

**Summary Minutes  
Monthly Meeting  
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION  
Tuesday, October 20, 2015  
Sister Cities Conference Room  
City Hall  
301 King St  
7:30 a.m.**

**Commission Members**

***Present***

Charles Ablard, Historic Alexandria  
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)  
Stephen Mutty, Citizen Park Planning District I  
Edward (Ted) Pulliam, Alexandria Archaeology Commission  
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Paul Smedberg, Member, Alexandria City Council  
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.  
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.  
Ryan Wojtanowski, Environmental Policy Commission

***Excused:***

Sally Masterson, East of Washington St. and south of King St

***Absent:***

Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)\  
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

**City Staff**

Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison and Division Chief, Public Relations, Special Events & Waterfront Operations, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Al Cox, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)  
Dirk Geratz, P&Z  
Captain Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department  
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA  
Matt Landes, Department of Project Implementation  
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

**Guests:**

Christine Bernstein, resident  
Susan Cohen, Arts Commission  
Skip Graffam, Olin Group, LLC  
Alex Romero, Superintendent, National Park Service (NPS)  
Dan Straub, Urban Design Advisory Committee

**Welcome and Introductions**

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

**Approval of Minutes from September 15, 2015 and September 24, 2015**

Thayer moved and Watters seconded that the September 15, 2015 minutes be approved. They were approved by unanimous voice vote. Thayer moved and Auld seconded that the September 24, 2015 minutes be approved. They were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Marina Subcommittee**

***Presentation posted to:***

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/MarinaStakeholderMeeting8Oct2015.pdf>

***Stakeholder survey posted to:***

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/MarinaFeasibilityStudySurveyOctober2015.pdf>

Thayer reported on the Marina Subcommittee's October 8, 2015 meeting that hosted a stakeholder briefing and discussion about the City's Marina Feasibility Study recently begun. The Feasibility Study will focus on options for recreational boating slips along the Waterfront as the Waterfront Small Area Plan (Waterfront SAP) is phased in. The study was initiated in response to Council's direction that staff should work with the Waterfront Commission to examine the feasibility of potential locations for pleasure boat slips within this area. Thayer said the Olin Studio has hired Moffat & Nichol to conduct the feasibility study for the City. The October 8 meeting was the first of two planned stakeholder meetings for the study. Hall said the meeting was well-attended and stakeholder inputs will be very useful to the study.

Thayer said the study will include a market analysis for marina slips, a review of potential marina locations, an operational review of Marina costs, staffing and revenue, and options for addressing the problem of shoreline debris. He distributed copies of a stakeholder survey that had also been posted to the Commission's website. (*See link above.*)

***Commission Discussion***

Auld asked how the Old Dominion Boat Club's (ODBC) relocation from its current site to the Beachcomber site might impact the Marina. Thayer said the only aspect of ODBC's move that would impact the Marina would be ODBC's use of the A/B pier, either temporarily or permanently, as it decides whether to build a new pier .

**Waterfront Plan Common Elements Update - Skip Graffam, Olin Studio**

***Briefing posted to:***

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/CommonElementsWCPresentation20Oct2015.pdf>

Graffam updated the Commission on the design palette being developed by the Olin Studio for the Waterfront landscape design's common elements in public and private spaces. He said the main common elements are: paving, lighting, site furnishings, and art and history elements.

Graffam noted the City had accelerated its timeline for developing the design palette so that the developers of the four private Waterfront projects, the Indigo Hotel, Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC), the Robinson Terminal North (RTN) site, and the Robinson Terminal South (RTS) site, would have these design options in time to integrate them into their own project designs. Browand said private development sites will be completed several years ahead of the City's timetable for its own Waterfront projects.

Graffam said Olin's final options for the common elements will reflect inputs in the City's community engagement process that is currently scheduled to run between September 2015 and January 2016. His briefing to the Commission was the second engagement activity and followed a briefing presented October 15, 2015 to the Park and Recreation Commission. He said additional engagement activities can be added as needed to those listed in the briefing.

Graffam said the designers are considering options for mixing paving, park areas and lighting. He said paving will be important as a common element along the promenade and along Strand Street from King Street to Wolfe Street to emphasize the Strand's historic wharf and pier area. Graffam said lighting will also be a signature design element along the Waterfront and reviewed three categories of lights being considered for the promenade: period-inspired historic lighting, industrial style lighting, and contemporary lighting. Graffam said maintenance and replacement costs for customized lighting will influence the choices.

### ***Commission Discussion***

#### ***Ensuring that private developers use common elements in Waterfront projects***

In response to Auld's question, Graffam said the City's design team and private developers have been communicating with each other regularly to ensure that developers have the information they need to integrate common elements into their designs. In response to Mutty's question of whether the City can impose common elements on private project designs, Al Cox said the requirement to integrate common elements was included in their development special use permits (DSUP) and the Board of Architecture (BAR) then reviews and approves design details within the Historic District. Smedberg said EYA's DSUP for the Robinson Terminal South project states that Olin's design guidelines must be followed. Graffam said EYA's RTS design includes historical interpretative elements that exceed those included in the Olin design.

#### ***Consistency of style***

Watters said Council should ensure that the City does not approve requests for a private project to use an "approximate equivalent" for a common element in a privately owned public space, as the BAR recently approved for the Old Dominion Boat Club project.

Kolbe said the City should ensure that common design elements are used throughout the promenade since it ties the Waterfront together. She suggested using color to tie together public and private Waterfront spaces. Browand said the City will be able to maintain design continuity along the Waterfront promenade because it will own the full promenade. In response to Mutty's

question whether one consistent standard light fixture will need to be used throughout the Waterfront area, Graffam said the design guidelines will instead require 'consistency of style'. Baum said she supports having consistent design elements along the Waterfront but thought the Waterfront core area is the one part of the Waterfront where a more dramatic variation might be interesting. Graffam agreed this was a possibility.

***Choosing design elements to convey an impactful effect of early implementation phases***

Auld said that costs and maintenance requirements will be important factors in decision-making but Council should ensure the City chooses impactful design elements for the parts of the Waterfront SAP that will be implemented first. Smedberg agreed.

***Lighting***

In response to Dunn's question, Browand said promenade lighting will likely be kept on all night, the City' practice in City parks and other lighted trails. Graffam said factors that will influence lighting choices will include safety, design, views from the street and water, and cost. Wojtanowski said he assumes non-light polluting fixtures would be used to minimize concerns about potential light pollution from Waterfront lighting. Watters said light pollution is an important factor but lighting should be kept on after the parks close since residents walk their dogs there.

***A process to ensure timely coordinated implementation of common element***

In response to a question from Watters, Smedberg said a revised process may be needed for how the Council, the Planning Commission and the BAR will share the responsibility for ensuring that common elements are effectively incorporated into private project designs. He said the Council might, for example, need to play more of a continuing oversight role after a DSUP has been approved than it has done traditionally. Smedberg said it will be important to offer opportunities for public input into these design choices as they move forward. Graffam said the City's outreach process can evolve as needed.

***Phasing In Waterfront Grading Changes***

Manor said he was concerned about how the timetable gap between public and private work at the foot of Duke Street, where the seawall and promenade will be built in front of the RTS project, will be addressed since Point Lumley's current elevation will be six feet lower than the new regarded RTS redevelopment site. Graffam said issues such as this will be addressed by a "next step" grading plan for the entire Waterfront as work proceeds and Olin will feather their part of the design work into the flood mitigation seawall. Browand said interim grading will avoid sudden drops in elevation as work proceeds at sites and any need to have interim steps connecting elevations at the foot of a street.

***Maintenance, durability and cost***

In response to Downs' question, Graffam said the cost, durability and maintenance requirements wharf material option will be among the factors considered. Downs said she liked the green color being considered for light fixtures but worried about the potential impact on maintenance costs. She suggested LED lighting be used to keep costs down.

***Public Comments***

Christine Bernstein recommended that lighting be used to create an effective "ribbon" around the historic district that ties together its architectural styles and the design and color of lighting for the new areas should be consistent with those within the historic area. She recommended that Olin's final design palette of options should not include more than three options for lighting.

Joan Huffner said consideration should be given to including a bicycle trail that runs along the Waterfront and is separate from the promenade. Browand said this option has not yet been discussed although there has been substantial discussion about how to handle bicycle traffic to mitigate bicycle and vehicular conflicts, especially along Union Street.

### **Jones Point Park Activity Study - Alex Romero, National Park Service**

Alex Romero, the National Park Service (NPS) Superintendent responsible for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, reviewed the upcoming Jones Point Park Activity Study and other NPS projects reflecting the four activity themes of the NPS Director's 2014 Call to Action - organizational excellence, connecting people to parks, preserving America's special places, and advancing education. He highlighted new activities designed to educate people in the National Capital Area about national parks and increase their use as NPS celebrates its centennial in 2016.

### ***George Washington Memorial Parkway Trust***

Info: <http://www.gwparkwaytrust.org/about-the-trust>

Romero said the NPS has set up the George Washington Memorial Parkway Trust (The GWMP Trust), a public-private partnership, as a partner for developing new activities that respond to people's unmet interests, coordinating volunteer support for the parks and identifying potential donors. Romero noted that Commission Chair Charlotte Hall serves on the recently created GWMP Trust Board.

### ***NPS Urban Parks and Programs Agenda***

Romero said the Urban Parks agenda has been launched as part of the NPS Centennial celebration. He reviewed ideas such as NPS' 'rent-a-tent', directed at urban residents who live in small spaces without extra storage space for storing camping items, as a way to make it easier for them to take advantage of outdoor activities in national parks.

Romero said NPS is planning town hall meetings to discuss ideas for urban parks on November 2, November 4 and December 1 that will be held in the areas of the City of Alexandria, Fort Hunt and the Great Falls area.

### ***Jones Point Park site development planning process***

Romero said NPS will host three town hall meetings at Jones Point Park to gather community ideas about which amenities that could be installed under the Woodrow Wilson Bridge would be interest people. He offered as examples activities in New York's Bryant Park such as ping pong tables, an outdoor literacy library, bocce ball, chess and card tables. The Jones Park meetings are scheduled for November 7, November 9 and November 12. Browand said he will forward details about the meetings when he receives them.

### ***Town hall: How to attract Latinos to national park activities?***

Romero said NPS is planning to hold a town hall meeting in 2016 to engage the Latino community in discussions of how to encourage more Latinos to visit national parks and enjoy their amenities.

***Mobile visitor center***

NPS has bought a food truck that will be converted into a mobile visitor's center for use at public parks without a visitor center.

***Rubinstein donation to support renovations***

Romero reported that NPS had received two donations of almost \$19 million from David Rubinstein to be used for NPS' restorations of Arlington House and the US Marine Corps Iwo Jima War Memorial.

***NPS Restoration of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve***

Romero said restoration work on the wildlife preserve near Belle Haven is expected to start in 2017.

***Commission Comments***

***Belle Haven Marina***

In response to Auld's question, Romero said the Dyke Marsh restoration will not impact the Belle Haven Marina.

***Athletic fields at Jones Point Park***

Baum said she likes the NPS idea of adding tables for activities such as chess and ping pong and recommended the athletic fields be brought up to a usable condition. Romero said his office is exploring options for installing a usable surface for this multi-use field. He invited activity ideas to be presented at the site development planning meetings. Baum said she will encourage the Park and Recreation Commission members to attend the meetings. Romero said the George Washington Memorial Parkway website will be collecting public inputs to help NPS develop new and vibrant programs that respond to local community needs.

***Public Comments:***

Hall invited comments. There were none.

**Commission Liaison Reports**

***Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction - John Bordner***

*Information posted to:*

<https://alexandriava.gov/special/waterfront/default.aspx?id=82590>

Bordner invited people to attend the monthly meetings of the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction (Ad Hoc Monitoring Group), held at 5:30pm on the first Monday of the month, and its new monthly street-side meetings at the Indigo Hotel site, held at 9:30 a.m. on the Thursday two weeks after the Monday monthly meeting. Bordner thanked Dirk Geratz (P&Z), Pete Mensinger (Code Administration) and Browand for their continuing support of the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group.

Bordner reported that the Ad Hoc Group is collecting lessons being learned from the Indigo Hotel construction that can be applied to upcoming Waterfront projects. Hall said signage and communication are among the many lessons being learned for how improvements might be made to handle upcoming construction projects.

***Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group - Howard Bergman***

Bergman, the Commission representative on the Work Group, reported there were no new actions taken. He said he was disappointed that OTAPS' final recommendations were limited to issues such as how to encourage vehicles to park in garages rather than on residential streets. Bergman said he would have preferred for the OTAPS Work Group to have also considered issues related to the need for a comprehensive Waterfront transportation plan. Dunn, also an OTAPS Work Group member, said it accomplished its mission.

Browand recommended Commissioners contact Carrie Sanders of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) if they have parking-related ideas they would like T&ES to consider. Hall asked that Commissioners be provided a list of upcoming public meetings at which Sanders will discuss the OTAPS recommendations so that Commissioners can publicize those meetings to their constituencies.

***Waterfront Governance Subcommittee - Kathryn Kolbe***

Kolbe, chair of the Governance Subcommittee, reported it had heard from the executive director of the Glen Echo Partnership, non-profit partnership that governs public park land. She said the Subcommittee plans to hear from City staff regarding how they would manage the Waterfront, and has also invited representatives from D.C.'s two riverfront Business Development Districts (BIDs) to discuss their experiences at its November 2 and November 16 meetings. Kolbe said the Subcommittee will then develop its recommendations for the Commission regarding Waterfront governance options.

**Agency Reports**

***500 & 501 N. Union St. (RTN) – Planning and Zoning - Dirk Geratz***

Geratz reported that Council approved the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) for the RTN project by a 7-0 vote on October 22, 2015. Geratz said the final site plan review, the next step in the process, may begin by the end of the year. He noted that most projects go through several site plan iterations before submitting their site plan for approval. He said work on the RTS site plan continues. Geratz said the City has been working hard with the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction to head off problems before they develop.

***Flood Mitigation – DPI/RPCA***

Browand reported that the contractor is expected to begin work by the first of the year.

***City Marina – RPCA***

Browand reported that a number of sidewalk and other repairs will be initiated, including brick work near Torpedo Factory and Blackwall Hitch, the sunken walkway in Founders Park, and improvements in Marina restrooms to ensure they meet the requirements of the Americans for Disability Act.

***New Waterfront park manager***

Browand introduced Anthony Smith as the City's new acting park manager for all parks along the Waterfront. He succeeds Eugene Loew.

**Anacostia Waterfront Boat Tour – Saturday, November 7, 2015**

Hall announced that the City's Holiday Boat Parade of Lights will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2015, rain or shine.

Hall announced the Commission will tour the Anacostia Waterfront redevelopment area by boat on Saturday, November 7 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. She said representatives from Federal City Council and another organization working on Anacostia waterfront improvements will join the tour.

**Reports from Commissioners**

Auld said it will be important for the Commission to watch the Ad Hoc Waterfront Monitoring Group's timeline over the coming year.

Hall asked Al Cox to provide information for the November Commission meeting regarding the City oversight bodies responsible for reviewing the various Waterfront development projects.

**Announcements/Public Comments** - No additional comments.

**Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.