

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

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, May 17, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Summary Minutes

Commission Members: Vice Chair Robert Moir, Gina Baum, Richard Brune, Secretary, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Caleb Vogt. **Excused Absences:** Chair Judy Guse-Noritake, Stephen Beggs, Brian McPherson, John Sullivan, and Mollie Timmons.

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler; Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant; William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services; Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director Park Operations; Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning, Design and Capital Development; Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Director, Office of the Arts. **Absent:** Cheryl Lawrence, Acting Director Special Events/Marina, Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts.

I. Call to Order by Vice Chair Robert Moir. Bob Moir called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. Aquatics Facilities Work Session - 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Ron Kagawa, Division Chief, Park Planning, Design and Capital Development gave the presentation and facilitated the discussion on the aquatics study. **See Copy of presentation.**
<http://alexandriava.gov/Recreation/Commission/MayReports>

- **Mr. Kagawa-** said a public briefing was held on April 25, 2012, 7:00 pm. at the Lee Center with the Consultants, Kimley Horn and Counsilman-Hunsaker, to present their final report and recommendations. The work session is primarily for the Commission and others to discuss the Aquatics Facility Study and set goals for future action. Kagawa reminded the Commission of the past actions taken and summarized the presentation:
- **Purpose of the Aquatics Study:** is to confirm the aquatics program needs of the community; verify the types (and quantity) of facilities needed to meet those needs; evaluate the most appropriate locations based on traffic patterns and use; determine the financial impact and operating costs required to meet the City's needs for the next 30 years.
- **The Goal of the City's Aquatics Program:** is to promote water safety awareness, while providing a broad variety of programs to meet the needs and interests of a diverse community, and facilitate the development of healthy lifestyles related to aquatics based programming.
- **Existing Facilities:** Mr. Kagawa reviewed existing facilities (Indoor/Outdoor, Community/Neighborhood) – **Indoor-** Chinquapin is currently the City's only indoor facility and contains a 25-meter pool with dive well built in 1985; **Outdoor – community pools include:** Charles Houston-updated in 2009; Old Town Pool-six lane training pool built in 1975, Warwick Pool- irregular shape built on a hill on land

currently leased by the City, built in 1969. Outdoor-neighborhood pools (3): Nannie J. Lee and Nicholas Colasanto, both were underutilized and closed due to budget constraints, and John Ewald, scheduled to close in FY2013.

Currently there is \$9 million in the 10-year CIP allotted for aquatics (approximately \$6 million for Chinquapin repairs/improvements and \$3 million for spraygrounds), this is not enough to meet all the needs but could be reallocated to begin phased improvements:

- **Recommended Phasing was discussed (See Report)**- Phase I - would include, Replacement of Old Town Pool with a medium-sized Family Aquatics Center, Upgrade to Warwick Pool, and making minimum repairs to Chinquapin, the City's only indoor facility (total cost \$8,792,000); Phase II - Add a West Side Pool and Upgrade Ewald with a Sprayground (cost \$7,295,000); Phase III- Central/Citywide - Replace Chinquapin Pool and Recreation Center with a 25" x 25" meter pool and leisure pool and new Center (cost \$28,366,000), and Phase IV - East Side/Citywide, Replace Nannie J. Lee Pool (currently closed) with an Indoor Wellness/Therapy Pool, and Upgrade Nicholas Colasanto Pool with an Interactive Fountain (cost \$4,202,000). This recommended phasing may be modified. Kagawa said costs are listed in 2012 dollars. Commissioner Moir asked about the possible location of a West End pool. RPCA staff said there is a limited amount of undeveloped land remaining in the West End. The Director said a West End pool could possibly be located at a school site, Ben Brenman, or be part of the Landmark Redevelopment Plan (which is some years out).
- Mr. Kagawa reviewed the **Comparison of Scenarios: "Do Nothing", "Maintain As-Is", "Replace As-Is", "Recommended"**. (See chart for costs, estimated attendance, operating costs and required subsidy.) The "Do Nothing" approach costs \$0; "Maintain-As-Is" would cost \$9.17 million, with the downside being no increase in attendance and continued operating costs of \$1.6 million, with a life expectancy of only 5-10 years, and low annual revenue estimated at \$500,000; "Replace As-Is" with like models has a capital cost of \$37.8 million, a life expectancy of 30-50 years (similar to the Recommended Plan), no increased attendance, and operating costs of \$1.6 million. Both the "Maintain As-Is", and "Replace As-Is" would require a subsidy of \$9.17 per visit. The **"Recommended"** phased-in replacement of the City's aging pool system with modern aquatics facilities to better serve the community has capital costs of \$48,655,000 for replacing/rebuilding all pool facilities, with a 30-50 year life expectancy and expected increases in attendance and revenue due to having newer more modern facilities. There would be an associated increase in operating costs, and a decreased annual operating subsidy from \$9.17 currently to \$2.85.
- Questions/Comments from Commissioners:
- Q. Cromley: How do you earn revenue? A: *Kagawa -Revenue is derived from metrics which include operational costs, user and rental fees.*

- Q. Brune: Since annual attendance is a negligible figure, how would attendance be tripled without expanding all facilities? A: Kagawa- *The Consultants believe that once new facilities are built more people will use the facilities, and that programming would increase.* A: Baum - *said facilities would have the capacity to increase programs, and noted that there is a waiting list of at least 100 people for swim lessons at Chinquapin.*
- Q. Vogt - *What type of modern facilities would be the big attraction?*
- A: Kagawa- *offered examples from slide: Old Town Pool near Jefferson Houston would have a new 25-meter pool, a new children's pool, an interactive space, and new bath house. The benefits here are that renovations can be done within the existing footprint; Chinquapin would become a large indoor aquatics facility, with a dive well and actual 25x25 meter pool; Nannie J. Lee would become an Indoor Wellness and Therapy Pool, an upgraded facility on the existing footprint; Colosanto could be an Interactive Fountain, very similar to what will be built at Potomac Yards.*
- Q. Moir- *asked if construction of the Old Town Pool would be affected by the Jefferson Houston School renovation?* A: Kagawa- *said this is possible, but would need to be planned for, however what is proposed for Old Town Pool can be accomplished within the existing site footprint.*
- Q. Cromley- *Would sprayparks require a lifeguard?*
- A: Kagawa- *said he had visited a Palm Beach, Florida facility with a very large spraypark and large fountain that was so popular it had a lifeguard/monitor on duty, but they currently don't require lifeguards.* A: Moir *said it would be nice to have a person to monitor safety.*
- Q: Cromley: *Would the Chinquapin pool renovation require the complete demolition of the existing facility, including the Recreation Center?*
- A: Kagawa- *said yes, based on the Consultants' recommended plan, however that is dependent upon potential to retrofit the existing building shell.*

Discussion regarding aquatics study follow-up:

Mr. Kagawa and Mr. Spengler facilitated the discussion on the possible convening of a Park and Recreation Commission (P&RC) aquatics advisory group. The group could further develop the aquatics discussion. Possible topics: revisit the number and types of major aquatics systems, better evaluate cost recovery and revenue systems, discuss City user groups, and look at what role pools in private developments and multi-family housing could play in meeting the City's overall aquatics needs, particularly in the West End.

Baum- *doubted private complexes in the West End would let outsiders use their pools.*

Moir- *there are a few parks inside developments. He agreed if it is a public pool- it has to be public. He asked how Commissioners felt about forming an aquatics advisory group.*

Baum- *asked what would be the role of a P&RC aquatics group.*

Director James Spengler said a P&RC aquatics sub-committee could develop a broader understanding of the City's aquatics needs and ways the City can meet these needs, discuss cost and revenue implications, and discuss policy recommendations. Policy discussions could include whether there should be public outdoor pools in the City and/or the level of services to be provided. City Council is looking to RPCA for a plan that offers a direction for how to move the City's aquatics programs forward. The City is at a crossroads in aquatics services and needs to decide whether and how to invest more money. He noted that aquatics-related funding items in the CIP are placeholders. In the long-run Old Town and Charles Houston pools will be inadequate to meet the City's needs. Currently competitive events can't be held at the Chinquapin facility because it is a non-competition sized pool.

Cromley- agreed Chinquapin does needs renovation, however he does not support the idea of sprayparks, which he feels are more of an entertainment-type activity. He would prefer the Commission advocate for teaching swimming as a life, health and safety issue, as City resources are limited.

Baum- noted that children love pools with amenities.

Vogt- expressed concern that interactive fountains may attract traffic; he asked how long interest in such attractions lasts, and said it doesn't feel like something for adults.

Baum- suggested that rather than forming another City committee, the Department of RPCA should propose a plan that the P&RC could review and then support. She prefers pushing for a large competitive-sized pool first, e.g. renovating or rebuilding Chinquapin. Baum said once people see a nice facility they will better understand the need for additional smaller aquatics facilities.

Moir- suggested inviting the Wahoo's swim team and other swim groups to a meeting to obtain feedback. He said plans for the Chinquapin pool should be done as part of the Chinquapin Master Plan.

Vogt- asked about the time commitment for making a decision about the Aquatics Master Plan, as he will graduate in June and no longer be on the Commission.

The Director said there is no timeline for the aquatics plan actions.

Baum- suggested that over the next five years, efforts be made to identify additional funding sources for the additional \$20 million.

Moir- asked Commission members how they wanted to proceed on this item. He said if an aquatics advisory committee were formed it should include a member of the P&RC as the Chair.

Forbes- commented that with the limited funds available, a goal should be to develop a consensus for moving ahead with one large pool, and then branch out with plans for additional facilities. This approach would be similar to that taken for installing synthetic turf artificial fields in the City. Minnie Howard's artificial turf field created popular support for having artificial turf at other fields. If a major redevelopment of Chinquapin is decided, ACPS should be involved in the process, as they could possibly help with

funding. Moir noted that the ACPS athletic swim team uses Chinguapin, and asked what non-ACPS swim teams use City pools.

Vogt commented that he knows people that live in Fairfax County and its three major pools are always packed in the summer.

Baum- asked the P&RC consensus was to move ahead with the large competitive-size indoor pool first and invite interested groups to P&RC for a discussion. The Director clarified that no formal action was anticipated at tonight's meeting. Baum also asked, in light of the Ewald Pool closure in FY 2013, what RPCA can do to bring attention to the need to renovate the City's aging aquatics facilities. The Director said a City Council work session on Aquatics and the Needs Assessment had been scheduled for November/December of 2011, but needed to be postponed due to hiring of new City Manager and has not yet been rescheduled. He said that RPCA and the Commission need to determine recommendations for the Aquatics Master Plan. Baum suggested giving City Council a briefing on the aquatics plan recommendations, preferably before they recess in June. The Director, RPCA Mr. Spengler said the important thing is that some decisions need to be made before the next round of CIP projects are completed.

In response to a question from Mr. Cromley, on how long would Old Town Pool be out of service if renovated? Mr. Kagawa said this could take 18-20 months.

Action: Vice Chair Moir and Commissioners agreed to defer further discussion on the Aquatics study until the June meeting.

III. Approval of Summary Minutes from April 19, 2012:

Approval of the minutes was held until a quorum was present. Rich Brune moved, and Ripley Forbes seconded, that the April minutes be approved as presented. All were in favor.

IV. Division Updates: To View a Copy of the Full Staff Report go to <http://alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation/CommissonReports>.

- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley- **See Staff Report**. Mr. Chesley joined the meeting after having attended a "Safe Place" Recognition Ceremony in City Hall, Vola Lawson Lobby with Ann Redfearn, RPCA Safe Place Coordinator. Safe Place is a national private and public partnership that provides access to immediate help and safety at public and private sites for youth in crisis. RPCA is now a designated "Safe Place" organization.
- B. **Park Operations Report** - Jack Browand- **See Staff Report**. Commissioner Baum asked when Jones Point Park is scheduled to open. Kagawa- said the park is scheduled by contract to open on June 25. The City will be coordinating a date for the grand opening in September 2012 with the National Park Service.
- C. **Office of the Arts Update**- Cheryl Anne Colton gave the following updates -**See Full Staff Report**. Items Discussion: Charles Houston Memorial Sculpture Update: A recent fundraising meeting was held in the last two weeks, more info. to follow; Memorial Day Celebration "Rocky Versace Vietnam Veterans

Memorial”- the upcoming event will be held May 28, 11 am, at the Mt. Vernon Rec Center; FY2013 Grant Recipient Recognition and City Galleries Artists reception- Colton noted that there is a reception in City Hall on Monday, May 21, 5:30 pm, Opening Reception for the Art in City Hall Exhibit and to recognize the Fiscal Year 2013 Grantees. The formal part of program will begin at 6 pm.

D. **Park Planning Updates** – Ron Kagawa and Division Team:

i. **Division Updates: See Staff Report and Presentations:**

- Four Mile Park Expansion-completion summer/fall.
- Freedman’s Cemetery- Summer/Spring 2013. A 365-day contract, signed May 1 anticipated completion by May 2013. Ms. Colton said, the top finalists for the Art Sculpture design, will be in town July 7th for a presentation at the Lyceum. The sculpture’s delivery is anticipated by April 24, 2013. The Selection Panel will make recommendations to the P&RC. The exhibit will be displayed for two weeks then go back to the Arts Commission. The Arts Commission will make a recommendation to City Council. Kagawa noted the importance and sensitivity of the Freedman’s Cemetery project, and that there are both known gravesites and likely also unknown grave sites.
- Miracle Field (at Lee Center field) - Kagawa said staff is very excited about this project, community support is good, and the adjacent neighbors support the field. The Miracle Field Foundation has raised funds. The project goes before the Planning Commission on June 5 and to City Council on June 16, 2012 for approval of small lights. Work is expected to begin at the end of June/early July, and plantings done in fall. Donnie Simpson and others have been instrumental in the project.
- Potomac Yard Park- is 15 percent finished –Anticipated Completion Summer 2013.
- Windmill Hill Basketball Court- The basketball court construction is 30 percent complete with completion expected in fall 2012. The City received a note of concern (COA) from a resident whose son hurt his ankle playing on the court. The project is still under construction.
- Witter Recreational Fields- As part of the development project a traffic light, activated only when traffic exits the park, has been approved. Mr. Kagawa reviewed the rectangular and softball fields’ locations. The project will preserve the cemetery. Hand selected honey locus trees are now being installed. At right is a service building with solar panels on the roof. Humble glass pavers will be installed made from recycled glass.
- Facilities Assessment- David Ghezzi, Architect RPCA is working with Department of General Services to complete a facility assessment of all City Recreation Centers. Looking at lifecycle, mechanical, electrical systems, and roofs. This is the first time this has been done in the City. The DRPCA is

investing money now to save costs in the future. There were no questions or comments.

- **Duron Community Building Update:** The Duron Paint building project, in Arlandria that was purchased with Open Space Funds several years ago, was completed this spring. The site was renovated and regraded, and the Farmers Market will continue. In June additional plantings and an irrigation system will be installed. More plantings will be installed in the fall. The Chair had worked on this project with Architects Anonymous.
- **1. Citizen CIP Request for period of November 2011 to April 2012- Holmes Run Park Trail Fitness Equipment (See copy of project request):** Jack Browand said that one request was received from the residents of Holmes Run. An annual playground inspection had found equipment not up to par, interim renovations repairs were made. Over 150 residents have signed a petition in support of expanding the current exercise area in Holmes Run Park and to replace three pieces of exercise equipment. Kagawa reviewed the Citizen CIP process and noted that 18 months ago staff had proposed a process for submitting external citizen CIP requests to the Commission. The Citizen CIP process allows for matching funds. Matching funds are being sought for this project, staff is seeking guidance from the Commission on the project. Browand- said the location is just east of the Beatley Library on the opposite side of Holmes Run. Kagawa- said a determination is needed at the June P&RC meeting. Vice Chair Moir said the project is slated to cost \$4,955, and that \$2,500 is being funded by the requestor. The additional cost being sought is approximately \$2,500 plus staff time.
- Baum said she sees no reason not to move this project forward now. In response to Forbes question, Moir noted the area is near the CVS near Beatley Library on Duke Street. Browand- said it is on Holmes Run Parkway trail side along the bike trail near Van Dorn and Duke Street.
- Moir noted that Councilwoman Pepper signed the petition and asked who is expected to use the equipment. Browand said the two pieces of equipment there now are heavily used and their disrepair occurred because the site is hard to maintain.
- **Motion-** Commissioner Baum moved, and Forbes seconded, to approve the Holmes Run Park Trail Fitness Equipment Citizen CIP request in the amount of \$2,500 as requested by the Holmes Run Committee. All were in favor.
- **Other: Dana Wedeles-** Mr. Kagawa congratulated Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, with RPCA for the last two years, for passing her exam to become a licensed Planner with the American Institute of Certified Planners. The Commission congratulated Ms. Wedeles in her absence. Vice Chair Moir said he would ask the Chair to write a letter congratulating Ms. Wedeles.
- **2. Active Rec CFMP Projects-** See Staff Report for a list of completed and planned maintenance to Recreation facilities and Recreation Centers as of May 2012.

- Cromley asked for the status of the Charles Houston Memorial. (See Arts Report Item# III-C)

E. **Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events, Waterfront** – See Staff Report by Cheryl Lawrence. Mr. Browand noted that the 35th Annual Memorial Day Jazz Festival would be held May 28 at Waterfront Park, and that the Music at Twilight concert series, formerly held at Ft. Ward Park, will be held at John Carlyle Square this year, beginning on Thursday, June 7. Mr. Forbes asked what happened to the Second Annual Jazz Fest planned for June. The Director said this event will be moved to September/October 2012. The date was changed because the middle school bands are on travel.

V. **Director’s Report - James Spengler (verbal updates): FY 2013 Budget and CIP-** the Director reported that Council passed the FY 2013 budget on May 7. There were no additions/deletions other than those previously discussed. Holiday Lights- Council discussed how long to keep the King Street lights on after New Year’s. After discussion it was decided that decorative banners, to be maintained by the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA), would be installed. Urban Forestry- RPCA will be doing less tree work because the Urban Forestry budget was cut. Ewald Pool-will not re-open this summer due to low usage. (See budget memo #11 for details.) RPCA After-School Programs- will have a fee increase this year, with an offset for parents who cannot afford the fee. William Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services and Programs, and staff have been publicizing this change to parents and caretakers. Operating Budget- additional funding was received for Witter Field.

A. **Jones Point Park-Update-** See Staff Report. This item was previously discussed (See Item IV-B).

B. **Update on Beauregard Corridor Small Area Plan Letter-follow-up:** City Council held a public hearing on Saturday May 12 (see City Council webpage – Action Docket, May 12, Item #12) .The Beauregard Corridor Small Area Plan (BCSAP) (and amendment to the Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill and Alexandria W. Small Area Plans) was passed by City Council. The major controversy in the BCSAP is how to maintain Affordable Housing, 800 units of dedicated affordable housing have been secured, but the plan will demolish over 2,500 units.

VI. **2012 CIVIC Awards Subcommittee** - Jack Browand- See Staff Report. The P&RC will form a subcommittee, consisting of Ripley Forbes and Rich Brune, to review nominations and recommend award recipients. The awards will be presented at the City’s annual birthday celebration, July 7. Mr. Browand said he had received two applications to date, and would send out another reminder for nominations. Typically the Commission receives 7 to 9 nominations per year. There were no further questions or comments.

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

A. **Waterfront Commission** - Commissioner Baum reported that the Bikeshare Pilot Project will launch this summer with a number of locations, to be determined. The proposed sites along the Waterfront are is within a half block of Union and Prince Streets, and the Beachcombers property.

- B. Youth Sports Committee – Commissioner Moir said that he and Mr. Chesley, Deputy Director, Recreation Services were unable to attend the last Youth Sports meeting.
- C. Four Mile Run - Ripley Forbes. No report.
- D. Freedman’s Cemetery - Bob Moir. This item discussed earlier- See Item D.
- E. ACPS & Capital Improvements - Judy Guse-Noritake (absent). No report.
- F. Jones Point Park Liaison Group - Judy Guse-Noritake (absent). No report.
- G. Community Gardens Policy - Judy Guse-Noritake (absent). No report.
- H. Ft. Ward- Ripley Forbes, Bob Moir- Forbes reported that a contractor will be selected for a consultant to work on the Management Plan.
- I. ACPS School Projects- Judy Guse-Noritake (absent). No report.
- J. Jefferson Houston School - William Cromley. Cromley reported that Elevations of the new Jefferson Houston school site were unveiled.

VIII. Public comments on additional topics. Vice Chair Moir invited comments on other topics. There were none. Commissioner Forbes suggested that, if possible, brief public comments be invited on non-agenda topics earlier in a meeting’s agenda in the future.

IX. Agenda items for June meeting and location. The next P&RC meeting will be Thursday, June 21, 2012, 7:00 p.m. at Charles Houston Community Center. Topics: Aquatics Master Plan. Cromley said he would try to invite interested groups. Vogt said he would probably be unable to attend and noted that he and Mollie Timmons are seniors at T.C. Williams High School, and will be graduating.

Ripley Forbes moved to adjourn the meeting the motion was seconded by Rich Brune. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.