

Summary Minutes - DRAFT

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 16, 2012

Alexandria City Hall, Room 2000

Members:

Present: Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association
Morgan Delaney, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Art Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.
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
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
James McCall, Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Patricia (Pat) Miller, Commission on the Arts
Peter Pennington, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

Excused: Dennis Auld, Citizen, Park Planning District II
Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation

Absent: Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat leaseholder
Trey Hanbury, Citizen, Park Planning District I

Vacancy: Old Town Business and Professional Association

City Staff: Rich Baier, Director, Department of Transportation and Engineering Services (T&ES)
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront Operations, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Faye Dastgheib, Transportation Planning, T&ES
Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Daniel Imig, Civil Engineer, Office of Environmental Quality, T&ES
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, P&Z

Guests: Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee

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 September 18 and September 27, 2012 meetings

Moved by Dunn, seconded by Hall, to approve the summary minutes of the September 18 and September 27, 2012 meetings. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Vice Chair Election

Macek reported that Vice Chair Pennington would be resigning from the Commission as of October 31, 2012 and invited nominations for a new Vice Chair. Manor nominated Hall for Vice Chair, effective November 1, 2012, and Bernstein seconded the nomination. The Manor/Hall motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Pennington said he had decided to end his service on the City's Waterfront and Environmental Policy Commissions to free up time to pursue other commitments. Commissioners thanked Pennington for his many contributions to the Commission's work.

Presentation: Motorcoach Enforcement

In response to Commissioners' concerns about enforcement of City motorcoach regulations, Baier reviewed recommendations developed by the City's Motorcoach Task Force as adopted by Council on March 14, 2009 and additional ongoing efforts to address the issue.

Baier said the City's goal for its motorcoach regulations is to balance the need to protect quality of life, affected by the impacts of motorcoaches traveling, parking, idling and blocking traffic, with the need to facilitate access to the City by motorcoaches.

Improving awareness of City motorcoach rules

Baier reviewed the City's educational campaign, developed with the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA), to improve residents' and motorcoach operators' familiarity with City regulations and said T&ES continues to work with organizations such as the American Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association to publicize rules about where motorcoaches should load and unload passengers, park, and idle while waiting for their dropped off passengers. He provided a "Motorcoach Do's and Don'ts" doorknob hanger with information about City regulations and how to report observed violations to the City and asked Commissioners to help publicize this information. He offered to make the materials available for members to distribute to their constituencies.

Baier said the City has three types of motorcoach traffic, those bringing visitors the City that park and wait for their riders until their visit is done, those traveling through the City without stopping en route to other destinations, and those whose passengers visit the City as one of several planned destinations. Baier said the second category, through-traffic, is the hardest type to educate about City. The City continues to work with motorcoach associations on ways to publicize these regulations.

City authority to restrict motorcoaches

Baier said the City has independent authority to regulate motorcoaches only as long as the regulations apply equally to the oversized vehicle category within which motorcoaches fit. He said the City lacks authority to impose motorcoach-specific restrictions without prior authority from the state to do so and he said the City Attorney had advised staff that City restrictions on motorcoaches must be consistent with the legal requirements of both the Dillon Rule and, because many motorcoaches come from areas such as Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC, the need not to impede interstate commerce.

Baier said a City request for state authority to impose a motorcoach-specific restriction needs to be precisely defined, for example, barring motorcoaches from a specific street, and must address a specific problem. Baier said Williamsburg and Poughkeepsie have successfully requested authority from the state letting them impose certain restrictions on motorcoaches within their city limits.

How to report observed motorcoach violations

Baier said motorcoach violations of rules and regulations should be reported to the Alexandria Police Department's (APD) non-emergency number – 703-838-4444.

Baier said that with the City's five-year resident turnover rate of 45% public outreach publicizing how to report motorcoach violations is especially important. He said that civic associations can play an important public education role in this regard. Torres said it is important for the public to report all violations to APD's non-emergency number, even if though after-the-fact reports do not result in traffic citations, so that the City can document the extent of motorcoaches violations. Baier and Torres said reporting a violation by phone is more effective than searching for an APD officer on the street to report an offending motorcoach.

Baier reviewed City locations designated for motorcoach loading and unloading of passengers, parking, and idling and said the City routinely issues violations for parking in front of City Hall in spaces designated only for passenger pickup and unloading. Baier said T&ES continues to work with industry organizations on ways to encourage drivers' adherence to City regulations. Pennington said the City should work with the American Bus Association to develop a parking app for motorcoaches. Baier said T&ES is developing an app for vehicular parking and will consider also creating a motorcoach-specific app.

Short-term parking

Baier said the City has developed a simple and quick motorcoach reservation system to encourage its use by operators and has been offering free short-term parking permits to increase operator compliance. He said 600 short-term parking permits were issued the previous calendar year and T&ES plans to offer free short-term parking for at least one more season.

Enforcement and reporting of violations.

Bernstein said enforcement is key to improving the effectiveness of City motorcoach regulations and asked if APD routinely shares information about motorcoach violations and complaints with other City agencies such as T&ES and ACVA. Baier said APD provides T&ES information about motorcoach violations once a pattern of violations within a geographic area has been identified and T&ES meets twice a year with ACVA to discuss the issue. Bernstein said the City should create a regularized and timely process to share information.

Several Commissioners said they had called in motorcoach traffic violations on the non-emergency APD without any APD response and Torres said APD responds to non-emergency complaints as quickly as it can. He said APD plans to assign Parking Enforcement officers to The Strand and King Street during the 2013 tourist season, beginning in March and they will proactively enforce regulations. Baier said the Union Street Corridor study had included stakeholder recommendations that a visible on-site traffic enforcement presence be added, especially at congested locations such as Union Street between Cameron and Prince Streets. Torres said he would discuss the importance of proactive enforcement with officers assigned to King Street. Van Fleet said that if APD is unable to provide officers to enforce the regulations then perhaps the Sheriff's Office should be asked to do so.

Manor said that when Union Street is redesigned a single permanent location should be created at which problems and questions could be reported to APD. Baum said the Commission should receive data on weekly motorcoach violations and the related citations issued at its March 2012 and April 2013 Commission meetings. Baier said T&ES plans to start reviewing reported motorcoach violations weekly.

Discussion: Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group Draft Recommendations

Macek reported that the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group (OTAPS) would meet that evening to finalize draft recommendations that were developed during OTAPS meetings held throughout summer 2012. Macek said four Commissioners had been serving on OTAPS: Macek and Pennington, as Waterfront Commission delegates, Hall, as Chamber of Commerce delegate, and Manor, as the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association delegate.

Macek said draft recommendations being considered by OTAPS had been broken into five categories, with parking options offered for each parking district, some applying to all districts, some to individual parking districts. The five categories included (1) measures related to the Residential Parking Permit Program, (2) creating a Citywide Employee Handicapped Parking Permit Program offering 12-hour parking permits, (3) setting neighborhood parking saturation triggers to mark when the City should initiate consideration of corrective actions, (4) adding meters to unmetered residential blocks with businesses in buildings' ground floors, and (5) creating an Old Town Valet Parking Program for businesses that do not offer their own valet parking.

Increasing residents' access to on-street parking in their own neighborhoods: Enforcement

Macek said there is was general agreement within OTAPS that increased enforcement of the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program throughout all parking districts is needed and Commissioners agreed this should be the City's number one parking priority. Watters asked if enforcement has been under-emphasized for budget or philosophical reasons. Macek said APD said parking rules are enforced to the extent possible with existing resource and that APD expects parking enforcement to improve due to new technology.

Macek said data indicates residential parking space availability is most constrained between 5-7 PM, as residents return home and visitors dining out are both seeking on-street parking spaces. Baum said poor enforcement of parking restrictions makes it almost impossible for residents in some neighborhoods, such as South Fairfax Street, to find daytime parking near their homes because employees of local businesses park there all day without fear of being ticketed.

Van Fleet said it was "unconscionable" for residents to be unable to find on-street parking near their homes and said only permitted residents should be able to park in residential neighborhoods after 6 PM. Macek said that when OTAPS considered this proposed restriction the Old Town Civic Association delegate had been among those opposing it out of a concern that it would hurt neighborhood businesses. Macek said the alternative approach is to install multispace parking meters in residential neighborhoods that those with RPPs would be exempt from using so that price could be used to incentivize non-residents to park in garages and away from residential neighborhoods near King Street.

85 percent "saturation parking" threshold

Pennington and Macek said they thought the City's proposal to use an 85 percent parking saturation threshold in a neighborhood as a trigger for the City to take action to increase nearby garage capacity was too high. Pennington said that, for example, if multispace parking meters were proposed as a corrective remedy for parking saturation the public outreach process could take at least a year before a decision could be made.

Mutlispace parking meters

Macek said some OTAPS members have questioned whether multispace meters would work in some parking districts but Macek and Pennington support using multispace parking meters in all residential neighborhoods near King Street and recommend that a pilot within a small residential area be implemented now to test the program's impact. Macek said price should be used within three blocks north and south of King Street to incentivize non-residents to park in garages, on King Street, or further away from King Street. Members expressed support for a pilot program to test the meters' impact

Encouraging non-residents to increase garage use

Bernstein, Macek and other Commissioners said dynamic on-street signage in residential neighborhoods should be used to publicize the availability, price and location

of nearby garage parking. Macek said improving the condition of existing garages would also increase their appeal.

Commissioners said a pilot Old Town valet and validated parking program should be initiated to test the on-street parking impact of using, for example, the City's Market Square garage, for customers of nearby businesses.

The need for consistent parking regulations within each parking district

Smedberg said parking rules should be consistently enforced throughout a parking district and applying consistent restrictions throughout a parking district should replace the current City practice of letting on-street parking hour restrictions vary street by street. Dastgheib said the Union Street Corridor Study had also recommended that parking hours be made consistent within a parking district.

Baum said it is inappropriate for OTAPS to address parking problems related to events at one church in particular without also addressing similar parking problems due to churches in other parking districts. Macek said it would be a good idea for staff to contact other houses of worship to identify those facing similar problems.

Hall said businesses should be asked to advise their employees not to park in residential neighborhoods. Macek said that in most areas daytime parking is not a problem in many neighborhoods, but it is an important idea to consider. Bernstein asked where City Hall employees park and Macek said there is an impression that City employees park on-street. Dastgheib said City employees park at the VRE lot next to the King Street Metro Station, not the neighborhoods. Macek and other Commissioners said they continue to be frustrated by parking under the Wilson Bridge no longer being available. Browand said parking under the bridge is permitted but must be secured.

Pennington moved and Watters seconded that the Commission recommend that the following be included among the OTAPS recommendations:

- that enforcement of parking regulations should be the top priority;
- that metered on-street parking within three blocks north and south of king street should be tried as a pilot to test pricing's impact;
- that the city consider using pay-by-phone and smart phone applications for payment, which could alleviate the need for multispace meters, which the commission believes are incompatible with residential areas in historic old town;
- that dynamic wayfinding signage and development of a smart phone application should be used to inform drivers of the location, price, and availability of off-street, garage parking;
- that there should be consistent non-resident parking restrictions throughout each Old Town residential parking district replacing the current practice of having rules that can vary block-by-block;
- that the City's adoption of new technologies such as license plate readers should be accompanied by providing sufficient staff to implement the effective use of these new technologies;
- that the City should work with employers within each parking district to manage employee demand for parking. and

- that pilot valet and validated parking programs should be implemented for Old Town.

The Pennington/Watters motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Report from Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)

Oronoco Outfall Project

Imig reported that phase 1 of the outfall remediation project, construction of a below-ground remediation system designed to prevent discharge of creosote into the Potomac River from the area beneath the Observation Deck at the foot of Oronoco Street, is expected to begin in early December 2012 and to finish in spring 2013. He said construction will affect Oronoco Street between the Waterfront and North Union Street, at the northern end of Founders Park. He said dredging the river bottom at the outfall, phase 2 of the project, is expected to be finished in 2014.

Bernstein asked when the observation deck could reopen and the boom be removed. Imig said the system's effectiveness would be reviewed after construction and dredging had been completed and, the system reviewed after it had been operating a year. Once the effectiveness of the new system is verified the temporary boom could then be removed. Browand said the City plans to reopen the observation deck at West's Point after the construction and dredging is complete and RPCA had completed any needed maintenance work on the pier. He said a portion of the pier might need to be dismantled because it is located within the contaminated zone if any creosote had been absorbed.

Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Update on Windmill Hill Park bulkhead safety fence.

Browand reported that RPCA had reinstalled the interim safety signage near the bulkhead that someone had removed. He said City Council's November 17 public hearing is expected to consider the public appeal filed of the Board of Architectural Review's choice of a design for the bulkhead's planned safety fence.

RPCA program pricing

Browand reported that RPCA had begun a public outreach process to develop Management Framework Plans for the City's large multi-use parks and said an upcoming public meeting at the Lee Center would consider how to price recreation programs, including Waterfront-area recreation offerings, as part of this overall review.

Browand said public inputs at the hearings would help to categorize for their pricing 30 recreational activities using a "Cost Recovery Pyramid" (the Pyramid) that staff had developed. He said the Pyramid would help evaluate the individual and community benefits a recreational program or activity provides by ranking those benefits as either Highly Individual, Mostly Individual, Individual/Community, Community/Individual, or Community benefits and, once categorized, the City could decide whether and how much it should be subsidized or expected to generate a profit. He said that, for example, an activity that benefits the community as a whole would be fully subsidized, while a recreational activity whose benefit is "Highly Individual" would receive no City subsidy and instead be considered as an enterprise profit center for the City. Other activities

offering a mix of individual and community benefits would either be subsidized to differing degrees or not at all. Browand said RPCA is reaching out to its four advisory commissions—the Waterfront Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Beautification Commission and the Commission on the Arts—for comments on benefits and pricing for the activities they oversee.

Macek said the workshop he had participated in earlier in the year had provided very useful information about the benefits of specific recreational activities and how pricing might affect residents' ability to participate in them. Van Fleet asked how City user fees compare to those of neighboring localities. Browand said the City's fees for programs compare favorably with other Northern Virginia jurisdictions and its fees for after-school programs are substantially lower than Arlington County's.

Other items

Browand reported that the bollards in Founders Park's southern end had been removed. Hall thanked RPCA for the new Point Lumley benches and also commended the three Marina staff—Randy Jones, Anthony Smith and Keith Beasley—for the level at which they have been maintaining parks along the Waterfront. She said further improvements are needed but additional staff will need to be hired if those improvements are to be implemented. Browand said plans for major Waterfront landscaping improvements are being finalized.

Waterfront Plan Implementation

Update on Waterfront Center Conference and Tour in Washington, D.C.

Macek and Lyle discussed their participation two weeks earlier in a tour of Washington, DC's waterfront redevelopment areas related to the recent Waterfront Center conference. Macek, Lyle and City staff from RPCA and P&Z reviewed Georgetown's new Waterfront Park, The Wharf project on the Southwest waterfront, and The Yards near Nationals Park. It was informative to see how the Washington waterfront designs incorporate mixed use design elements such as green space, historic buildings, and piers for historic ships. He said the The Yards plans to incorporate its newly finished park area with mixed-use development whose design elements would include both new and historic buildings.

Macek said that although the scale of Washington's DC's waterfront development is much larger than that planned for the City's Waterfront redevelopment, the tour provided a useful perspective to see how other projects are designing similar elements into their own waterfront redevelopments. He said viewing the Washington planning was a reminder that Alexandria's historic waterfront will no longer be the only one offering visitors similar mixed use features close to Washington, DC.

Lyle said she also attended the Waterfront Conference related to the tour that she also attended, including presentations of two award-winning waterfront projects' whose architects described the new design concept of designing from the water's perspective inward rather than from the waterfront's perspective out onto the water. Lyle said the presenters noted that efforts are consistently made to include waterfront hotels as part

of the redevelopment because hotels with a waterfront view fill up faster and can charge room rates double those for hotels without waterfront views

She said EE&K and Moffat & Nichols, design teams for the Washington's Southwest waterfront revitalization had both worked successfully with the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies to secure Congressional authorization to de-authorize a portion of the Potomac's federal navigation channel in the same way that de-authorization of some areas might be needed to facilitate implementation of some elements of Alexandria's Waterfront Small Area Plan.

Macek said a Commission tour of the Washington, DC waterfront development sites is being planned for spring.

Union Street Corridor Study

Macek reported a Commission letter to the City Manager was sent on October 15, 2012 to convey the Commission's preferred improvements to Union Street that were chosen from among those developed by the Corridor Study and endorsed at the Commission's September 27, 2012 special meeting. He said he would represent the Commission's preferences at the November 7 Transportation Commission and the November 8, 2012 Planning Commission public hearings when each commission considers the Corridor Study recommendations.

Report from Police Department

The PD report was deferred since Lt. Torres had to leave meeting prior to this agenda item.

Reports from Commissioners

Marina Committee

Thayer reported the Committee had, at its October 11, 2012 meeting, focused on two issues: the current vacancy of the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion and the Marina's fee structure. He thanked Baum, Macek and Manor for their participation and invited Commissioners to participate in the Marina Committee meetings as they will continue to examine Marina-related issues at a level of detail not possible within the time constraints of the Commission's monthly meetings. Thayer said additional attendees included: General Services Director Jeremy McPike, Stephanie Landrum with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Nancy Williams and Jack Browand.

Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion Vacancy

Thayer said the Committee discussed the staff summary of the current lease for the Food Pavilion, in effect since 1988 and extending to 2048. All equipment has been removed from the Pavilion and, as of December 2012, the Pavilion will have been vacant for a year. He said Williams had advised the Committee that the Office of Historic Alexandria plans to install Civil War-themed window coverings as a short-term measure in late fall.

Thayer said the present Food Pavilion leaseholder was actively reaching out to potential restaurant tenants to occupy the 10,000-square foot building, a space considered too

large for a single restaurant but too small for two restaurants. He said the Committee recommends that the City consider short- and long-term uses for the space.

Thayer said the Committee had recommended that Commissioners should propose to the current leaseholder and City officials a meeting to discuss the Commission's concern that new tenants be recruited for the site as soon as possible and to consider how the Commission might assist in moving the search forward. Commissioners said they were concerned that, because the property covered by the lease continues to generate revenue for the leaseholder from the remaining tenants, e.g., the Charthouse and related offices, the leaseholder has less of an economic incentive to find a new tenant for the Food Pavilion space than if no revenue were being generated. Macek said he would draft a Commission letter that proposes Commissioners meet with the leaseholder and tenant group to discuss the Commission's concerns, interests and ideas about the importance of resolving the vacancy problem as soon as possible. Bernstein and Manor suggested the Commission consider ideas for types of tenants that the Commission might think it would be useful to consider for the space in addition to the restaurant tenants currently being sought. Stephanie Landrum with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership indicated that several potential tenants for the property were previously identified but those prospects did not come to fruition for a number of reasons; however, there is interest in the property and, with that, hopefully a viable tenant(s) can be found.

Marina fee structure

Thayer said the Committee had discussed at length the question of whether and how to increase the City Marina's fee structure that has been unchanged for the past four years. In most categories the Marina's fees are lower than those charged by nearby marinas. He said the Committee's review of fees charged by the Columbia Island, Gangplank, James Creek, and National Harbor marinas showed that the City Marina's leaseholder rates for pleasure craft, \$8 per foot for City residents and \$9 per foot for non-residents, is less than rates charged by those nearby marinas but the City Marina's \$2 per foot fee charged for transient overnight visits is higher than the fees charged by all the nearby marinas except for National Harbor, which charges \$2.50 per foot.

Thayer said it was the Committee's recommendation that the City Marina should raise its fees for resident and non-resident pleasurecraft leaseholders by \$1.00 per foot, for transient overnight per-night charges by \$0.50 per foot, and for transient visits up to a four hour-period by \$5 per foot. This would update the Marina's fee schedule to include leaseholder rates of \$9 per foot for residents and \$10 per foot for non-residents; an overnight per-night transient fee of \$2.50 per foot; and a transient fee for visits up to four hours of \$20 per vessel. Thayer said that, with the Marina currently making available 48 annual leaseholder slips and 13 transient slips, the Committee also decided to consider the proper balance between leaseholder and transient slips.

Macek said the goal for updating the Marina's fee schedule is to minimize the City's subsidy by raising fees to a level where the rates are comparable to nearby marinas. Marina capital improvements supported by the Commission would additionally justify the increased fees. Watters asked if it was appropriate for the Marina to have lower fees in

light of the greater amenities offered by other marinas. Macek said that although the City Marina offers fewer amenities than National Harbor it offers boaters the substantial advantage of being able to moor within walking distance of historic Alexandria's many popular restaurants and attractions and that the Marina's waiting list for boaters wishing to rent an annual slip reflects this popularity.

Baum said it would be inappropriate for the City not to raise Marina fees for boat owners at a time when RPCA is conducting a review of fees charged for recreational activities throughout the City.

Baum moved and Manor seconded that the Commission adopt the Marina Committee's fee structure recommendations and document in a letter to City staff. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Art/History Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee

McCall reported that the Art/History Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee (Art/History Committee) continues to meet twice monthly and is, among other tasks, finalizing its proposed process for naming Waterfront public spaces. He said the proposed process would be reviewed by Commission for the Arts and the Alexandria Archeological Commission at their meetings that week and that he expected the finalized naming process to be ready for the Waterfront Commission to consider at its November meeting. Macek asked if the stakeholder review of Van Fleet's Fitzgerald Park naming proposal, using the proposed process, would be finished by the Commission's November meeting. McCall said he could not yet predict when review of the Fitzgerald Park proposal would be finished. Baum requested that the Art/History Committee add the Park and Recreation Commission to those listed under "appropriate commissions" on the draft naming process's flow chart.

Announcements / Public Discussion

There were no public comments.

Macek announced the next Commission meeting would be on November 20, 2012.

Thayer announced that the next Marina Committee meeting would be on November 8, 2012.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned without objection at 9:54 AM.