

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

Monthly Meeting

Sister Cities Conference Room

City Hall

7:30 a.m.

Commission Members

Present:

Charles Ablard, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Cheryl Ahearn, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Dennis Auld, Citizen, Park Planning District II
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Eldon Boes, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Rich Brune, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Robert Cvejanovich, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Susan Cohen, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Beth Gross, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Charlotte Hall, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Trae Lamond, Representative, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Nate Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission
Kleber (Skid) Masterson, Citizen, east of Washington St. and south of King St
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Mohamed E. "Mo" Seifeldein, Member, Alexandria City Council
Stephen Thayer, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of King St., and Chair
Christa Watters, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.

Excused

John Bordner, Citizen, west of Washington St
Roger Yoerges, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholders representative

Vacant positions:

Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, representative

City Staff

Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Division Chief, Park Planning, Design & Capital
Development, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Brian Meli, Planning and Zoning
Catherine Miliaras, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Guests

Brian Buzzell, resident
Bert Ely, Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront
Mark Ludlow, Archaeological Commission

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and welcomed Council Member Mo Seifeldein as Council's new liaison to the Commission. Commissioners introduced themselves and identified the entity or geographical part of the City that they represent.

Thayer reviewed the Commission's mission: advising Council on all matters related to the Waterfront, including evaluating activities for how well they follow the 2012 Waterfront Small Area Plan (Waterfront Plan) guidelines. He emphasized the importance of Commissioners providing two-way communication between the Commission and the entities and geographic areas Commissioners represent. To help Commissioners prioritize, analyze and develop solutions to issues as they arise Thayer encouraged them to re-read the Waterfront Plan's guidelines, especially Appendix 6, the 2010"Alexandria Waterfront History Plan: "Alexandria: A Living History".

Macek noted the Commission had provided key recommendations during the Waterfront Plan's development and has continued to identify issues needing further attention during implementation. For example, the Commission had identified traffic issues that lead to the City's Union Street Corridor Study and evaluated developers' designs for the Robinson Terminal South and Robinson Terminal North sites for how well they adhered to Waterfront Plan guidelines.

Note: Waterfront Plan: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/special/waterfront/default.aspx?id=18940>
Waterfront Plan's Appendix 6: "Alexandria Waterfront History Plan: Alexandria, A Living History"(2010):
[https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/A6_History%20Appendix\(1\).pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/A6_History%20Appendix(1).pdf)

December 18, 2018 Minutes – Action Item

Brune proposed and Macek seconded that the December 2018 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Presentations & Information

A. STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION - Stephen Thayer, Chair, and Nate Macek, Vice Chair

i. Waterfront Plan Implementation. Thayer identified some of the major implementation issues the Commission is following and asked that Commissioners continue to discuss them with the entities they represent so that the Commission can be made aware of residents' concerns as they arise: City Flood Plan Implementation; Pedestrian and Traffic Planning; Waterfront Art and History Plan Implementation, the King Street Initiative, and the Tall Ship Providence.

Commission comments

Art and History Implementation: Susan Cohen (Arts Commission) noted that an Art and History Implementation Plan had been created as a reference that built on Appendices 5 and 6. Both Cohen and Commissioner Pulliam served on the committee that authored it. Posted at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/130812_Art_and_History_Waterfront_Report.pdf

ii. RiverRenew Initiative

Posted at: <https://riverrenew.com/sag/>

Since the project will have a significant impact on the Waterfront, Thayer has, as announced at the previous meeting, asked Watters and Masterson to attend meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to keep the Commission advised of its actions when SAG meetings begin.

Public Comment

Bert Ely said the City Manager had told him at Council's meeting the previous Saturday that choices had been made for SAG appointments but not yet announced. Browand will follow up. Posted at: <https://riverrenew.com/sag/>

iii. Private Development & Redevelopment Activities: Thayer noted the Commission had to date reviewed private development site plans such as the Indigo Hotel, the Robinson Terminal South site and Robinson Terminal North for consistency with Waterfront Plan guidelines. Similar reviews for future activities will be conducted as needed.

**iv. Commissioners' Stakeholder Group Priorities
Commission Discussion**

Thayer reminded people that the Waterfront Plan's vision statement states clearly that the Waterfront is being redeveloped as a place to serve all City residents, not only those who live nearby.

Gross (Founders Park Community Association) : Gross reported she had sent out a survey to members and 10 percent had responded and identified issues that included (a) **Founders Park drainage and debris**, with some volunteers offering to help City staff address this; (b) **whether summer hours for the Water Taxi service could be extended** to compensate for summer Metro service cutbacks; and (c) **sleeping and other unauthorized Waterfront Park activities at night** near the ODBC pier, including public drinking, panhandling, people sleeping overnight in the park, and general concern about safety in this area. A resident had asked if City staff could do more to direct people to City services available to the homeless. In response to Council Member Seifeldin's question about crime statistics in this area, it was suggested the APD report at the February Commission meeting could include this. Regarding Water Taxi hours being extended this summer, Hall said the City is considering this.

Thayer (east of Washington St. and north of King St) - Dockless Bikes. Residents are concerned about safety hazards created by dockless bikes being left in Waterfront areas that block walkway access for pedestrians and emergency vehicles. Siefertden reported that Council and staff have also been receiving complaints about how the dockless bike pilot program is being implemented and encouraged residents to report any problems they see. For example, the company has failed to post its phone number on its bikes for reporting violations 24/7.

Macek (Planning Commission) - Draft FY 2020 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program (Draft Work Program):

Posted at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/planning/info/de_fault.aspx?id=91530

Macek recommended Commissioners review the Draft FY2020 Work Program and think about how the Commission should be involved. It covers the proposed schedule for major planning activities in all departments over the next year and a half and is likely to be updated annually through FY2025. The Planning Commission discussed the Draft Work Program at its January 3, 2019 public hearing and Council will discuss it at its retreat in late January.

- **Waterfront Art and History Plan Implementation:** Of special interest to the Commission is this planning project, tentatively scheduled to be developed between July 2019 and June 2020.¹ Other commissions taking part will include the Park and Recreation Commission, Commission for the Arts, and the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. Macek and Watters noted that the Waterfront Commission had previously played important advisory roles for other Planning and Zoning activities related to implementing Waterfront Plan elements: e.g., the Waterfront Governance Study that lead the Commission to recommend creating a Waterfront BID, and, as they moved through the DSUP process, the reviews of the RTN and RTS site redevelopments.

Commission comments:

Cohen (Commission for the Arts) - Citywide African American History Walking Trail.

Cohen and Pulliam (Archaeology Commission) are both working on it. Thayer invited them to arrange a Commission briefing on it.

King Street Initiative & Related Actions: Proposed food and craft trailer with seating near the Torpedo Factory. Thayer was concerned that a recent Washington Business Journal article on the King Street Initiative had referred to a proposal to put a food trailer in front of the Torpedo Factory, but the Commission had not been told about it. (Note: See Private Development Update for further discussion.)

Follow up: Staff agreed to develop an improved process for briefing the Commission on Waterfront-related proposals being considered by Planning and Zoning - ideally before they are considered at a Planning Commission public hearing.

Governance and activation: It was agreed that the public-private partnership of VisitAlexandria's King Street Initiative activities have somewhat filled the role the Commission had hoped a Waterfront Business Improvement District (BID) could play. The Commission recommended a BID after reviewing in detail a range of public and private governance options used by other localities to beautify, activate and maintain an area. Watters noted BIDs have proven very effective in providing services that would otherwise be taken care of by a local government. Browand said VisitAlexandria's next activity planned for the new Waterfront Park will be the public art installation in March.

Follow up: A VisitAlexandria update on the King Street Initiative's activities during the past six months and for the coming year.

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY - No report.

Browand reported that Sgt. Mark Blackwell has replaced Lt. Michael May as the APD liaison to the Commission and Browand will request a report for the February meeting. Thayer asked that it include a report covering general crime trends and a recent incident on the 100 block of Union Street that affected a busker, the Lee and Quay robbery, and how the City directs its homeless to supportive services.

COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATES - Jack Browand, Division Chief, RPCA

¹ Draft FY 2020 Interdepartmental Long Range Planning Work Program posted on WC website

- **Windmill Hill Park** – Project is substantially complete. The northern pier will be constructed during spring and summer 2019.
- **Waterfront Park** (formerly KING Street Park at the Waterfront) - Construction is primarily done and the park largely in its final condition with an opening in early February. Power to the park should be finished by early March in time for the public art installation and final planting will be completed this spring.
- **Founders Park** - Drainage work is largely complete and turf management and restoration work will be done in the spring.
- **Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA)** - Gretchen Bulova has been appointed the new OHA new director after having served as interim director since Lance Mallamo's retirement. Hall noted Bulova's excellent work supporting Tall Ship visits.
Follow up: Watters encouraged people to respond to an OHA survey asking which of the year's Waterfront events were most memorable. She encouraged people to mention Tall Ship visits, so the City will know they are valued and continue to provide funding for them.
- **Tall Ship Providence** - Browand said the ship will probably dock at the Marina's G/H pier until Waterfront Park's northern pier is ready to be used, but nothing has been decided.
Follow Up: The Commission will be briefed on plans to support The Providence when details become clearer.

Comment - Seaport Foundation's need for Waterfront space: Seifert said that, since the Alexandria Seaport Foundation (ASF) uses the current Waterfront Park pier for its Seaport Center youth training activities, ASF is concerned about the impact on its programs when the City replaces the current Waterfront Park pier with a new one to support the Tall Ship Providence. She noted the ASF Seaport Center, which currently trains 18-23-year olds for the workforce, is already squeezed for space at its temporary location and will be expanding its services to cover those 16-23 years old.

- *Seifert said she hoped the Commission will support ASF in its request for additional Waterfront space.*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS & UPDATES - No report.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES - Catherine Miliaras, P&Z

- **211 Strand** - Excavation and other site work continues.
- **Robinson Landing (Robinson Terminal South site)**- The City has approved a permit authorizing pouring concrete as late as 9 pm near Duke/Strand, but work is unlikely to go past 7 p.m. An SUP has been approved for a restaurant in Building 1 and an SUP has been requested for a second, smaller, restaurant.
Follow up: At the February Commission meeting P&Z will brief on the upcoming SUP.
- **Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO) project** - Preliminary plan is expected to be submitted in February and a DSUP hearing is likely in July.
- **Outdoor Restaurant Trailer and seating in the Marina near Torpedo** - Miliaras reported that Alexandria Restaurant Partners (ARP) has requested an SUP to place a Slipstream trailer north of the Torpedo Factory for a food and crafts market, an intensified use of the space currently used by the hot dog food truck. The Planning Commission (PC) will consider the SUP at its February 5 meeting and Council at its February 23 public hearing. ARP leases the area from Realco.

Commission comments: Commissioners were very concerned that the SUP review for an area in the Marina would be considered by the Planning Commission before the Waterfront Commission had been briefed on it. Macek (Planning Commission member) said it was unfortunate that the Planning Commission would not have the Waterfront Commission's input at its February 5 meeting, the traditional practice on Waterfront-related permit requests. Watters noted the Commission has specifically expressed its concerns over time about crowding in this part of the Marina.

Follow-up: Waterfront Commission will consider the ARP proposal at its February 19 meeting and submit its recommendation to Council's February 23 public hearing.

Commission Liaison Reports

AD HOC MONITORING GROUP ON WATERFRONT CONSTRUCTION - No report.

Thayer reported that the Monitoring Group's next meeting is February 4, 2019, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) will brief on its Robinson Terminal North (RTN) petroleum and chemical site assessments.'

RIVERRENEW SUBCOMMITTEE – Skid Masterson, Co-Chair & Christa Waters, Co-Chair

<https://riverrenew.com/>

Masterson and Watters will be following SAG activities for the Commission, but the RiverRenew Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) had not yet met. Browand said the City had not yet announced its appointments to the SAG.

February Meeting Topics - proposed

- ARP Waterfront, LLC (Alexandria Restaurant Partners-Waterfront) s SUP request for enhanced use of the Marina space they lease. (Request for Special Use Permit #2018-0111 105 and 107 North Union Street - Outdoor Food and Crafts Market, filed November 27, 2018) (<file:///C:/Users/IJP/Downloads/SUP2018-00111%20Application%20Materials.pdf>)
- Robinson Landing restaurant SUP (public hearing expected in March)

Commissioner Announcements & Reports

- Thayer announced the Ad Hoc Committee meets Feb 4 and the next Commission meeting is February 19, 2019.
- Hall announced VisitAlexandria's new Visitor Guidebook.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.