

Summary Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, January 20, 2015
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
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
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
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

Absent:

Arthur Fox, east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)

Vacancies:

Citizen, Park Planning District III
Historic Alexandria Foundation representative

City Staff:

Emily Baker, Acting Deputy City Manager
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)
Al Cox P&Z
Tony Gammon, Department of Project Implementation Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Yon Lambert, Acting Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)
Jessica McVary, P&Z
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Lalit Sharma, Project Manager, Stormwater & Sanitary Infrastructure Division, T&ES
William Skrabak, Deputy Director, Office of Environmental Quality, T&ES

Guests:

Christie Abramovic, resident
Christine Bernstein, resident

Brian Buzzell, resident
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee;
Dene Garbow, Harborside HOA
Mel Garbow, Harborside
Richard Goodale
Hal Hardaway, 311 South Union Street
Joan Hutter
Peter Kilkullen, resident
Jerry King
John T. Long, III, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Pat Miller, Public Art Committee
Jerry McAndrews, resident
Ruth McKenty, Beautification Committee
Elizabeth Moon
Herbert Rosenblum
Al Schlachtmeyer, 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 Commissioners introduced themselves. She said public comments would be heard on each of the topics but the meeting was not a public hearing.

Approval of Minutes from December 11, 2014 & December 16, 2014

Dunn moved and Thayer seconded that the December 11, 2014 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Downs moved and Dunn seconded that the December 16, 2014 minutes be approved. The motion passed by voice vote with Bordner abstaining due to not having been at the meeting.

Robinson Terminal South Subcommittee Report

Draft letter is posted with the meeting materials at:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WCMeetingInfo20Jan2015.pdf>

Watters said the draft letter's length reflected the fact there were no unanimous Subcommittee judgments on any of the issues. She said the Subcommittee, when it discussed how well EYA's proposed design meets the Waterfront Plan's design goals and guidelines for the RTS area, had faced the dilemma of how to reconcile Waterfront Plan design goals and guidelines that call for the RTS site not to be primarily residential with the fact these had assumed three Waterfront hotels, not the final two approved by Council. and one of those hotels would likely be on the RTS site. Watters said the Subcommittee also recognized that without the option of including a hotel on the RTS site, the EYA had lost a design option that would have been a major generator of public activity on the development site and its neighboring public spaces.

Commission discussion

Dunn said the wording should make clear that Council reduced the hotel number from three to two in response to public opposition to having three Waterfront hotels but should not imply the

Waterfront Plan originally specified a hotel at the RTS site. Watters said she would re-word the draft letter to clarify that some of the Waterfront Plan's design goals for the RTS site became outdated when Council reduced Waterfront Plan hotels from three to two, especially paragraph 2 of the draft letter.

Archaeology

At Pulliam's request it was agreed the page 3 statement that the goal "encouraging historic interpretation consistent with the recommendations of the History Plan, is minimally met" be changed from "minimally" to "partially" to make it clear other actions should be taken. He said RTS representatives are discussing this with the Archaeology Commission and City staff.

Visiting boats and Tall Ships

In response to Hall's question, Watters said the statement on page 2, no. 4, goal 8 reflected that Subcommittee members had disagreed about the potential impact of having Tall Ship visits at RTS and whether it would be suitable. Browand said whoever owns the docks would be responsible for their management, including that related to Tall Ship visits. Watters said EYA had not yet provided details about how such visits would be managed, including security- and parking-related issues. Downs said a situation should not be allowed to develop in the future where the City might be held responsible for expenses related to private visits at RTS by vessels such as Tall Ships.

In response to Bennis' question about how the infeasibility of boat slips at RTS had been adjudicated, Watters said that determination was made by the developer.

Design issues

Dunn said he did not think it appropriate for the Commission to criticize EYA's incorporation of glass into the site's design as being "historically inconsistent" with the neighborhood architecture since Commissioners appear willing to accept the design's residential emphasis even though residential use is inconsistent with the neighborhood's historic use.

Van Fleet said he would vote against approving the Commission draft and file a minority report because he could not support a draft letter that does not include the statement "despite the fact that some of the goals and guidelines had been met, the Commission does not approve the development because it does not meet the over-riding goal which is Goal 6, calling for maintaining a building mass and scale consistent with that of the Old and Historic District.

Watters said the majority of RTS Subcommittee members felt the design met Design Goal 6 because the buildings' proposed mass, density and height are below the limits set by the Waterfront Plan. She invited Van Fleet to submit his views to Council separately.

Action: Commissioners deferred their vote on the draft RTS letter to their February 2015 meeting to have time to review the draft after Watters had incorporated their comments.

Next steps: Timing of the Olin Plan's Phase 2?

Mutty asked whether delaying approval of the Commission's letter to Council until February 2015 might undercut the timeliness of the letter's statement that the Olin design team "should promptly come up with Second Phase designs that address the common elements of the Plan"

so private Waterfront developers can incorporate these common design elements as they move forward with constructing their projects. Baker said staff would not begin finalizing the scope of the next phase of the Olin design until Council has given staff guidance on how to phase Waterfront Plan elements into the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) budget being developed. She said this guidance is expected at Council's January 27, 2015 meeting.

Browand said staff is working with private developers to identify the common design elements they can incorporate into their private Waterfront developments. In response to Downs' question, Baker said staff will be breaking out costs for various Waterfront elements as well as identify possible sources to fund those elements.

Public Comments

Hall invited public comments on the specifics of the Commission's draft RTS letter.

Christie Abramovic (1040 N. Royal St.) said she supported the EYA design plan overall as a way to activate the area but did not have specific suggestions for the draft letter.

Pat Miller, Waterfront Art/ History Committee, said the draft letter's paragraph that calls for moving ahead with the Olin design's next phase developing is especially important. She reported that when the Art/History Committee met with the EYA design team EYA said they are ready to move forward to integrate elements of the Art and History Plans into their own design but cannot do so until the Olin team adds in these details for design elements common to public and private Waterfront spaces. Miller said EYA has offered some wonderful ideas that will establish positive ground rules that could be incorporated in the rest of the area.

Peter Kilkullen, Harborside resident, suggested that after paragraph 2 on page 2's statement "the proposed building design does not meet the plan's broader guidance for building styles that refer to 18th century warehouse style architecture", a sentence be added to the letter that includes examples of the "building style" expected at the site.

Special Events Proposed Policy Update

Note: The full briefing is posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WCEvents20Jan15.pdf>

Hall introduced Browand to review the proposed Special Events Policy Update (policy update) provided to Commissioners the previous week. She said Commissioners had raised a number of concerns about the proposed modifications with her and because of this Commissioners would discuss, but not vote on, the proposed policy update that morning to have more time to consider them. Hall said the Park and Recreation Commission was briefed on the proposed policy update at its January 15, 2015 meeting, was generally supportive of it, but had not yet voted on it. She said the Park and Recreation Commission had asked staff to pull only the foot races section out of the proposal so it could be studied further.

Browand reviewed the process that developed the Special Events Policy update, begun in late summer 2013, and the five principal policy changes proposed. He said the goal of the review, initiated at the City Manager's request, was to identify measures to improve user satisfaction.

How to balance the need to accommodate large events with their impacts on residents.

Thayer said neighborhood residents would prefer that large events are not held on consecutive weekends and the Special Events Policy should do more to balance demand for hosting large public events with the impact of those events on residents' quality of life, especially if the current restriction limiting events in Old Town with over 500 attendees to alternating weekends is lifted. He said the importance of this balance will increase when the large public space planned for the foot of King Street becomes available as a venue for public activities.

Browand said the City review process already considers a proposed large event's potential impact on residents and how to mitigate those impacts and consults with businesses and residents about potential community impacts. Baum said the City already has a rigorous process to review applications to hold large scale events in the City.

In response to Dunn's question about how the City notifies residents of an event, Browand said staff works primarily with civic associations and, since not all residents join civic associations, the City issues general public announcements and posts signs as needed.

Large events' impact on the City resources needed to support an event

Browand said there is rarely a weekend between April and October without a large event somewhere in the City and, with limited City resources to support such events, it is unlikely more than one large event would be scheduled on the same weekend. He said the Special Events Committee that reviews applications, with representatives from the 12 City agencies that provide resources to support large events plus the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, carefully considers an event's impact on City resources.

Ideas for keeping the alternating weekend restriction on large events in Old Town and updating other parts of the policy

Mutty suggested keeping the current alternating weekends policy for large events and adding an option for staff to offer an applicant wanting an exception to the policy the opportunity to pay an "impact fee" that the City could waive if appropriate. Browand said an impact fee of this type could be considered.

Watters said this might not be the best time to change the alternating weekend events rule since Old Town residents are already concerned about the potential neighborhood impacts of opening up new large spaces planned for public activities on the Waterfront.

Dunn asked if the alternating weekend policy had created specific problems that prompted staff to propose eliminating this requirement. He said the proposal seems to favor the needs of event sponsors over those of neighborhood residents. Browand said the goal is to give staff more flexibility for responding to event requests but in many instances staff has been able either to encourage sponsors to move an event out of Old Town or choose a different date.

Encouraging large-scale events in neighborhoods outside Old Town

Downs said other City areas such as the West End or Holmes Run Park would welcome hosting large scale events now held in Old Town, such as walks and races. She said encouraging more large events in these areas would enhance community recreation and attract additional patrons for local businesses. Bordner said when he'd asked neighbors living west of Washington Street what they thought of the proposed policy update many said they would like to take more advantage of Old Town and the Waterfront area, but he said eliminating the

alternating weekend rule could also create an undue burden on the Waterfront and take away a current incentive to push some large events to other parts of the City.

Baum said the proposed policy update's main advantage is to help staff respond in a more timely fashion to requests to hold large events by changing the authority to grant an exception to the alternating weekend rule from Council to staff. She said Council's schedule sometimes prevents an exception being approved quickly enough for an event sponsor's planning needs. Several Commissioners said that, to improve efficiency, the policy update could transfer the authority to grant exceptions to staff without eliminating the alternating weekends rule.

Inputs into the policy review by groups that sponsor smaller events

Livingood said her organization, the Seaport Foundation, was sent a survey to complete, but was not invited to take part in the special events focus group. She said non-profit sponsors of small events, such as the Seaport Foundation whose annual Seaport Day attracts about 300 people, should also be invited to work with staff when proposals are being finalized, especially if special events fees might be raised. Bethel, executive director of the Art League, said she had participated in the Special Events Policy focus group and supports the proposed policy update in general as a way to streamline the current events process.

Potential impact on neighborhood businesses and parking

Hall said more consideration is needed for the question of how allowing more frequent large events would impact parking and should be considered by the recently reconvened by the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS). She said many employees of Waterfront businesses, for example, use garages located on Union Street.

Revenue impact of eliminating the every-other-weekend rule for large events in Old Town

Manor said he supports eliminating the alternating weekend rule as a modest proposal that would, for example, allow a morning race and evening movie and also offers a chance for additional City revenue at a time the City is considering a Waterfront Plan estimated to cost \$120 million to implement fully.

Dunn asked how much additional City revenue is projected if the alternating weekend rule were eliminated and what the additional costs to the City might be. Browand said the City would be reimbursed by an event's sponsor for any additional costs. He said potential revenue estimates are difficult without knowing the nature of the additional events that sponsors propose. He said an additional \$40,000 revenue a year might be generated by Tier 4 and Tier 5 events, those that significantly or primarily benefit an event's manager. Browand said it's not possible to estimate revenue from additional rentals of a park or public space without knowing the nature of the event and whether the City will be a co-sponsor.

In response to Bennis' question, Browand said the City does not have a projection of the net impact on additional business-related revenue that an event might generate. Van Fleet said the City's biggest annual revenues from business taxes are probably generated on the days of the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Scottish Walk.

Action: Commissioners agreed to continue discussing the proposed Policy Update at their February 2015 meeting.

Public Comments

Christine Bernstein, resident of the Founders Park community, said increasing the frequency of large events in Old Town looks like an opportunity to increase City revenue that will diminish residents' quality of life. She said the frequency of weekend events should not be increased when the neighborhood impact of major construction on multiple Waterfront projects already worries residents. She said the City should find additional ways to inform individual residents about events since many residents are not civic association members.

Ruth McKenty, member of The Oronoco's board, said Oronoco owners will not complain about additional events being held because their condominium purchase contract specifies weekend Waterfront events are held.

Peter Pennington said measures to enhance City tourism while mitigating its impact on residents are important. He said the City should manage events in a more businesslike manner and should be able to predict, for example, the likely revenue from an event and what the event will cost. He said he was frustrated as an organizer for the City-sponsored War of 1812 celebration by the fact the City could not tell organizers in advance (1) how much the costs to the City would be, and (2) which City permits would be needed. He said the City should develop a "one-stop shopping" Special Events location that makes event planning easy for organizers by offering one central place with information about the event planning process where a person can also apply for permits and pay fees.

Jerry King said the City should consider whether demand for event venues would justify raising fees.

Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead Community Meeting #1

Browand said the community meeting cancelled on January 12, 2015 to discuss the stabilization of the park's shoreline will be rescheduled for February 2015 to allow for sufficient preparation. In response to Hall's report that she had received many calls from people confused about the scope of changes planned for the park, Browand said the Windmill Hill Park improvements are currently limited to the stabilization of the park's shoreline.

Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction

Meeting Presentation posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/FinalPPP13January2015Website.pdf>

Bordner, the Commission's representative on the City's Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction (Monitoring Group), reported on its second meeting, held January 13, 2015 meeting. Bordner, the Monitoring Group's chair, said the Monitoring Group's function is to serve as the community liaison for construction-related issues on private development projects, not as a policy group. Bordner said the Carr hotel project, one of the five projects being monitored, is on hold for the moment. Bordner said the Monitoring Group received information from the City Attorney's office explaining why it is too late in the process for the City to discuss with Carr, in response to community requests, the option of their transporting construction materials by barge not truck. He said the Monitoring Group was advised this issue should have been raised when Carr's request for a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) was considered. Bordner said the Monitoring Group was briefed about DSUP conditions attached to the Carr permit and, among other issues, the Monitoring Group will discuss

potential truck hauling routes for the Carr construction. Bordner said AlexRENEW had also briefed the Monitoring Group about the Potomac Interceptor Cleaning Project. (See documents posted at above link.)

Bordner said that as construction plans move forward on the Carr hotel the Monitoring Group will assist the City with outreach to the community. He said the Monitoring Group's next monthly meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2015 at 6 PM.

Agency Reports

Combined Sewer System Long Term Control Plan - Community Meeting Thursday February 5, 2015 - Bill Skrabak (T&ES) Lalit Sharma (T&ES)

Skrabak reported the City had scheduled a February 5, 2015 meeting at 7PM to begin the City's process for developing a long-term plan for addressing the need to reduce the impact from the City's Combined Sewer System (CSS) over the next 10-15 years. He said the finalized plan is due by August 2016. He said T&ES had also scheduled meetings to discuss CSS with the Old Town Civic Association, the Civic Federation, the Environmental Policy Commission and Council to provide an overview of the work requirements, timeline, technology options, and other issues.

Skrabak said the cost of sewer separation under private developments is born by the developer and, for City costs related to the work, the City will be identifying grant and other funding opportunities. Baker said the Carr Hotel, RTS and RTN properties are outside the Combined Sewer System area. In response to Dan Straub's question, Skrabak said green infrastructure will be among the strategies for addressing the issue. Wojtanowski said the RTN development team has incorporated a green roof into its design to mitigate stormwater run-off's impact.

Smedberg said the public meeting should also include information about financing strategies for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project. Watters said it needs to be made clear what role payments made through the sewage and water bills will play in financing the project.

NRG Corrective Action Plan February 3, 2015

Information on NRG is posted to <<http://alexandriava.gov/GenOn>>

Skrabak announced that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) had scheduled a public meeting on February 3, 2015 to obtain public comment on the proposed Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the NRG (formerly GenOn) site. He said VDEQ has extended the public comment period for this CAP until February 13, 2015.

Hall reminded Commissioners to publicize these meetings to their constituencies.

In response to Christine Bernstein's question, Skrabak said NRG, as PEPCO's lessee for the property, is responsible for cleaning up the property.

Marina Committee

Robinson's Presentation "Tools Used to Reduce Trash in the Anacostia River" is posted at: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/DCTrashMitigationPresentation.pdf>

Thayer reported the Marina Committee's January 8, 2015 meeting had addressed

three issues: Marina dredging, reinforcement of the Marina boardwalk, and riverfront debris mitigation. He said the Committee's Ad Hoc Debris Subcommittee, co-chaired by Mutty and Livingood, had arranged the first of several planned briefings about how other jurisdictions address river debris. Matt Robinson, with the Stormwater Management Branch of the DC Department of the Environment, briefed on how DC addresses Anacostia River trash. Thayer said the Committee will next invite City officials to provide information about likely sources of debris along the City's riverfront. Mutty said the Debris Subcommittee had also surveyed 50 public and private entities along the Potomac about how they handle their own river debris.

Reports from Commissioners

Information on interim measures to create usable public space on ODBC sites.

Auld said he would like the Commission to prioritize on future meeting agendas discussion of time-sensitive issues related to Waterfront Plan phasing after they have been raised at a meeting. He said an example is the need to consider how to respond to Frank Fannon's comment at the December 11, 2014 Joint Commission meeting on Waterfront Plan phasing and funding options that the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) might be able to vacate its clubhouse within 30 months while staff has said construction on Phase 1 of the City's Waterfront Plan elements will probably not begin for three to five years after the planning process has begun. Auld asked that the Commission be given information about how quickly the City could, assuming available funding, convert the vacated ODBC sites into usable public open space as an interim measure before work starts on Phase 1.

Gammon said it would not be possible to project a timeline for Waterfront Plan phasing before Council's January 27, 2015 meeting because Council was expected to advise staff then how to integrate Waterfront Plan phasing into the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Gammon said that even though Phase I design and permitting will likely take three to five years, staff is considering interim public space improvements on the ODBC sites.

In response to Auld's request, Gammon said he would also provide a one-page sheet with details of the \$52 million and \$120 million cost projections.

Reports of tentative timelines consolidating private and public space construction projects

In response to Commissioners' requests for a written consolidated schedule of tentative timelines for each private and public space Waterfront project to be updated as new information develops, Gammon said he could compile the information but cautioned that timelines will change as circumstances evolve. Browand said staff can develop more detailed timeline projections after receiving Council's guidance at the end of the January on how to integrate Waterfront Plan phasing into the CIP.

A Waterfront "czar"?

Mutty proposed the Commission discuss at a future meeting whether to recommend the City create a "Waterfront czar" position to coordinate current and planned public and private Waterfront-related projects. Hall said Commissioners' interest in this idea has been conveyed to Council and staff and is being discussed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45AM.