a letter of endorsement to the Planning Commission, and the owner is seeking endorsement from the Park and Recreation Commission; the proposal is consistent with use as identified in the approved Waterfront Small Area Plan. The owner hopes to open the seating area this summer.

Atkins- asked if this use is on an area that is categorized as public open space. Browand said the City Marina falls under the authority of the Department of RPCA. Following a question about the terms of the proposed license agreement, Browand stated the license fee calculation is consistent with the license agreement for the dining space in Wales Alley. It was stated that based on that calculation, the license fee would be \$12,000 adjusted annually. Beggs- \$14 per sq. ft. is inexpensive –the normal price for retail space in this area of the City is \$25 per foot. Cromley- said this is a great benefit for the waterfront- creates synergy. It is a good price point and good use.

Chair- We should request a shade device over the tables and ask them to include some limited number of tables and chairs that the public can just use, i.e., non-service seats or benches. Browand- said there is seating within the marina. The two benches that will be removed will be relocated to other areas of the marina. The Chair – what is the pleasure of the Commission?

Brune- general consensus, I think this is a very good plan to take care of the dead zone which is not revenue producing at the current time, and I think that the money should go to the open space or the other [fund].

Chair- do we want to make that a motion, is that the general concensus? Baum- where does this money go normally? Chair- into the general fund.

Browand- answered a question from another Commissioner as to where money goes for Wales Alley- Browand said we don't manage that property, ...it may go to the general fund in the General Services.

Chair- the difference is the alley is not part of what (RPCA) manages as public open space. This is arguably a park space.

Director- Laura is that area counted as open space. Durham, yes- the Waterfront Plan has included it as part of open space.

Chair- let's have a motion. Baum- He already gave you one. Chair- do we have a second? Baum and Coleman—seconded motion [Brune]. Chair asked- All in Favor- Aye, opposed - none.

Chair - when is this going to Planning Commission?

Baum- are we suggesting or recommending. Chair- we are going to recommend. Chair - When is this scheduled? Browand - Planning Commission May 7.

Director- do we require a 9.06, Durham- technically only the sale of property does?

Browand- In response to a Commissioner's question, this will be three year license with the option to renew, 3% increase each year.

- D. **Park Planning Reports** – Ron Kagawa and Division Team- See Staff Reports. Kagawa- reminded group that staff reports for the May 7 Planning Commission are due next Wednesday. Coleman asked a follow-up question regarding the Joint Meeting held on April 2, with the PRC and the EPC on storm water management and Block 19. She asked if July is still the deadline on the permitting process, and if the City is requesting an extension. Director Spengler said the City has applied for an extension.

VII. **Director's Report** - James Spengler. **See Budget Memo #22-Aquatics Facility Study Implementation Options**, April 16, 2013 to the Mayor and members of City Council. The Director reviewed the memorandum. The Chair said she and Baum attended the Aquatics Work Session with City Council. The Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA) attended meeting. Warwick Pool was discussed regarding keeping pool open this summer during temporary closing of Chinquapin, whether it should become a spray park or rebuilt pool. City Council would like for it to be a rebuilt pool. City Council gave direction to look at the 50 meter pool concept at Chinquapin, rather than a 25x25 pool, citing that the City should be building for the future. Some Council members like the idea of having spray parks but are concerned of investing money for age groups 4-10 years only.

VIII. **CIVIC Awards Discussion**- Jack Browand - See Staff Report: The PRC holds an annual Civic Awards Program which recognizes outstanding residents who have provided a service to the Alexandria community in the area of meeting recreation, park, or cultural needs. Three members of the PRC serve on the committee. Nominations are taken in May; recommendations are made in June. Award Recipients will receive a plaque at the City's Birthday Celebration, July 13, at Oronoco Bay Park. Volunteers for this year's committee were: Commissioners Brune, Forbes and Atkins. Browand said he will finalize the packet and send it out to the Commission. The Chair encouraged members to attend and be present on stage around 7 p.m.; she said there are usually about 7 nominations.

IX. **Commissioner Assignments Update** – deferred to future meeting.

X. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. **Waterfront Commission**- Gina Baum: a bike corral was installed at King St. Founders Park-Special Events Proposal item is deferred. Food Court purchase (near Torpedo Factory), the interested party fell through; the Waterfront Commission will seek feedback. RFP out for purchase of- Beachcombers property-proposals are due by June 10. Waterfront Walk- June 8, 9 a.m. walk will begin at Madison St. The PRC and Waterfront Commissions will join the walk along with staff. Landscape design firm still evaluating proposals. Waterfront Commission Boat Tour will be held next Thursday, this is an opportunity to get a view of the City’s waterfront from the water, and also look at the MD, DC shorelines.
- B. **Youth Sport Committee**. Brian McPherson (absent). The Chair said the work on Athletics Fields Allocation Policy has been a large part of recent focus.
- C. **Four Mile Run**. The Chair said that a meeting is scheduled for May 15, at Cora Kelly Recreation Center at 6 p.m. The Chair asked Laura Durham, City Open Space Coordinator to send out a reminder. It will be followed immediately by the Four Mile Run Park Planning Meeting due to a desire for the JTF to participate in planning for Four Mile Run Park.
- D. **Freedmen’s Cemetery**. The Chair reported that work is progressing, expected completion date is June 2013.
- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements** – Chair Judy Guse-Noritake - Most items have moved to the Joint Facilities long-range groups, of which she is a member. Group met recently, reviewed Draft RFP for Engineering Assessments Services. The Chair and Mr. Kagawa marked up the draft. Fields were discussed. The Mayor and Councilman Justin Wilson are on group. Patrick Henry School is the next project. ACPS is being more conservative with projections than a year ago. Forbes asked if T.C. Williams H.S. Tennis Courts Project Update will be presented at May meeting.
- F. **Community Gardens Policy**- Judy Guse-Noritake. No updates.
- G. **Ft. Ward** - Ripley Forbes- they will meet next month, hopefully with the consultant after funding approved by City Council.
- H. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake- discussed previously.
- I. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley. Work will begin in May. Kagawa said final site plan completed. Cromley said issue of possible takeover of school is a separate issue-will this affect schedule. Atkins said Stephanie Hopkins gave report recently, fate of takeover is undetermined. The Chair said the site and land are all owned by the City, not ACPS as is the case in other school locations.
- J. **Beauregard Corridor Plan Task Force** - Stephen Beggs. City Council approved the Beauregard Corridor SAP last Saturday-April 13, by a vote of 6-1.
- K. **Open Space** - Judy Guse-Noritake. Staff is drafting a letter to City Council on next steps on Open Space Plan. Durham- key strategies, recommendations improve and new target of 183 acres in the next ten years to maintain a constant ratio of parkland to population increases. The Chair said it will need to come to the PRC and Planning Commission. Coleman asked what open space is allotted for Landmark Redevelopment- not a lot. Chair said this is a classic case of what you get when you redevelop a site; she is disappointed at lost opportunities.

- L. **Braddock Plan Park**- Judy Guse-Noritake. Meeting will be held May 5; it will be discussed in May PRC. Browand- follow-up on Lenny Harris Naming Proposal- the comment period closed, approximately 30 comments received, majority in favor of the renaming, some neighbors not.

- XI. **Public Comment Period**: Elizabeth Wright, resident and Chair of the Holmes Run Park Committee, spoke about her concern about trail markers in Holmes Run Park. She asked Wedeles to have all stakeholders involved. At last PRC meeting Wedeles said markers will be 1/8 of a mile, but Wright wants 1/10 mile markers. More trails would be marked in the future. She would like staff to include a logo on markers which would indicate which trail it is. Wedeles said vendor is already making markers. Wright said she is frustrated-wants markers to be efficient when people call in the event of an emergency. Chair – asked what can be done now. Wright- she wanted the Fire and EMTC to integrate trail system into. Durham- staff has worked with the Police Department and are following up on whether changes can be made to the markers.

**Days of Remembrance** - Wright commented that April 10, Days of Remembrance ceremony was a great program. The exception was the refreshments, the cups used were not recyclable –she has been in contact with Jack Browand. Also the caterer’s trash can did not have a recyclable logo. The City should include in contracts that vendors use recyclable containers, etc.

- XII. **Agenda items for May 2013, meeting and location**: There will be a special meeting on May 1, on the Large Parks Master Plan, at 6:30 p.m. at Charles Houston. The Commission discussed moving the regular meeting from May 16, to May 23, and meeting at the Potomac Yards Fire Station meeting room. The Commission will take a tour of P.Y. Metro sites in order to prepare to write DEIS comment letter when the time is ripe. Additional possible items for discussion in May meeting include: Open Space, Polk Property- will be deferred to July, and T.C. Williams Tennis Courts follow-up.

- XIII. List of upcoming public meetings- a list was distributed at the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 9:30 p.m.

/rd 6.17.13