

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Park and Recreation Commission

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, June 17, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Oswald Durant Center

1605 Cameron Street, Alexandria VA

Summary Minutes

Commission Members: Judy Guse-Noritake, Chairperson. Henry S. Brooks, Rich Brune, William Cromley, David Dexter, Ripley Forbes, Stephen (Clark) Mercer, Robert Moir.

Excused Absences: Jeffrey Murphy, Anthony Zamora (new H.S. youth member)

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

Guests: Dr. Morton Sherman, Superintendent, ACPS, Margaret Byess, Deputy Superintendent, ACPS, Jim Gibson, President, Youth Sports Advisory Board.

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed guests.

I. ACPS Capital Projects Process Update and Jefferson Houston School - Dr. Morton Sherman, Superintendent ACPS and Margaret Byess, Deputy Superintendent, Planning and Support Operations.

Dr. Sherman greeted the audience and gave a brief presentation on the ACPS Public Private Partnership on the Jefferson Houston Site:

- Overview:
- **Alexandria City public school facilities are aging -average school is 57 years old.**
- Last year study done showed - three schools need replacement: Jefferson Houston (J.H.), Patrick Henry (P.H.) and Cora Kelly (C.K). P.H. and C.K to use traditional route- money placed in City long range CIP- both are planned as Pre-K to 8 schools.
- **Enrollment is increasing at middle schools:** Currently George Washington has 1000+ students and Francis Hammond has 1300+, Capacity is 1200/1500 respectively. Enrollment issues:T.C. Williams - 571+ students graduated today; Kindergarten enrollment is 1250 (double that of seniors). If pattern continues, very soon they will be out of space at middle schools and H.S. They are trying to expand options at elementary schools instead of making a new middle school. The **Jefferson Houston site** has a lot of potential due to its location/proximity to King St. Metro, hotels and open space. Public/Private Partnership concept is a way to use property to generate revenue without using taxpayer dollars. Land at J.H. site would not be sold but leased, ACPS or City would retain ownership of the land and the Developer would have right to develop it. The site includes ARHA housing units. **A 501C3-Non-Profit Foundation will be created** as the vehicle used for funding- no debt will be added to City or ACPS. Concept is a community run Foundation working with the neighbors, agencies, commissions and the school district as stakeholders. No Developer has been selected yet.
- **ACPS- Admin. Offices may move to new J.H. site-** offices at Mark Center (rent cost \$1 mil per year). Lease was recently re-negotiated in anticipation of move to J.H. site-will save taxpayers money. BRAC coming Seminary and Beauregard area and is expected to bring lots of traffic to area.

- **June 22 - Joint Work City Council and Alexandria City Public Schools will be held to discuss the Jefferson Houston Project.** If approved, Margaret Byess, ACPS will work with City to do a MOU to create the Board.
- The Superintendent said he understands the importance of Recreational and Arts needs and that land is scarce and fields are in demand. Hopes to find way to make it a collaborative effort. Gwen Wright- P&Z looking at creating a flat roof with field-green. They are changing from traditionally school building footprint- going up vertically-using a multi-story school concept (similar to Tucker).
- **Questions/Comments:**
- The Chair asked if plans had been developed yet and who owned the land?
- *Dr. Sherman - no plans have been developed yet- it is a broad concept right now. Presentation focuses on 501C3 Concept. City owns the land at J.H. site- ACPS has exclusive use of the site for a school (by City Code).*
- **The Chair** commented that the J.H. site is a highly valuable piece of property due to its location to King St. Metro. From P&RC prospective main concern is need for new Community Recreation facility and fields. Historically recreational needs have been shortchanged or considered after other budget items. In current CIP, money is mostly going towards Schools. The City can not afford to ignore recreational needs anymore or ten years down the line we will be in the same position. *Sherman – he agrees that the P&RC and ACPS should partnership for children. ACPS is now broadening the use of schools and moving towards community schools concept. Schools will open earlier and stay open later in order meet the needs of children. Recreation centers, sports and fields should be part of this plan. If J.H. model is done well it may save the City money and generate revenue that can be given back for field development.*
- **Chair-** She is glad to hear what is being said the P&RC will continue to advocate for these uses. There is not enough land, not enough money, but a lot of children. She commends ACPS for taking an innovative approach. Development can pay for those things that the community needs and wants which it cannot currently afford.
- **Dr. Sherman-** after concerns were expressed re: Ben Brenman field selection, ACPS-was creative and found way to pay for field at Hammond. Funds have now been placed in reserve acct to pay for field at Hammond. Chair-we are concerned but ready to embrace new opportunity.
- The **Chair asked** if it has it been considered what would happen if a school were not built on J.H. site. **Dr. Sherman.** *Yes this has been considered. From a Citywide prospective on enrollment and growth - we are out of space at several schools. Within 3-10 yrs. schools will be overcrowded. Schools are needed in the West End and on J.H. site. As Superintendent he has a responsibility to retain a school in this area of the City.*
- *Not sure Duran building can come down due to it potentially historical nature. Byess- if building has to be saved –it can be embedded into new site. Economic analysis clearly shows trade off on what can be funded as density is increased.*
- Mr. Cromley commented-As member of Parker Gray Civic Assoc. and community he feels that the planned development at J.H. site is appropriate. Density will help pay for development of site. It is important for community to understand the tradeoffs vs. benefits.
- The Chair, Superintendent Sherman and Margaret Byess held a discussion about the MOU and structure of the 501C3 board. The Chair asked if the Board would have decision making authority. Sherman- the MOU will define the structure and relationship

between the School, City and 501C3 Board. This could include Recreational facilities, fields and pools. It was suggested that a City Council Member be made part of the Board.

- **Jim Gibson** - said that there is a pent up demand for field space. We can't afford to have a field off-line for 1-2 years. **Sherman** – the work will be phased in over several years similar to T.C. Williams H.S model. Can't close J.H. until new school is ready-there is no where to put kids. **The Chair** said it may be possible to lease space for school in order to have site free and clear during construction. This would save money and allow site to be done correctly and in much less time. Doing the project in two phases will be far more complicated and expensive. Moving a grade school to temporary facilities for a couple years is not difficult to do and it could save the project a lot of money overall. Mr. Sherman said he is open to discussion on this. The Chair thanked Mr. Sherman for coming.
- **Margaret Byess**- gave a presentation, **Public Private Partnership on Jefferson Site-January 2010-CBRE**. She said the process is different than typical development plan.
- See pg. 11 **What are next steps/process?**
 - 1. Determine if ACPS and City will pursue joint development.
 - 2. ACPS and City enter into MOU for project.
 - 3. Hire ACPS Project Manager
 - 4. Continued-See Presentation...
 - **For copy of presentation go to ACPS website:**
<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/meetings/2009-2010/20100112sbx.pdf>
- **Discussion/Comments:**
- The Chair said that looking ahead as projects are phased-in, it will be important to coordinate plans between ACPS, RPCA and P&RC as to lessen the impact of fields being temporarily taken off-line (i.e. James K. Polk). The Chair said smart growth studies are showing that young families in the future will not be moving to suburbs but will want to stay and raise their children in high urbanized environments. They don't want lawns but they will want recreational fields near where they live. We need to move forward with Simpson Field in the interim. Byess-she is not sure where breakdown in communication happened re: Polk field, but will try to improve this. **Action Item**. Ms. Byess-asked Ron Kagawa-can coordinate 2 sets of long range plans ACPS and RPCA.
- **N. Potomac Yards Development:**
- **Spengler**- due to enrollment growth projections he sees the need for 2 schools at P.Y. but there is no additional land. At some point in future number of children in organized sports vs. number of fields available will cross lines and result in an extreme problem.
- **Chair**- N. Potomac Yard development recently approved will be dense. It needs to have a school, and a field and dog park. She was told there was not enough land for all three due to Metro Station being built and the amount of development to off-set that. The solution that was offered was to provide money to put artificial turf on an existing field, but that only does so much good. She stated that whenever land is considered necessary for a new school it should include a Recreation Center, and athletic field. If there is enough population growth to require a school then recreational facilities will also be required. We are all viewing multiple uses for the same land. We can not give up all open space for fields. The City still has a stated goal to acquire 37 acres of additional open space in the next few years. We have shared concerns and need to work together jointly. Alexandria Children belong to ACPS in daytime and Rec Centers after school.
- The Chair thanked Margaret Byess for coming and said that the P&RC will invite ACPS back in the fall for an update or as needed.

- **Hand-outs:**
- **T.C. Williams H.S. Transformation “from Good to Great” ACPS**
- **A Community Partnership for Jefferson Houston-ACPS**

REGULAR MEETING

II. Approval of Summary Minutes from May 20, 2010 (deferred to July).

III. Retreat Action Items:

- A. Continued Discussion of Draft Bylaws-Operating Procedures for Commission – Dave Dexter, Henry Brooks.
- B. Review and prioritize consolidated list of action items from Retreat, March 6.
- C. Develop list of items to address at P&RC meetings for July and September 2010.
Action: Discussion of these items was deferred to next meeting.

IV. Division Updates (See Staff Reports):

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

- A. **Recreation Services-** William Chesley
See Staff Report- Pg. 1 **Adult Activities.** A question was asked what is being done to identify the need for additional adult sports? Mr. Chesley said RPCA-Sports Section staff is meeting, doing research and looking at trends in order to get ideas for expanding opportunities for indoor sports, they are open to suggestions. Mr. Forbes raised a question on availability of space at Centers for indoor volleyball at Minnie Howard. Mr. Chesley-gyms are not designated solely for basketball use. Goal is to have diversified uses; there may be other gyms that can handle this use they are also looking at expansion of hrs. He thanked him for his feedback. *The Chair suggested holding a lunchtime listening session at PTO Office, with young adults in order to get feedback on their interest, in addition to looking outside the Alexandria community for ideas. She stated that indoor sports are important and that why it is important to have full size gyms at new school sites.*
- B. **Operations & Park Planning Monthly Report** - Roger Blakeley
See Staff Report: **Customer Satisfaction Survey-** In response to a question about limited number of participants (17), RPCA Director explained that new survey is new is being to try to solicit ongoing feedback, goes out with every email. Although response was limited to 17 people-Overall satisfaction rate is very good. Over the course of the year data will be used as tool in improving service needs. Chair-in future this will be helpful when the Recreational Needs Assessment is reviewed. **Mr. Mercer followed-up re: Chinquapin Garden Plots** and 4-Mile Run trash issues. Mr. Spengler said he should contact John Walsh and or Roger Blakeley respectively, by email or phone.
- C. **Office on the Arts Update** -Alisa Carrel
See Staff Report- no questions/or comments.
- D. **Park Planning Updates-**Ron Kagawa
See Staff Report- **Potomac Yard N. Plan.** The Chair said this item was on City Council docket last week. She requested Mr. Kagawa and Beth Carton provide a brief presentation at the next meeting.
Waterfront Plan Update- staff is reviewing the public input. The P&Z Dept. is meeting with the Arts Commission on Monday.
Potomac Yard-Landbay K- Chair- there is a kickoff meeting for the final plan. Kagawa EDAW was the firm who completed the approved preliminary plan for the park, but they were not selected to complete the final design plans. Another firm was selected. He and

Beth have met with the new firm. They are reviewing the final development plans. The developer expects to have construction documents out to bid in Feb. for construction in the spring. Kagawa- there will be no substantial changes, except for the possible change of location of the Metro Station.

E. **Marketing, Public Relations & Special Events** - Jack Browand

- See Staff Report. Mr. Browand reminded P&RC and staff of the Parker Gray Roundtable Community Block Party-on Saturday June 26 at Charles Houston.

V. **Director's Report** - James Spengler

A. **Jones Point Park:** (verbal update)

- Update-Since the last meeting May 20, there have been several meetings with the NPS and VDOT. On June 9 a meeting was held at the office of Congressman Jim Moran to discuss various issues related to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and construction at the Park. As a result, Mayor Euille and Congressman Moran will hold **a public Community Meeting on July 13 at 6:30 at the Lee Center**, to discuss the project. The NPS and VDOT will conduct a presentation. VDOT will be the lead for contacting Homeland Security to see if we can get a different response in regards to secured parking under the bridge. Currently in order to use parking lots under bridge people will have to be screened by Homeland Security. Homeland Security will not give approval to open the lot unless NPS and VDOT agree to fund screeners. Mayor Euille, and Congressman Moran are reviewing screening requirements to see if they still make sense and/or if they can be relaxed.

Clarification on Construction Closings- The entire Park will not be closed during construction. There will be access to the community gardens, recycling center and Mt. Vernon Trail will be open during construction. Southern portion of property; fishing pier, lighthouse will be closed as needed depending on construction and safety factors. **Construction to begin October 2010 and is expected to take 16-24 months.** Bid will go out mid-July not June. A P&RC member expressed concern that the NPS could not provide clear information on May 20. Director said the community will receive updated information. There were no further comments.

B. **Legislative Proposals 2011 General Assembly**

- Memo was distributed from Bernard Caton, Legislative Director dated May 20 to all commissions soliciting items that the City might request for the next Virginia legislative session in 2011. The Chair and members held a brief discussion on possible proposals. The Chair proposed that the P&RC request that the City ask the Legislature to once again consider letting Alexandria use a real estate transfer tax to fund open space acquisition. The Chair said that this would be in addition to requesting City Council to reinstate annual funding of the Open Space Fund in coming years. **Motion:** The Chair motioned that as part of request for legislative proposals for the 2011 General Assembly the P&RC request that the City ask for the ability to employ a real estate transfer tax be used to implement the adopted Open Space Plan. Rich Brune seconded the motion. Steven (Clark) Mercer- opposed the motion due to lack of information and details regarding the use of this kind of program. All others were in support. The motion passed. **Action Item:** The Chair will process the necessary documents in order to get this included as part of the 2011 General Assembly Legislation package. **Due date is September 8.**

VI. **2010 CIVIC Awards Sub-committee Recipient Recommendations.**

- Commissioner David Dexter reported that 10 Nominations were received. The subcommittee is **recommended** awards as follows. **Individual:** Jeffrey Peisch- for his service as a youth coach-Alexandria Little League Board member and President, and Whitney A. Dubinsky- for her volunteer service to the Cora Kelly Recreation Advisory Board and involvement with the Duron building site. **Group:** - Architects

Anonymous-for their work on the Duron Paint Building- Mt. Vernon Ave. Professor Jaan Holt- in recognition of 30 years of exemplary service in design education, and service to alumnus of the City's only academy of Architecture and Design.

- **Action Item:** Henry Brooks motioned that the P&RC accept the recommendations of the CIVIC Award sub-committee. The motion was seconded by Rich Brune. All were in favor. Mr. Browand, RPCA will order plaques for the recipients.
- **The Ceremony will be held, July 10, 4 to 10 p.m. at Oronoco Bay Park as part of the City of Alexandria Birthday Celebration.**
- Members and staff discussed revising the nomination criteria to include the fact that a one-year minimum of service is required. It was also suggested that nominations received that may belong to other groups be forwarded to them expeditiously.

VII. Commission Attendance Report and 2009-2010 Annual Report - Jack Browand

- The annual Attendance Report and Annual Report are due. See Attachment: letter from Rose Boyd, Executive Secretary for Boards and Commissions. The City wants to ensure that all boards/commissions are in compliance for 2010 and has asked that this item be made part of the official agenda. **Action Item:** Mr. Browand will coordinate completion of reports in conjunction with the P&RC and RPCA staff the **due date is July 23**. The report will focus on highlights and be forwarded to the P&RC members for input and review.

VIII. Reports From Commissioners (verbal updates)

- **Ft. Ward Ad Hoc Advisory Commission**- Bob Moir, Ripley Forbes, Rich Brune
 - Brune- a meeting was held-update on what various Committees have done. Moir- next meeting RPCA and T&ES staff will lead a field trip to view weeds and discuss mowing cycle. The committee's year term will end in December 2010.
- **Youth Policy Commission**- Stephen (Clark) Mercer
 - He was away during last meeting. They voted to merge the Youth Policy Commission & the Alexandria Early Childhood Commission. He supports this recommendation. A new group will be created to align services for children, youth and families.
- **Waterfront Committee**- William Cromley
 - There are some people in favor of a certain amount of commercial development vs. others who feel the waterfront should be left alone and/or don't favor of commercial development or feel that the City should pay for it. He feels the overall Concept plan is good and worth pursuing. Appropriate Development that is very well planned will help pay for improvements. **Follow-up on letters requested by the Chair, Waterfront Committee**,- Judy she recently contacted the Chair Waterfront Committee and let him that the P&RC would write the letter in support of the no wake boat. They will meet soon with the goal of helping to build a better working relationship between the P&RC and Waterfront Committee.
- **Youth Sports Committee**- Jeffrey Murphy (absent).
 - **Jim Gibson, Chair, YSC**- reported. last month, the Chair, School Board and new Athletic Director, T.C. Williams H.S. attended the meeting. **Initiative is being pushed to get lights installed at T.C. Williams H.S. synthetic turf field in order to make full use of the field.** A small group of residents have expressed concern. They will meet with new Principal to address this issue. **Chair, Guse-Noritake**- the SUP for the field specifically prohibited use of lights. Recommended Mr. Gibson speak with Planning & Zoning, Deputy Director (Ross) to obtain guidance on how to approach the issue of possibly amending the SUP. It is important to understand the legal ramifications and to gain community support. Main concern of neighbors was not the lights but potential noise due to use of amplifiers and constant use of field on weekends. Moir- suggested that community be told that on weekends will have youth games without the use of speakers. Brooks- lighting types have changed/ improved since that time. Gibson-anyone that is for children should understand the importance of having full use of the field/facility at T.C. Williams H.S. One night game, has been approved for October 29, at T.C. Williams

using portable lights. If lighting of T.C. Williams athletic turf field is approved this will help expand field use for children in Alexandria.

- **4-Mile Run**- Ripley Forbes and Chair
- Energized group, 4-Mile Run project will happen in the future. A **New Farmers Market-will open in Arlandria Sunday, June 20 at 8:00 a.m.** SUP for the Duron building-4109 Mt. Vernon Ave. was passed by City Council Saturday, June 12. Chair- see article on the Duron paint building in the Washington Post.
- **Charles Houston Memorial Project**-William Cromley
- Parker Gray Roundtable- Block Party- Saturday, June 26 at Charles Houston 11a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is an effort to build communication between residents of public housing and the community and tour the new Rec. Ctr. May be used as a pilot program for other areas of City.
- **Freedman's Cemetery**-Bob Moir
- **Beauregard Corridor Plan**- David Dexter
- June 28 meeting-has been cancelled by P&Z. Next meeting is in September.
- **BRAC** Update- Alexandria Gazette published Article today. Congressman Jim Moran's proposal to cap the number of parking spaces at 1000 passed. See article
- September 2011- 6400 new residents will move to area (Seminary Rd. & Beauregard St).-will bring a lot of traffic. **Durham**- she was notified recently that the NVCT is working with the Winkler Foundation to do a Conservation Easement on property. Chair- suggested the Commission look at possibly requesting conservation easements for some of Alexandria's larger parks. The P&RC may look into this in the future.
- **ACPS & Capital Improvements**. – refer to Item I-
- Other:
- **Charles Opalak**- Outreach Events on Mt. Vernon Trail this summer. Looking for ideas and and input. First event is June 26 and 27. Arlington- Mile 16 marker. There will be water, activities and giveaway and of safety prevention info. The Chair-said that the P&RC doesn't have much overlap with George Washington Parkway. It was suggested he speak with Yon Lambert, T&ES, Bike Trail Coordinator. Kagawa-will provide contact info. There will be a community tent at the 4-Mile Run Farmer's Market.

IX. Agenda items and location for July meeting.

- PotomacYard Presentation, location Mt. Vernon Recreation Center-to be confirmed.

X. List of Upcoming Public Meetings- a list of public meetings was distributed.

XI. Adjournment- 9:40 p.m.