

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

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 21, 2011, 7:30p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA

SUMMARY MINUTES

Commission Members: Chairperson, Judy Guse-Noritake, Rich Brune, William Cromley, Stephen (Clark) Mercer, Bob Moir, Jeffrey Murphy, Anthony Zamora, and Mollie Timmons.
Absent: Ripley Forbes.

RPCA Staff: Director, James B. Spengler, William Chesley, Deputy Director, Cheryl Lawrence, Laura Durham, Robin DeShields. Absent: Roger Blakeley, Jack Browand, Ron Kagawa.

Guests: Roger Sullivan, Chinguapin Advisory Board, Lougenia Williams, Director, Chinguapin Recreation Center.

- I. Call to Order by Chair: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. The Chair introduced new members; Mollie Timmons (high school youth), and John Sullivan (Planning District III). It was noted that Anthony Zamora graduates from T.C. Williams H.S. on June 18.
- II. Approval of Summary Minutes from February 17, 2011, and March 17, 2011.
 - February 17: Richard Brune motioned to approve the minutes; Clark Mercer seconded the motion, all were in favor, the minutes were approved.
 - March 17: Richard Brune motioned to approve the minutes, William Cromley seconded the motion, all were in favor, the minutes were approved.
- III. Follow-up on Draft Waterfront SAP - Public Hearing April 5, 2011
 - Chair Judy Noritake spoke with John Komoroske, Chair of the Planning Commission prior to the April 5th hearing. He stated that the Chair's testimony was more important than a written letter at this time; therefore the Chair will hold off on drafting letter with P&RC's comments.
 - Next Steps - Laura Durham, said proposed changes to the Waterfront SAP will be released tomorrow and will be available on-line; go to www.alexandriava.gov/Waterfront. Planning Commission's revised staff report should be available by 12:00 noon tomorrow.
 - Some key changes are: the removal of the Waterfront Park parking and restaurant building from the Plan; and the addition of a "Policy for Restaurant/Hotel/Commercial Uses".
 - Chair Noritake will forward the memo from the Planning Director to the commission (see Attached Copy). The Chair was disappointed that some changes were made prior to a vote of the Planning Commission and City Council.

- Mr. Cromley also expressed disappointment that the restaurant was taken out of plan. He thought it would have been a good commercial use and amenity for this location.
- The Chair said one of most important components of the Waterfront SAP is to move the ODBC parking lot from waterfront; she encouraged members to weigh in on this.
- **Action** - the Chair will write a letter with the P&RC's comments on the Draft Waterfront SAP, and will testify at the City Council, Public Hearing, Saturday, May 14.
- Laura Durham said that the Planning Department closed the public comment period, but may open it back up due to the recent changes; she will keep the Chair informed.

IV. Follow-up Fort Ward Stakeholders Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations.

Chair Judy Noritake- On March 22, 2011, City Council, held a work session on the Ft. Ward Park Ad Hoc Committee Report. Speakers included Thomas Fulton, Chair, Ft. Ward Advisory Group, Pam Cressey, OHA, and Chuck Zeigler Vice Chair of the advisory group. (For more info. go to www.alexandriava.gov/City Council, see Action Docket for 3/22/11. See attached memorandums from P&RC Chair Noritake and memo from Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, Nicole Devero McGrew, Secretary Acting for HARC Chair, John H. Sprinkle, Jr.).

Judy Noritake, Chair P&RC said there was a lot of Council support to fully implement the recommendations of the Ft. Ward Park and Museum Ad Hoc Advisory Group report. She stated her preference that existing boards and commissions handle ongoing issues at Ft. Ward, instead of a creating a new oversight group, and that a master plan for Ft. Ward should be done as part of a master plan for all large parks, not separately.

- ***City Council voted in support of doing a separate and immediate management plan for Fort Ward Park. Council also agreed to the establishment of a separate public group to oversee the Park on a limited basis, for two years.***
- Mr. Spengler-the Director RPCA, and Lance Mallamo, Director OHA will outline the plan for group. This item will go to City Council in the June. The Department of RPCA will propose a draft constitution of the group to identify stakeholders, civic associations, school groups, large churches in that area, and have each group appoint a representative to work with City on upcoming issues for the park. Mr. Spengler said the option to create a "Friends Group" for Ft. Ward Park, rather than having City Council appoint representatives, puts it at a different policy level. RPCA will propose that the groups' structure be similar to the recently formed Jones Point Park Community Liaison citizens group.
 - *National Trust for Historic Preservation article "The Forgotten"- May/June 2011 pgs. 28-37. Commissioner Cromley, presented an article for discussion. Article contains information on Ft. Ward Park and its decedents, and discusses what the City was doing in terms of the park. The article was routed to commissioners and will be emailed.*
- Mr. Spengler said that within the next two weeks, City Council will go through its add-delete budget process. By the time the docket item for June has to be done, information will be available on the dollar amount voted on for implementation of the recommendations for Ft. Ward Park. If Council does not take the recommendations of the P&RC, then the new group formed may be charged with managing the planning process. This process will still have to come through the Park and Recreation Commission.
- The Chair said if money is allocated it will likely go towards ground penetrating radar study. Mr. Spengler said the Phase II Archeological study is under the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA)'s budget; T&ES will handle the storm water management. These two

items must precede a master plan, and may take twelve months. The new group if formed this fall, will be involved with these items.

- Q. Brune- does this affect tenure of a two-year cycle.
- R. Spengler-we will wait to see what City Council does. If Charge of Work were kept similar to Jones Point Park Stakeholder Liaison group, then the role would be more general (collecting information from, and disseminating back to the community). The other option is to form a group and their role would be to focus on a specific task.
- Chair- City Council may allocate money for the remainder of the investigation ground study and storm water management study, and wait until the next fiscal year to address money for a master plan. If funds are not in this year's budget, she will speak with Council regarding how much a broader comprehensive master parks plan will cost, with the goal of undertaking this within a similar timeframe as the Ft. Ward Park master plan.
- Durham-staff responded to a budget request memo to Council with preliminary cost estimates (\$350,000 to \$500,000) to do a large park master plan, vs. the smaller plan for Ft. Ward (range \$60,000 to \$100,000.) The memo is online ([www.Alexandriava.gov/OMB-budget memo # 46](http://www.Alexandriava.gov/OMB-budget%20memo%20#46)), and will be emailed to commissioners.
- Mr. Spengler said the greenhouse at Ft. Ward was taken down, there was no ground disturbance. The two wooden buildings on the southern corner of maintenance yard will be retained by OHA for storage of artifacts, and will move to OHA's inventory. Areas in the park identified by OHA as most historically significant have all been identified on a new mowing map; these areas will be their responsibility. This year funds are in RPCA's account, next year funds will be transferred to OHA's budget.

V. **Next Steps-on Creation of an Adult Sport Advisory Group:**

- Chair- At the last meeting it was reported that a first discussion was held with Slover, Forbes and Murphy. A second meeting of adult sports stakeholders, is scheduled for the second week of May.
- Mr. Chesley-Mac Slover is developing an adult sports participation chart for the Commission on the number of teams, participants, residents, vs. non-residents, fields used for specific programs, and non-RPCA program use of fields for sport leagues and programs.
- The Chair said a broader discussion on adults sports is needed (data from the 2011 Needs Assessment survey will help.) Adults currently participating in formalized recreational programs are covered. The larger question is how many teams are not on fields; what programs are needed; and what are the unmet needs. More programs are also needed to reach adult women. A discussion should be held with the Commission on Aging, and Commission on Women to get their input.
- Mr. Chesley said the Commission on Aging is currently doing a Needs Assessment, and a preliminary draft report will be available soon.
- Moir- we need a program for men over 50 (the miracle field can possibly be used.)
- Laura Durham said the Needs Assessment survey will go out within the next two weeks. Rich Brune asked if the survey is targeted to older adults. Ms. Durham said the survey will be mailed to a statistically representative sampling of the community.

- Mercer- there is a vibrant adult Hispanic male soccer group. We should try to find out how many people play on fields and in league.
- Moir- the adult Hispanic soccer league obtains permits from the City. It would be nice to have a consistent pattern on residency throughout programs. In terms of field time, it is discouraging that half of the children on teams are not from the City of Alexandria. If the number of sports offered is expanded, without increasing the number of fields proportionally, and we continue to allow a non-residents at \$750,000 a field- this could become a problem.
- Chesley- ASA permits non- residents to play on City teams, and charges them a non-resident fee. Approximately 300, out of the 1800-1900 players on City teams, are non-residents.
- Chair regarding non-residents, when you start to form adult leagues, it would be nice to if there was enough capacity to allow for office teams.
- Moir- there have been no new softball teams added in the last ten years- there is a minimum amount of players that have to be from the City of Alexandria residents. Alexandria citizens in some cases are being deprived of using fields.
- Director Spengler- said he sees two issues with youth and adult sports.
- RPCA was asked a question during the budget work session on fees. In order to add new items to the budget, a supplemental request is needed. Certain sports programs can be expanded, because expenses are covered by fees (i.e. soccer). While other sports programs (i.e. football), cannot be expanded because program fees do not cover costs. Chair- it gets to be “pay to play”. Spengler- the issue is how should this be applied across the board, process is currently unequal. All youth and adult programs, are on different pay scales. He anticipates City Council asking RPCA to determine this as a policy issue.
- Action Item- the Chair asked Commissioners to think more about adult sports, in a broad prospective. This item will be added back to agenda for May.

VI. Francis C. Hammond School- Fields and Lights – ACPS project.

- The Chair reported that the field, track and fence that will go in at Francis Hammond middle school is a project of ACPS and is in their budget- no SUP is required for this part of project. A SUP is required to install lights on the field. Installing artificial turf without lights is less desirable because you don't get maximum usage. The community directly near the school has been supportive of installing synthetic turf field with lights, however there is also some vocal opposition. The Chair will attend meeting on April 26, and speak to the need for lights. She encouraged other members and Anthony Zamora (high school youth member), to attend. This is an important issue, because if lights are not approved at Hammond, it will make it more difficult to request lights for other fields. Commissioners Moir and Murphy attended the last meeting; it did not go well. Some opponents are concerned if lights are installed at Hammond field, then T.C. Williams will be next. Moir-The adult leagues need lights to play the same adults coach youth sports, as programs expand it's very difficult to get coaches and players to play during the daytime, most play in the evening. The City is growing at an incredible rate, we need to create/expand more opportunities for recreational development. The Chair asked the Director RPCA to research information from the years when there were lights at Hammond.
- The Chair asked Mr. Sullivan how the lights installed in his neighborhood at Ben Brenman were working out. Mr. Sullivan said he hasn't heard any negative feedback

about the lights or noise since installed. Light shadows are confined to the playing space, lights do not intrude into residences (uses newer lighting technology)-street lights are brighter. Chair- lights do increase intensity of use- people can play on field longer.

- Mr. Sullivan- said however, there have been concerns about parking (due to increase in use of field) and spillover into the community and associated traffic. There is a parking issue; street adjacent to park is a City street, other streets are private - getting overflow parking. At this time, not major issue but it may become one, Civic Association is concerned. Need to find a better way to uniformly deal with parking.
- The Chair- gave an example of how traffic was handled at Rivergate. At entrance on both sides-signs were installed “private parking-for residents only- no cut through” this helped. Sullivan-their streets are not cut through, people are driving into the community to park. Chair-similar issue-we can discuss more when we meet with Director RPCA. Director Spengler Update- he has been speaking with the homeowners and Civic Associations. People need to realize there were no new fields added to Ben Brenman Park. Lights just extend use of fields. As part of project- P&RC discussed several options:

1. To do restriping of lower roadway (completed), and Somerville (not done yet). If Somerville were done 10 spaces would be created.
2. Cut in parking along the main drive next to the soccer field. The P&RC decided not to do this at this time, however, this can still be done, or
3. Totally cut in a new parking area in the park near the north end. This could be done from an engineering standpoint-may have opposition. On the master plan shown as future site of senior center - potential opposition-trading open space for parking lot. The issue is do you do your design for peak time usage; spring is peak time, by May June or July usage will go down.

Cromley commented when you build more parking lot you may encourage more traffic?

Chair- we need to think seriously about taking parts of parks for parking lots. Could be done in the interim. She also advocates looking at parallel parking. Right now, we need to take small steps, then move forward with the parks master plan, and take City Council.

Mr. Spengler suggested having a community meeting with groups and sport leagues to discuss; possibly getting sports leagues to stagger playing times. People also need to be good neighbors, everyone wants to park close and will break rules to get close. Chair- somehow we need to change behavior. Maybe put signs up directing people where to park. Mr. Spengler said he will work with the Commission on this issue.

VII. Division Updates: To View Full Staff Reports go to www.alexandria.gov/Recreation/Commission reports.

A. Recreation Programs and Service Update -William Chesley

- See Staff Report- Alexandria Invitational Cheerleader Competition was held on April 9, at T.C. Williams H.S. The event attracted 1,300 spectators. Sixteen cheerleader teams; 260 children competed in event. Story was featured on the cover of Washington Times Newspaper. Miracle League Program’s inaugural season begins with Opening Day Ceremony on April 30, 2:00 p.m. at Lee Center Field.
- The Chair mentioned that Long Bridge Park- N. Potomac Yard Arlington- doing a huge project, there is a tour April 30, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

- B. Operations and Park Planning Monthly Report - Roger Blakeley (absent) - no questions or comments.
- C. Office of the Arts Update – by Alisa Carrel- no questions/comments.
- D. Park Planning Updates - Ron Kagawa (was absent), Laura Durham gave the updates **See Staff Reports**:
 - i. Divisional Updates – no comments
 - ii. Aquatics Master Plan- Next Steps: the P&RC received invitations to the stakeholders update meeting with consultants, May 4, at 7:00 p.m. - location to be determined next week.
 - iii. Needs Assessment- See Staff Report- the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment survey is scheduled to go out within the next two weeks to a random sampling of Alexandria households. (3000). Rich Brune asked Ms. Durham for a copy of the final survey.
 - iv. Four Mile Run Park Expansion and Community Building – See Staff Report- the Chair reported that some work will be done as part of the City’s “Spring for Alexandria” service day in May 6. There will be a lot of City and other staff involved. The building will be painted bright red. Duron is donating 20 gallons of paint (plus giving 1/3 off purchases). Contractors are doing work have made a lot of progress within the last two weeks. On April 26, City Council will re-allocate \$250,000 to the overall park site development. Project construction will start by fall. City Council will do a ribbon cutting on May 15, in the afternoon. The Farmers Market opens again on May 1st.
 - v. 1& 7 E. Del Ray Ave. Pocket Park – See Staff Report and attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s). Durham- on-site meeting held.
- E. Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events - Cheryl Lawrence – See Staff Reports
 - i. **2011 Park and Recreation Commission CIVIC Awards** - See Attachment for draft nomination criteria. Nominations must be received by Thursday, June 9; awards will be presented July 9, at the City’s Birthday Celebration. Selection will be made by a sub-committee of P&RC representatives, Chaired by Rich Brune.
 - ii. **RPCA Facility and Naming Policy**- See Draft Policy Attached- Cheryl Lawrence said that RPCA does not currently have a naming policy. Department receives a number of requests annually- no established criteria. Staff has been asked to research information; researched region-policies do exist. Looking for feedback and comments from Commission. Spengler- the policy as drafted does not go through the Park and Recreation Commission. Requests will go through RPCA staff. A process will be set up to collect comments, and criteria will be posted in advance. Information will be sent to City Council Naming Committee. Council will hold a public hearing. Brune- said criteria all based on public service to community. What about other criteria. e.g. 1 & 7 E. Del Ray Park. Chair- said the precedent for this goes back to Skyler Jones Skate Park. She has been on the commission for a long time; they don’t deal with naming places. After Ben Brenman died, a group was formed that named the park after him without input from P&RC. One commissioner was not in agreement. The Chair is opposed to the P&RC taking on naming places,

this can be a contentious issue. She does understand the point about having criteria.

Action: The P&RC will review the draft Policy for Naming and Renaming City Parks, Recreation Areas and Facilities.

VIII. Director's Report - James Spengler

- A. Simpson Fields Update- P.Y. Developer –fields have been sodded, irrigation and electrical work done. Expect fields to be inspected and ready for permitting possibly in fall. Once the fields are accepted, it is uncertain how fast they can put into play. Bob Moir commented that it may take a while for sod to grow.
- B. Jones Point Park Update – See Staff Report-Item VIII-B- Update March-April 2011. The Stakeholders Liaison Group took a site tour on Saturday, March 26, to provide members with an up-close briefing of the ongoing construction process (See Report for further info.). Construction is proceeding as planned. There are some issues with trucks trying to use route to haul in early in the morning-outside permit time period. The larger issue for decision is the parking under the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. There are 159 parking spaces are under the bridge as overflow, and 110 north of the bridge. Congressman Moran and Council wanted to reduce the restrictions so parking could be used on a more on-going basis. Homeland Security reviewed; and may recommend that parking under bridge may now be more restrictive. Now VDOT and MDOT are in position of having to follow more restrictive regulations or face liability. New recommendations is N.S. Parking Lot orientation. Cannot go E.W. They are proceeding with Plan 4A (See Attachment) as previously approved. What will happen with additional parking spaces is still unknown.

The Chair said that if parking is not put under bridge- they will have to compensate the City.

The Next JPP Stakeholders group meeting is May 17, 7:00 p.m., Lee Center. The Chair will attend.

OTHER:

Budget Add-Delete Session: Spengler- 1st Add-Delete budget session with Council- moved miracle field up 1 year as requested.

Fords Landing: Issue starting with Fords Landing community complaining- they will be impacted by having Jones Point Park being open. They would like to see City take responsibility for doing maintenance etc. (see email). Meeting scheduled for next week 4/28. Chair- this a NPS issue. Moir- City can't schedule athletic fields at JPP.

IX. Retreat Action Items:

- A. Next Steps on Draft Bylaws - No Action
- B. Other Items for Discussion

X. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. Waterfront Committee -William Cromley-no report, he was on vacation.
- B. Youth Sport Committee - Jeffrey Murphy – no report, he was on vacation.
- C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes (absent) - Chair reported possible citizens task force meeting May or June.

- D. Charles Houston Memorial Project - William Cromley reported that there are four Artist's presentations for the memorial (the Marquette's are on public display at Charles Houston until May 2, and will then move to City Hall- see Arts Staff Report, Item VII-C pg. 2). Mr. Cromley said that one of the memorials, that focuses on Houston's brilliance and what he did to promote education nationwide-, really stood out in his opinion. Funds do not currently exist for this project. The goal is to collect \$300,000; fundraising will be held once the design is chosen. Design will be selected soon.
- E. Freedman's Cemetery - Bob Moir- project is moving along. Laura Durham said 90% drawings complete. Construction will begin soon.
- F. Beauregard Corridor- The Chair reported that there are ongoing meetings being held re: open space, BRAC impacts and JBG development. David Dexter former commissioner to P&RC will keep us informed.
- G. ACPS & Capital Improvements- Judy Guse-Noritake- no report
- H. Jones Point Park Liaison Group - Judy Guse-Noritake - See Directors Report Item #VIII-B.

XI. Agenda Items for May meeting and location: Next meeting May 19. Items for agenda: Adults Sports Group update, tentative location: Chinquapin. The P&RC and staff will tour the community gardens prior to the meeting.

XII. List of Upcoming Public Meetings- sent by email after meeting.

XIII. Adjournment: 9:10 p.m.