

Summary Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, December 16, 2014
City Hall
Sister Cities Conference Room

Commission Members

Present

Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Jerry Bennis, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholders representative
Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Mari Lou Livingood, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
Stephen Mutty, Citizen Park Planning District I
Ted Pulliam, Alexandria Archaeology Commission
Paul Smedberg, Member, Alexandria City Council
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Ryan Wojtanowski, Environmental Policy Commission

Excused:

John Bordner, Citizen west of Washington St.
Arthur Fox, east of Washington St. and south of King St.

Vacancies:

Citizen, Park Planning District III
Historic Alexandria Foundation representative

City Staff:

Emily Baker, Director, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Fran Bromberg, City Archaeologist, Office of Historic Alexandria
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison and Division Chief, Public Relations, Special Events & Waterfront Operations, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Tom Canfield, City Architect, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Tony Gammon, DPI
Jessica McVary, Planning & Zoning
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Steve Sindiong, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
Nancy Williams, DPI, and Principal Planner, P&Z

Guests:

Susan Askew, resident
Christine Bernstein, resident
Brian Buzzell, resident

Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee;
Marianne Creed, resident
Bert Ely, Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront
Dene Garbow, Harborside HOA
Hal Hardaway, 311 South Union Street
Brian (AJ) Jackson, Senior Vice President, EYA
Peter Kilkullen, resident
Stephanie Landrum, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
Jerry McAndrews, residen
Ruth McKenty, Beautification Committee
Jonathan Rak, McGuire Woods (EYA/RTS team)
Al Schlachtmeyer, resident
Carl Smith, resident
Dan Straub, Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC)
Sloane Whelan, Fontaine & Company (EYA/RTS team)

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the Commission to order at 7:30 a.m. and welcomed newly-appointed Commissioners Ted Pulliam and Jerry Bennis. Commissioners introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2014

Mutty moved and Auld seconded that the November 18, 2014 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

FY 2014 Annual Report

Motion. Auld moved and Bergman seconded that, on p. 5, the phrase "or the Chair's discretion" be added to "by majority Commission vote" to describe more fully Commission practice and that the Annual Report be accepted. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Le Hermione Tall Ship

Browand reported an additional day has been added for Le Hermione's visit to the City. He said tall ship is expected to arrive some time after midnight on Tuesday, June 9, 2015, will stay through Friday, June 12, 2015, and be moored on the C/D pier in the Cherry Blossom's spot. Browand said all related activities will be held within the Marina, including free public tours, private events, and activities with the schools. Hall said Le Hermione will arrive after midnight because the Wilson Bridge will open for its passage.

Waterfront Plan Implementation Phasing Priorities for Public Improvements

December 3, 2014 Community Open House documents posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/special/waterfront/default.aspx?id=78787#Dec3>

December 11, 2014 meeting's presentation, "Waterfront Implementation: Phasing and Funding Options" posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/20141211WaterfrontPublicHearingPresentatoinFinal.pdf>

Baker reviewed the process used to develop the Olin Waterfront landscape design plan for public spaces and the recent public outreach used to identify public priorities for how to phase in the plan's individual elements over a 10-year period. She said information from the December 3, 2014 Community Open House and the December 11, 2014 Joint Meeting of the Waterfront Commission and Park and Recreation Commission is being considered as staff develops its recommendations for the City Manager's FY2016 budget proposal and 10-year Capital Improvement Budget (CIP). She said how to fund the Waterfront Plan elements is also being considered, recognizing that cash funding would require a longer timeline than bond funding. She said major construction is unlikely to begin before three to five years.

Baker reviewed the three implementation options developed for the Joint Commission meeting December 11, 2014 after the Community Open House..(See the December 11, 2014 briefing posted to the City website). She said Option A, which makes the flood mitigation system and the Waterfront promenade top priorities, reflects the clear preferences stated during community outreach. She said Fitzgerald Square and Point Lumley Park would be added in phase 2 of this option. In response to concerns raised at the Joint Commission Meeting, Baker said the Department of Project Implementation (DPI) is the City entity responsible for coordinating the timing of Waterfront Plan construction projects with the construction timelines of private Waterfront projects.

Baker said the City is also working on a feasibility study examining issues that include potential revenue sources and the type of governance entity that should maintain and program the parks once they are finished.

Commission Discussion

Phasing in key components - promenade, bulkhead and park improvements

Minimizing construction-related damage

In response to Dunn's question, Baker said staff has been considering the issue raised at the Joint Commission meeting about the need to coordinate construction of the promenade, bulkhead and park improvements in a way that minimizes the risk that construction of park improvements might damage promenade elements previously already installed.

ODBC/Fitzgerald Square site and open space

Bennis said that once ODBC vacates its current site, the City should move quickly to raze the ODBC building and parking lot and convert those areas to grassy public open spaces even though work on Point Lumley and Fitzgerald Square would not happen until later. Baker said creating usable grassy areas in advance of implementing the formal park improvements is planned. Livingood said the Seaport Foundation might, if needed, be interested in using the vacated ODBC clubhouse on a temporary basis.

Budget and Financing

In response to Dunn's question, Baker confirmed that the \$2 million cost projected for implementing the Lower King Street Multimodal Plan will be in addition to the \$120 million projected for the Waterfront Plan phasing. Van Fleet said flood mitigation and the Waterfront promenade should be the top implementation priorities to minimize the chance of their being

delayed by unforeseen fiscal circumstances during the budget's out-years. Watters said completing the high visibility public amenity elements in Option A as soon as possible, including the Waterfront promenade, Fitzgerald Square and Lumley Park, would make it clear the City is committed to implementing the Waterfront Plan's public elements as soon as possible. She said a public-private fundraising partnership should be considered among funding options along with bond and cash financing.

In response to Bergman's concern about the City having several very expensive projects coming up, such as the Potomac Yard Metro station and sewer system improvements in addition to Waterfront Plan implementation, Baker said each has a separate funding source. She said Waterfront Plan funding will come from a revenue stream generated by a special tax increment on private waterfront development, fundraising activities, potential grants, and other sources. She said each element of the budget always has to compete with the others within City spending priorities for coming years. Downs said cost data for individual elements should be made available so that companies and other entities can be approached as potential sponsors for specific elements such as Fitzgerald Square's proposed ice rink or fountain. In response to Wojtanowski's question, Williams said the development-related Waterfront taxes will include a mix of real estate, sales, lodging, and food taxes from restaurants plus development taxes.

Civic Building

Downs said that if the phasing options do not include the civic building until the end of the 10-year implementation period, Robinson Terminal North's public space would become especially important as a venue for cultural activities along the Waterfront. Baker said that, although all of the plan's elements are important and could be revisited in the future, the civic building was not ranked as a high priority by those who participated in the Community Open House.

Private developers' reaction to proposed priorities

In response to Auld's question about the response from Waterfront developers to the proposed 10-year phasing options, Baker said they support the priority given to flood mitigation but the City has not asked private developers for their preferences on the phasing options for the Waterfront Plan's public elements.

Public Comments

Bert Ely asked how vulnerable the promenade would be if it were a wood structure and were hit by an Isabel-type storm. Baker said the promenade would be a hardened surface to the west of the bulkhead and there would be some sort of wooden boardwalk to the east of the bulkhead. A decision has not yet been made regarding how to design the boardwalk.

In response to Christine Bernstein's question, Baker said construction of Option A's Phase 1 elements would take three to four years after the permitting process had been completed.

Motion. Thayer moved and Watters seconded that the Commission recommend to Council that the City move forward with Option A as proposed. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The need to find a new Waterfront location for the Seaport Foundation

Mutty said the Commission should recommend to Council that a temporary, and eventually permanent, Waterfront home needs to be found for the Seaport Foundation. Hall said the Commission continues to support its formal position that the Alexandria Seaport Foundation should continue to be located on the Waterfront. In response to Hall's question, Landrum said the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) has advised the Seaport Foundation of a few potential sites that might become available and will continue to do so.

Livingood said it had become apparent to the Seaport Foundation in recent weeks that they would likely be unable to afford to rent 2 Duke Street on the commercial lease terms being planned by EYA. Van Fleet said he supported Livingood's idea that one temporary relocation option might be for the Seaport Foundation to move temporarily to the current ODBC clubhouse after ODBC vacates it.

Williams said Council had, when it approved the Olin landscape design plan at its June 14, 2014 meeting, directed staff to work with AEDP and the Seaport Foundation to find it a new permanent home and Council and staff remain committed to helping the Seaport Foundation find a new home. Smedberg said City-owned Waterfront locations outside the core area, such as Riverside Park, with its boathouse and working pier, might also be potential options.

Robinson Terminal South

Presentation posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WCRTS16Dec2014.pdf>

Hall announced the Commission would have a work session in early January 2015 for its Robinson Terminal South (RTS) Subcommittee, open to the public, that would examine how well the details of EYA's proposed design meet the Waterfront Small Area Plan's guidelines and goals for the site.

Project timeline

Jackson reviewed EYA's projected timeline, covering Waterfront Commission, Planning Commission and City Council (Council) reviews and hearings, demolition, construction, and EYA's goal of having the RTS site's development ready for occupancy by summer 2017. He said EYA continues to work with the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and will submit a detailed design to the BAR after Council approves EYA's Development Special Use Permit. (DSUP).

Overview of EYA goals and objectives for the RTS site

Jackson said a more detailed analysis would separately be provided to the Commission of how the design concept addresses Waterfront Plan goals and guidelines for the site. He said the site design's density is less than that set by the Waterfront Plan, includes a diversity of open spaces, encourages pedestrian circulation on the site, will include a variety of uses that activate the site, and include residential areas designed to be compatible with an active Waterfront.

Jackson said the RTS site's marina would include transient slips, would not accommodate overnighting and, based on a site study, would not include a pier extended out into the channel.

Jackson said a commercial tenant is planned for 2 Duke Street but none has been chosen and it is unlikely to be available prior to 2017. He said the Georgetown Dean and Deluca building has been mentioned by EYA as an example of the type of design envisioned for the converted 2 Duke Street building but not as a tenant.

Commission Discussion

Governance for the EYA development

In response to Baum's question about who will be responsible for maintaining the site's Waterfront spaces along the promenade, Browand said the development will be a private space with public access maintained by the private homeowners association and be covered by an agreement similar to that for Harborside.

Mass and Scale

Van Fleet said the mass and scale of the buildings is too big for the Old and Historic District (OHD) and the design has no connection to the concept design of buildings within the OHD. He said 2 Duke Street's design is the only building that fits the OHD scale.

Art, History, Historic Preservation, and Historic Interpretation

Pulliam said he was pleased EYA will preserve the historically significant 2 Duke Street building.

Waterfront Art and History Plan guidelines

Pulliam said the site design as presented failed to address at least two of the Waterfront Plan's guidelines: Number 8, stating that "historic interpretation consistent with the recommendations of the History Plan should inform every aspect of the design and redevelopment..." and Number 13, stating that since public art is a prominent feature in both the public and private realm, "... the recommendations of the Art Plan should be incorporated to the greatest extent possible in the design for the redevelopment of the warehouse, pier and public spaces...."

Pulliam asked EYA for information about how the design concept addresses both these guidelines. Jackson said some public art is already on the site, the shipbuilder's statue will be relocated there and the development team has been discussing with the Office of the Arts how to incorporate art programming into the site. Pulliam asked EYA to provide additional information about how the history of Point Lumley will be incorporated into the RTS design concept.

Issues raised in Harborside residents' letter to the BAR

Auld said the design's mass and scale is appropriate but the letter had also raised a number of other issues that should be considered, including how setbacks might be incorporated.

Removing construction debris by barge?

Mutty asked whether, in light of the Harborside residents' letter asking barging to be used to remove construction materials (as well as other issues), EYA had considered barging the material. Jackson said marine engineers Moffat & Nichol had examined the pier and found structurally insufficient for supporting barging. He said a contractor is also evaluating the respective costs of transporting construction materials by barge and truck.

Van Fleet said removing debris by barge is very important to many members of the Old Town community. Wojtanowski said that from his perspective as the business representative on the Environmental Policy Commission and as one who had worked for many years in marine construction and had barged materials as part of his work, barging debris from the RTS site would be "environmentally unconscionable" and "cost-prohibitive for the developer". He said its expense would be driven in part by the need to construct a staging area with a temporary pier for barge loading and unloading if the existing pier at RTS could not withstand the stresses of barge-loading, as Moffat and Nichol had determined.

Wojtanowski said barging's environmental impact is related to the need to use seven diesel engines to load and unload debris using a mix of barge and trucks to deliver it to the Richmond area landfill, as compared to needing only two or three diesel engines for the whole process if trucks were used to deliver the debris directly from the RTS site to the Richmond landfill.

Seaport Foundation as a potential 2 Duke Street tenant

In response to Mutt's question of why EYA had apparently ruled out the Seaport Foundation as a tenant for 2 Duke Street, Jackson said the Seaport Foundation had asked to buy the building and EYA plans to retain ownership and lease it, using a commercial term lease structure offered at market rate. Livingood said the likely rate would be too high for the Seaport Foundation, a nonprofit, to afford.

Public Discussion:

Bert Ely (Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront), said the RTS plan to include two parking spaces for each residence was insufficient and residents would need to request District 1 residential parking permits for a neighborhood where parking is already in demand. McVary said RTS residents would be eligible for on-street parking permits.

Peter Kilkullen (Harborside resident) said he was unconvinced the RTS pier could not support the physical demands of dump truck weight loading debris onto barges. He said work on the development should not proceed until a further engineering study is done to verify that underground parking is feasible since the development relies on underground parking to provide the on-site parking spaces required by the City.

Kilkullen, citing information in the December 10, 2014 neighborhood letter coordinated by Askew, said the design concept is inconsistent with Waterfront Small Area Plan guidelines for the site, e.g. using design elements to minimize the impacts of height, and having small-footprint buildings instead of a superblock development. Kilkullen said that by ignoring the Waterfront Plan's site guideline to not have residential development as the site's primary use the area will become "another millionaire's enclave with no thought to affordable housing".

Susan Askew (Harborside resident) reviewed highlights of the December 10, 2014 letter sent to the BAR by Harborside and neighboring residents who are concerned about the RTS concept design's impact on their neighborhood. She said the neighbors' goal is to open a constructive dialogue about how to make the design concept more compatible with the neighborhood and

noted the design's mass, scale and proportionality, its potential impact on parking, and the impact on the neighborhood if construction debris is removed by truck rather than barge are major concerns.

Hal Hardaway (311 S. Union Street) called the architecture "hideous" and inconsistent with the Old and Historic District (OHD).

Marianne Creed (Old Town resident) said she supports the Waterfront Plan's goals of historic preservation and making the Waterfront more accessible to people. In response to her question, Jackson said construction demolition is expected to begin in mid-2015 and first occupancy expected in the second half of 2017.

Follow Up

Hall appointed Watters to chair a subcommittee that will host a public meeting and evaluate the RTS site design for consistency with the Waterfront Plan's goals and guidelines. It was agreed the subcommittee would prepare a draft recommendation for the full Commission to consider at its January 20, 2015 meeting.

Lower King Street Multimodal Study (100 block) – Status Report

Presentation posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WCLowerKingSt16Dec2014.pdf>

Sindiong reviewed the conditions analysis and civic engagement that have been conducted as part of staff's development of options to accommodate the heavy multimodal traffic that uses the 100 block of King Street. His briefing updated the Commission on actions taken since he had briefed it in February 2014 on the Multimodal Study then beginning. He said issues highlighted at the outreach meetings included the potential impact on parking on King Street and in nearby neighborhoods, the need to have substantial outreach to incorporate public concerns into the analysis, and to ensure delivery access for local businesses.

Sindiong reviewed the advantages and constraints of five options developed to address multimodal access to the block. (See briefing.) He said staff will make no recommendations before T&ES has completed updating the Old Town Area Parking Study and developed cost projections for the options.

Commission Discussion

Thayer thanked staff for incorporating into the options the inputs gathered during its broad community outreach. Van Fleet said the Old Town Civic Association had supported a previous brief trial that had pedestrianized the 100 block and commended the detailed evaluation. He asked how Old Town merchants viewed the concept. Sindiang said there was significant support for the concept when staff met with OTBPA and other business representatives.

Potential Implementation Costs

Dunn said some options should be tested using Option 1's as-is street configuration, since there would be no street modification-related expenses. He said public reaction to traffic restrictions

such as having no parking on certain summer days or permitting only the King Street Trolley and pedestrian traffic on the block for a time could be measured, as well its impact. In response to Downs' question, Sindiong said the cost of King Street options would be separate from costs projected for implementing the Waterfront Plan phasing options discussed earlier in the meeting.

Sustainability

In response to Downs' question, Sindiong said the issue of sustainability and its related costs had been raised during the public discussions and will be considered.

Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction

Agenda and presentation posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/Ad%20Hoc%20Monitoring%20Group%20PP%208Dec2014-Final%20Edition-website%20version.pdf>

Williams reported that the first meeting of the newly created Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction (Monitoring Group) was held December 8, 2014 had focused on organizational issues and expected construction timelines. Its next meeting will be mid-January 2015. Its members include Waterfront Commissioners Bordner, representing the Commission and chairing the Monitoring Group, and Hall, who is the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce representative on the Monitoring Group. Other Monitoring Group members are Katy Cannady (Old Town Civic Association), Bert Ely (Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront), Barbara Saperstone (Waterford Place HOA), and a developer representative to be announced.

Agency Reports - No additional.

Marina Committee

Thayer said the next Marina Committee meeting, January 8, 2015 at 5 PM, will include a discussion of river debris mitigation, including how DC handles this.

Report from Commissioners

Bennis asked about next steps for the staff feasibility study of options to preserve pleasure boat slips at the Marina or a nearby it, a study directed by Council in response to the Commission's September 16, 2014 letter requesting it. Hall said the Commission will have a staff briefing and then hold a public meeting. She said Bennis' help publicizing the hearing will be important.

Announcements / Public Comments

Hall reminded Commissioners it is important for them to attend Commission meetings and share information from the meetings with their organizational constituents, neighbors, and others.

Hall announced upcoming meetings: the Marina Committee on January 8, 2015, a Windmill Hill Park bulkhead community meeting on January 12, 2015, and the Commission's regular monthly meeting on January 20, 2015.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 AM.