

Summary Minutes

Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Alexandria City Hall

Members:

- Present:** Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation,
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association
Arthur Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Linda Hafer, Old Town Business Association
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Nathan Macek, At-large citizen and Chair
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
Peter Pennington, Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Pete Peterson, Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Van Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association
- Excused:** Engin Artemel, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat lease holder
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council
- Vacancy:** Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
- City Staff:** Richard Baier, Director, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)
Lt. Mark Bergin, Police Department
Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director, Parks Operations, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Cheryl Lawrence, Acting Division Chief, Marketing, Waterfront & Special Events, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Faye Dastgheib, Parking Planner, T&ES
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Sandra Marks, Chief of Planning, T&ES
James Spengler, Director, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Department of Planning & Zoning (P&Z)
- Guests:** Gina Baum, Park and Recreation Commission
Benno Brenninkmeyer, Harborside
Katy Cannady, Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan (CAAWP)
Tony Kupersmith, CAAWP
Harry Harrington, Old Dominion Boat Club

Andrew Macdonald, CAAWP
Joanne Platt, resident
Hugh Van Horn, CAAWP
Boyd Walker, CAAWP

Welcome and Introductions

The Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. and members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from October 18, 2011 Meeting

Moved by Pennington seconded by Hafer, to approve the summary minutes of October 18, 2011 as drafted. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Marina Pilings

Hixon reported that the City expects to award a contract soon to replace the Marina's damaged pilings. Installation is expected by January 1.

NPS action is expected by month's end on the City's separate request for a permit to install pilings for the *Minnie V* floating pier. The floating pier is a private project on City property. It is likely that the Potomac Riverboat Company (PRC) would pay to install the floating pier, subject to negotiation of an agreement with PRC. The City applied for the NPS pilings permit to ensure that the requisite approvals will be in place when the City and PRC are ready proceed with *Minnie V* dock construction. Hixon reported that the Corps of Engineers has said it would amend its permit for the *Minnie V* pilings as needed. If the floating dock can use existing dolphins rather than pilings a *Minnie V* piling construction permit will not be needed. Browand said that because this is not a City project, RPCA would not be conducting a pilings/floating dolphins cost comparison.

Marina Users Public Meeting Results

Macek reported that the November 3 meeting was attended by several Committee members, approximately a dozen Marina lease-holders, RPCA staff, and several Committee members. The meeting covered Marina operations, storm preparations and changes made over the past year, a demonstration of the new Marina Webcam security system, and other Marina improvements. Boat owners praised the dock master and his staff and were generally happy with marina operations over the past year.

Lease-holders asked whether RPCA might modify the process for email notifications and alerts; staff will be considering possibilities.

Macek reported that lease-holders supported the Committee's support for transferring Marina security responsibilities from General Services to RPCA as a way to enhance the security provided by guards. Lease-holders did not favor the installation of gates at pier-ends to enhance Marina security, indicating they thought gates would make the Marina less inviting. In response to these comments, Macek proposed that the Committee reconsider its recommendation to City Council that funding for gates be included as a CIP priority for FY2013.

Browand reported the new Marina security camera system is fully operational and feedback has been positive.

Waterfront Parkland Summary Map

Browand reviewed the map of maintenance responsibilities and ownership for the 23 acres of Waterfront park land in the Waterfront Park District, extending from Jones Point through Daingerfield Island. The map is RPCA's first comprehensive aggregation of maintenance and ownership information, compiled from the many individual agreements signed over the years to establish maintenance responsibility for individual sites. Some parcels include a patchwork of divided maintenance responsibilities for specific portions of the site.

Browand reported that the Waterfront District's annual budget is approximately \$300,000, including personnel and operating costs. This includes a higher per acre cost in the Waterfront district than RPCA's per acre costs for non-Waterfront park maintenance, but is significantly less than maintenance costs for waterfront parkland in areas such as Chicago and New York.

Pennington reported that a constituent had asked him if the City might be able to reduce Waterfront maintenance costs by contracting out and proposed that the Committee discuss this question with staff at a future meeting. The Committee will try to schedule this as an agenda item in 2012.

Park Maintenance

Browand reported that RPCA and T&ES continue to consider options for addressing the impact of flooding at Founders Park's south end.

In response to a question from Bernstein, Spengler corrected the misperception that RPCA would be redoing the Founders Park soft-surfaced trails immediately and advised that the work is scheduled for the current fiscal year, using Capital Facilities Maintenance Program (CFMP) funds. The plan for the repair work was last discussed with the Committee at its September meeting.

Browand reported that replacement work on the Oronoco Bay Observation Deck is expected to be completed by month's end. Replacement lights have been installed along Pomander Walk and in Founders Park and Oronoco Bay Park.

Jones Point Park Signage

Browand reported that RPCA meets with NPS weekly regarding Jones Park construction progress. A new sign will be installed at Jones Point when construction is finished. Currently neither the City nor NPS is planning additional Jones Park-related signage along the Waterfront. If additional City signage related to Jones Point is proposed it would be considered as part of the overall Wayfinding Study Group.

Food Pavilion Closure

Macek reported that the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion will close December 1 and that all tenants' leases have been terminated as of that date. Although the possibility of attracting a full-service restaurant to the site has been mentioned, leaseholder Realco's plans for the location are not known.

Members discussed how the Food Pavilion's redevelopment might affect the Committee's recommendation in its FY2013 CIP priorities letter that the City should discuss with the Food Pavilion lessee the possibility of making its restrooms available to the public outside the Pavilion's operating hours. Macek will amend the Committee's CIP letter to reflect that there is some uncertainty about the Food Pavilion's future at this time.

Williams offered to work with Macek to arrange an update on Food Pavilion prospects at the December Committee meeting, inviting either Gary Baker of Realco or a representative from the City Manager's office.

Report from Police Department

Bergin reported that City police have met Gary Baker of Realco and others to discuss the problem of squatters near the Torpedo Factory and 201 Union Street. Police had received 16 complaints during the previous two weeks regarding trespassers in this location. Baker has given the police authority to act as his agent if they discover squatters on his property.

The police goal, Bergin said, is not to arrest trespassers but to advise them that they are trespassing, remove them from the site, and offer them alternative shelter. Police also distribute clothing to the homeless. Arrests are only made if a person refuses to leave. City concerns about squatters include littering, public health, and sanitation issues.

Bergin reviewed police procedures for responding when residents notify them of trespassing or squatting on their property and emphasized the importance of people reporting problems to the police. Police cannot always discover problems in a timely fashion but will quickly respond if called. The police only intercede with squatters when a complaint is filed or, as with Baker, the property owner has signed an agreement with the City designating the police as the owner's agent and giving them standing authority to intercede without the owner calling or being present at the time.

Bergin reported two arrests for public drunkenness at Jones Point.

Waterfront Plan Work Group Update

Macek, the Committee's representative on the Waterfront Plan Work Group (Work Group), reported that the Work Group expected to finish discussions of Work Group statements about the Waterfront Plan's public realm recommendations at its meeting the following day. The Work Group would then begin discussing private realm issues such as density and zoning. Previously the Work Group had agreed upon principles that should be reflected in each of the Waterfront Plan's elements and Work Group members are now reviewing each Waterfront Plan recommendation to determine

whether it adequately reflects those principles and, if not, how it might be modified to do so.

Macek reported that when Councilman Smedberg, convener of the Work Group, had presented a Work Group progress report to City Council at its meeting the previous Wednesday Council members had said they expect the Work Group to complete its work by mid-December so that they will have time to consider its recommendations before voting on the Plan in January. Macek said that in light of the numerous additional work sessions the Work Group had added to its original schedule, he thought it was on track to produce a quality report by mid-December.

Macek and Work Group member Bob Wood will be writing a draft Work Group report to Council that the full Work Group membership will then consider.

Van Fleet said that he disagreed with the Work Group's focus on meeting a deadline and that when the City Council had appointed the Work Group members had discussed the importance of the Work Group providing high-quality recommendations rather than meeting a specific deadline. Macek, the Committee's representative on the Work Group, said that absent a firm deadline, the work would become unfocused and noted that when the Work Group was established it was not intended to become a standing committee.

Presentation by Citizens for an Alternative Alexandria Waterfront Plan

Macdonald provided the Committee with copies of the Acting City Manager's November 1, 2011 memo, "Analysis of the Report of the October 30 [CAAWP] Report", and CAAWP's response to that November 1 memo.

Macdonald said CAAWP shares the City's goal of a revitalized Waterfront, differs with the City about revitalization elements, rejects the City's premise that it is an appropriate trade-off to increase density on certain Waterfront sites to pay for Waterfront amenities, and recommends that a number of elements receive greater emphasis in the Plan:

CAAWP recommends that more recognition be given to the Waterfront's historic elements and seaport past as appealing City features attractive to visitors. CAAWP recommends that parks, arts, and museums be substituted for some of the Plan's proposed commercial development to provide more Waterfront open space and avoid increasing density on the sites. CAAWP recommends that additional measures, such as using price to incentivize garage use, be implemented to mitigate current traffic and parking problems and facilitate pedestrian use of the Waterfront.

Macdonald said CAAWP disagrees with a number of aspects of the planning process: (a) It considers the City's process of public meetings held over two years to have been ineffective; (b) it does not think it was appropriate for the City to have had discussions with owners of private Waterfront properties during the planning process; (c) it considers the Plan to have underestimated the potential positive economic impact of parks on the community; and (d) it supports a broader review of other cities' waterfront revitalization experiences as a frame of reference for the City's options.

Macdonald said CAAWP disagrees with the Waterfront Plan's premise that it is an appropriate trade-off to increase development density at several Waterfront sites to generate revenue from commercial activities to pay for waterfront amenities. Macdonald said, for example, that bringing more commercialized diners to the Waterfront by adding a new transient marina at the Robinson Terminal South site would not enhance Alexandrians' enjoyment of the Waterfront.

Macdonald said CAAWP would like to work with the City to develop a compromise plan, and identified areas for potential discussion such as CAAWP's traffic, parking, and flood mitigation proposals and CAAWP's proposal for what it estimates would be a \$20 million scaled-down arts, parks, and museums alternative that CAAWP developed as an alternative to the planning staff's Parks & Arts Alternative budgeted at \$200 million.

Macdonald said the Committee, the Waterfront Plan Work Group and the City Council should each take more time to make thoroughly reviewed decisions about the Waterfront Plan. CAAWP rejects City officials' judgment that delaying decisions about the Waterfront Plan would undermine the City's opportunity to have Waterfront development guidelines in place in time to influence individual property owners' redevelopment plans.

Macdonald introduced CAAWP members accompanying him and identified the Waterfront Plan-related tasks they had undertaken for CAAWP: Tony Kupersmith, who reviewed the Plan's traffic and parking analysis; Hugh Van Horn, who reviewed other cities' waterfront revitalizations; Katy Cannady, who attended all of the City's Waterfront Plan public meetings; and Boyd Walker, who developed the CAAWP Report's museums proposals.

Discussion of the CAAWP proposals

In response to a question by Bernstein, Macdonald said CAAWP supports adding the GenOn site to the Waterfront Plan's scope. Pennington said PEPCO, owner of the GenOn site, has said unofficially that planning related to the site should not expect any action earlier than 10 years from now. Van Fleet said the Waterfront Plan's 15 to 25 year implementation period would be consistent with a 10-year delay in planning for the GenOn site and that P&Z has requested funding in FY2013 for study of GenOn site options. Walker said that since the Clean Skies Foundation had already developed its own plan for developing the site, the community needs to recognize that developers won't wait for the City before moving ahead with their own plans to develop the GenOn site.

Macek agreed with Walker that developers would not wait for City plans once they had decided to develop their property, and said this same fact is what is driving the City's need to finish action on the current Waterfront Plan covering the core Waterfront area: several property owners in the core area already have plans to develop their sites.

Macek said almost any future development of the GenOn site would generate less City revenue than the approximately \$1.5 million in annual City revenue that GenOn, the

City's second largest property taxpayer, currently generates. Walker said he thought that the two Robinson Terminal (RT) sites might be under-taxed by the City and the City should consider buying Robinson Terminal sites before re-zoning them.

Pennington said two aspects of the CAAWP report concerned him: (a) All City decision-making reflects choices and compromises about community priorities but he did not see CAAWP suggestions for possible areas of compromise with the City's Plan; and (b) the report's use of cost estimates that differ from those Pennington has seen elsewhere.

In response to a question regarding why CAAWP members had only attended one Waterfront Committee meeting over the two years that the Committee has been discussing aspects of the Waterfront Plan, Walker said CAAWP members attend Committee meetings when they are invited, as they had been that day.

The attendance numbers used by CAAWP to project revenue for its proposed maritime museum were briefly discussed. Macdonald said annual attendance figures for the Torpedo Factory had been used for a baseline comparison. In response to a question about traffic a proposed Waterfront maritime museum might generate, Kupersmith said he hoped he would be able to discuss with City staff CAAWP ideas for mitigating traffic on Union Street and The Strand.

Kupersmith said CAAWP members with technical expertise had met with City engineers, were scheduled to discuss issues related to sub-grade parking in a flood plain, and anticipated ideas being generated by those discussions that CAAWP could use to fine-tune its technical recommendations.

Kupersmith suggested flood mitigation ideas in the URS Corp.'s study of flood mitigation options for Old Town might offer some ideas for developing compromise ideas on flood mitigation. CAAWP technical advisors have also highlighted some planning premises that City staff could consider. For example, Kupersmith said City staff considers the City's Potomac interceptor to be functional for rain events, yet an analysis done for CAAWP proposed that the City instead use an analysis of coincident events to predict the surge capacity needed for a hurricane that coincides with a storm surge associated with a 100-year rain event to plan for worst-case capacity requirements. CAAWP members with technical experience consider it important for the assumptions and parameters that underlie the City's planning recommendations be made clear.

Moved by Van Fleet, seconded by Peterson, that the Committee send a message to the Waterfront Plan Work Group and City Council that CAAWP's ideas should be thoroughly discussed prior to any decision being made by either group regarding the waterfront plan.

Van Fleet said his motion's objective was to insure that all ideas be thoroughly considered before final decisions are made and said that CAAWP members with substantial professional expertise in relevant areas had worked on the CAAWP report. Hall said that she and other Committee members who represent organizations should

have the opportunity to consult their constituencies before voting on the Van Fleet motion.

Moved by Hall, seconded by Hafer, to table the motion. The motion to table passed 7-4 by a show of hands.

Additional Discussion

Cannady said she thought City Council's desire to avoid delaying a vote on the Waterfront Plan reflected a concern that the Plan is not broadly popular.

Papp said that ideas might be generated for possible compromise positions that the Committee could support if Committee members continue to discuss the technical issues raised in the CAAWP report.

Bernstein and Pennington suggested that, because the Waterfront Plan Work Group is expected to have finished its report to City Council by December 13, the Committee should meet with CAAWP representatives prior to the Committee's next meeting on December 20 to discuss the CAAWP report at greater length. A November discussion would, they said, let Committee members have the opportunity to probe CAAWP's underlying assumptions, to discuss with CAAWP the Committee's concerns about Waterfront Plan elements that have been presented to City officials over the past two years, and to develop possible compromise positions in time for the Committee to consider proposing them as Waterfront Plan elements the City should incorporate..

Issues identified for further discussion included the City's proposed rezoning of Robinson Terminal (RT) parcels, measures needed to address Old Town parking and traffic problems, flood mitigation, the prospect that the proposed RT parcels' rezoning might exacerbate existing problems, the need to recognize the variety of substantial budget demands facing City officials over the 15-25 year implementation timeframe proposed for Waterfront Plan amenities, and the financial premises underlying the CAAWP proposals.

Macek explained that, as with other Committee meetings that have been held to discuss the Waterfront Plan, all members are welcome to participate the meeting would be open to the public and publicized, and if a quorum were present at the meeting, the Committee could choose to take action at the special meeting rather than refer consensus recommendations to the Committee for action at its next regular meeting on December 20. A quorum of the 15-member Committee is 8 members.

Papp thanked the Committee for its interest in meeting with CAAWP to discuss these issues further, said it appears that many of the stakeholder groups involved in the Waterfront planning process had raised concerns that seem to converge around the same set of core issues, and that discussion at the Committee's special meeting would offer the opportunity to clarify the substance of those concerns. Pennington and Papp agreed that even though concerns about many Waterfront issues are shared among organizations, it should not be assumed that the Waterfront Committee would reach the conclusion as CAAWP regarding how to address those problems.

Moved by Pennington, seconded by Hafer, that the Committee hold a special meeting, tentatively set for Tuesday November 29 at 4:30 p.m., to discuss the CAAWP report. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Barnekov advised the Committee that he would be unable to attend the November 29 meeting.

Report from Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Baier introduced Faye Dastgheib and Sandra Marks, transportation planners for T&ES, and explained that T&ES has developed a multi-pronged approach to address the City's parking challenges, including elements such as increased north-south transit, increased King Street trolley service, enhanced wayfinding signage directing drivers to garages, increased use of valet parking, use of pricing to incentivize use of garage parking, introduction of uniform metering throughout the City, and other possibilities still being considered.

Baier offered to provide a copy of the T&ES briefing to anyone wishing one, and offered to have his staff meet with CAAWP's technical experts to discuss the technical aspects of sub-grade parking, noting that the question is not if sub-grade parking is feasible, but rather how it can be done. Baier advised the Committee that both he and City Engineer Emily Baker have experience designing waterfront structures, including buildings and docks.

Dastgheib provided an overview of parking recommendations generated by the Old Town Alexandria Parking Study Group (OTAPS) appointed by City Council to review the Parking Study and generate implementation recommendations, and by the Waterfront Plan. The August 2011 OTAPS recommendations to Council were incorporated into the Waterfront Plan. A T&ES chart detailing OTAPS and the Waterfront Plan's short, medium, and long-term parking recommendations, including their implementation status was reviewed.

OTAPS membership includes residents and representatives from hotels, retail, the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the Old Town Civic Association (OTCA), the Chamber of Commerce, parking garage owners, and others. Macek advised the Committee that although the Committee had not been represented on OTAPS, two of its current members, Hall and Manor, had served on OTAPS.

Parking Wayfinding Program

Plans to implement improved lighting and signage are under way, including lighted garage signage and prominent posting of uniform signage outside garages that displays rates and garage hours. Lighted signs, recommended by OTAPS, will address the problem of signs being difficult to view under the low wattage of the Old Town Historic District lamps. The City expects signs to be delivered by the end of December, will install them on City garages and encourage private garage owners to install the new lighted signs on private garages. The City has begun contacting private garage owners to discuss installation possibilities.

Parking Implementation Plan

Baier and Marks reported that several elements of the parking plan are being implemented, including installation of multi-space meters, uniformly extending meter hours to 7 p.m., and planning to procure pay-by-phone technology for the new meters. T&ES will conduct a public education program to explain how the new systems work.

T&ES will constitute a Parking Implementation Work Group to consider next steps such as considering options to increase residential parking protections, improving the City Website's parking information, and implementing a two-year pilot permit program for handicapped employees. T&ES is considering options to improve residential parking access such as instituting evening-hours residential permit parking and reserving one side of the street for residential parking. Macek suggested T&ES also consider how pricing might be used to incentivize residential parking, e.g., letting residents park at meters in their neighborhood without paying. Marks said staff will be considering how to implement a comprehensive residential strategy that avoids pushing a parking problem from one street or neighborhood to the next.

In response to Baum's question, Baier reviewed the procedure for reviewing curb cut requests in Rosemont, the Old and Historic District, and the Town of Potomac, a process that differs from the rest of the City.

Baier said that using pricing effectively to incentivize garage use is a significant focus. For example, several years ago metered street parking had been less expensive than garage parking. Although private garage owners make their own operational decisions, the City will work with private garage owners to encourage them to adopt pricing and signage that reflects the City's goals of moving parking-related traffic away from the Waterfront and encouraging garage use over street parking.

Additional parking measures being considered include the City's providing special event shuttle service from garages outside Old Town and away from the Waterfront, with the cost likely to be paid by event sponsors. For example, the City's breast cancer walk recently rented space from the Hoffman garage and provided shuttle service to the event.

Pennington suggested the City consider arranging for private garages away from Old Town to serve as park-and-ride locations from which the City could run regular shuttle service to Old Town.

In response to a request from Bernstein T&ES will provide information about the potential revenue increases resulting from converting to multi-space meters that make it impossible for drivers to "piggyback" by parking for free at meters with unexpired time.

Baier offered to provide to the Committee a copy of the day's presentation, the Web link to the Old Town Parking Study, the timeframe for T&ES to procure and implement pay-by-phone technology for parking meters, and a review of multi-space meters' impact,

including increased revenue resulting from no more free parking at spaces with unexpired time.

T&ES will be identifying potential Waterfront stakeholders for membership on the Parking Implementation Work Group, which is expected to convene in early 2012.

Bikeshare Program

Marks provided an overview of planning underway for the City's participation in Capital Bikeshare, including a review of its tiered pricing structure, a regional map of Bikeshare stations, a review of the City's new and existing bikeway infrastructure, and the pilot program presented to City Council the previous month. Bikeshare's tiered user fee structure provides revenues to the host jurisdiction, and the City hopes that revenues generated by high tourist use of the Bikeshare program will offset the cost of the stations.

The City is planning six Bikeshare station locations, including locations that connect the King Street Metro to the Waterfront. Stations will be solar-powered, so they require a sunny location. T&ES expects to have grant funding for the next fiscal year, and plans to add an additional six bike share stations during the program's second year of operation. The first and second years of the pilot program are funded at \$400,000 each. T&ES is work with private property owners to identify possible additional locations for stations. A community open house is planned for January 2012 to introduce the program to the community.

In response to a question from Van Fleet, Baier explained that Council had not held a public hearing on the Bikeshare program because it is grant-funded, Council approved the pilot program as a consent item, and Council had received no public inputs that would trigger a public hearing. T&ES had provided information about the program to the Environmental Planning Commission and the Planning Commission.

In response to Van Fleet's concern about bikes on Union Street, Baier said it is the City's goal to encourage use of a variety of transportation modes, though for years the City had done little to encourage people to use modes other than cars. He thought the problem on Union Street was less one of infrastructure than of operator behavior with cyclists ignoring traffic regulations.

Thayer said Bikeshare vendors should be asked to encourage Bikeshare renters to use certain parts of the City as a bikeway, to respect rules of the road, use helmets, and encourage use of Royal Street rather than Union Street. Marks said Royal Street is the designated through route for bikes in Old Town but signage is needed to publicize this.

In response to Hafer's question regarding whether creating one-way streets has been considered, Baier said one-way streets are useful for cars but not pedestrians because traditionally one-way streets have higher traveling speeds. In addition, most visitors expect traffic from both directions. For example, pedestrians crossing Route 1 can have a difficult pedestrian experience because of its higher capacity and speeds.

In response to a concerns raised about the lack of City control over delivery vehicles blocking Union Street Baier encouraged people who notice violations to call the police non-emergency number, 703-838-4444. The importance of police enforcing traffic regulations for cyclists and delivery trucks was discussed.

In response to a question from Pennington about the possibility of installing additional Jones Point-related signage, Baier said that if the Committee supports having additional signage added it should convey that to him and T&ES will consider it.

Announcements

Macek announced that the next regularly monthly Committee meeting would be December 20 at 7:30 a.m. in Room 2000 of City Hall and that the annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights is scheduled for December 3 at the City Marina.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 9:45 a.m.