

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Park and Recreation Commission

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, July 15, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

**Mt. Vernon Recreation Center - Multi-purpose Room
2701 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria VA**

Commission Members: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chairperson. William Cromley, David Dexter, Ripley Forbes, Stephen (Clark) Mercer, Jeffrey Murphy, Anthony Zamora (new H.S. youth member).

Excused Absences: Henry Brooks, Rich Brune, Robert Moir.

RPCA Staff: James Spengler-Director, Roger Blakeley, William Chesley, Jack Browand, Ron Kagawa, Beth Carton, Robin DeShields.

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., noting that Henry Brooks, Rich Brune and Bob Moir had excused absences. The Chair introduced new high school youth member Anthony Zamora to Commission members.

- I. Potomac Yards Presentation- Bethany Carton- Park Planner RPCA** - Ms. Carton, gave a brief presentation of the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan (SAP), which began in 2008 and was approved by City Council as part of the City's Master Plan in May, 2010. **To view presentation visit <http://alexandriava.gov/uploaded/files/recreation/info/parkandrecreation>**
- N. Potomac Yards covers the northern 69 acres in P.Y. and is bordered by Route 1 on the west, Four Mile Run to the north, and the rail tracks on the east side.
 - In 2008 City Council created PYPAG, to facilitate the process for the new SAP. More than 47 meetings were held on N. Potomac Yard to gather community input and generate the final plan. **The plan can be found online at <http://alexandriava.gov/PotomacYard>.**
 - The plan contains several specific items that coordinate and reinforce the Four Mile Run Master Plan which include sustainability elements, connectivity and open space networks. Specific recommendations include: expanding open space-near Four Mile Run; exploring connections to trail networks in Arlington Co. and G.W. Parkway, and providing connections to Landbay K in the southern portion of Potomac Yard. Following the SAP, a Coordinated Development District (CDD) was approved to rezone the property, increasing the density from 600,000 sq. ft. to 7.5 million sq. ft. The CDD was approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in June, 2010. It includes requirements for a comprehensive Open Space Plan for N. Potomac Yard including significant open space acreage at ground level and on building tops. The developer is also required to implement improvements to Four Mile Run adjacent to N. Potomac Yard, not to exceed \$8.7 million in cost.
 - Responses to Questions/Comments from Chair by Ms. Carton:
 - Q. What are the time triggers for contributions?
 - R. Triggers will be decided with the 1st Final Site Plan of DSUP as detailed in the Site Plan Conditions. There are several steps that need to take place prior to the first Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) application including resolution of the Metro Flex Zone which is undergoing a feasibility study at this time.
 - Q. How much of the open space would include storm water management facilities?
 - Although environmentally required, these often take away from usable open space and

they should be sized to reflect the site requirements of LEED certification which will reduce the amount of storm water needing treatment.

R. The surface area of the water cannot be counted as open space. However, certain infrastructure can be counted as open space if it is useable area and there is the ability to program on top of the infrastructure.

Q. Are rooftops developments open space amenities counted as open space.

R. Yes, rooftop amenities are counted as open space if it is available for use by residents. The CDD also requires a certain amount of open space be made available at ground level because the network of OS available to the community is very important.

The Chair said there needs to be a clear understanding with Planning & Zoning and the Developer, about the need to have some open space at ground level, there has to be a balance. This may need to be codified.

Ms. Carton -There are several layers of regulation built in: the SAP, the CDD, and finally, detailed requirements in DSUP's for each block on architecture, storm water management, amenities, etc.

Potomac Yard Updates:

Potomac Avenue

Construction is in process in the South starting at Route 1.

Landbay D – Rail Park (between the CSX and Metro Rail tracks)

Developer is interested in fulfilling their requirements; afterwards the parcel will be transferred to the City.

The developer will plan the new dog park on Monroe Avenue with the community in the future. The Chair stated this has been a long standing issue, the P&RC needs to discuss programming of the area as soon as possible.

Potomac Yard Amendment (Landbays D, E, H, I, J, K and L)

Minor changes and technical revisions to the design guidelines and other coordination issues will be brought to the Planning Commission and City Council in October. No impacts are proposed on open space, parks, or area programming.

Landbays I & J

Final site plan approval is expected this winter and construction is anticipated in 2011.

Landbay K

The park was approved in 2008 and is submitting for final site plan. Construction is anticipated to begin 2011.

Athletic Fields

Construction of the approved plan is in process this summer.

Also see Director's Report Item V-A Simpson Stadium-Duncan Avenue.

II. Approval of Summary Minutes from May 20 and June 17, 2010.

- Minutes of May 20 - David Dexter moved to approve the summary minutes. The motion was seconded by Stephen (Clark) Mercer. The minutes were approved.
- Minutes of June 17- Stephen (Clark) Mercer moved to approve the summary minutes. The motion was seconded by Ripley Forbes. The minutes were approved.

III. Retreat Action Items:

- A. Continued Discussion of Draft Bylaws and Operating Procedures for Commission.
- B. Review and prioritize Consolidated List of Action Items from Retreat, March 6.
Action: Items A&B were DEFERRED TO SEPTEMBER by consensus, due to the absence of several key members.
- C. Develop list of items to address at P&RC meeting for September 2010.
Action: The Chair requested this item be moved to the end of meeting - see Item VIII.

IV. Division Updates (See Full Staff Reports):

www.alexandriava.gov/Department/Recreation/Commissions and Committees

- A. **Recreation Programs and Services Update** - William Chesley
 - See Staff Report-The Alexandria Gazette has run a number of good articles on Recreation Services and programs; and feedback from parents has been good. Youth Field Hockey is doing an exceptional job due to the hard work of staff Mac Solver, Tamika Coleman, and Marvin Elliot. Program started as a pilot in 2009.
- B. **Operations & Park Planning Monthly Report** - Roger Blakeley
 - See Staff Report- The “**No Mow**” zones seem to be working out fine in a number of places and that the public seem to like it.
 - **Dora Kelley Park** - tree project upcoming due to damage from major winter snow storm. Department is trying to strike a balance between, habitat, trail use, and canopy. Work will be completed near the end of July.
 - **Ft. Ward Park private cemetery** - a number of trees have fallen there, signs have been posted. Trees will be removed, buffer zone to be installed. Work will take place next week, neighbors are aware.
- C. **Office on the Arts Update** – Alisa Carrel- See Staff Report- No questions or comments.
- D. **Park Planning Updates** – Ron Kagawa- See Staff Report- No questions or comments.
- E. **Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events** - Jack Browand- See Staff Report.
 - **Virginia Recreation and Parks Society Awards** – RPCA submitted 3 Awards: New facility (Charles Houston), Renovation (Soft Playroom-Chinquapin Ctr.), and Innovative Program (“Equestrian Program” at Charles Houston). Results will be shared at September meeting.
 - **City’s Birthday Celebration was held - July 11** at Oronoco Bay Park. The 2010 CIVIC Awards were presented: 3 out of 4 recipients attended. The Chair said that the event went very well. In response to a question from the Chair, inquiry from Councilwoman Pepper, the Director said the stage was a rental. Commissioner Mercer said the Chair did a great job presenting the Awards.

V. Director’s Report - James Spengler

- A. **Simpson Fields- See Staff Report.** (item discussed as part of P.Y. updates - Item I.)
The Director gave a report on **Park Construction near Duncan Avenue (Council Request #10-20E).**
 - A series of meetings began around February 2008 leading to Council approval of the DSUP. Issue: the P&RC and Youth Sports Advisory Board wanted the size of fields be as large as possible, due to the multiple sports that are played on rectangular fields by varying age groups. The Chair P&RC wrote a letter to the P.C. and City Council supporting larger fields.
 - A condition in the DSUP spoke to the size of the two fields and that the City and Developer should enter into an agreement to upgrade fields to include artificial turf and with lights similar to other fields in the City. After approval by P.C. and C.C. the Developer created construction drawings. At the same time, Park Planning staff (Kagawa) and other staff attempted to negotiate the formula for contribution for artificial turf and lights which finally ended unsuccessfully. The developer proceeded with the minimum requirements to replace fields. Construction of the first phase of townhouses cannot begin until fields are replaced and ready. The replacement fields

are in Landbay K and currently owned by the developer. The developer will turn the fields over to City after construction and acceptance.

- Due to the economy, there was no activity on site for years after approval. When the developer went to survey the site for construction, neighbors started getting concerned and called to see what was happening.
- On June 28, Beth Carton met with neighbors to discuss concerns, and several ideas were generated as listed (See staff report). Ms. Carton shared this information with staff at a meeting with P&Z, T&ES & Developer. Developer concerned that changes to the Plan may trigger amendments to the DSUP and have to go back to P.C and City Council. Staff from other Departments determined the changes can be done through the Revision process and As-Built Drawings.
- Director RPCA shared concerns and schematics at the Youth Sports Advisory Board meeting on Monday at Mt. Vernon Recreation Center. The Chair of YSAB wants fields to be as large as possible for reasons previously noted.

- Q. Chair- is there is a top limit - fields are shorter than initially described?
- R. Spengler- yes
- Carton- Playing surface is 345 X 180 feet – which is 60 yards wide (both fields).
- Chair-generally we ask for the field to be 70 yards wide. A number of sports such as lacrosse and rugby require larger than 50 yard wide fields.

- P&RC and staff discussed the importance of having adequate run-out area on fields. Chair- we cannot reduce size of the fields. Moving the fence in the corner may have the least impact. While she understands the neighbors' concerns, we live an urban environment.

- Spengler- The Developer is willing to make the requested accommodations. Other option to maintain playing surface may be to reduce the size of the run-out areas. Beth Carton and the Developer are working on schematic layouts to show changes. Information will be presented on July 22 at a Community Meeting on the Potomac Yard Replacement Fields, and comments taken. Developer is on-site and has put up a construction fence. Rough grading for the fields will take approximately 4 weeks.
- Action: Director, encouraged P&RC members to attend meeting next week; members from Youth Sport will be in attendance. Feedback will be gathered and comments will be shared.

VI. Commission Attendance Report and 2009-2010 Annual Report - Jack Broward

- **Reports are due by July 23 to Citizens Assistance.** The Attendance report has been completed. A draft Annual report was distributed for discussion and review. The Chair asked that draft report be revised to include a section on: significant presentations and discussions; Jones Point Park (Marshall), Waterfront Concept Plan (Hamer), and Jefferson Houston school (Sherman).
- The Chair also requested that a paragraph be included about the **Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB)** their function and that they were set up by this Commission and operate as a standing subcommittee
Commissioner Forbes said he doesn't see the YSAB, technically as being part of the P&RC, but as more of an advisory group to RPCA. Since, there are no established rules/procedure regarding appointment of members, terms of office, etc. Mr. Forbes further stated that it is wrong to assume that this group is part of the P&RC before the Bylaws are approved. He asked the Director RPCA for more info. on how members are appointed to the YSAB and how they operate. In addition he requested to review the language in the draft Bylaws. **The Chair** said, the YSAB was set up by the P&RC, and the group is obligated to operate under the same sunshine laws as the P&RC. She will research supporting documentation. **This will be part of the discussion on standing committees when the draft Bylaws are reviewed.**

Director, James Spengler said his understanding is that the YSAB view themselves as reporting to the P&RC. Membership is comprised of a designated representative from each of the organized youth sports programs in the community that RPCA schedules on the fields. He agreed that this should be formalized as part of adopting the P&RC Bylaws.

- Action Item: The Chair asked members to Email their comments on the draft Annual Report to Jack Browand. Mr. Browand will revise report and email back to members, early September (reports will be completed for FY2009 and FY2010). Mr. Browand will notify the Director, Citizens Assistance that the annual report will be submitted in September. Per City code, members cannot vote on items via Email or in abstentia. **The Annual Report will be adopted at the September meeting.**

VII. Reports From Commissioners (verbal updates):

- **Ft. Ward Park-Ad Hoc Advisory Committee** - Bob Moir, Ripley Forbes, Rich Brune.
– Forbes - nothing new to report since last meeting.
- – Director James Spengler – reported that a walk of the cemetery was done to see which trees will be taken down. OHA received a grant to do a study of gravesites in the park based on ground sensing radar study. Meeting was held last week to discuss. Several committee members want to become permanent body to determine policy for Ft. Ward. Report pending completion of archeological work. Group is scheduled to disband in December.
- **Youth Policy Commission** - Stephen (Clark) Mercer
- – No Report- the YPC is in recess for the summer.
- **Waterfront Committee** - William Cromley
- – Mr. Cromley and the Chair recently met with Nate Macek, Chair of the Waterfront Committee in order to help establish better communication between the two groups. Waterfront Committee members have been asked for comments on the Waterfront Concept Plan which will be forwarded to P&Z. The Concept Plan will be revised via the SUP process. People generally understand Plan, but are unclear as to the mechanics of its implementation: funding, phasing, etc.
- **Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB)** - Jeffrey Murphy
- Staff did a presentation on the new Simpson Fields (see Director's report).
- Discussion: **T. C. Williams athletic field lighting**. SUP for the new school prohibits lighting of the athletic field. YSAB wants to request that field be lighted in order to maximize use. Steve Colantuoni (Executive Assoc. Principal of Athletics & Student Activities) and Dennis Randolph (Assistant Athletic Director) announced plans to play a home game under the lights on Friday, October 29. Neighbors are more concerned with sound than lights and worried about giving in to night games because they fear it will lead to other night activities. Current T.C. Williams/ACPS staff seem to be unaware of a site plan agreement between T.C. Williams/ACPS and the neighbors that gives the neighbors substantial powers regarding what happens at the school. Director RPCA has a copy of a separate letter; he will share with the P&RC. The Consensus was to take no action until after the night game and use that outcome to pursue lighting of the athletic field. A request to add lighting to field may trigger amendments to the SUP. Major amendments will need to go back to the P.C and Council for approval. Ripley Forbes suggested holding a P.H. with ACPS to get community input. The Chair agreed that there needs to be more work in the community, she asked Mr. Mercer to help with this. ACPS would ultimately have to be the ones to file an amendment of the SUP. YSAB wants to create a subcommittee to track field discussions in the City. Bob Moir passed out FOIA guidelines; YSAB wants to take official position on these issues (for the record).
- Action Item: The Chair suggested holding a community meeting in November with the P&RC and ACPS, and asked Commissioner Murphy to keep the P&RC apprised of the situation.

- **4-Mile Run** - Ripley Forbes
 - New Farmers Market in Arlandria is open.
- - **Duron Building**- Chair- progress is being made; the Public Arts Committee will paint a hopscotch game, and a big picture frame for kids to draw on using chalk on sidewalk. Construction drawings started. Engineering and other professional services have been donated. The heating system in the building works. The Construction Documents are expected to be ready in September. Laura Durham is working on establishing the first community meeting.
- **Charles Houston Memorial Project** - William Cromley
 - No report.
- **Freedman’s Cemetery**- Bob Moir (absent.)
- **Beauregard Corridor** - David Dexter.

Still in the preliminary stages-the next community meeting is scheduled for September 30. Possible opportunity for green space-that would connect Holmes Run greenway to Mark Winkler Botanical Preserve. JBG, major land owner, wants to tear down the Hamlets Apartments. Need to think about connecting the almost 45 acres to the Holmes Run greenway. One roadblock, Sanger Ave. - how to get from there to the Winkler Preserve. Kagawa-stated connection is not by accident - it is in the Plan. Action Item: The Chair asked Ron Kagawa for a schematic of area.

 - **Friends of “Dora Kelly Nature Park”** – group met last night and discussed hazardous trees issue. Participant was concerned regarding how far a tree has to lean before being taken down. The group was satisfied with Mr. Blakeley’s, broad approach/solution of selective tree trimming on the trail and in the park.
 - Action Item: Mr. Spengler asked Mr. Dexter if the “Friends Group” could prepare an official statement to Council. Mr. Dexter can provide something for the Friends Group.
 - **Holmes Run Pedestrian Crossing**- T&ES issue- one hazardous issue where the stream bank stabilization will occur- a flimsy fence was installed and fell down. Dave Dexter will speak with Director; T&ES Rich Baier to make get fence put back up.
- **ACPS & Capital Improvements** : Henry Brooks (absent)
 - **Jefferson Houston School - Public/Private Partnership**. The Chair reported that a joint work session was held in June with ACPS, the School Board, and City Council. Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager presented the financial data. Superintendent Mort Sherman, provided details of plans for the site. ACPS requested approval to proceed with MOU to form the 501-C3 Non-Profit Foundation. City Council, said more work needs to be done. Margaret Byess, ACPS said schematic design that was expected by end of summer may be delayed. Councilman Donley understands the need for more time to put the pieces in place and hear from the community. Melvin Miller, ARHA board is concerned about the possible demolition of the Jefferson Village public housing. Plan is getting some push back from the community regarding density. The Chair said that this is not just a school project, but a huge community project.
 - James Spengler- said this will not affect the Patrick Henry school time table.
 - The Chair will meet with Yvonne Folkerts, Chair of the School Board and John Komoroski, Chair of Planning Commission next month.
- Other:
 - **Jones Point Park**: Update- neighbors have formed a website for the “Friends of Jones Point Park” group. A **Community Meeting was held July 13** at 6:30 p.m. at the Lee Center with Congressman Moran, Mayor Euille, City Council members and representatives from VDOT and NPS. As a result, VDOT is now developing a contract addendum to the bid documents that will request bidders to specify how they will phase-

in the project, to allow access to park by residents during construction, and keep it on schedule. Bid advertisement is scheduled for July 27. Construction to begin by the end of October. For more info. go to www.alexandriava.gov/Departments/Recreation/Jones Point Park.

- **Francis C. Hammond Field:** Kagawa- field is moving forward. The consultant would like to come to the P&RC and present their plan - tentative for October.
- **“No Wake” Letter-** the Chair prepared a response July 14 (copy attached), to the City Manager in support of proposed Amendment of the District of Columbia Watercraft Speed Limit at the Alexandria Waterfront as requested by the Chair of the Waterfront Committee.

VIII. Agenda items and location for September meeting.

- Annual Report
- Draft Bylaws
- Capital Projects (presentations/hearings)
- 2012 Budget – and newly adopted City Council Strategic Plan. The Commission should review CIP Projects and comment.
- P. Y. Landbay L
- Additional Open Space.
- ACPS updates - Patrick Henry, Charles Houston and Jefferson Houston.
- Location - Charles Houston Recreation Center- to be confirmed.

IX. List of Upcoming Public Meetings – a brief list was distributed at the meeting. City Council and Planning Commission will be in recess during the summer.

X. Adjournment: 9:20 p.m.

Attachment



DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS
AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3999

Phone (703) 838-4343

Fax (703) 838-6344

Park and Recreation Commission

July 14, 2010

Mr. James Hartmann
City Manager
City of Alexandria

Re: Support for Proposed Amendment of the District of Columbia Watercraft Speed Limit at the Alexandria Waterfront

Dear Mr. Hartmann:

The Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission wishes to inform you of our support of a proposed change to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulation, Title 19, Chapter 10 which governs the speed of vessels along the waterfront of Alexandria. It is our understanding that the current regulation is targeted at maintaining a no-wake zone and it accomplishes that goal by limiting the speed of watercraft, which is effective. It is important that this no-wake zone is kept in force as our waterfront currently has an active mix of commercial, motorized and non-motorized small watercraft, as well as an active adult and high school rowing program. For the safety of everyone concerned, and most particularly the rowers in narrow crew shells, we cannot tolerate boat wakes in the vicinity of our waterfront.

That being said, the existing regulation addresses the issue of boat wakes by limiting the speed of any watercraft to 10 knots. While effective, it does not address the innovation in marine technology that is producing a new era of commercial watercraft that can move through the water at much higher speeds without producing a wake. The Park and Recreation Commission, therefore, supports amending the governing regulations to put in place a no-wake performance criteria for this zone so that it is not speed that is regulated but rather the creation of a wake. If such a performance criteria can be crafted then we feel consideration should be given to amending the regulation.

Our Commission urges you, along with the Mayor and City Council, to explore this change with the District of Columbia in order to allow a broader range of appropriate water taxi and commercial boat services to operate from our waterfront, while still assuring the safety of other boaters and rowers which frequent our part of the Potomac River.

With kind regard,


Judy R. Guse-Noritake, Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

Cc: James Spengler, RCPA Director
Park and Recreation Commissioners
Nate Macek, Chair, Waterfront Committee

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