

## Summary Minutes

### Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting November 17, 2009

**Members:** Engin Artemel  
Jay Atkinson  
Christine Bernstein  
Henry Brooks  
Mel Fortney  
Mike Geissinger  
Doug Gosnell  
Linda Hafer  
Nathan Macek  
Peter Pennington  
Pete Peterson  
Susan Pettey  
John Renner

**City Staff:** Roger Blakeley, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Jack Browand, RPCA  
Lt. Len Fouch, Police Department  
Jim Hixon, RPCA  
Rodney Masser, Fire Department  
Craig Perl, Transportation & Environmental Services (TES)  
Laura Seidler, RPCA  
Nancy Williamson, P&Z

**Guests:** Harry Harrington  
David Olinger  
Joanne Platt  
Van Van Fleet  
Joe Youcha, Alexandria Seaport Foundation

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Macek noted that Linda Couture's name was misspelled in the draft October meeting minutes. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October meeting as corrected. Motion carried on a voice vote.

#### **Update on Waterfront Planning and Update on Valet Parking**

Williamson reported that she had provided a copy of the Special Use Permit application (SUP# 2009-0043) for valet parking at Landini Brothers Restaurant and The Fish Market. The restaurants have requested to serve 25 to 50

vehicles, to be parked at 115 South Union Street. The application had been approved by the Planning Commission and would be heard by the City Council in the coming week. Gosnell asked what the City would do if additional restaurants applied for valet parking along the 100 block of King Street. Williamson said that this was why P&Z would re-evaluate the program in six months. Artemel, Geissinger, and Gosnell each spoke in favor of re-evaluating the program in six months, and considering a comprehensive review of valet parking options in the vicinity of Lower King Street.

Williamson also reported that a Special Use Permit (SUP #2009-0057) had been requested for a 509-seat restaurant at 106 South Union Street, formerly occupied by Olson's Books and Records. She said that the permit had not yet been scheduled for any public hearings. The applicant has also applied for an encroachment ordinance (application ENC #2009-0002) to build a porch structure to hold approximately 230 seats, which would encroach on Wales Alley. In response to a question, Pettey responded that the Old Town Restaurant Policy (Resolution No. 1672 adopted by City Council November 13, 1993) is still in effect. Harrington noted that Wales Alley has a long history and was originally used to access wharves on the waterfront.

Regarding the waterfront plan, Williamson reported that there had not been additional public meetings since October, but that P&Z had presented to the Old Town Civic Association. Williamson reported on the Moffatt and Nichol Engineers shoreline study completed as part of the waterfront planning effort, to evaluate the nature and condition of shoreline surfaces. She said that the City had learned that there is a total of 31,518 feet of shoreline, 54 percent of which is riprap, 34 percent of which is bulkhead, and the remainder of which is natural beach or other surfaces. Of the total linear feet of shoreline, 42 percent is in satisfactory condition and 25 percent is in fair condition. Some areas in particular were described as problematic and are in need of immediate attention: immediately north of Wilson Bridge; near Windmill Hill Park; and near Thompson Alley. The report also evaluated structures along the waterfront and noted the degradation of piling and decking. The report recommended a detailed engineering study be conducted.

Williamson said that Moffatt and Nichol also conducted a market feasibility study for the marina. Within a one-hour boat ride of the Alexandria marina there are 26 other marinas, which include two sub-markets: downtown and suburban marinas. The report details the amenities of each competing marina. The report estimates the market for Alexandria and projects long-term growth in demand for marinas in the area. The report suggests reducing lease rates in the near-term to improve occupancy. The report recommends that future facilities provide a minimum of 150 slips sized to serve an average vessel length of 40 feet, and recommends floating piers. Seidler noted that RPCA continues to work with Moffatt and Nichol to review the report and get more information on how the consultants reached some conclusions.

Williamson said that elements of the waterfront plan slated for further analysis include integration of art into the waterfront; transportation facilities (including parking); and economics of the waterfront, including the marina.

Petty and Artemel requested copies of the Moffatt and Nichol report. Williamson said she would provide a more substantive document to the Committee following staff review and consultant revisions.

Pennington said that the CIP budget may include funds to mitigate the creosote problems at the foot of Oronoco Street. Blakeley said that CIP discussions are ongoing and he would raise the issue.

### **Presentation on Flooding Mitigation Project**

Perl reported that the study, being conducted by URS Corporation, examines flooding issues in Old Town. The consultants have studied nine potential solutions and conducted a cost-benefit analysis to determine which should undergo further study. Some options, such as a flood wall, are not cost-beneficial. Some options that have high cost-benefit ratios are installation of elevated walkways and floodproofing of structures.

The consultant has made several recommendations, including:

- Elevated walkway and roadway improvements near King Street
- Elevated walkway and floodproofing of waterfront commercial properties
- Floodproofing of North Union Street properties
- Floodproofing of Jones Point area

Perl presented conceptual drawing of the impact of elevated walkways and floodproofing options.

Several non-structural methods of mitigating flood impacts were recommended, including improving the City's floodplain and zoning ordinance, elevating goods and supplies to higher levels, and expanding sandbagging and other temporary measures.

Following staff review, TES will release a draft of the URS report to the public and will host a public meeting in early 2010. Following public feedback, the consultant will complete the report and concepts will be refined through the planning process, and implementation will begin as appropriate.

Pennington asked what could be done to address drainage on streets. Perl said one option is to raise the street level.

In response to questions from Macek, Perl said the new FEMA floodmap would be posted online (since posted at <http://alexandriava.gov/FloodMap>), and that

TES was coordinating with P&Z to integrate these findings into the waterfront planning study.

Geissinger asked what the frequency of high-water was over the course of a year. Perl said it occurs 4 to 6 times per year, and may have increasing frequency with rising sea level. Most of the changes to the floodmaps are not on the waterfront but are elsewhere in the City. In response to a question from Pennington, Perl said that the new maps are now being applied for planning purposes.

Harrington suggested the installation of a check valve near the corner of The Strand and King Street to prevent frequent tidal flooding at this intersection. Perl said that check valves require a lot of maintenance. He said that TES crews try to vacuum them out before major storm events, but due to high amounts of debris, they do not function very well.

### **Plans for Special Events in Alexandria**

Browand said there is a special event committee that evaluates applications to hold special events at City facilities. Pettey asked when a list of special events for 2010 would be available. Browand said that applications are received every day, but that a preliminary schedule could be provided. He said that many of the past special events will be held again. Gosnell noted that weddings are happening on City property anyway and the event application and approval process should reflect that. Browand said that applications that are received through the existing system are not the issue, but events that occur unannounced or without prior application to the City are a problem. Gosnell suggested that signage be posted to inform prospective park users of the process to apply to use facilities for special events. Browand agreed and said that information could be posted on the City's website as well.

Pettey asked whether there were ways for the Waterfront Committee to work more closely with RPCA regarding special events. Browand said that a parks operations staffer is on the special events committee, and could communicate with the Waterfront Committee.

### **Presentation on Alexandria Seaport Foundation**

Youcha said that the Alexandria Seaport Foundation has two major foci: an apprenticeship program, which helps at-risk children learn carpentry skills; and a program for training other instructors how math is practically applied, given the Foundation's success in its application in building wooden boats. Youcha said the Foundation has no plans to further expand along the waterfront. He said that Foundation members sees themselves as stewards of a City resource, and are happy to help the City when possible. He noted, for example, that the Foundation assisted the City's "green collar" job training program during the past summer by providing vocational training. He said that the Alexandria Seaport

Foundation is not taking lead, and has no agenda, to expand along the waterfront.

In response to a question from Bernstein, Youcha said the organization is supported by individual and corporate donations, grants, private foundations, some contract work, and boat commissions. Pettey noted that the Waterfront Committee was concerned with maintaining an authentic marine presence on the waterfront, and the Seaport Foundation's current location and activities supported that objective. Fortney said that Youcha is internationally known for the Alexandria Seaport Foundation's efforts and commended the Foundation's accomplishments.

### **Update on Waterfront Security**

Blakeley said that there had been no changes in terms of security in the past month. He said the cameras seemed to be working well. Gosnell asked whether there was consideration of changing the angle of the cameras. Seidler noted that the system has the ability to add more cameras but the budget does not currently permit it. She said they are budgeting to address safety issues with blue lights, which do not film well. Gosnell suggested using red bulbs. Seidler said that red bulbs could be tested, but permanently changing the color of the lights would require approval of the Board of Architectural Review.

Blakeley noted that RPCA's new fee proposals are posted, and requested feedback from the Committee on the proposed new fees.

### **Announcements**

Pettey announced that this would be her last meeting as a member of the Waterfront Committee. She said that leaving in the midst of the fun would be difficult. She asked for Committee members interested in running for chair to contact her by December 1.

Bernstein said that Founders Park Community Association had provided funds to maintain regular grass cutting cycles at the park during the past year, and had recently conducted a successful cleanup along the park's shoreline. Gosnell suggested installation of a boom to keep out litter.

Pennington said that the First Night Committee was in need of volunteers. He said that a seminar on weatherizing your house would be held at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Seidler announced that the Parade of Boats and the Scottish March would be held on Saturday, December 5.

Atkinson asked whether plans for redevelopment of the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion discussed at the October meeting were independent of the waterfront

planning process. Williamson said that the Food Pavilion leaseholders contacted the City independently regarding their proposed changes.

Atkinson asked whether it would be possible to discuss traffic control at corner of North Union and Queen Street. He noted that traffic routinely disobeys that stop sign.

**Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned at 9:09 a.m.