

**Special Meeting
Robinson Terminal South Historical Interpretation**

**Summary Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Thursday, September 24, 2015
City Hall
Room 2200
5 p.m.**

Commission Members

Present

Charles Ablard, Historic Alexandria
Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
John Bordner, Citizen west of Washington St.
Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Jody Manor, Visit Alexandria (formerly Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association)
Stephen Mutty, Citizen Park Planning District I
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Archaeology Commission
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

Absent:

Jerry Bennis, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholders
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Kathryn Kolbe, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Sally Masterson, East of Washington St. and south of King St.
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Paul Smedberg, Member, Alexandria City Council
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Ryan Wojtanowski, Environmental Policy Commission

City Staff

Francine Bromberg, City Archaeologist
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison and Division Chief, Public Relations, Special Events & Waterfront Operations, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Al Cox, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Tony Gammon, Acting DPI Director
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Guests:

Dene & Mel Garbo, Harborside
Lynn Hampton
Tom Hulfish
A. J. Jackson, senior vice president, EYA
Edna Johnston, History Matters
Pat Miller
Rick Parisi, MPFP

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. and introduced City Archaeologist Bromberg to discuss the City's role in handling items of archeological significance found as excavation proceeds on Waterfront redevelopment sites.

City of Alexandria's Cultural Resources Protection Protocol

City Archaeologist Francine Bromberg reviewed the responsibilities of her office regarding Waterfront construction sites. She said the Archaeological Protection Code requires that Office of Historic Alexandria and the City Archaeologist be fully integrated into the site plan process. They review all site plans from the concept stage onward. They conduct site inspections, monitor sites, review artifacts discovered during excavation and work with archaeological consultants on a project's development team when the City has required developer to hire an archaeological consultant to conduct a full-scale archaeological investigation on its site.

She said archaeological evidence that ties into early residences and industries will likely be uncovered at all the Waterfront sites. She said likely finds could include ship hulls that were used as landfill in the cove, information about the cove's early banking out and landfill process and grading down the bluffs.

Indigo Hotel site

Bromberg reported that items of archaeological significance have already been uncovered at Carr's Indigo Hotel site. She said the City Archaeologist and Office of Historic Alexandria are working with Thunderbird Archeology, consultants on the Indigo Hotel project and archaeological site work is being done in concert with the excavation and construction. Bromberg said archaeological test trenches are being dug to a depth of four feet and everything found within that four feet is recorded archaeologically. She said that as digging proceeds for the foundation and basement an on-site archaeologist monitors all work for areas between the trenches and can stop work as needed.

Bromberg said items that have been uncovered include a warehouse floor and foundation and rail lines that went into the Bryant Fertilizer Company building. She said some of the rails have been saved to be available for future use as a potential interpretative feature. She said all dirt being dug up has been monitored. She said evidence of the early shorelines has not yet been found.

"Waterfront Discoveries" website

Bromberg said the Office of Historic Alexandria will be putting up a new website, "Waterfront Discoveries", that will include photographs and archaeological information about finds being

uncovered as work on the Waterfront redevelopment sites moves ahead. She emphasized that archaeological interpretations of items that are found during excavation should be expected to evolve over time as information about them is found.

Bromberg said she will present a talk at Gadsby's Tavern Museum on how the City's Archaeological Protection Code works on Saturday, October 17.

Update: Robinson Terminal South Historical Interpretation.

Note: EYA's presentation is posted to:

<http://www.robinsonterminalsouth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RTS-Historic-Interpretation-and-Site-Finishes-Waterfront-Commission-9-24-15-final.pdf>

A. J. Jackson, senior vice president of EYA, introduced Rick Parisi, of the landscape architecture firm MPFP, and Edna Johnston, of History Matters, to update the Commission on the Robinson Terminal South (RTS) historical interpretation plan. Jackson reported that the EYA plan had been submitted to the Board of Architectural Review for consideration at its October 7, 2015 meeting. He said EYA will be making final decisions on historical details, such as text for the site's historical markers and events to include on the site's historical timeline, in consultation with the Office of Historic Alexandria and the City Archaeologist. Jackson said the historical plan will be updated if needed as archaeological artifacts are uncovered on the site.

Rick Parisi reviewed highlights of the plan, including new street names that will reflect the site's historical events and personages, a linear promenade, upper gardens, active and passive activity areas, and commercial zones.

Johnston said she and her History Matters colleague Julia Claypool, former curator of Carlyle House, developed the documentary history of the RTS site used by the EYA team to develop the RTS historical interpretation plan. She said among the important reference sources used for their work were the Alexandria Library's Special Collections, the Office of Historic Alexandria, the City Archaeologist, and the comprehensive work study by Ted Pulliam and the Alexandria Waterfront History Committee.

Johnston said the historical interpretation plan's goal is to create in the RTS site design a sense of the City's historical working and entrepreneurial seaport and to convey the how the nature of its activities at this location have changed over the past 250 years. She said street names are used to recognize some of the major individuals who established some of the varied businesses at this location. She said Fleming Alley, for example, represents Thomas Fleming who, in 1751, leased land at Point Lumley for a shipbuilding operation. Johnston said Annie Moore Place is named for Annie L. Moore who purchased the parcel on Duke Street in 1892, and ran with her husband William S. Moore the machine shop and iron foundry located there. Annie Moore later established W. S. Moore & Sons after her husband died and also hired an architect to design 2 Duke Street, a building that still stands today. Parisi said historical street names are used to reflect the foundries, warehouses and shipbuilding activities located on the site over time before the site was bought for Robinson Terminal in the 1940s.

Parisi reviewed how the changing shoreline between 1749 and 2014 is integrated into the site's design, beginning with the original 1749 shoreline at Point Lumley, and including the 1845 and 1877 piers. He noted the Olin design plan incorporates the 1849 shoreline throughout the length of the Waterfront but the 1945 and 1877 pier line will only be represented on the RTS site.

Among highlights pointed out by Parisi were

- The *Progression of Industrial Use* timeline, an interactive signage piece to be included in the design.
- A metal element running along the site's Union Street sidewalk where an old rail line was once located.
- 2 Duke Street being rebuilt in its current location with an historical plaque to be added.
- Furniture designed using shipwright technology using a mix of iron and wood to reflect shipbuilding activities at the site during the mid-18th century.
- Furniture styles and materials designed and constructed to reflect the maritime and aeronautical construction carried out on the site at the different times.

Commission Discussion

There was a Commission consensus that the design as presented was excellent although Van Fleet said the design could not correct what he considers to be RTS site architecture that is too massive and dense.

Auld asked if any archaeological work will be done for the water area. Jackson said no archaeology work is being done for the water area because no construction work is being done in the water.

Downs asked if the colors of granite will vary. Parisi said no final decisions have been made about the final design but the granite colors along the RTS shoreline will match those to be used along the full length of the Waterfront and will differ from those used for the timeline.

Pulliam said it was a good plan, especially for having so much of it completed at this stage in the site's development process. He suggested it might be useful to consider the RTS historical elements in the context of how the Waterfront Small Area Plan's Art and History Plan integrates history throughout the Waterfront landscape design. For example, Pulliam said that since the Waterfront History Plan lays out thematic areas along different Waterfront sites it might be helpful to incorporate the Waterfront industrial development theme at this location in the same way that the Torpedo Factory site will have a war manufacturing theme in its historical interpretation elements.

Pulliam suggested it might only be necessary to represent two, rather than three, of the historic shorelines at this location. He said including the 1749 (Point Lumley) and 1845 shoreline or pier line would be enough to show how the shoreline has evolved over time. Parisi said the design team has not yet made a decision about how many historic shorelines should be portrayed in the design.

Historical Signage

Ablard said he thought History Matters had done a superb job. In response to Ablard's question about the eventual design of the historical signage, Parisi said the RTS design will incorporate the Olin team's eventual designs for Waterfront elements common to the public and private spaces.

Cost implications of using custom-designed elements

Bordner and Bergman said they were concerned about how using custom-designed furniture will affect the cost and availability of replacement items over the long term. Parisi said his firm has used custom-designed furniture in many of their projects and they work with a single manufacturer for these items. He said the company that manufactures their pieces keeps the original molds and finishes in stock for future needs. Bergman said managers at D.C.'s Yards Park had warned Commissioners against the City using customized design elements - as they had done - because they eventually discovered it made it difficult and very expensive to replace some of those pieces.

Public Comments

Recognizing Clarence Robinson

Tom Hulfish said a prominent 20th century personage such as Clarence Robinson, founder of the Robinson Terminal Corporation, builder of the Robinson Terminal warehouses, and a prominent member of the Alexandria community, should also be recognized within the site's historic design. Johnston said the historic concept as it exists focuses on historic themes rather than individual personages other than naming streets after them. She said historians are usually reluctant to include more recent personages when recognizing in historical reviews but History Matters has gathered a variety of information about Robinson that could be incorporated into a place on the site if a decision were made to do so.

Hall said there seemed to be a consensus that recognizing Robinson in some way on the site would be appropriate. Johnston said it would also be helpful to record Hulfish's personal recollections of how the Waterfront has evolved over time.

Maintenance

Bert Ely said he is concerned that maintenance along the Waterfront may be insufficient over the long term and asked which areas will be maintained by the City and which by the homeowners association. Jackson said the City will be responsible for maintaining the promenade and areas east of the promenade. Browand said the RTS condominium association will pay the City \$75,000 annually per the DSUP condition.

Auld said the Commission's Governance Subcommittee is very focused on the need for the City to have a Waterfront governance model that will ensure proper maintenance of the redeveloped Waterfront .

Design

Pat Miller, a member of the Waterfront Art History Committee, said she is very impressed with how EYA's design has incorporated the site's history and ties the site into the full Waterfront design .

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Bergman announced that the Founders Park Community Association (FPCA) is donating \$1,000 to the City to be used for Founders Park. Bergman handed Browand a letter to the City from the FPCA Board of Directors that stated "We appreciate all the work and upkeep the City provides Founders Park.... "

Hall announced the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Waterfront Construction Monitoring Group will be on October 5, 2015.

Browand announced the Marina Subcommittee will hold an October 8 Marina stakeholders meeting as part of the City's Marina Feasibility Study being conducted to review options for keeping recreational boating slips along the Waterfront. He said the study will include an updated market analysis of demand for slips and the area being reviewed for potential sites is that between Wolfe Street and Montgomery Street. He said the study will identify what amenities and other factors need to be addressed to make new marina slips attractive to boat owners. Hall noted that some stakeholders can be expected to encourage the City to also look north of Madison Street for potential sites.

Adjournment

Hall adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.