

## Summary Minutes

### Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting June 15, 2010

#### Lee Center Gold Room

**Members:** Christine Bernstein  
William Cromley  
Mel Fortney  
Linda Hafer  
Nathan Macek  
Peter Pennington  
John Renner  
Paul Smedberg  
Van Van Fleet

**City Staff:** Roger Blakeley, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Lt. Len Fouch, Police Department  
Karl Moritz, Department of Planning and Zoning  
James Spengler, RPCA  
Nancy Williams, P&Z

**Guests:** Deborah Feldman, National Park Service  
John Gosling  
Charlotte Hall  
Mary Page Hickey  
Philip Matyas  
Joanne Platt  
Virginia Rocen  
Sarita Schotta  
Jeremy Taylor  
Mary Carol Taylor

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Cromley clarified his remarks from the May meeting regarding the Concept Waterfront Plan, stating that he believed waterfront retail was both warranted and desired. Moved by Pennington, second by Van Fleet to approve the May minutes as revised. Motion carried on a voice vote.

#### **Waterfront Walk**

Pennington and Bernstein summarized the Waterfront Walk held June 8, 2010, noting that not much had changed on the Waterfront since last year. Macek said

the walk was an opportunity to look forward at the Concept Waterfront Plan. Pennington provided an update on maintenance issues identified along the waterfront.

### **RPCA**

Blakeley reported that due to mold infestation the dockmaster hut at the City Marina would need to be remediated or replaced. A long-term solution similar to other marinas may be a floating dockmasters office, similar to a houseboat, which has a cost ranging between \$50,000 and \$200,000. In the mean time, essential services had been moved to the Torpedo Factory.

Blakeley reported that the Marina cost center book should be available at the September meeting.

### **Jones Point Park**

Spengler provided an update on the renovation of Jones Point Park. He said it was owned by the U.S. Department of Interior and is not City property. The renovated park would be built and maintained as a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). He said construction was expected to last 18 to 24 months beginning in November 2010. Construction would be managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project.

Spengler said there was a misconception in the community is that the park would be closed for two-year period during construction. He said he had participated a meeting the previous week with City, National Park Service, and VDOT officials at U.S. Rep. James Moran's office. One of the outcomes of the meeting was an agreement to phase the project to ensure portions would remain open during construction. Another is to re-evaluate parking under the bridge, which the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has required to be secured.

Feldman reported that both the interior and exterior of the Jones Point Lighthouse would be restored. It would be open for special events and would be maintained by the National Park Service instead of the Daughters of the American Revolution, its previous caretaker. Maintenance and policing of the park would be under the jurisdiction of the GWMP. A community meeting with City, NPS, and VDOT officials was planned for July.

Pennington asked whether the Jones Point Park project created any flood issues for properties near the park. Moritz offered to talk with TES about whether these impacts had been evaluated as part of the flood study.

Van Fleet asked what types of special events could use the secured parking. Feldman respond that it would be available for special events hosted within the park. A total of 110 secured and unsecured parking spaces were planned.

## **Report from Department of Planning and Zoning**

### ***Waterfront Plan Update***

Moritz reported that since May 3 P&Z had given 10 presentations on the Concept Waterfront Plan, which had been fairly well received. Recurring concerns included parking, phasing, funding, and incorporation of history and the arts. He said the City was committed to addressing those issues in coming deliverables. Two additional meetings were planned, another history night and an art on the Waterfront night. He said staff was trying to get a written master plan document out by mid- to late-summer, with hearings during the latter part of the fall.

He said that Council issues regarding the Concept Waterfront Plan included parking, phasing, implementation likelihood, flooding, and connection of trails.

### **Review and Discussion of Waterfront Concept Plan**

Members discussed their reaction to the Concept Waterfront Plan. Hafer said that the Concept Plan was not specific on how history would be addressed. Pennington said the Committee's reaction must emphasize what is right about the plan, and that the plan shouldn't be too specific about how to implement its objectives. Fortney said that developers' assistance would be required to fund implementation of the plan.

Cromley said that parks are one of the few amenities the City provides that are equally available for all residents to enjoy, which may justify further park investment. He said the proposed connectivity of all of the Waterfront parks was a positive goal reflected in the plan. Smedberg said that that was the main aim, in addition to incorporating flood mitigation.

A member of the public commented that much of the proposed development seemed to be commercial, and he didn't see the philosophical justification. Cromley responded that commercial development helped to pay for park improvements, and it was only proposed to impact portions of the waterfront. He said it also created vibrancy and a place that people could enjoy.

Van Fleet said that the aim of the plan was to increase the City's tax base and asked if Alexandria would become another National Harbor. Smedberg responded that City Council has no intention of turning Alexandria into another National Harbor. He said that there were only two large parcels available for redevelopment (Robinson Terminal North and South), and the City was trying to protect itself in advance of any developer proposals—including codifying height restrictions. He said the Council wants to open the waterfront to everyone.

Hafer said that when she first presented to the Committee, P&Z Director Faroll Hamer said it wasn't a development plan as much as a use plan, and sought to preserve the waterfront as something for everyone throughout the City.

Renner said that the concept plan was a compromise that has come a long way. It brought together commerce and residential. He said that encouraging tourists and commerce was okay. He said everyone had to give up a little. He wished there were more commercial spaces (which paid for park improvements in New York City), but said he thought Alexandria's planners encouraged a good mix. He said that the City would have to have development to pay for improvements without higher taxes.

Bernstein said that one wouldn't know the City was a historic seaport by looking at the plan. She said the City didn't do a good job with that part of the waterfront plan. She said an advantage of plan was the opportunity for citizen input. She said improvements would require funding and the plan could be an opportunity to access resources to improve the City.

A member of the public commented that he did not have a problem with the Concept Plan, but would prefer alternatives.

Moved by Bernstein, second by Hafer, to adopt the synthesis of member comments prepared by Macek, as well as additional comments by Van Fleet and Renner, and draft a letter to P&Z regarding the Committee's position.

Pennington said that he supported the inclusion of wording in the letter regarding the plan being a compromise.

The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

### **Announcements**

Renner announced he would be leaving the Waterfront Committee to participate in another community committee.

Macek announced that Hall would be joining the Committee in the fall as the new Chamber of Commerce representative.

### **Adjournment**

Pennington moved to adjourn, Hafer seconded. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.