

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 21, 2016
Sister Cities Conference Room
City Hall,
301 King St
7:30 a.m.

Commission Members

Present

Charles Ablard, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Cheryl Ahearn, Citizen, Park Planning District I
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 from any group or area in the City, Other
Susan Cohen, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Kathryn Kolbe, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Nate Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission
Jody Manor, VisitAlexandria
Sally Masterson, Citizen, 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.

Absent:

David Speck, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)

Vacancy:

Representative, Environmental Policy Commission

City Staff

Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison and Division Chief, Park Planning, Design & Capital Development, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Captain Len Fouch Alexandria Police Department (APD)
Tony Gammon, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Jim Hixon, Dock Master, RPCA
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Doug Powell, Non-Emergency Communication Center
Patrick Reed, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)

Guests

Christine Bernstein, resident
Gayle Converse, Commission for the Arts

Bert Ely, Friends of the Waterfront (FAW), OTCA
Hal Hardaway, resident
Tom Kaiden, Visit Alexandria
Stephanie Landrum, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)
Skip Masterson, resident
Josh Nadas, National Park Service (GWMP)
Kandy Rundel, Fords Landing (FLHOA)

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and welcomed' Nate Macek, the new Planning Commission representative. She noted that prior to Macek being appointed to the Planning Commission he had served as the Waterfront Commission chair.

Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2016

Watters moved and Bordner seconded that the May 17, 2016 minutes be approved. The motion was approved by voice vote.

MGM Readiness Task Force Update (“National Harbor Readiness Overview”)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/MGMWaterfrontComm21June16.pdf>

Tom Kaiden (Visit Alexandria) reviewed the work of the City's MGM Readiness Task Force, appointed in fall 2015 to help the City prepare for MGM National Harbor's, opening on December 9, 2016. He said the 20 Task Force members represented a variety of business, economic development, workforce development and public stakeholders and a variety of City agencies. Their task was to develop options for how the City could prepare for potential positive and negative impacts from MGM's opening and develop a good City working relationship with MGM. He said sample impacts include the Vegas-style resort's spa being competition for City spas while its entertainment and amenities will offer employment opportunities for City residents and additional visitors for City businesses.

Parking and transportation impact

Kaiden noted MGM's potential impact on City parking and transportation since MGM plans to include 4800 parking spaces but expects about 3600 employees and 25,000 daily patrons. 12-15,000 patrons are likely to be on site at a time.

Kaiden said MGM's limited on-site parking has encouraged City planning to set up bus service between National Harbor and the City. Kaiden said public transit will be important for Alexandria residents who work at MGM. Macek said the Transportation Commission reviewed and recommended for Council support a proposal to create a new Metro bus route, the NH2, to run between National Harbor, the Oxon Hill Park & Ride lot, and the Huntington and King Street Metro stations...Council has not yet considered it. A proposed one-year NH2 pilot run would start shortly before the MGM opens and be subsidized by the developer, the City, Fairfax County and Prince George's County. Smedberg said the Metro Board has discussed the importance of

creating a transit connection between National Harbor and the King Street and Huntingdon Metro stations. He said the new bus connection would be very important to City residents working at National Harbor.

Adopted Task Force recommendations

Kaiden reported that five of the Task Force's 14 recommendations to the City were included in the current budget. The five covered:

- Wayfinding signage (implementing the City's previously approved plan on time)
- Retail training (covering strategic business practices and enhanced customer service training)
- City working with MGM to raise the area's visibility at international trade shows
- Refreshing the City Marina's aesthetics and adding seating; and
- Expanding performing arts along the Waterfront

Commission Discussion

Marina refresh

In response to Auld's question, Browand said the additional funds added to the current year's operating budget would be reviewed annually during the City's budget process.

Wayfinding

Browand said Waterfront Wayfinding signs in the Founders Park, Marina and lower King Street areas should be installed within the next 10 days. He said \$90,000 was added to the Wayfinding program and the Task Force also recommended that previously approved funding be used to implement the Task Force recommendations this year.

Transportation & parking

Bergman said he was concerned Wayfinding signage directing MGM-related visitors to City parking lots along Union Street would worsen the existing congestion along Union Street and the Waterfront. Browand said the City's Wayfinding program, focused on improving how traffic moves through the City, was created before MGM planning began. In response to Kolbe's question, Kaiden said MGM expects most of its visitors to be local day visitors. Smedberg said the City would also need to consider the potential impact on the King Street Trolley from additional visitors using King Street Metro.

Debris cleanup

Hall noted the Commission's ongoing concern about the need to address Waterfront debris. Browand said a variety of actions would address Waterfront debris and trash.

Waterfront performing artists

Hall said the City should ensure that performers (buskers) do not adversely affect Waterfront businesses. Macek said the City should encourage Waterfront buskers to spread out along the Waterfront but buskers should be recognized as a unique part of Waterfront entertainment that

contributes to the area's vibrancy and helps the City keep its annual Waterfront public programming budget to \$30,000.

Public Comments

Parking and Traffic

Ely said Wayfinding signage should direct visitors to parking outside Old Town. Randy Randall said the City should encourage MGM visitors not to use Old Town hubs to minimize their potential impact on Old Town and the Waterfront. He said the City should consider interim actions during the five years of Union Street construction that are expected and OTAPS should be reconvened to integrate planning for these activities. Macek noted OTAPS recommendations are still in the process of being implemented.

Summer Boat Tour

The Commission agreed to schedule an August boat tour to review the progress being made along Washington DC's Anacostia and Southwest Waterfront developments. Hall noted this would let Commissioners see the progress made during the year since the Commission last reviewed these sites. Hall and Browand will work with Kolbe, the incoming Chair, to arrange a date and agenda for the two-hour tour.

Commission Liaison Reports

Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/info/AdHocTimeline15July2016.pdf>

Bordner said the Monitoring Group continues to update the Waterfront construction timeline posted to its Web page. (See link above) He said the June 6, 2016 meeting discussed the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC), Robinson Terminal South (RTS), Robinson Terminal North (RTN), the Windmill Hill Park Shoreline Rehabilitation, and the Indigo Hotel and a site visit to the Indigo Hotel is being arranged. RTS reported that site demolition should take place between mid-July and the end of August 2016.

RTN reported to the Monitoring Group its plan to notify homes within 250 feet of the property that they should contact RTN to schedule pre-demolition home inspections to photograph and document property conditions before and after demolition. Bordner said the Monitoring Group continues to emphasize to developers the importance of communicating their plans to the community in a timely manner. He said the Monitoring Group had also been briefed on the flood mitigation project and the City's rodent abatement policy as they affect development work on the sites. The next Monitoring Group meetings are July 11 and, tentatively, August 8, 2016.

Discussion

In response to Bergman's question, Bordner said residents living within 250 feet of the RTN site should contact Ken Wire if they have not received RTN's notice about arranging home inspections. Auld asked that Commission meeting materials include a link to the Monitoring

Group's online timeline. Thayer reported that demolition on the ODBC site was expected to start within a week and should take about 10 days.

Security near construction sites - In response to Masterson's question, Lt. Fouch said APD has reviewed types of crimes reported at construction sites throughout the City to help anticipate crimes that might occur around Waterfront construction sites. He said APD provides free home and business security reviews to identify measures that could improve a property's security.

Non-emergency communication center

Lt. Fouch introduced Doug Powell, director of the City's non-emergency communication center. Commissioners discussed the importance of working with Powell to help make call center staff more familiar with Waterfront site details, street and alley names, and landmarks to help ensure accuracy when a person reporting a specific problem does not know an actual street address but does know a landmark or alley name. Fouch introduced Matt Weinert as the person to contact for Waterfront concerns when Fouch is unavailable.

Motorcoach Task Force

Mutty reported the second of four Motorcoach Task Force meetings was held May 31, 2016 and began its review of potential motorcoach parking sites to replace those being lost to construction. The Task Force discussed the need for improved enforcement of Motorcoach traffic regulations. He said the Task Force has not begun developing recommendations. The next Task Force meeting is July 11, 2016.

200 block of S. Lee Street - Baum asked if trucks and motorcoaches are allowed on the 200 block of S. Lee Street since there are no longer signs barring them. Smedberg said the first Motorcoach Task Force discussed the question because of damage to cars and street infrastructure from the larger European-style coaches. Browand will ask T&ES what the current regulation is.

Marina Subcommittee

Marina feasibility study

Browand reported staff is currently reviewing the draft Marina Feasibility Study and plans to have it ready for release in early fall. He said the report would be presented to the Waterfront Commission, the Planning Commission and City Council for discussion.

Browand emphasized that the Marina Feasibility Study evaluates the potential costs, advantages and disadvantages of possible sites that could be used for new City pleasure boat Marina slips but does not recommend any potential sites.

Hall commended the RPCA staff for recent Marina beautification actions at the Marina.

Staff Reports

Flood Mitigation

Gammon (DPI) reported that collecting the data to be used as the basis for the preliminary flood mitigation design work has finished. He said soil samples will be collected over the next month and the schedule will be posted online.

He said the Commission would be briefed in the fall on the two park pavilion buildings that will accompany the two pump stations that are part of the flood mitigation project. He said these buildings would include space to store pump station equipment, store backup generators and house public restrooms. One building is planned for The Strand at Waterfront Park and a second building for the end of Thompson's Alley. Gammon said staff is working on the design with the architect and planning its community outreach.

Discussion

Flood mitigation project's impact on Marina

Bennis asked staff to create a working timeline for activities that will affect the Marina's configuration and suggested it be similar to the regularly updated timeline used by the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction. Gammon said a proposed phasing plan is being developed as part of the preliminary design work being done and this will be presented to Council for approval next year.

Gammon said timing is purely speculative for two activities that would affect the Marina: flood mitigation work at Fitzgerald Square and an ODBC decision on whether to build piers at ODBC's new Prince Street location. He said the Fitzgerald Square flood mitigation work would affect ODBC's north and south piers and would trigger transfer use of the City Marina's A/B pier to ODBC. CIP funding for the Marina's proposed reconfiguration for a commercial marina at its north end has not yet been approved.

CIP funding for the Fitzgerald Square flood mitigation work is unlikely before 2022.

Street drainage problems

Van Fleet reported drainage problems near ODBC, where a backflow preventer is located, and Prince/Strand. Gammon said the old infrastructure and pipes affecting drainage in this area would be among the first replaced as part of flood mitigation. He said staff studied the area daily for a couple months and observed the backflow preventer works at most times. Hall reported a backflow preventer problem at 211 N. Union Street is causing water to back up into the garage. Gammon and Browand will investigate it.

Interim Fitzgerald Square

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/special/waterfront/default.aspx?id=89727>

Gammon reported that an Olin Studio video created for the City's civic engagement process on the Interim Fitzgerald Square project is available on the City website [see above link]. He said the Planning Commission and Council authorized staff to move forward with planning the

project and noted that public comments on the project, received prior to Council approval, were overwhelmingly positive. He said public outreach included online inputs and more than 20 public meetings. Actual dimensions and site plan details are being developed and work will begin on the Interim Fitzgerald Square after ODBC vacates its King Street clubhouse and moves to its new location.

Public comments

In response to Ely's question, Gammon said the Waterfront Common Elements and Gadsby street lights are on the BAR's September 7, 2016 meeting agenda.

Windmill Hill Park

Browand said details on the not-yet-finalized construction timetable would be provided to the Commission in September. He said the construction documents for the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead are complete and the procurement phase is about to begin. The goal is to sign a construction contract in July and to begin construction in mid- to late-August. He said most of the construction work should be completed in three to five months and it should take about two years to complete all the work needed for the park to reach its ultimate condition. Browand noted the project's permitting requirements are extensive.

Impact on access to the park

Browand said all the park property east of Union Street will be affected, including the area of the dog park and improvements planned for this area include restoring the eroded shoreline near the dog park and improving drainage. He said the City will close down or reroute access in sections as construction proceeds, keeping as much of the park open as possible. He said the park area west of Union Street will be unaffected and noted the project also includes work on the outfall coming off Gibbon Street.

Browand said the timing of the approved Union Street pedestrian enhancements has not yet been decided. Hall said it would continue to be important to keep residents advised of how the construction will affect access to the park.

Reports from Commissioners

Historic ship lecture. Pulliam said the Torpedo Factory would host a June 25 lecture on the 18th century ship hull discovered during the 220 S. Union Street excavation.

Parking in Old Town discussion. Bennis said the City should do additional planning for how to address Old Town parking problems on a macro level that expands on the recent OTAPS recommendations. He noted that neighborhood problems have been made worse as Waterfront construction eliminates motorcoach parking spots and asked what actions the Commission could take to help encourage improvements.

Smedberg said Waterfront motorcoach parking lost to construction needs to be replaced and enforcement of motorcoach parking regulations should be improved. Macek said the OTAPS

Work Group highlighted the need to provide drivers with real time information about location and cost of available garage parking and supported using electronic signage and apps, including Pango, to do this.

Funding for OTAPS recommendations. Macek said some OTAPS recommendations are not yet funded and if the Commission decides to advocate for additional City actions to address Old Town parking problems it could formally recommend to Council during the budget process that the remaining OTAPS recommendations be funded. Bergman said OTAPS recommendations are an important start but additional actions are needed to manage Old Town area transportation and parking. Manor said a public-private partnership such as the Improvement District being considered could help address how to encourage drivers to use available parking garage spaces.

Upcoming Metro surge - Smedberg reported the Metro surge is going well but the next two surges will both affect the City. The first, July 5 through July 12/13 will shut down service between the Braddock Road and National Airport stations. The fourth surge will shut down the track between the Pentagon, Pentagon City & Crystal City Metro stations.

Commission Leadership Change

Hall announced that Kolbe would assume her responsibilities as Commission Chair on July 1, 2016, Thayer will continue as Vice Chair. Commissioners thanked Hall for her service as Chair and it was announced that a reception honoring Hall's service was set for 5-7 p.m. that evening at the Seaport Foundation.

Hall thanked Jack Browand for his consistently excellent support of the Commission.

No Regular Meeting July & August

Hall announced the Commission's next scheduled regular monthly meeting is September 20.

Announcements

Hall announced Mount Vernon would host fireworks, viewable from the river, on July 2.

Browand announced the annual USA/City Birthday Celebration on July 9 in Oronoco Bay Park and the Comcast Film Festival in Waterfront Park on July 15 and July 16.

Adjournment

Baum moved and Mutty seconded that the meeting adjourn at 9:20 a.m. The motion passed by voice vote.