

**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**  
**Park and Recreation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2009**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Charles Houston Center**  
**901 Wythe Street**

**Commissioners**

Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair  
 Henry Brooks  
 Richard Brune  
 Matthew Coda  
 William Cromley:  
 Ripley Forbes  
 Clark (Stephen) Mercer  
 David Dexter  
 Kaj Vetter  
 Robert Moir

**Staff**

Richard Baier (Interim Director, RPCA)  
 William Chesley (RPCA)  
 Roger Blakeley (RPCA)  
 Jack Browand (RPCA)  
 Ron Kagawa (RPCA)

**Commissioners – Excused Absences**

Marshanika Rich

**AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome – 7:30 p.m. Call to order**
  - Chair noted Ms. Rich is graduating, opening a student representative vacancy on the Commission and encouraged Commissioners to publicize the vacancy through their networks.
- 2. Approval of Summary Minutes from the April 16, 2009 Meeting**
  - Deferred until the June meeting due to its late receipt by Commissioners.
- 3. Recreation Center After-School Program Update - William Chesley**
  - Mr. Baier reported that RPCA has prepared a memo for City Manager with recommendations re: facilitating more interaction with the community about the proposed program direction.
  - Mr. Chesley highlighted:
    - History since 1997 of RPCA and City efforts to create a plan with an appointed Advisory Committee. A consultant was hired in 2003 to study the issue.
    - The Advisory Committee considered the options presented by the consultant, but did not reach consensus on all of the consultant’s recommendations.
    - In January 2007, City Council deferred making a decision on the Advisory Committee’s recommendations.

- In 2002, option of City pursuing Rec center licensing was considered; better Rec center programming – but not necessarily licensing – was the goal.
- Current goal – Fall 2009 school-year start-up of a coordinated program model that fits within available resources
  - Approximately \$2.3 million budget envisioned for the program in 2007 for funding two coordinated City programs not currently available;
  - RPCA now plans one program with no accredited centers.
- **Discussion:**
  - Chair noted that at a 2007 public the need for sign-in/sign-outs was brought up as a safety issue. The RCPA agreed to moved forward and advocated for a fully accredited and licensed program at rec centers, a goal achieved to date only at Ramsay and Mount Vernon rec centers. Increased costs of providing services at the rec centers is the fundamental issue.
  - RPCA’s proposed program goals:
    - Offer same programs at all Rec Centers
    - Implement sign-in/sign-out for participants
    - Charge modest fees on a sliding scale (e.g. \$25/semester) for after school programs.
    - Note: The same fee applies to the Middle school program (Power- Up program) as well.
  - Licensing of rec centers may not be needed and is not now recommended.
  - Providing adequate supervision, safety and programming are the program’s priority issues - including “sign in-sign out” for all children participating.

#### 4. Update on City Waterfront Planning – Ron Kagawa

- **Recent Activities**
  - **April 23:** Open Public Forum No. 1 - for Stakeholders
  - **April 30:** Public Forum No. 2 - featured a WF expert’s panel offering their impressions of Alexandria WF with information re: other WF developments as options to consider.
    - Reviewed the need for sustainable development to incorporate long-range planning and operational maintenance.
    - Highlighted the importance of planning for ‘early wins’ – pieces easy to accomplish that will also have maximum impact
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- **Upcoming WF Study-related activities:**
  - **May 30:** Boat tour of Waterfront on the Miss Mallory. Contact Andrea Barlow of P & Z to reserve Miss Mallory seat for WF tour.
  - **June 27:** Public Forum No. 3 (Site TBA), 10 – 3 p.m. – to integrate the analysis phase of the first 2 meetings.

**Follow-up Action:** Commissioners to attend June 27 public forum and mix among the public break-out tables for input on the plan.

- **Art on the Waterfront** – Chair of the Arts Commission would like to forward electronically to the P&R Commission a slide show on how public art might be integrated into the WF planning process, including ideas of art within the small scale recreational sites.
- **June 24** (7:30 a.m.): Annual Waterfront Walk by Waterfront Committee and Planning Commission: PRC Commissioners invited.

## **5. Update on Potomac Yard and Braddock Park Fields at G.W. - Kagawa**

Planning has presented a study of Land Bay L – to be started after the retail study is complete.

- Reviewed that this idea came from the PYPAG meeting and a threshold study needs to be done as a first step to assess the feasibility.

RICH: - A Metro feasibility work group meeting took place.

The proposed site sits in the middle of that long linear park. This will have to be dealt with.

COUNCIL DECISION – NONE YET

- At June 9 Council work session they will give Planning some guidance on this.

RICH: PYPAG is also meeting tonight, noting that cost, footprint, usability, density and traffic were highlighted as issues to be considered.

## **6. Update from Yon Lambert- Principal Transportation Planner**

Chair introduced signage to be used “Bike Friendly Community” – reflecting City’s having been accredited as one of 73 bike friendly cities in the nation. Alexandria received “bronze” level certification.

UPDATE ON PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE PROGRAM

Yon Lambert distributed the bike map.

Reported on progress at the Holmes Run Greenway ( City line from Chambliss Crossing to Eisenhower Ave) – plan showing where work will be done over the next few years.

- Duke St north to N. Ripley – to be resurfaced, working starting w/in the next month.
- Along Eisenhower Ave to Cameron Run Park – site of most of the work over the past year (resurfaced trail from Lake Cook to Avalon Bay)

- Part 2 was a “transportation enhancement project” <sup>1</sup> begun several years ago – which will continue via stimulus funding.

PPT PRESENTATION TO BE PUT ON WEB SITE – “BICYCLE “2008: Progress on many fronts” - sidewalks, bikeways, trail resurfacing, adding bike racks, etc.

We are now providing bike classes via RPCA, especially geared to cycling within the city & identifying safe routes to school for students – working with schools, PTAs, etc. to ID sites for targeted improvements.

FOUR MILE RUN TRAIL - Arlington Side –

- May 30, 2009 10 a.m. Sat – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (- key link for @ & OD, Four Mile Run &: Mt. Vernon Trails.

WILSON BRIDGE TRAIL: Pedestrian and Bikeway RIBBON CUTTING – Sat June 6 – 1 PM – opens AFTER 1 PM to the public.

FOUR MILE RUN PED-BIKE BRIDGE

- Design competition funded by VDOT grants will be underway soon and will run from Commonwealth Ave to South Eads.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS REVIEWED INCLUDED:

HOLMES RUN MULTI-USE TRAIL: Ccomplicated project, might eventually be a somewhat large connection, noting significant environmental issues, such as hydrology, noting that a firm has evaluated the location, working to stabilize the stream bank..

EISENHOWER AVE MULTI-USE TRAIL – work reviewed. Noted May 28 and May 30 meetings re Homes Run/Chambliss Connector.

COMMENT: DEXTER:

Desperately need this type of crossing at the Homes Run – Fair water crossing near N. Morgan Street (DEXTER POINT)

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE – Working to identify signs to identify the trails.

## **7. Four Mile Run Stream Restoration Project – Design Guidelines – Kagawa**

- Staff working on the design guildlines
- Sept – going to Planning Commission
- Pedestrian bridge design compete managed by V Tech.

## **8. Recreation Program Plan and Current Programming Update - Chesley**

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<sup>1</sup> Q: Name used of transportation enhancement project?

Adopted a year and a half ago.

At June meeting – as part of the accreditation effort as well – will provide update of the year’s accomplishments ref the plan – and indicate plans for coming fiscal year.

**MORE OFFERINGS:** More full cost recovery programming in early morning to be offered as a 4 month pilot - asked for by the adults in the community (7-9 a.m..) – will be offered after July.

**SPORTS ARENA** – City-wide track meet this past weekend was held at Episcopal, 230 kids took part and winners will go to the state level.

**CHEERLEADING** - \$4,000 in revenue was generated. Considering expanding the cheerleading program in light of the interest in it. RPCA is looking at finding a way to recover some of the funds (e.g. \$4,000) generated by the cheerleading competition back into the program so it can be expanded.

#### **CITY POOLS**

- **OUTDOOR POOLS** – Opening this weekend. –
  - Old Town Pool
  - 1 Warwick Pool
- Charles Houston and Ewald pools will operate this summer
- Small pools will open the first Monday school is out (June 29)

#### **9. Update on Accreditation/ Visit – CAPRA June 14-17 - Broward**

Accredited programs are reviewed every 5 years. The City of Alexandria Department of Recreation was first accredited in October 2004, and 2009 is the first review. The Department submitted its self assessment earlier this month.

- Commissioners were provided a CD containing the Self Assessment
- A reception for the Visitation Team is scheduled for 5:30 pm on Tuesday, June 16 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.
- Each year RPCA submits an annual report regarding its progress in maintaining compliance with CAPRA Accreditation Standards.

#### **10. Director’s Report – Richard Baier, P.E., Interim Director**

- **SPRING FOR ALEXANDRIA** –50 projects city-wide. RPCA had 7 projects, 700 volunteers.
- **PROVIDED A SUMMARY OF RPCA BUDGET CHANGES.** – noting the 10-1/2 positions lost to the Department; that RPCA is seeking to replace 2 of the lost positions.
  - Handout shows the methods to inform people in the community of the service adjustments (e.g. Fort Ward mowing changes being implemented July 1).
  - **BLAKELEY**

- Introduced Walter Powell, manager of Fort Ward, with oversight responsibilities for Holmes Run, Brenman and Fort Ward parks.
  - Noted the \$1.5 million cut from current budget – that it’s been a wet spring – and that grass has grown out of control.
  - Mr. Powell - Mowing is the major concentration of effort. Other scheduled maintenance has been deferred. Last year’s 7-day mowing schedule has been changed to 14-days.
  - Mr. Blakeley - Mowing has focused on core issues (medians, etc.).
  - Mr. Blakeley - RPCA is considering ways to reduce costs of mowing and to change community expectations for same.
- **Rec Center Changes** – Mr. Chesley
    - 2 pools will not open this summer (unless the community could raise funds to open a small pool so that it was revenue neutral – though the pool would be open. \$23,000 to operate one mini-pool for the 8-week program.)
    - John Adams Rec Center now has only after school hours – from 6pm on will be used for fee-based adult programs (summer and beyond).
    - George Mason Elementary School - Will cease operation as of June. Has had low enrollment and other programs are available for youths.
    - **MANY REC CENTERS TO HAVE REDUCED OPERATING HOURS ON WEEKENDS** – noting there’s a market for adult programs (indoor soccer programs and other fee-based revenue generating programs).
  - \$600K or more in vacancies – positions to be vacant the full year, with an inevitable impact on services.
  - Special Events Budget - To be reduced \$150 K (30 per cent of budget)
  - City is considering full cost recovery for all special events - with possible exception of GW Birthday, City Birthday Celebration, etc.

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION with the Commission:**

1. MATRIX REPORT – RPCA to review with Council
2. Fort Ward

**Council Work Session - Efficiency Study and Implementation, May 26 (Matrix)**

- Themes: Dept structure, rec services and programs, park maintenance and ops, arts programs, capital projects.
- Noted that the Matrix study was undertaken under very different economic conditions than the current ones.
- **MATRIX REC’S AS GROUPED BY RPCA:** (1) Matrix’s rec’s already done; (2) Matrix’s that RPCA concurs but not yet done; (3) Matrix’s that require further study; and (4) a few Matrix rec’s that RPCA does not agree with.

## Fort Ward Park Update

The April 14 update given by Kirk K. and Lance Alamo.

- Long-term planning will need to be part of an overall Master Plan.
- Park Management –
  - Have had an asst park manager on duty on weekends
  - Positive feedback from neighbors and OHA staff.
  - Picnic Reservations system – now in 4 hr blocks (10-2pm; 3-7pm. (Improved management of groups; avoid all-day events that draw larger numbers of attendees.
  - Reservation and deposit now required for picnics (a 5% deposit).
  - Area 1's shelter was removed due to safety issues with the shelter. It cannot be reserved but is available.
  - Picnic 2 – avail for walk up, not reservation.
  - These 2 less reservation reduce 100 reserve slots – not including walk up picnicking.
  - 400-500 picnickers are the ideal capacity of the park.
  - Changes to be made to RPCA's storage sites at Ft. Ward.
  - Addressed the issue of trash from the OHA building
  - OHA will be roping off the 3 gate sites located within the maintenance yard to protect them.
  - Will recommend that Council establish an ad hoc, short-term advisory group to look at historical, environmental, and passive/active recreational Fort Ward issues. Parks & Rec will be represented.
- Athletic Field Improvements – Lighting at Lockett Field and Four Mile Baseball, Synthetic Fields
  - Overview – Kagawa noted that though the costs of lights and synthetic turf are known for upgrading fields, ancillary costs of problems that are encountered once work has begun are difficult to project.
  - LUCKETT – New lights – to be on by the following Friday, replaced after lights had been damaged by a severe storm recently. (\$120K)
  - Four Mile Run lights will now have full field state of the art lighting. (\$210 K approx)
  - Synthetic fields - Will propose which fields to be done with remaining CIP funds this year – would like to do the Ben Brenman field. Will require a number of public meetings.
    - Issues – To build a new field, upgrade the existing Brenman field? Change the location, etc?

## COUNCIL

- MAY 25 – FORT WARD – JAZZ FETSIVAL
- MAY 28 – Urban Forestry Master Plan – Sent out for comment.
- June 5 – Dedicating (6:30 pm) Frank Mann field (followed by season game for the Aces.)

Chair – City Manager has reported that 8 serious candidates will be interviewed for the Director’s position. Goal is to bring a new Director on by July.

### **11. Reports from Commissioners**

Judy Guse-Noritake – Attendance Report circulated.

Henry Brooks – From a constituent – Are there plans to improve playground at Windmill Hill Park? Answer: Go the RPCA web site lists the schedule of upgrades – Windmill Hill is scheduled for 2012.

William Cromley - Asked the purpose of the fountains in lakes such as those at Brennman Lake. A: the purpose is to aerate the water – because this “lake” is a regional BMP which collects polluted run-off from the development and filters it before it goes into the Potomac.

Ripley Forbes – Add “Healthy Alexandria” project to next meeting’s agenda.

Clark (Stephen) Mercer – Youth Policy Committee.

Proffered the idea of developing a retreat and orientation for new members of the PRC – will discuss further with Chair.

- MERCER OFFERED TO HELP DEVELOP AN ORIENTATION PACKAGE FOR NEW PRC MEMBERS.

David Dexter -CIVIC Awards – July 11 – nominations close. To be recommended to PRC at its July 18 meeting. (3 nominations have already been received).

- Application form is on the Web site – encourage people to nominate people.

Marshanika Rich – excused.

### **12. Adjournment – 10 p.m.**