

Summary Minutes - DRAFT
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, September 16, 2014
City Hall
Sister Cities Conference Room

Commission Members

Present

Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
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
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholder
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
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.

Excused:

Arthur Fox, east of Washington St. and south of King St.

Absent:

Morgan Delaney, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Jacob Hoogland, Alexandria Archeological Commission
Ryan Wojtanowski, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

Vacancy:

Citizen Park Planning District III

City Staff:

Joanna Anderson, Assistant City Attorney
Emily Baker, Director, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Fran Bromberg, City Archeologist, 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, Civil Engineer IV, DPI
Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
Jessica McVary, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Karl Moritz, Acting Director, P&Z
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Gary Wagner, P&Z
Nancy Williams, DPI, and Principal Planner, P&Z

Guests:

Brian Buzzell, resident
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee;
Dene Garbow, resident
Mel Garbow, Harborside HOA
Val Hawkins, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
Eric Wallner, Torpedo Factory Art Center

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m. and Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from July 15, 2014 and July 24, 2014

Dunn moved and Thayer seconded that the July 15, 2014 minutes be approved. The motion was approved by voice vote with Bordner abstaining.

Dunn moved and Thayer seconded that the July 24, 2014 minutes be approved. The motion was approved by voice vote, with Bordner abstaining, with the understanding that it be clarified on page 3 under the paragraph "ADA-accessibility" that the Commission does not want the design's plan to provide a minimum 8-foot width for all project pathways, designed to ensure full ADA-accessibility, to be used as a maximum width in the promenade area but instead wants these related pathways to be as close as possible to the 20-foot width being planned for the promenade.

August 6, 2014 Waterfront Commission City Shoreline Boat Tour Debrief

Browand briefly reviewed the Commission's August 6 boat tour of the City's shoreline and noted that representatives of each of the current redevelopment projects had been present to answer questions along with staff. Manor said that, from the perspective of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA), he was struck by the need to improve the Waterfront's attractiveness for those who arrive at the City by the river. Dunn said he was favorably impressed the Waterfront redevelopment sites would have only a minimal impact on the City Waterfront overall, as seen from the river. Auld said the diversity of existing Waterfront architectural styles should be used as a reference point as the Commission considers architectural styles for redevelopment projects.

Mutty said shoreline photographs he had taken during the cruise are posted at alexwaterfrontcruise814.shutterstock.com.

Landscape & Flood Mitigation Design Phase I Update

Note: *The matrix with the status of all Waterfront Plan-related projects is posted at:*
[http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/Summer%20%202014%20\(FINAL2\)%20Waterfront%20SAP%20Implementation%20Project%20Status%20Matrix.pdf](http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/WaterfrontPlan/Summer%20%202014%20(FINAL2)%20Waterfront%20SAP%20Implementation%20Project%20Status%20Matrix.pdf)

Williams reviewed highlights of the Waterfront Small Area Plan Implementation Project Status Matrix.

Council approval of ordinance authorizing 1 and 2 King Street, 200, 204 and 208 Strand Street and 0 Prince Street property transfers

[**Note:** Details are in the Commission's meeting material staff reports and available on City Council's September 13, 2014 meeting docket:

http://legistar.granicus.com/alexandria/meetings/2014/9/1291_A_City_Council_Public_Hearing_14-09-13_Docket.pdf

Joanna Anderson, Assistant City Attorney, reported that Council had, at its September 13, 2014 meeting, passed an ordinance approving and authorizing several Waterfront property transfers and ownership changes that affect 1 and 2 King Street (Old Dominion Boat Club); 0 Prince Street (Beachcomber); 200, 204 and 208 Strand Street; and resolution of some other title matters along the Waterfront.

Anderson said this action enables the City to move ahead with implementing the recent City-Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) agreement, consolidate, and re-subdivide four City Waterfront properties, those at 0 Prince Street and 200, 204 and 208 Strand Street, actions that will facilitate several Waterfront Small Area Plan-related actions, including the expansion of Point Lumley Park. Anderson said the Planning Commission had approved the consolidation/re-subdivision actions at its September 4, 2014 meeting.

Blackwall Hitch Alexandria

Williams reported the owner of Blackwall Hitch Alexandria, the restaurant that will replace the current Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion building, expects to begin work on the site in September 2014 and anticipates opening in early 2015. She said the owner would soon install signage on the building windows announcing the upcoming restaurant.

Fitzgerald Warehouse

[**Note:** Meeting materials include a staff update on details to date for the warehouse.]

Hall asked that the Commission be briefed on the redevelopment of Fitzgerald Warehouse before work on it moves too much further along since no briefing has been received. McVary said staff decided to defer briefing the Commission on Fitzgerald Warehouse planning until its October 2014 meeting because the design is at a very early stage and staff expects additional information to be available in time for the Commission's October 2014 meeting.

Chadwick's parking lot.

In response to Van Fleet's question, Williams said the City expects to assume ownership of the parking lot property by October 1, 2014 and will then lease the parking lot back to Chadwick's through July 2015. Van Fleet said the City should keep the parking lot open until an additional 100 spaces have been identified to replace the parking lot spaces.

Agency Reports (attached)

Note: See meeting materials posted to:

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WaterfrontCommissionMeeting16Sep2014.pdf>

Hall invited questions on the staff reports provided.

Windmill Hill Park bulkhead

In response to Garbow's question regarding when the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead designer will be selected, Browand said staff continues to evaluate the bid documents received and expects to provide information regarding selection and timeline in October . He said public outreach would be an important part of the City's review of the bulkhead design alternatives.

Hall reported that Battalion Chief Michael Sharpe had been designated as the Alexandria Fire Department's new representative for the Waterfront and Marina. She said she looks forward to his attending the Commission's next meeting.

Unauthorized parking in Thompson's Alley

Hall reported that a recent problem with unauthorized parking in Thompson's Alley highlighted the need to remind vendors and others using the alley that it is not to be used for parking, only for loading and unloading. She said respecting the "no parking" rule is especially important because the Alexandria Fire Department uses the alley. Hall said the Commission has supported staff's proposal to create a new and enlarged loading and unloading area in Thompson's Alley.

Manor said that Thompson's Alley currently is a blind spot for a driver that is dangerous for pedestrians. He asked that when the alley is redesigned as part of the Olin waterfront landscape design a way be created to warn pedestrians of oncoming vehicles. Moritz said he would convey that guidance to the Olin designers.

City Marina Update

Dredging

Browand reported that work on the Marina dredging is expected to start in mid- to late-November 2014 and be finished not later than February 2015.

Wharf strengthening

Browand reported that he expects a new contractor for the work to be chosen by mid-October 2014. He said the work will be coordinated with the Marina dredging schedule and the Marina will not be closed during the work. Hall asked that the schedule take account of the City's Festival of Lights that runs November 30 - December 31, 2014 and First Night Alexandria. Browand said the actual work should take 7-10 days and his goal is to have the work done before the Thanksgiving tree lighting, weather permitting.

LaFayette's Hermione Voyage 2015

Browand reported the City expects a two- to three-day visit, mid-week, by the tall ship l'Hermione in June 2015. He said events related to the visit would include free public tours. Hall, who has been active in City efforts to arrange the visit at minimal cost to the City, said the Potomac Riverboat Company has offered l'Hermione the use of its Cherry Blossom mooring at the Marina. Browand said he expects most of the activities related to the visit to be within the Marina.

Hall said l'Hermione's visit to America is being organized by the U.S. non-profit Friends of l'Hermione-LaFayette in America, sponsor of both the rebuilding of the frigate on which LaFayette sailed from France to America in 1780 and of its planned 2015 voyage recreating LaFayette's France to America journey. Hall said l'Hermione will arrive at Norfolk, visit Yorktown for activities there, sail to Mount Vernon for activities and overnight mooring, sail up the Potomac for a three-day visit to the City, then continue its journey up the East Coast. Hall said arranging the ship's visit up the Potomac is a significant accomplishment because both Alexandria and Mount Vernon have said they are unable to pay the \$200,000 fee that the non-profit foundation expects from ports the l'Hermione is visiting.

*Note: Detailed information about the l'Hermione Project is posted at:
<http://www.hermione2015.com/about-2/>*

Backflow Preventer for King Street/The Strand: Update

Gammon reported that repairs have been completed on the valves installed and testing conducted to date has indicated no problems. He said testing is expected to be completed within several weeks.

Joint Meeting: Commission for the Arts and the Waterfront Commission

Browand said a joint meeting of the Waterfront and Arts commissions is being planned for October 2014. The purpose is to provide comments on the proposed public art for the Carr Hospitality hotel project at 220 South Union Street. The joint meeting is a condition of the Development Special Use Permit.

Marina Committee

Note: *The finalized Commission letter to City officials is at:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WCCCommissionMarinaCityCouncilLetter16Sep2014.pdf>*

Recreational boating slips

Thayer submitted for Commission approval a draft Commission letter to the Mayor, Council and other City officials that were created by the Marina Committee after discussions at several Marina Committee meetings during summer 2014. The draft letter asked the City to conduct a feasibility study by the end of the calendar year to identify potential sites for pleasure boat slips that could replace slips at the Marina expected to be lost. Thayer agreed, at Browand's request, to change the feasibility study's proposed completion date to the end of the fiscal year.

Auld and Baum said they thought the letter's draft wording inappropriately implied the Commission was asking Council to build a public marina for recreational boaters regardless of cost. Thayer said the wording only supports conducting a feasibility study to identify potential options for providing pleasure boat slips. Gosnell said the draft was consistent with Council's direction that staff works with the Commission to identify options to replace the Marina's current pleasure boat slips. Gosnell said the Marina's pleasure boat slip leaseholders would support any option that addresses the problem.

Motion. Dunn moved, and Manor seconded, that sentence one of the letter's final paragraphs is modified to read, "The Waterfront Commission is requesting that City Council reaffirm its commitment to seek to maintain an active publicly accessible recreational boat marina...." The motion passed by voice vote with Baum voting no.

After a brief additional discussion of the proposed letter, Commissioners confirmed their votes on the Dunn/Manor motion to approve the draft letter.

Robinson Terminal South: a possible option for recreational boat slips?

In response to a question from Buzzell, Hall and Thayer confirmed that representatives of EYA, developers of Robinson Terminal South (RTS), had said they would be willing to listen to stakeholder ideas for putting non-transient slips for recreational boats at RTS in addition to the slips planned for transient visits. Thayer said EYA had not made any commitment to include non-transient slips but merely said that if an idea such as a public-private partnership for such slips were proposed it might be of interest to EYA.

River debris

Thayer reported that a subcommittee on the City's river debris problem had been set up and Mutty had agreed to chair it. He said the subcommittee will collect information about possible ways to address the problem, including a review of ways other waterfront locations such as National Harbor and Washington D.C. deal with their river debris. Thayer said he hopes that options will have been identified within six months.

Reports from Commissioners

Bethel announced that the Old Town Business and Professional Association would host its Supper under the Stars at King Street Gardens Park on September 26, 2014.

Van Fleet invited people to the Old Town Civic Association's annual membership cruise on the Miss Christin Sunday September 21, 2014 at 7 pm.

Livingood announced the Seaport Foundation was hosting its annual Seaport Day at Waterfront Park on September 27, 2014.

Livingood invited people to join the approximately 150 people expected for the Daingerfield Island park cleanup on Saturday September 27, 2014.

In response to Auld's question, Livingood said that, in light of the Seaport Foundation's need to vacate its RTS facility by April 1, 2015, AlexRENEW has offered to let the Seaport Foundation store its boats and equipment at their site temporarily until a permanent location for the Seaport Foundation is found. Livingood said the Seaport Foundation is also hoping to find office space to house their staff temporarily that could be available to them at no charge.

Hall complimented RPCA's Office of the Arts, lead by Diane Ruggiero, for the successful launch on September 13, 2014 of its new Mobile Art Lab and for the decision to bring it to the City Marina during the City's King Street Arts Festival that weekend. She said the variety of music, video and hands-on activities for youth and adults offered by the lab were very popular, including the Lab's three bands. Hall recommended that RPCA bring the Mobile Art Lab back to the Marina for other visits.

Downs reported that the Commission for the Arts was meeting that evening to approve its public art plan and invited comments on the plan.

Browand announced the next Marina Committee meeting is planned for October 9, 2014.

Hall announced the next Commission meeting would be October 21, 2014.

Adjournment

Hall adjourned the meeting at 8:38 a.m.