

## Summary Minutes

### ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION Tuesday, August 14, 2012

#### Alexandria City Hall, Room 2000

**Members:****Present:**

Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission  
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association  
Morgan Delaney, Historic Alexandria Foundation  
Stewart Dunn, Planning Commission  
Art Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.  
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat leaseholder  
Linda Hafer, Old Town Business and Professional Association  
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Melinda (Mindy) Lyle, Citizen, Park Planning District III  
Nathan Macek, At-large citizen from west of Washington St. and Chair  
James McCall, Alexandria Archaeological Commission  
Patricia (Pat) Miller, Commission on the Arts  
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.  
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

**Excused:**

Dennis Auld, Citizen, Park Planning District II  
Trey Hanbury, Citizen, Park Planning District I  
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)  
Peter Pennington, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)  
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council  
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.

**City Staff:**

Jack Browand, Division Chief. Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Tom Canfield, Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z)  
Faye Dastgheib, Transportation Planning, Department of Transportation and Engineering Services (T&ES)  
Faroll Hamer, Director, P&Z  
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA  
Sandra Marks, Division Chief, Transportation Planning, T&ES  
Catherine Miliaras, P&Z  
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, P&Z  
Katie North, P&Z  
Iris Portny, Recording Secretary, RPCA  
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, P&Z  
Gwen Wright, P&Z

**Guests:** Brian Buzzell  
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee  
Austin Flajser, President, Carr Hospitality  
Mark Orling, Rust/Orling Architecture (architects for Carr Hospitality)  
Ken Wire, McGuire Woods (zoning counsel to Carr Hospitality)

**Welcome and Introductions**

The Commission was called to order at 7:35 a.m. and Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes from June 19 and June 21, 2012 meetings**

Moved by Bernstein, seconded by Fox, to approve the summary minutes of the June 19 and June 21, 2012 meetings. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Presentation by Carr Hospitality on 220 South Union Street development proposal**

Moritz introduced Carr Hospitality representatives Flajser, Orling and Wire, and said the briefing's timing, presented at an early stage in Carr Hospitality's design process for the boutique hotel reflected staff's commitment to bringing issues before the Commission early in the City's consideration process. The hotel is planned for the site of the Cummings Warehouse building, bordered by Union Street, Duke Street and The Strand. He said Carr Hospitality had provided a general overview of its plan for a boutique hotel on the site to the City's Waterfront Plan Work Group in fall 2011. Flajser said the slides being presented were those used for Carr Hospitality's informal discussion of its proposal at the July 25 meeting of the Board of Architecture Review (BAR). Flajser invited Commissioners' questions and comments about the design ideas and said Carr Hospitality is beginning its public outreach process for the redevelopment. Wire said Carr Hospitality anticipates returning to the Commission in the fall to discuss the design as it had evolved. Orling reviewed the principal elements of several designs options that had been developed for the hotel and said design ideas suggested at the BAR meeting would be reflected in the eventual design.

Orling said Carr Hospitality's proposed hotel would replace the one-story warehouse currently at 220 South Union Street. The design would replicate the historic 18th century warehouses originally found in the Waterfront area, typically three to four story buildings spanning a full block. This choice responded to the Waterfront Small Area Plan's (the Plan) guidance that a design for this site should incorporate interpretative aspects of Alexandria's historic working waterfront and the principles of the design elements of the model developed for the Plan.

***Design Layout***

All parking would be below-grade and the garage entrance is proposed for Duke Street. The ground floor plan includes a reception area, lobby, restaurant opening onto The Strand, a business center, housekeeping office, and a small meeting room. The hotel's rooms would likely face the street, not the property line. Design options currently include a courtyard that opens onto The Strand but the courtyard's location and street access may change as the design evolves. A single loading dock is planned for Duke Street.

### ***Parking Garage and How Its Design Addresses Flood Risks***

Orling said the City code requires that occupiable space be one foot above the 100-year flood plain, therefore, the entire first floor is at elevation 11. Several Commissioners, including Gosnell, Van Fleet, and Thayer, said they were concerned about flooding risks posed by a below-grade garage. Wire said City code prevents residential uses from putting garage spaces below the flood plain but permits a commercial property to do as long as it incorporates a variety of flood-proofing design elements. Orling said the design would include a flood emergency plan for garage parking that included relocating the garage's cars as needed. Thayer said a major concern about flooding is related to river flooding during storms.

### ***Floor Area Ratio Impact on the Proposed Hotel's Economic Viability***

Bernstein asked if the hotel could be designed to accommodate the current zoning's 2.0 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) instead of the Small Area Plan's 3.0 FAR for the site. Wise said Carr Hospitality would not build a hotel on the site with a 2.0 FAR because a 3.0 FAR is needed to design a boutique hotel with the requisite amenities, including underground parking. Van Fleet said the Morrison House is a boutique hotel built to a 2.0 FAR. Fasjer said Morrison House did not offer underground parking. Wise said Carr Hospitality has an option to purchase the property through 2013.

### ***Hotel Design Options for Open Space***

Orling said one of the design options included a green roof on the Strand side and Carr Hospitality is discussing with the City ideas on how to connect the building to the park. Wire invited suggestions about how the design could prioritize open space, access to The Strand and to the river and the overall building height. He said a variety of public preferences about had already been voiced.

McCall said outdoor dining had been an issue for the Waterfront and Orling said outdoor seating was being considered to activate the hotel's riverside. McCall suggested a through alleyway to offer public access to the open space, consistent with the Waterfront's historic alleyways. Macek said the Waterfront Plan Work Group had been interested in having a through alleyway to The Strand to provide open, accessible public space rather than privatized green space. He said he personally did not favor having a closed courtyard similar to that of The Monaco and asked whether providing a de facto tunnel under the building to provide access to the public open space would be sufficient to meet the Small Area Plan's goal for having public open space in this area.

Buzzell asked how plans for the properties on the Potomac side of the hotel would affect views of the river. Moritz said the hotel would span the two buildings now there, Robinson Terminal's marine supply building and the City-owned Crenshaw building. He said the City planned to remove the Crenshaw Building to create park space but the City had no new information about Robinson Terminal's plans for its Marine Supply Building site. Hamer said there would be at least an angled view of the water from the hotel's rear, regardless of what development might occur at the Marine Supply Building site.

Orling said that because the design options comply with Duke Street and Union Street elevation requirements the focus has been on how to accommodate City elevation requirements for The Strand. Van Fleet asked where cabs, delivery and garbage trucks would access the hotel. Orling said an enclosed Duke Street loading dock is planned. McCall said Carr Hospitality's planned meeting with the architecture and history communities would provide an important opportunity to discuss the design's interpretative elements. He said design measures that enhance open space would be important to incorporate.

Baum said she had heard both supporters and critics of the plan voice concerns about the choice to base the hotel's design upon an industrial warehouse design and asked whether the City's design guidelines that the neighborhood's historic warehouse and commercial aspect might have been too rigid since the goal of removing the warehouses had been to remove the impact on the neighborhood of the industrial warehouse design. She asked whether the City wants a boxy warehouse-inspired design to dominate its Waterfront since there would likely be only two Waterfront hotels. McCall said the Waterfront History Plan's concept had been for this neighborhood to echo the commercial and business properties historically found in this part of the City's Waterfront.

Bernstein asked if Carr Hospitality had considered non-warehouse design options as inspiration for the hotel's design. Macek reviewed the Waterfront Small Area Plan's development guidelines for the Cummings/Turner Block that had inspired Carr Hospitality's design (on page 101): *"Historic interpretation consistent with the recommendations of the History Plan should inform in every aspect of the design of the redevelopment and adjacent open spaces. Buildings and open spaces should reflect Alexandria's maritime history. The plan encourages modern design inspired by historic precedent (such as 18th century Alexandria warehouse architecture) while maintaining compatibility with nearby residential neighborhoods and ensuring compliance with Potomac River Vicinity Height District regulations. Architecture should reflect the historic east-west orientation of buildings, alleys and wharves."*

Gosnell said he opposed a block setting without open space and the current design reminded him of the design of a Portland, Maine hotel in that city's historic warehouse district. He said he felt the Portland hotel's design, lacking open space, created an obstruction in the neighborhood although Carr Hospitality's design included more open space. Van Fleet said he thought the warehouse-inspired draft design was a "five-story monstrosity" inconsistent with the City's historic architecture and he thought it was premature to discuss putting a hotel on the site until legal actions related to Waterfront Plan rezoning had been concluded because current W-1 zoning did not permit hotels. Bernstein asked if Carr Hospitality had considered non-hotel options if a FAR 3.0 were not approved. Orling said residential development would be likely.

Wire said they anticipated briefing the Commission again on the redevelopment as the design evolves, depending upon how discussions with City proceed.

### **Review and Approval of Waterfront Commission Annual Report**

Macek said the Commission's activities summarized in draft FY12 Annual Report he had prepared reflected a very busy and productive year. He said many of the issues considered by the Commission during FY12, ending June 30, 2012, would continue to be considered during coming months.

Moved by Dunn, seconded by Hafer, that the Commission approve the FY12 Annual Report. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Commissioners commended Macek for his draft and briefly discussed two issues included in the report, the Commission's continuing interest in City actions to encourage redevelopment of the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion and the importance of the Commission receiving information as soon as possible regarding a new park-naming protocol. The Commission is interested in responding to a pending Van Fleet proposal that Waterfront Park be renamed for John Fitzgerald.

### **Waterfront Commission Budget Recommendations**

The Commission briefly reviewed its FY13 recommendations for Waterfront-related operating budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) items to determine which items should be reaffirmed for funding in the FY14 budget.

The FY13 CIP projects endorsed by the Commission in September 2011 include: (1) City Marina Utility Upgrade; (2) City Marina Seawall Maintenance; (3) Marina Waterway Trash Deterrence; (4) Marina Security Improvements; and (5) Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead Repairs; and (6) Waterfront Public Restrooms. In addition, in February 2012, the Commission endorsed the following additional projects: (1) Waterfront Small Area Plan Implementation; (2) Marina Dredging; and (3) City Marina Maintenance.

The Commission's FY13 operating budget recommendations included several items that have been budgeted by the City: (1) Office of Project Implementation; (2) Union Street Traffic Study; (3) Valet Parking Pilot Program; and (4) Waterfront Plan Study/Implementation Contingency.

Marks clarified that T&ES is working with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership to develop a centralized valet parking stand to support multiple businesses as a way to reduce customer demand for on-street parking. It would not support restaurants required to provide their own customer parking.

### ***City Budget Process***

Macek and Browand reviewed the FY14 budget process. Browand noted that CIP is programmed over a ten-year period. Browand said over the next four to six weeks City departments would receive budget guidance regarding funding assumptions to use for developing their budget recommendations to the City Manager. The City Manager submits a final FY14 budget recommendation to Council in February 2013 and Council then begins its review of the proposed CIP and budget proposals and holds public hearings, culminating in the adoption of a budget by Council in May. Macek said if the Commission's budget and CIP recommendations were not reflected in City staff's FY14

recommendations to the City Manager or the City Manager's recommendations to Council, Commissioners could follow up with the appropriate City officials.

The Commission reviewed staff recommendations for Waterfront Small Area Plan Implementation funding during FY14, listed by the department responsible for it.

- T&ES: (1) Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project; (2) King Street Flood Mitigation Project; (3) Utility Master Plan; and (4) Implementation of Union Street Corridor Recommendations.
- P&Z: Landscape Architectural Plan.
- City Manager's Office (CMO): Waterfront Implementation Office/Operations
- RPCA: Public Restrooms Operation.

Williams added two P&Z items to those already proposed: improvements to King Street Trolley service and a study of pedestrian improvements to the 100 and unit blocks of King Street. Williams said FY13 funds might be available for the Lower King Street study. Macek said funding details for public restroom operational support would be determined after restroom specifics had been decided upon. Browand said no separate FY14 budget item was needed to fund administrative services to support the Implementation Office. Moritz said funding for a centralized management office to oversee operational Waterfront activities, responsibilities currently divided among T&ES, RPCA and GS, was not covered by the CMO's administrative request. He said the City had not yet taken any actions to create a centralized office to oversee all Waterfront-related activities and responsibilities.

Commissioners supported all the staff-proposed budget items presented to the Commission and discussed several additional Waterfront-related items they wanted to see included in the FY14 budget.

### ***Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion's Reopening***

Commissioners agreed to continue their active advocacy for City actions to facilitate the Food Pavilion's reopening.

### ***Marina security***

Commissioners said marina security improvements continue to be a priority. Browand said RPCA staff currently provides on-site security for a portion of the 24-hour period and General Services (GS) provides contractor-provided security for the Marina during the rest of the time. Browand said RPCA had added on-site closed circuit cameras this past year and responsibility for Marina security may be transferred from GS to RPCA.

### ***Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead***

Commissioners discussed the FY16/17 CIP expenditures planned for bulkhead repairs. Browand said staff also currently has \$1.3 million available for design and other smaller improvements to the Park, including \$300,000 to cover wayfinding and interpretive signs and playground renovation. Commissioners discussed whether to continue supporting the planned installation of a safety fence around the deteriorating Windmill Hill Park bulkhead. Van Fleet said fencing off the bulkhead would encourage the City to delay CIP funding for bulkhead repair work, and called the delayed bulkhead repairs

“demolition by neglect”. Bernstein asked when bulkhead repairs would stop being delayed and noted that the deteriorating bulkhead was beginning to slip into the river. Macek said CIP funding had been budgeted for FY16/17 for the past several years without modification. Gosnell said the Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead and Marina seawall work should be combined.

Browand said an analysis of the bulkhead’s stability was completed and submitted to Council in February 2012 and had recommended installing a safety fence as soon as possible. He said RPCA and GS expected to contract for a Marina engineering assessment to identify work needed over the next five to 10 years. and RPCA hoped to receive recommendations in late 2012. Gosnell said it was unwise to let the seawall continue to deteriorate rather than installing pilings to reinforce it.

Dunn asked whether work on the bulkhead had been delayed because a City consensus about what should be there had been lacking. Macek said the 2002 Windmill Hill Park Concept Plan reflected a consensus about the need to improve the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead and preserve the Windmill Hill Park shoreline and suggested a study be done to identify options for proceeding with a seawall at the Marina and Windmill Hill Park. Macek said questions remain about whether economies might be achieved by modifying the design and a study could identify options for proceeding.

#### ***Early Implementation of Waterfront Small Area Plan Elements***

McCall said that because the Waterfront Plan included a goal to implement elements of the Plan as soon as possible, and the arts community had developed a public art acquisition plan and budget while no funding had been included in the Plan for History Plan’s interpretative signage, the City should begin to consider potential sources for funding elements of the History Plan, especially those unlikely to be funded by developer contributions. Macek said \$2.7 million was budgeted for public art and \$2.3 million for Wayfinding signage. McCall said this funding did not appear to cover the interpretative signage endorsed by the History Plan or a “history showcase” center. He noted that a specific plan for proceeding with history-related signage had not yet been developed by the history community. Bernstein said interpretative signage should be moved forward.

#### ***Marina Dredging and City Marina Maintenance***

Macek recommended continued Commission support for dredging, without advancing its timeframe. Thayer said the seawall would be the lynchpin making dredging possible since the seawall was determined to be too weak.

#### ***FY14 Budget Elements Supported by the Commission***

Moved by Dunn, seconded by Hall, that a Commission letter regarding Waterfront-related items in the FY14 General Fund Operating Budget and FY13-22 CIP should be drafted in support of the following expenditures:

##### **Capital Improvements**

- Engineering of the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead and City Marina seawall improvements and the City Marina Utility Upgrade, implementation of these

capital improvements in a shorter timeframe, linkage of the Windmill Hill Park and City Marina bulkhead projects, and the study of ways to preserve existing seawalls now

- Waterfront flood mitigation project;
- King Street flood mitigation project;
- Implementation of Union Street corridor recommendations;
- Transportation and wayfinding signage
- Utility master plan;
- Marina dredging
- Landscape architectural plan
- Public restrooms
- City Marina maintenance
- Public art acquisition
- Waterfront history center

### **Operating Budget**

- Waterfront implementation office/operations
- Public restroom operation.
- King Street Trolley expansion
- Lower King Street pedestrian traffic study (noting that this study may be funded in FY13),
- Improved Marina security
- Implementation of historic elements of the Waterfront Plan, including interpretive signage, programming, and other history-related expenditures.

The motion was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Commissioners agreed they should also continue to advocate for the Food Court's reopening.

### **Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities**

#### ***Update on Windmill Hill Park bulkhead safety fence***

Browand said a community open house would be held the following day and public comments at the BAR hearing had been incorporated into five design options now being offered for the bulkhead safety fence. The design options would be presented to the BAR at its September 5, 2012 meeting. Bernstein asked how Harborside residents had been notified and Browand said he had notified Harborside's president, Ford's Landing and Old Town Civic Association directly and the BAR had also notified them per City requirements.

#### ***Update on relocation of Fire Boat docking***

Browand reported that the new boat might arrive by November 2012. It would likely be located on southern side of the Marina's G/H pier (also known as the T pier) and would occupy two spaces within the Marina. Relocation and insulation of three pilings would likely be needed.

***Jones Point Park dedication, Saturday, September 22, 2012***

Browand said he would forward information about the dedication to Commissioners when he receives it from the National Park Service

***Requested docking of Stiletto, October 21-24, 2012***

Browand said the Stiletto, a Defense Department research vessel, would be docking at the end of the T pier for four days, No public tours or charters are planned. Hall asked if a fee would be charged for the vessel's docking and Browand said that because it is a federal vessel and there are no plans for any for-pay tours or charters, there would be no fee. He said the visit is unrelated to the security conference at Gaylord.

***Questions regarding Waterfront Walk Matrix***

Browand said a more comprehensive status report would be submitted to the Commission in September. Macek said a detailed discussion of the follow-up actions would be on the September meeting agenda.

**Report from Police Department**

This report was deferred, as a Police Department representative was not present.

**Reports from Commissioners**

***Art and History Waterfront Implementation Committee***

Miller and McCall reported on the new Art and History Waterfront Implementation Committee (Art and History Committee) created to implement the Art Walk and History Plan elements of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. McCall said its members include four Public Art Committee representatives and four history community representatives, including those from the Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC), Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF), and Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC).

McCall said the Art and History Committee was working on two immediate issues: (1) creating a process (protocol) for naming or renaming public spaces along the Waterfront; and (2) public art for the site of The Oronoco. Construction at The Oronoco is expected to begin in September. McCall said the Van Fleet proposal before the Commission that day, to rename Waterfront Park for the historical figure John Fitzgerald, was an example of a Waterfront issue that requires inputs from the arts and history communities as part of the Commission's consideration process. Miller said the Art and History Committee's timeline for creating a naming process was being driven by the Commission's need to continue to consider the Van Fleet proposal first discussed at the Commission's June 19 meeting. At that meeting Commissioners had agreed the Van Fleet renaming proposal should be considered without undue delay and had deferred its consideration so the Commission could first receive information about other relevant Waterfront stakeholders' positions. At that meeting Commissioners had also asked that an institutionalized process be created for naming or renaming Waterfront items or sites to facilitate inputs from other commissions and bodies whose jurisdictions include Waterfront activities. Van Fleet and Bernstein asked why the Commission could not act on Van Fleet's renaming proposal without waiting for the Art and History Committee to create a process for naming/renaming Waterfront public sites since the

City has an existing Naming Committee that reviews proposals and makes recommendations to Council.

Macek and Browand said the naming protocol being defined would not replace the Naming Committee, which consists of two Council members and the City Manager, but would create a standardized process for the Waterfront Commission to apply in considering a proposal to name or rename a Waterfront site. The Commission's recommendation would then be forwarded to the appropriate City officials. The current process is for naming proposals to be reviewed by the Naming Committee, the Naming Committee to submit its recommendation to Council, Council to hold a public hearing, and then consider the proposal. Bernstein said she was concerned Commission action on the Van Fleet proposal could be unduly delayed by waiting for the Art and History Committee to define a naming process since several months could pass between a Commission recommendation and Council's action. Miller said the Art and History understood the Commission's need for an early recommendation. She hoped the recommendation would be ready by early fall. Browand said the goal for having a naming protocol is to create a consistent process that would include validation of a personage's historic significance that facilitates a holistic naming process for the Waterfront that produces names reflecting the Waterfront's historic nature instead of fragmenting the Waterfront by naming its elements without an overall context. Baum said the Park and Recreation Commission avoids recommending naming parks for individuals instead of locations out of a concern that honoring one person would encourage other such naming proposals.

Thayer asked that the Commission receive a written report at its September meeting on the status of the Art and History Committee's work on a process to facilitate Waterfront stakeholders' inputs into the Commission. Macek asked that the status report to be provided in advance of the September meeting.

Dunn said it was important for the Commission to be briefed soon by EYA on the status of The Oronoco's development so that it could be made clear to EYA they should not consider the park between The Oronoco and the Potomac River as their private preserve. Bernstein said she's concerned that the foliage and trees there be preserved.

### ***Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS)***

Macek said OTAPS would meet that evening, Macek and Pennington were the Commission's OTAPS representatives and Commissioners Hall and Manor were also OTAPS members. He said OTAPS' focus thus far had been on residential parking and ways to encourage visitors to use off-street parking and consider ways to manage parking demand within residential neighborhoods. Commercial parking issues would be considered after residential ones. He reviewed residential parking options being considered, such as adding meters in residential areas (exempting residential permit holders from the meters), resident-only parking; and reducing parking hours (for example converting two-to-three-hour parking limits to one-hour parking). Dastgheib said the Waterfront-related area is included in District I's northern portion and District II's southern portion and that staff recommendations would be offered for each district. Baum said that for residents living south of Lee Street, one-side-of-the-street parking

would create major difficulties for residents. Macek said the question of how to balance the need to make residential parking easier with the need to keep visitor and customer parking from becoming difficult was a central OTAPS focus and noted that resident members of OTAPS strongly opposed resident-only parking restrictions for their neighborhoods.

### ***Marina Committee***

Macek and Thayer, chair of the Commission's Marina Committee, asked Commissioners whether they thought there were sufficient Marina-related issues before the Commission to warrant scheduling a Marina Committee meeting in the fall. Thayer said that FY14 issues such as the need to create a Marina fee category for historic vessels, Marina maintenance, and the need for the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion's redevelopment would benefit by a more detailed Committee consideration before the Commission takes them up. Macek invited Commissioners to recommend potential agenda items to consider for a Marina Committee meeting. He said committee meetings are open to all Commissioners and a committee quorum of three is required to recommend an action for full Commission consideration.

### **Announcements**

Hall said Commissioners should visit the Marina on a weekend to see the less-than-ideal state of food service offered to Marina visitors now that the Food Pavilion has closed and said she was concerned about the ramshackle and unprofessional assortment of food vendors and performers that Realco, lessee of the air rights for the Marina's brick area, had allowed to set up in the area on weekends

Macek said the Commission would hold a special meeting on Thursday August 23 at 4 PM at City Hall, to receive a briefing on the Union Street Corridor Circulation Study.

### **Adjournment**

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