

**Summary Minutes
Monthly Meeting
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 19, 2016
Sister Cities Conference Room
City Hall
301 King St
7:30 a.m.**

Commission Members

Present

Charles Ablard, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Jerry Bennis, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholders
Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
John Bordner, Citizen west of Washington St.
Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Kathryn Kolbe, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Jody Manor, Visit Alexandria (formerly Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association)
Sally Masterson, East of Washington St. and south of King St
Stephen Mutty, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Edward (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
* **NOTE:** On 1/19/16 Mr. Mutty vacated his Commission seat as Park Planning District I representative to become the Seaport Foundation representative

Vacancies

Representative, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Citizen, Park Planning District I

City Staff

Francine 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)
Tony Gammon, of Project Implementation (DPI)
Jim Hixon, Dock Master, RPCA
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Captain Don Hayes, Alexandria Department

Guests:

Christine Bernstein, resident
Brian Buzzell, resident
Susan Cohen, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Skip Graffam, Olin Studio
Hal Hardaway, resident
Joan Huffer, resident
K. S. (Skip) Masterson, resident
Maria C. Ross, Potomac Party Cruises (The Dandy)
David Speck, resident
Dan Straub, Urban Design Advisory Committee

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 15, 2015

Watters moved and Thayer seconded that the December 15, 2015 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

COMMISSION OFFICER ELECTION POLICY

Draft posted to:

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

Hall presented for discussion a draft Commission Officer Election Policy that she and Jack Browand had drafted in response to Commissioner Smedberg's suggestion at the December 15, 2016 Commission meeting. At that time Smedberg had called Commissioners' attention to the fact that, unlike other City Commissions, the Waterfront Commission's bylaws do not specify a regular schedule for Commissioners to elect their officers. The draft language specified that Commission officers be elected annually for one-year terms at the June meeting, with their term of service to begin at the July meeting. Hall said that if the annual vote on officers were held in June the proposed candidates could be identified at the Commission's May meeting. Commissioners suggested several issues to include such as requiring Commissioners to be prepared to serve on a Commission committee or work group as needed. Hall said she and Browand would revise the draft for consideration at the February 2016 meeting.

Thayer moved and Bergman seconded that the Waterfront Commission elect its officers in June of each year. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

WATERFRONT UPDATE

Interim Fitzgerald Square Park

Posted to:

http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/IFS_WaterfrontCommissionMeeting_2016_0118.pdf

Tony Gammon (DPI) introduced Skip Graffam (Olin) to present two interim design concepts (schemes) recently developed by the Olin Studio for an Interim Fitzgerald Square Park, a new civic space that will be located at the foot of King Street.

Activating lower King Street as soon as possible

Gammon said the reason the City has worked with the Olin Studio to create design options for an interim Fitzgerald Square Park is that there will be a seven- to eight-year gap between when the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) vacates its lower King Street clubhouse site and when the City can begin work on the permanent Fitzgerald Square envisioned by the Waterfront Small Area Plan for this site. He said the City wants to make this area an active public space as soon as possible.

Browand said the design planning includes three basic components: site condition, elements within the spaces, and potential programming. He emphasized that ideas being presented for public comment are flexible at this point and the morning's presentation to the Commission was the first step in the public comment process.

Two design schemes

Graffam said a prominent difference between the two schemes is that Scheme 1 has a larger and single green space area for activities and Scheme 2 has two smaller green spaces created by its walkway dividing its green space into two sections. He said the temporary green space created for the site will include using movable planters, furnishings, and shade structures.

He said factors influencing the scheme designs include:

- Limited budget
- Elements that can be supported by existing site infrastructure.
- Using durable materials to last for the seven to eight year period
- Minimizing energy consumption (e.g., low voltage or solar-powered lighting)
- Creating a design appropriate for this prominent Old Town civic space
- Including green space
- Including a fully ADA-accessible walkway
- Creating flexible spaces to support a variety of activities and events
- Preserving access to piers for boat owners
- Preserving views of the river
- Preserving existing trees
- Ensuring the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park design will not impact the City's flood mitigation plan.

Graffam said activities that could be created on a temporary basis for the site include an artificial beach, a roller rink, art installations, performance spaces and movie screens.

Commission Discussion

The importance of activating lower King Street soon

There was a Commission consensus about the urgency of activating the lower King Street area as soon as possible. Manor said recent announcements of mom-and-pop business closings underscore the importance of creating a vibrant Waterfront area.

Timeline

Browand said the City's timeline for the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park depends on when ODBC vacates its lower King Street site. Thayer said ODBC should select a general contractor soon and will then create a construction/relocation timeline. Graffam said constructing the interim park's elements could take between six and eight months once work begins.

In response to Thayer's question, Gammon said staff plans to propose that \$1 million be included in the FY2017 or FY2018 budget for the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park. He said flood wall construction is expected to begin in 2019 or 2020 and will be done in a way that lets as much of the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park be used as possible. He said CIP funding for the permanent Fitzgerald Square Park is in the FY2024.

Marina security

In response to Auld's question, Graffam said marina security could be provided by site features that avoid the visual impact of a fence and will be as unobtrusive as possible.

Green space

In response to Bergman's suggestion that green space be expanded, especially along the river, Graffam said only temporary or movable landscaping is being considered for the interim design to avoid additional expense, avoid permitting complications, and avoid actions that might limit design options for the permanent Fitzgerald Square. He said including movable planter boxes for trees is part of this concept. Browand said using lawns on palettes to simulate permanent green space is being considered.

In response to Dunn's question about whether Graffam had a preference between the two schemes, Graffam said he preferred Scheme 2 for the smaller and more intimate scale of its green spaces since this is less likely to create unused open spaces

Watters said she is leaning towards Scheme 2 because its flexibility is especially useful for a temporary space. She noted a Roger Lewis article in the January 15, 2016 Washington Post discussed the importance of avoiding unused open space.

("The clamor for open space is constant, but sometimes it's the wrong way to go"

https://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/the-clamor-for-open-space-is-constant-but-sometimes-its-the-wrong-way-to-go/2016/01/14/68435328-b96f-11e5-99f3-184bc379b12d_story.html)

Adding Waterfront restrooms

In response to Watters comment that interim planning for the Fitzgerald Square Park area should include public restrooms, Browand said staff agrees that public restrooms need to be included for the area near Waterfront Park and noted that using attractive mobile restrooms is an option being considered. Manor said the City should revisit the idea of expanding the hours during which public restrooms in the Torpedo Factory (TF) are open to Waterfront visitors, keeping them open outside the TF's operating hours.

Comparative scheme costs

In response to Dunn's question about the cost difference between Scheme 1 and Scheme 2, Graffam said Scheme 2 might include some additional costs because of some of its design features.

Re-using interim elements in permanent features later?

Kolbe asked if any elements of the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park could be re-used as part of the permanent Fitzgerald Square. She said she would prefer that when funds are spent on interim elements there would be the potential for reusing some of those elements later. Graffam said a factor that might limit what could be re-used would be whether materials used for the short-term civic space would be of a comparable quality and durability to the materials eventually used for the permanent Fitzgerald Square. Browand said staff will create and include in a future presentation an overlay showing the relationship between the potential interim and long-term elements.

Maintenance costs

In response to Bordner's question, Graffam said the \$1 million budget estimate does not include maintenance for the civic space. Browand said maintenance would be covered by the RPCA operational budget.

What would increasing the project's budget make possible?

Smedberg asked how the interim civic space might be changed if the budget were, for example, \$1.5 million rather than \$1.0 million.

Gammon said increasing the project's planned \$1 million budget might make it possible to use more of the site as an interim civic space if \$1 million were to be insufficient to demolish, transform and furnish the full site area envisioned in the design schemes. He said higher quality materials might also be able to be used.

Potential activities

Downs said movie events have been very popular around the City. Mutty supported including a small see-through pavilion within the Scheme 2 design and suggested that activities such as boat building and creating public art could be located there. He said he thought such a pavilion would provide an attractive sponsorship opportunity. Pulliam also supported Scheme 2 as well as including a pavilion and an information kiosk to serve as an annex to Ramsey House.

Public Comments

In response to Bernstein's question, Graffam said construction of the interim civic space would probably take six to eight months, assuming no infrastructure improvements. Browand said work on the site could probably not begin before fall 2017.

In response to Bernstein's question, Gammon said Council will make the final choice of a scheme after staff has completed the community outreach process. He said staff will report the results of community meetings to the Waterfront Commission and the Planning Commission before presenting the concept plan to Council. The DSUP process will be initiated once Council approves the concept.

Straub said he prefers Scheme 2 and recommended that the asphalt on the parking lot be cleaned up without making major improvements since it will eventually be removed when the permanent Fitzgerald Square is constructed. Graffam said only minimal improvements to the asphalt would be made to address its poor condition.

Arranging community briefings

Hall asked Commissioners to encourage their constituencies to participate in the public the Interim Fitzgerald Square Park outreach process. Browand said Commissioners should contact him to arrange for Graffam and Gammon to present the briefing to their organizations. Graffam invited Commissioners to provide comments by e-mail.

Public Improvements – Flood Mitigation

Gammon said the flood mitigation contract for a design consultant on the next phase should soon be finalized and work can begin on preliminary design and permitting.

Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC)

Thayer reiterated that ODBC is in the final stages of selecting a general contractor and a timeline for clubhouse construction and relocation will be created after that.

Potomac Party Cruises (Nina's Dandy)

Browand reported that the City and Potomac Party Cruises have an agreement in place to ensure continued operation when ODBC construction begins and until activities of Waterfront Small Area Plan moves forward. Hall recognized Potomac Party Cruises' Maria Ross in the audience.

COMMISSION LIAISON REPORTS

Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction (Monitoring Group)

Note: Waterfront Contaminated Land Program briefing posted with Ad Hoc Monitoring Group's January 11, 2016 meeting materials at:

<https://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/info/AdHocPresentation11Jan2016.pdf>

Bordner said the construction timeline for public and private Waterfront projects continues to be updated monthly and uploaded to the Monitoring Group's webpage. He reviewed highlights of the Monitoring Group's January 11, 2016 meeting and noted it included a briefing on the Contaminated Land Process included in Robinson Terminal North DSUP, the history of the site's contamination, and information about the City's Contaminated Land Program. (See briefing link above.) He said the Monitoring Group's next monthly meeting will consider how motor coaches are likely to be affected by Waterfront construction and will also consider lessons learned from the Carr property's construction work. The Monitoring Group's January on-site South Waterfront Community Meeting reviewing construction activities would be held the next day rather than on the Thursday of the second week after the regular Monitoring Group meeting.

Public comment

In response to Christine Bernstein's question, Bordner said the Robinson Terminal North developer has not identified a hotel for the redevelopment. He said they expect to focus first on the development's east building.

Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group

Browand said staff plans to brief the Commission at its February meeting on Council's action on the OTAPS report scheduled for its January 26, 2016 meeting.

Waterfront Governance Subcommittee

Kolbe reported that the Governance Subcommittee plans to meet during the first week of February to finalize its governance recommendations to the Commission.

Motorcoach Task Force

Hall reported that Council had voted to reconvene the City's Motorcoach Task Force and Mutty will serve as the Commission's Task Force representative.

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MARINA SUBCOMMITTEE

Thayer reported that it is hoped the Marina Feasibility Study will be ready to be briefed to the Marina subcommittee at its February meeting.

INDIGO HOTEL (CARR) HISTORIC RESOURCE UPDATE

Browand presented a recently-made City video, narrated by City Archaeologist Francine Bromberg, that describes the significance of the 18th century ship hull discovered at the Carr Hotel's construction site and how the City is handling its conservation-related work.

Pulliam, member of the Alexandria Archaeology Commission, presented a brief report left by Bromberg when she needed to leave for another commitment. He said the archaeology work at the Carr site had been finished and the ship hull had been removed, dismantled and put into large water tanks at the old DASH facility on Quaker Lane to preserve it for conservation work. Pulliam said Bromberg is inviting ideas for potential funding sources to help cover the costs of conserving the ship.

Commission discussion

Seeking private funding ideas for the City's archaeological conservation work

Auld asked if the \$60,000 to \$100,000 cost estimate for conservation work that Bromberg had offered in response to a question from Council would cover both the ship and the warehouse discovered at the site. Browand did not know.

Public comment

Hardaway said he had heard that the ship found might be a military vessel and noted that at Mallows Bay in Maryland, a maritime resource area across the Potomac River from Quantico, there are two Alexandria-built gunboats that were sunk during the Revolutionary War. He offered to provide the Commission any information he receives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) about those gunboats that might add to the City's information about the ship hull at the Carr site.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Old Town North Small Area Plan

Watters reported that work on the Old Town North Small Area Plan is progressing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bordner said the Waterford Homeowners Association (HOA) members had asked if 24/7 security could be provided for the Carr construction site as a crime deterrent. He said the City had responded quickly to a recent Waterford HOA report of street lights out near the construction site. Bordner asked if the Alexandria Police Department (APD) could increase patrols in the area. Captain Hayes (APD) said APD continues to work with Browand on security-related measures for the Waterfront area.

Hall announced that Steve Mutty, the Seaport Foundation's new executive director, will take over the Seaport Foundation's Commission seat as of 10 a.m. that day and vacate his Park Planning District 1 seat on the Commission. She asked Commissioners to help publicize the District 1 vacancy. Hall said Old Town Business and Professional Association had proposed a representative for its currently vacant Commission seat.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.