

Summary Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 21, 2015
City Hall
Sister Cities Conference Room
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
John Bordner, Citizen west of Washington St.
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
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.

Excused:

Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Paul Smedberg, Member, Alexandria City Council

Absent:

Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Ryan Wojtanowski, Environmental Policy Commission

Vacant:

Citizen representative, east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Representative, Alexandria Seaport Foundation

City Staff

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)
Susan Eddy, Deputy Director, P&Z
Tony Gammon, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Project Implementation
Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Dirk Geratz, P&Z
Captain Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Carrie Sanders, Division Chief, Transportation Planning, Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)

Guests:

Susan Askew, resident
Christine Bernstein, resident
Bert Ely, Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront
Kathryn Papp, resident
Dan Straub Urban Design Advisory Committee
Eric Wallner, Torpedo Factory Arts Center

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from March 17, 2015

Thayer moved and Manor seconded that the March 17, 2015 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of Minutes from April 2, 2015

Watters moved and Bordner seconded that the April 2, 2015 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Set Date for Annual Commission Waterfront Walk

The Commission scheduled its annual Waterfront Walk for Saturday, June 6, 2015 at 9 a.m. to begin at Tide Lock Park at Canal Center. Tide Lock Park was chosen as the starting point because of Commission concerns about the property's history of poor maintenance.

Set Date for DC Southwest Waterfront Boat Tour

The Commission scheduled a tour of ongoing development in DC's Southwest and Anacostia waterfront neighborhoods for June 16, 2015 that will depart from the City Marina at 7:30 a.m. via Potomac Riverboat Company's Miss Mallory.

Commission Liaison Reports

Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction (Monitoring Group)

Waterfront Development Anticipated Schedule

Bordner, the Commission's representative on the Monitoring Group and its chair, reviewed two issues covered since the last update to the Commission: the barging/trucking issue for the Robinson Terminal South (RTS) redevelopment, proposed construction conditions for the RTS Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) and the Monitoring Group's outreach strategy to the community. He said he had, in light of residents' concerns presented to the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group, submitted to the Planning Commission the Monitoring Group's recommendation that the RTS DSUP include weekend requirements that construction be limited, there be no trucking of materials, and noise abatement procedures be followed.

Outreach to the neighborhood

Bordner reported the Monitoring Group had recommended to the Planning Commission that an information clearinghouse for residents be set up to provide information related to construction-related impacts on the neighborhood, including upcoming meetings and information contact points, and assistance to residents needing help processing damage claims. Bordner said P&Z staff suggested to the Planning Commission that the Monitoring Group serve as such a clearinghouse. Bordner said the Monitoring Group also recommended to the Planning Commission that the RTS DSUP conditions include requirements that actions be taken on weekends to mitigate site noise and avoid trucking materials. He said he also conveyed residents' concerns that development's impact on neighborhood parking will need to be monitored. Bordner said the next meeting, May 14 or 21 would focus on haul routes for the Carr and RTS properties.

Discussion

Potential impact of overlapping schedules for Waterfront redevelopment sites

Van Fleet said he had urged the Mayor to talk to Carr about using barging for its construction materials as the Mayor had urged EYA to do for its RTS development. Van Fleet said he was also concerned about the potential impact on neighborhood residents and businesses if work on multiple redevelopment sites were ongoing at the same time. Dunn said it's hard to predict whether the neighborhood might be more disrupted if work on the Carr hotel, RTS and the Old Dominion Boat Club sites were carried out on overlapping schedules over a shorter time period or if construction were carried out over a longer time period if work on the three sites were carried out sequentially.

In response to Baum's question, Dirk Geratz said Council had approved the RTS DSUP with a condition that neighbors within 250 feet of the construction can request EYA to have their homes surveyed before and after RTS construction to document whether damage discovered after the construction was there before. He said EYA is required to hold and publicize a pre-construction meeting with the neighbors that will provide information about the available home surveying. Watters asked that the City consider notifying neighbors of the pre-construction meeting by letter rather than only posting meeting notices within the neighborhood. Geratz said using a letter could be considered for homes within the 250-foot distance.

Haul routes for ODBC construction

In response to Hall's question, Bordner said the next Monitoring Group meeting could consider the ODBC construction's haul routes along with those for the RTS and Carr's Hotel Indigo. Thayer said he expects ODBC haul routes to be determined during the site plan review.

Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group - Carrie Saunders

Saunders (T&ES) reviewed highlights of the last OTAPS Work Group meeting and reported that the next meeting, April 29, 2015 at 6 p.m., would consider Old Town residential permit parking policies, including two options raised by residents at the previous meeting: having some permit-only residential parking areas for Old Town residents at certain times of the day and having two-hour free parking in some areas replaced by two-hour parking payable by phone.

Hall recommended the upcoming OTAPS meeting as an excellent opportunity for residents and businesses to receive helpful information about the parking options being considered and to provide inputs into the process.

Marina Committee

Thayer reported the Marina Committee's May 9, 2015 meeting provided an orientation for slip holders and reviewed the FY2016 City budget, including its plan to enhance its video security. He said the meeting also covered current Marina maintenance projects such as Marina dredging, ADA signage, the just-completed wharf strengthening and construction of the public restrooms at the Blackwall Hitch restaurant, expected to be ready when the restaurant opens. Thayer said the next Marina Committee meeting is set for May 14, 2015.

Discussion

In response to Hall's question, Browand said installation of the additional Marina cameras is expected by late June/early July 2015. In response to Auld's question, Browand confirmed that funding for the Marina seawall construction had been moved into the Waterfront Plan's flood mitigation budget and its design will be incorporated into the overall Waterfront flood mitigation design. Manor said it will be important to phase in construction of flood mitigation and the promenade as redevelopment of the private sites moves ahead since these are Waterfront Plan elements that will benefit the public,

City planning for Waterfront governance and operations & maintenance funding

Manor said the City's next major question is how to fund the public space operations and maintenance (O&M) activities that will be key to the revitalized Waterfront's success, the question that prompted the P&Z report on governance options briefed to the Commission at its April 2, 2015 special meeting.

Watters said the Commission's next focus should be to ensure the City moves forward with setting up Waterfront governance entities such as conservancies and other types of supporting organizations so that the City can afford to implement the public space components of the Waterfront Plan. She said that if such fundraising entities are not put in place in a timely manner the City risks the same type of prolonged delay that affected implementation of the Windmill Hill Park Master Plan passed in 2003.

Hall said a governance committee is being planned that will oversee Waterfront governance issues for the Commission.

Marina security

In response to Christine Bernstein's question, Browand said camera surveillance at the Marina was first increased three years earlier and the City's contractor, Securitas, regularly reviews the live feeds and security videos. He said mobile security patrols at the Marina will be used to augment video security and may be adjusted as needed as needed. Thayer said Marina slip holders were reminded at the Marina Committee orientation to report any security problems to the Alexandria Police Department. Hayes (APD) said the Marina's security procedures are working well.

Governance

Kathryn Papp said the Commission should focus on how it will work with the City to oversee creating a governance model for the Waterfront in a timely fashion.

Agency Reports

Robinson Terminal South (RTS) Update Dirk Geratz (P&Z)

Geratz reported that Council had approved the RTS DSUP by a 5-1 vote the previous Saturday and highlighted a few aspects of the DSUP as approved by Council: barging of the RTS site's fill and excavation material, adding neighborhood parking restrictions for RTS residents, and requiring that the use of valet parking for visitors to the site's planned retail and restaurant be incentivized. He reported that Council had also approved a requirement that the development's Homeowners Association make an annual \$75,000 payment to the City for Waterfront maintenance that will remain in effect until it is adjusted after the City institutes a new Waterfront governance structure with related fees.

Developing the RTS public art and history component

In response to Pulliam's question about whether the Commission will continue to review planning for the RTS project to ensure that art and history elements are integrated into the design, Browand said staff will invite all the Waterfront developers to brief the Commission as their projects move forward. Geratz said the RTS development's art and history elements would also be reviewed by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).

Bernstein asked when art and history elements would be integrated into the RTS design. Bromberg (City Archaeologist) said an RTS consultant is working with City staff as RTS develops an interpretative concept for its site design. Bromberg said this information would be provided to the BAR, the Commission on Archaeology, and the Waterfront Commission once it is developed. Susan Askew said Al Cox had said there would be multiple opportunities to comment on building design for the site's 10 buildings.

Robinson Terminal North (RTN) update

In response to Hall's question about upcoming actions related to the Robinson Terminal North development, Geratz said no official public hearings were scheduled for May 2015, the Planning Commission's public hearing is planned for June 4, 2015 and Council has scheduled the RTN DSUP for its Saturday, June 13, 2015 public hearing.

Creosote abatement project at Oronoco outfall near RTN

In response to Mutty's question regarding who is responsible for treating the creosote seepage at the foot Oronoco Street, Browand said the City is responsible. He said the first of two phases of its Oronoco Street outfall environmental remediation project is complete and Phase II, dredging the impacted river bottom sediment, will soon follow. Gammon said construction is expected to begin in fall 2015.

Ely asked if the City could be held legally liable by CityInterests in some way if the City's creosote remediation project did not eliminate the creosote scent.

Carr Hotel Update (Hotel Indigo)

Geratz reported that Austin Flasjer, president of Carr Hospitality, had briefed the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group at its last meeting and said he expects site demolition to start in June 2015 and work to be completed by late 2016/early 2017. In response to Van Fleet's question, Geratz said the Ad Hoc Monitoring would be briefed on trucking haul routes for both the Carr and RTS projects.

Windmill Hill Park Shore Rehabilitation Update

Note: Staff briefing presented at the community meeting is posted to:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/parks/WMHPresentation13April2015.pdf>

Gammon reviewed the three new concepts for replacing the bulkhead that staff had presented at the April 13, 2015 community meeting. He said the concepts reflected community input at the first community meeting, held in February 2015. Gammon said Concept 3, the Living Shoreline Concept, would be the least expensive, the least complex to construct, and the option most favored by attendees at the community meeting. Browand said the living shoreline would provide the same level of protection against tidal activity as that offered by a fixed bulkhead.

Next Steps

Gammon said staff plans to present a more detailed version of the process followed and the three concepts to the Waterfront Commission at its May 19, 2015 meeting, to the Park and Recreation Commission at its May 2015 meeting, and to Council in June 2015. He said construction is expected to begin during 2016 calendar year.

Browand said the bulkhead design at this phase is 30 percent and more detailed design of specific elements, for example, trail material design, plantings and other elements will continue to evolve.

In response to Mutt's question, Bromberg said it is possible that an old vessel might be buried at this site and, if it is discovered during excavation and there were a risk of disturbing the buried vessel, plans will be developed for how to proceed.

Public comments

Papp said the Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA both favor the living shoreline option as the option offering the most protection against erosion and its serving as a filter that would enhance the river water quality.

In response to Ely's question, Browand said the bulkhead design would incorporate ways to facilitate mitigating river debris.

Special Events Policy Revisions Update

Browand reported that a timetable for finalizing the revised special events policy had not yet been set. He said public outreach is ongoing but staff is planning to propose an amendment to the policy as it relates to frequency of events held in the Old Town District [Waterfront] in a manner consistent with the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

Reports from Commissioners

Auld asked that, in light of Council's expected FY2016 budget approval on May 7, staff add timing details for the public Waterfront Plan implementation projects that reflect the budget as passed.

Auld asked Gammon for a comparison of the \$52 million and \$120 million cost estimates for Waterfront Plan implementation.

Manor recommended *Washington Business Journal* article, posted online that week, about Council's approval of the RTS project, including the article's discussion of old and new architecture styles in Old Town.

Manor announced the Waterfront Cafe would, on May 11, 2015, host and provide refreshments for a community fundraiser for the Alexandria Community Trust.

Watters recommended Smithsonian Magazine's recent article on the French tall ship L 'Hermione, expected to arrive at the City Marina on June 10. Hall said the L 'Hermione will arrive sometime after midnight on June 10 and depart on June 12, 2015.

Announcements / Public Comments

Hall congratulated Commissioner Pulliam for having been chosen as the 2015 recipient of the Alexandria Historical Society's T. Michael Miller Award, an award that recognizes those who have made especially noteworthy contributions to the preservation of the historic, cultural and artistic heritage of the City.

Adjournment

Hall moved and Dunn seconded that the meeting adjourn. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.