



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2014 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2014

Adopted December 16, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Alexandria Waterfront Commission is to advise the City Council, City Manager, and City staff on matters pertaining to public, private, and commercial uses of Alexandria's historic Potomac River Waterfront and on implementation of the Waterfront Plan. The Commission is composed of 21 members, each representing a particular neighborhood, community organization, or City committee. The Waterfront Commission established, by City Council on April 14, 2012, replaced the Waterfront Committee founded in 1989.

This report covers the activities of the Alexandria Waterfront Commission for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, City of Alexandria Fiscal Year 2014. It begins with a listing of FY14 membership, followed by a statement of its mission and functions. Next are summaries of the Commission's principal activities in FY14. Finally, the report concludes with discussion of the Commission's recruitment and leadership plans and community outreach activities.

FY14 MEMBERSHIP

Dennis Auld – Citizen, Park Planning District II
Gina Baum – Park and Recreation Commission Representative
Howard Bergman - Founders Park Community Association Representative (Appointed 12/2013)
Christine Bernstein – Founders Park Community Association Representative (Term Expired 12/2013)
Suzanne Bethel – Old Town Business and Professional Association
John Bordner – Citizen, At-Large (Appointed 3/2013)
Morgan Delaney – Historic Alexandria Foundation Representative
Shirley Downs - Commission on the Arts Representative (Appointed 3/2014)
Stewart Dunn – Planning Commission Representative
Art Fox – Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Douglas Gosnell – Pleasure Boat Lease Holder Representative
Charlotte Hall, Chair – Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Representative
Jacob Hoogland – Alexandria Archaeological Commission Representative
Mari Lou Livingood – Alexandria Seaport Foundation Representative
Jody Manor – Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association Representative
Stephen Mutty – Citizen, Park Planning District I
Allison Nance - Commission on the Arts Representative (Appointed 10/13 & Resigned 2/14)
Paul Smedberg, Councilman - City Council Representative

David Speck, Citizen, Park Planning District III (Term Expired 5/2013)
Stephen Thayer, Vice Chair – Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Townsend Van Fleet – Old Town Civic Association Representative
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Ryan Wojtanowski – Environmental Policy Commission Representative

CITY STAFF

James Spengler, Director – Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Jack Browand, Division Chief (Commission Staff Liaison), Public Relations, Special Events &
Waterfront Operations – RPCA
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, Department of Project Implementation/Planning & Zoning

MISSION AND FUNCTIONS

The mission of the Waterfront Commission is to advocate for a vibrant Waterfront for Alexandria citizens and visitors that promotes Alexandria's maritime heritage. Its objectives are to advise City Council and staff on matters pertaining to public, private, and commercial uses of the Waterfront and implementation of the Waterfront Plan, including:

- Public improvements, including flood mitigation, new parks and improvements to existing parks, utilities, piers and the Marina, and shoreline improvements;
- Design guidelines or standards for new buildings and for the public realm (including parks, plazas, and other public spaces);
- Recommendations related to implementation of the public art and history plans;
- Proposals for commerce, private redevelopment, and public-private partnerships;
- Studies and recommendations related to transportation, parking, and circulation, including vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and marine travel;
- City management, maintenance, operations and programming of new and existing Waterfront facilities, including the Alexandria City Marina;
- Operating budgets, capital improvement programs, and funding for new and existing infrastructure, including phasing of planned improvements;
- Public safety and security issues;
- Environmental quality of the Potomac River, along its shores, and on adjacent land in Alexandria; and
- Governance and/or fundraising organizations or activities, such as they affect the Waterfront.

FY 2014 PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

This section summarizes the principal activities of the Alexandria Waterfront Commission during FY 2014. Detailed meeting information is available by visiting <http://www.alexandriava.gov/25562>.

- The Commission was instrumental in community outreach and provided staff with recommendations leading to the June 14, 2014 City Council adopted Phase I Schematic Landscape and Flood Mitigation Design. Principal activities included, but were not limited to:
 - Hosted four community meetings with The Olin Studio to review and make recommendations on Alternatives A, B, C & D concept plans. Hosted two joint meetings with the Park and Recreation Commission to review and make recommendations on design alternatives.
 - Established a Committee of the Waterfront Commission to assess the community preferred Alternative D design relative to the Waterfront Plan recommendations. The Committee's analysis showed substantial alignment between Alternative D and the Waterfront Plan recommendations, recognizing that the design at 30% does not yet address all the Plan recommendations. Based on the Committee's recommendation, the Commission sent a letter to the Planning Commission and to the Mayor and City Council in support of Alternative D. Ultimately, City Council adopted Alternative D that includes the relocation of the Old Dominion Boat Club.
 - Continued to monitor City Council approved recommendations on the Union Street Corridor Circulation Study to ensure their incorporation in the Phase I Schematic Landscape and Flood Mitigation Design, including review of the design for a temporary pedestrian plaza for the unit block of King Street.
 - Began providing input to on a multi-modal feasibility analysis to determine the potential pedestrianization of the 100 block of King Street.
 - Continued to review and advise on Waterfront-area development proposals, including, 220 South Union Street (Carr Hospitality), Robinson Terminal North and Robinson Terminal South to ensure development plans met Waterfront Plan Development Goals and Guidelines.
 - Reviewed the Special Use Permit for the Blackwall Hitch Restaurant Project and voted to support it relative consistency with the Waterfront Plan in November 2013, with a letter to the Mayor and City Council.

- The Commission appointed a Committee to review the Carr hotel development concept for the 220 South Union Street site and to make a determination if the Development Goals and Guidelines approved in the Waterfront Plan had been sufficiently addressed. The Committee's findings, forwarded to City Council on November 19, 2013, through a letter from the Waterfront Commission, were as follows:
 - The Committee reviewed the six Development Goals within the Alexandria Waterfront Plan and believed that the hotel proposal presented for a portion of the Cummings/Turner block was in line with the Goals and were satisfactorily met.
 - The Committee reviewed each of the 14 Guidelines at length, in conjunction with the development proposal and found that the proposal was in substantial conformance with the Guidelines.

However, the Commission also added language encouraging the developer to provide more detail in the confirmation of public alleys; to make sure redevelopment of the block fits in with the “Olin concept”; and that the developer should contribute significantly to the public amenities in the new park – stating that attention needs to be focused on the redevelopment and care of properties across The Strand.

- On November 7, 2013, the Commission hosted a public discussion between the City of Alexandria (the City) and Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) on the topic of the execution of the Waterfront Plan as it relates to the proposed Fitzgerald Square and ODBC property and claimed lands at or near the foot of King Street. By majority vote, the Commission recommended to City Council the following to expedite the road to a constructive solution:
 - That mediated, confidential and documented negotiations toward a mutually agreeable resolution between the City and ODBC happen, facilitated by an independent mediator selected by the City and ODBC.
 - That a member of the Olin team be made available in an advisory position during discussions to address accessibility, integration, and design flow of any proposed agreement into the Waterfront Plan concept/design.
 - That any agreement is holistic in nature; addressing not just the parking lot, but King Street Park, The Strand, and any current easements and rights-of-way as well.
 - That a time limit of 90 days after commencement be placed on these discussions, with monthly status reports to the Waterfront Commission during their normally scheduled meetings (morning of the 3rd Tuesday of each month).
 - After expiration of the 90 days, and if no agreement is in place, all records of negotiations between the two parties will become a matter of public record.

In March 2014, the City announced a landmark agreement with ODBC providing the City with the opportunity to fulfill design elements approved in the Waterfront Plan and settle multiple land ownership disagreements.

- The Commission hosted a D.C. Waterfront Tour for Commission members, City staff and community members on August 13, 2013. Site visits included guided tours of the Capitol Riverfront BID (Canal Park, Diamond Teague Park, and Piers, and The Yards Park and Riverfront Trail).

The tours provided participants with information on the development processes including community outreach, public/private partnerships, maintenance and design considerations for the City to consider as it begins the implementation of its Waterfront Plan.

- The Commission provided recommendations to staff on the City’s FY15 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as they pertain to the implementation of the Waterfront Plan.
- On February 27, 2014, the Commission took a tour, hosted by EYA, of The Oronoco, a building at 601 N. Fairfax Street that has been converted from office to residential on the Waterfront.

- The Commission, through its Marina Committee, monitored and advised the Commission on Marina operations and design features in coordination with Phase I Schematic Landscape and Flood Mitigation Design. Principal activities included, but were not limited to, debris mitigation; maintaining recreational boating opportunities; safety and security; and functional slip design to ensure coordinated and efficient commercial and recreational boating activities.

The Committee coordinated and monitored activities resulting from recommendations presented in the 2013 Waterfront Dock & Marina Maintenance & Repair Assessment.

- Monitored and advised on Waterfront park maintenance and operations resulting from follow-up items from the June 2013 Waterfront Walk.
- Monitored and advised on Waterfront area safety and security issues with RPCA, APD and Fire.

RECRUITMENT AND LEADERSHIP PLANS

Constituent member groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Park and Recreation Commission, Old Town Civic Association, Founders Park Community Association represent the majority of Commission members (see complete list on page 1 of this report). These groups are active participants on the Commission and quickly replace their membership when vacancies arise. Citizen members who do not represent a constituent organization hold seven seats, with numerous applications submitted to the City Clerk's office when terms expire.

The Waterfront Commission leadership includes Charlotte Hall, Chair and Stephen Thayer, Vice Chair. Mr. Thayer Chairs the Commission's Marina Committee. Member Christa Watters chaired the Committee which analyzed the Alternative D Waterfront design relative the Waterfront Plan recommendations and Vice-Chair Thayer chaired the Committee which analyzed the Carr Hotel relative Waterfront Plan Goals and Guidelines.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In response to citizen concerns, on September 20, 2011 the Waterfront Committee adopted a formal policy regarding public participation at its meetings. The policy states that the Waterfront Commission welcomes public participation during meetings. Individuals may speak on any Waterfront Commission agenda item for a period of up to three minutes. The Chair will invite members of the public to comment following Commission member and City staff discussion, but prior to Commission action on any motion as appropriate. It is the Commission's policy to limit public discussion on any single agenda item to a total of 15 minutes. The Commission may allow additional time for public discussion by a majority vote, or at the Chair's discretion.

Members of the public may provide comments on any issue not included on the Commission's agenda during the Announcements / Public Discussion item at the end of each agenda. Individuals may speak for a period of up to three minutes.

The Commission holds its regular monthly meetings at 7:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of the month at City Hall, 301 King Street. All Commission meetings are public, and notification of meetings is consistent with City protocol.

The Waterfront Commission will continue to sponsor annual Waterfront Walk as its major outreach effort each June.