

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

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, November 15, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Summary Minutes

Members Present: Chairperson Judy Guse-Noritake, Vice Chair, Gina Baum, Stephen Beggs, Richard Brune, Judith Coleman, William Cromley, Ripley Forbes, Brian McPherson, Robert Moir.

Excused Absence: Emma Schutzius.

RPCA Staff: Director James Spengler, Dinesh Tiwari, Deputy Director, Park Operations; William Chesley, Deputy Director Recreation Services, David A. Miller, Division Chief; Jack Browand, Division Chief Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations, Robin DeShields, Executive Assistant.

Absent: Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, and Office of the Arts, Ron Kagawa, Division Chief Park Planning, Design and Capital Development, Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator.

Guests: Daphne Kott, Civil Engineer, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), and Karon Badalamenti, GreenPlay Consultant.

I. Call to Order by Chair, Judy Guse-Noritake. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Chair welcomed new youth Commissioner Nick Wagner, a senior at T.C. Williams H.S.

II. Presentation - King Street Flood Mitigation Study - T&ES (note: this item was moved up on the agenda from III). Daphne Kott, Civil Engineer, T&ES gave an update on the King St., Strand and Union St. Flood Mitigation Study. **To view report go to <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/KingStrandUnionStreetsFloodMitigationProjectUpdate.pdf>**. The study area is part of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. This study was performed to help evaluate causes and to propose possible resolutions to reduce nuisance flooding events in these areas. Kott stated that nuisance flooding was defined as when the tide reaches an elevation of 4.0 (See slide-all events below the yellow line are considered nuisance flooding.) Some causes of nuisance flooding are rain; however the majority of events are caused by the tide backing up into the streets from the storm sewer inlets. Approximately 303 events occurred from January 2005 to April 2011. The Project will help reduce flood events, by raising the elevation of certain storm inlets, while minimizing the impacts to private property, and to minimize cost- See Slide 6/6/12. Existing conditions- See Slide. Strand St., Union St. and King St.- the darkest areas show lowest elevations. Grade and curb inlet- next to ODBC parking lot is at 1.45 elevation – (water comes out of inlet at 1.46). Along King St. the lowest elevations at inlets are at 2.6 and 2.8. Some project constraints, i.e. Potomac River Water Surface elevations; elevations of existing building entrances along King St., minimum slopes required for drainage, roads and sidewalks design standards, ADA

compliance, and cost. The Study provides two Alternatives 1 & 2: The goal of the project is to remove the low point on The Strand 1.45, and relocate it to King St. at 2.66.

Alternative 1 - raises the low point from 1.45 to 2.66 elevation, this will reduce flood events from 303 to 61 (estimated cost \$925,000). Alternative 2- raises the low point from 1.45 to 3.22, and will reduce flood events from 303 to 15 per year (estimated cost \$1,150,000.). There will be some impacts to the Mai Thai Restaurant entrance and a portion of the ODBC parking lot would need to be regraded. Kott said that the estimates are study based, and not based on actual engineered plans.

The Chair said when the Union St. Corridor Study was presented before the PRC on September 20, 2012, members suggested creating a paved street and sidewalk plaza at the foot of King St. Kott said the slide showing- “The Unit Block of King St. Cross Section-Looking West” addresses this and provides two Alternatives: Alternative 1 would raise the elevation from 2.82 to 3.06 ft., and Alternative 2 would raise the elevation to 3.55 ft., creating positive drainage sloped away from the buildings. In coordination with the Union St. Corridor Study, a plaza area will be created that will be used for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, including the King St. Trolley. Both Alternatives would result in grading on the parking lot and the parking spaces. For more info. please see presentation.

Commissioner comments and responses from Kott:

Q. What is the economic cost of events? A. *Nuisance flooding reduces revenues of businesses due to closings, cleanups, etc. The current study is a stand-alone project that could be implemented at an earlier date, and later integrated into the larger more comprehensive Waterfront Flood Mitigation Plan.*

Q. Would the study take into account the legal issues with the ODBC, and the issue of Wales Alley? A. *The City Manager’s Office is dealing with the legal issues associated with the ODBC and Wales Alley.*

Q. Baum- reviewed picture of ODBC parking lot; she asked if raised, will water go into Waterfront Park, see existing conditions.

A. *The low point has been moved off The Strand to King St., and the street elevation raised to reduce the flood events. The new low point will also be higher resulting in fewer and shallower flood events.*

Q. What happens downstream? A. *The Engineers have looked at cross sections downstream and the overland relief would be maintained. During a final design phase the expanded study area will be looked to ensure the improvements fit into the overall plan.*

Q. Was this an internal City, or external process? A. *A consultant was hired to do the plan. The original waterfront flood mitigation study was done by URS, and that this study was presented to City Council this week.*

Q. Is this still a draft study; and a suggestion was made that the PRC include language in their letter regarding the extension of Wales Alley near the ODBC. A. *The study is complete-the next step is to take the recommendations and move to an engineered level plan.*

Action: The Chair will include in the PRC's letter the Commission's position on the extension of Wales Alley near ODBC.

III. Presentation- Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Philosophy, Model and Policy Pyramid Methodology-Karon Badalamenti, GreenPlay Consultant.

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/GreenPlayPRCNov2012.pdf>.

David A. Miller, Division Chief, Recreation Services and lead for the project, said that GreenPlay develops and trains agencies in developing a philosophy for resource allocation/cost recovery. The GreenPlay "Pyramid Methodology" is used across the country. Director James Spengler said that staff recently met with the City Manager, and that this item will go before City Council in March as a new policy related to resource allocation. Badalamenti – Green Play Consultant gave a 40 minute presentation which included: I-10 Step Process Implementation; II- Public Engagement Strategies; III- Public Sorting Results; and IV-The tools and next steps. Badalamenti said many organizations are looking at their fee structure, budget, and facing possible service reductions. The goal is to start with a philosophy that guides policy decisions. GreenPlay Consultants have experience in the Park and Recreation field. They realize that the values, vision, mission, and needs of each community are different. They help communities look at how to be sustainable without being totally dependent on taxpayer funds. Additionally, this process helps let the public know how tax dollars are being used. Currently the Department of RPCA is at 12% cost recovery (approximately \$2 million annually), not including CIP funds, the National Average is 34%.

The Pyramid Methodology ranges from "Mostly Community" vs. "Mostly Individual" Benefit. Badalamenti explained that a "Mostly Community Benefit" would be an unmonitored park facility where everyone benefits whether they use it or not. "Mostly Individual" benefit would be a competitive/travel swim team. The Chair commented that the Commission has discussed the fee question over time. She said it is nice to see a defensible and thoughtful methodology for how the City should approach its fee structure and policy. Two concerns expressed by Commissioners were marina fees, and providing more learn-to-swim classes. A challenge moving forward will be the long-held expectations of the Alexandria community.

Commissioner's Discussion:

- Fees for Dog Parks- A question was asked regarding why are there no fees for dog parks. Badalamenti said this can be done if desired, the category of service would be non-monitoring parks. The Chair said that most dog parks have "Friends of Groups" that provide some funding and sweat equity for specific dog parks. Badalamenti said credit could be given for any volunteering and fundraising to keep tabs on contributions vs., cost recovery. The Director RPCA said that historically dog exercise areas have been a free service. When the Dog Park Master Plan was approved a \$2.00 license fee was proposed for upkeep of dog exercise areas, but not approved. Last year the City added \$38,000 to its CFMP program for dog park maintenance. The model to be taken before City Council allows for the community to have a discussion about items that are mostly an individual benefit vs. those that are mostly community benefit and then make decisions on resource allocation. The 2011 Needs Assessment Survey- Question #10- asked what activity/program direct costs that should be paid through taxes and fees. The Chair commented that this only holds true if the participation is statistically vigorous,

only 140 persons participated in sorting work sessions. The 2011 Needs Assessment is more statistically robust.

- Baum- said the City should begin focusing on things that will bring in money i.e. pools and marina fees.
- Coleman- asked if there a parallel model.
- Badalamenti- you may have policies in place, i.e. naming rights. Not every service is right for alternative funding. Grants are not the panacea people think. Organizations that don't need to raise their cost recovery-not a problem right now. Others organizations are looking at adding or increasing fees. The City is currently in a good fiscal position and is using forward-looking planning. There is an opportunity to improve the Department's financial picture, as shown with the increase in fees for the Out of School Time (OSTP) this year. There is a perception of value as it relates to cost. People are willing to put discretionary dollars where they value service. The Chair said in the past, the level of fees were largely decided in comparison to surrounding jurisdictions, and then the City would try to price close to this, but under this, comparing cost with a scale is a better model.
- Cromley- said this brings up the philosophy that government should be focusing on health and safety items that fall into essential public services.
- Forbes- asked does RPCA have a direction to raise fees. Spengler- not a specific direction, the City Manager gave direction regarding increasing revenues.
- Baum- asked what is amount of marina fees.
Browand- said it's close to 70-80% operating costs. The challenge with the marina is how to incorporate all the CIP charges and dredging costs.

IV. **Approval of Summary Minutes from October 18, 2012.** Rich Brune, Secretary motioned to approve the minutes, Robert Moir seconded the motion, the minutes were approved.

V. **Items for Action from October meeting:**

- **FY 2014 Budget and CIP Discussion and Recommendations to City Council-** See Staff Report: The Chair will draft a letter on behalf of the Commission and incorporate comments from the October PRC meeting, she asked if there was additional input. Baum- Chinquapin and spray parks where is this heading. Director- for the 10 year CIP, RPCA requested funding at Chinquapin to build a 25 x 25 meter, side by side pool that would connect to the existing facility. There is roughly \$6 million for outdoor pools to include: Old Town Pool, Warwick Village and a new Therapeutic Pool at Nannie J. Lee. The Chair said her take away is continued support for a Therapeutic Pool, Old Town Pool and for substantial resources to move Chinquapin up in the City's CIP budget.
- **Discussion and Recommendations on Composition of Park and Recreation Commission-** At the October meeting a matrix of current Commission liaison assignments and responsibilities was presented for discussion. The Commission is currently composed of 11 members, 3 from Planning Districts I, II, III, plus 2 high school youth positions. The Commission discussed the possibility of converting one student position, once vacated, to an at-large position, as the workload is expected to increase particularly in the area of new school construction/renovations. It was suggested that if an at-large position is created it would be helpful to obtain someone with knowledge of

schools. If decided, a letter would need to be sent to the City Clerk. Another suggestion was made to spread more tasks out amongst commissioners, as the Chair currently has a full workload. The Chair reported that Planning and Zoning and ACPS have formed a new committee to look at future growth areas in the City, SAP's and redevelopment issues and where future schools may be needed. She has been asked to serve on this long-term planning group. Another concern discussed was the ability of Commissioners to rotate among various meetings due to scheduling. The Chair feels that a seat allotted for a PRC member on a board or commission should allow for any member to attend the related meetings. This would allow the PRC to double up resources and rotate members for meetings. Action-Decision deferred for later discussion.

VI. Division Updates: To View Full Staff Reports - Go to
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PRCStaffReportNov2012.pdf>

- A. **Recreation Programs and Service Update** - William Chesley- See Staff Report. Chinquapin Center to be Closed for Maintenance - May to September 2013-to allow for the installation of a new HVAC system. ADA Compliance will be included for front entrance doors, and improvements will be made for lockers. Staff is planning to relocate programs to other recreation centers and school sites. Staff is also working with ACPS to relocate summer camp programs normally held in Chinquapin Park to Frances Hammond Middle School or Minnie Howard. A meeting is planned with Bill Finn, School Facilities Director, to coordinate school space for programs. The operating hours for outdoor pools will be expanded and we will schedule some aquatic classes at the outdoor pools, but there will be some challenges accommodating aquatic classes for seniors at the outdoor pools due to pool temperatures. Staff is also working with the community, Advisory Groups and RPCA staff to help with marketing and getting information out. The Chair said resources should be used to open up small outdoor pools as much as possible. Baum suggested moving most of the camps to Recreation Centers with pool facilities if possible. Chesley said they will try to look at this and we will be using Old Town Pool, Warwick Pool is still open, but Ewald Pool has been closed. The Commission suggested getting the word out as early as possible after the Christmas Holiday, as parents often begin registering their children for summer camps early January. Mr. Chesley said that the tennis courts will still be usable. Kagawa said staging for construction will be in upper lot and tennis courts will not be affected.

The Dedication Ceremony for the Kelly Cares Miracle Field– will be held this Saturday at 5:00 p.m. on-site at the Lee Center field.

- B. **Park Operations Report** - Dinesh Tiwari - See Staff Report - No comments.
- C. **Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations** - Jack Browand - See Staff Report- The City's First Night Celebration will be held on December 31 throughout Old Town, and will include a fireworks display set-off from a barge on the river.
- D. **Park Planning Reports**: Ron Kagawa and Division Team- See Staff Reports. Large Park Planning Survey- In response to a question from McPherson, Kagawa said a significant number of responses were received and that various forms of

multi-media were used in the process. Browand said that Joseph Hensley's Park was rescheduled for this Monday, a reminder email will be sent.

Witter Field Update- Kagawa said the new Fields (2 rectangular and 1 diamond) with lights will open on Tuesday, the Dedication Ceremony will be held in spring.

Francis C. Hammond School Status- ACPS is managing the project. It is anticipated to be complete in December.

VII. Director's Report - James Spengler (verbal updates):

FY14 Budget Update: See Staff Report and List of Proposed Budget

Adjustments – The Director reviewed the budget adjustment forms with the Commission. He said most are for maintenance funding for new facilities and obligations for new Parks that are coming on line, Potomac Yard Park is the largest. The requests total \$966,502. Action- the Chair said the Commission would include support of these budget requests in their letter to City Council.

VIII. Report from Commissioners (verbal updates):

- A. **Waterfront Commission** - Gina Baum. The Commission will meet next week; they will present a letter on extending Wales Alley. The Department of T&ES will also do a presentation on the Union Street Flood Mitigation Study. Browand reported that the marina sub-committee is recommending increasing licensed slips by six and reducing transient boat slips by six. There will be no significant decrease in service. It could generate an increased revenue potential of approximately of \$26,000, based on the proposed fee increase. Forbes commented that he felt that converting transient slips to leaseholders is moving in the wrong direction.
- B. **Youth Sport Committee** - Bob Moir was on travel- no report. The Chair said she testified in front of the School Board and asked them to please consider putting lights on the tennis courts that will be built at T.C. Williams H.S. The Board's discussion included providing \$3,000 for a feasibility study of lights on the tennis courts. The Chair contacted Jim Gibson, Chair, YSAB and asked him to attend and speak at the next School Board meeting on the 19th where there will be a follow up discussion and decision on the lights.
- C. **Four Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes - no report.
- D. **Freedmen's Cemetery** - Bob Moir- no updates.
- E. **ACPS & Capital Improvements** - Judy Guse-Noritake. The hearing on Jefferson Houston School before Planning Commission and City Council was delayed- she still needs dates. Planning for Patrick Henry School will begin soon. Kagawa-said an RFP for services being solicited; the intent is to begin Education Specifications in 2013.
- F. **Community Gardens Policy**- Judy Guse-Noritake- no updates.
- G. **Ft. Ward** - Ripley Forbes and Bob Moir: Forbes reported that a meeting was held yesterday, discussion was entirely on Recreation report from last stakeholder group. They are close to hiring a consultant by the beginning of next year to do a Management Plan.

- H. **ACPS School Projects**- Judy Guse-Noritake.
- I. **Jefferson Houston School** - William Cromley- Project went before the BZA for Concept Plan and was approved. Next Phase will go to the Planning Commission December 4, and then to City Council December 15, 2012. Jefferson Houston School process and plan is a great model for the community and planning for other schools in the City should use something similar. The Chair said she plans to attend meetings others are welcome.
- J. **Beauregard Corridor Plan Task Force** - Stephen Beggs- Meeting held last night discussed implementation of Beauregard SAP and where certain things need to be addressed at the CDD level, design level or SUP level. Beggs provided handout- there is two areas for SAP East Side of Seminary Road. They feel that things are progressing as they should. He brought up that the park should integrate into the SAP. There is a grid of primary roads-looking at adding additional roads that go behind some people's properties, this may be problematic.
- K. **Open Space**- Chair Judy Noritake reported that she and Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator discussed this yesterday and that progress is being made. When Open Space Plan was originally completed the goal was to obtain 100 new acres of open space, the City now has 93 acres. Director James Spengler said additionally the City has decided to purchase the Polk Property which will add another 2.34 acres.
- IX. At the close of the meeting, the Commission will take comments on any other topic from the public. None received.
- X. Agenda items for January 17, 2012, meeting and location- Charles Houston –to be confirmed.
- XI. List of upcoming public meetings - see handout.

Adjourned 9:10 p.m.