

## Summary Minutes

### Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting Tuesday, May 17, 2011

#### Room 2000, Alexandria City Hall

#### **Members**

Present: Engin Artemel, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.  
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association  
William Cromley, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission  
Mel Fortney, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.  
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat lease holder  
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Nathan Macek, At-large citizen and Chair  
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)  
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council  
Robert Taylor, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Van Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association

Excused: Jay Atkinson, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St  
Linda Hafer, Old Town Business Association  
Peter Pennington, Environmental Policy Commission  
Pete Peterson, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

**City Staff:** Lt. Mark Bergin, Police Department  
Jack Browand, Recreation, Parks, Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA  
Jim Spengler, RPCA Director  
Nancy Williams, Planning & Zoning (P&Z)

**Guests:** Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Harry Harrington, Old Town Boat Club  
David Olinger  
John Whitestone, Turner Development  
Matthew Whitestone, Turner Development

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

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

#### **Approval of Minutes from April 19, 2011 Meeting**

Moved by Artemel, seconded by Van Fleet, to table the April minutes until the June meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Moved by Artemel, seconded by Manor, to approve the summary minutes of the April 28 work session. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

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

Browand reported that the Department will begin submitting its monthly report to the Committee in writing prior to the monthly meetings. This will let Committee members review issues in advance and, where possible, advise Browand which issues should be discussed in more detail at the meeting. Staff continues with preparations for the spring/summer Waterfront season. Department weather-related e-mails to Marina leaseholders have become more regularized, especially when storms are predicted. The dockmaster hut is open. Procurement activities for the new Marina security cameras providing real-time Web-accessible security images for leaseholders continue.

RPCA has set up a process that will for the first time let Commissioners and members of the public propose RPCA projects to be considered for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). RPCA staff will evaluate the Web submissions twice yearly with inputs from project stakeholders. Browand invited Committee feedback on the new Web-based process and form. Macek invited Committee members to propose at the June meeting any items they would like the Committee to consider recommending for the CIP budget.

Browand reported that RPCA and T&ES are developing a coordinated spring and summer storm response plan that will be comparable to the City's winter coordinated response for weather events.

Gosnell said he wanted to clarify his comments at the April Committee meeting about the staff response to April's weather event-related problems at the Marina, adding that the Marina staff response to problems had been excellent and that RPCA communications with slip leaseholders have improved significantly since the April storm. Gosnell reported on his communications with the Mayor and other City officials regarding ways to enhance Marina security, including the possibility of the City installing Marina gates. Macek invited Gosnell to propose the Marina gate as a possible CIP item for the Committee to consider recommending at its June meeting. Artemel suggested that a fenced-in marina might be more appropriate at another Waterfront location once the Waterfront Plan is implemented. Browand said RPCA would need to update existing plans for Marina gates if CIP funding were approved.

Artemel commended RPCA for its prompt post-storm cleanup of logs and debris from Oronoco Bay Park. Browand reported that because RPCA has received requests from the public for logs, some of the washed up items may be moved to a central location for removal by the public. RPCA is developing plans to repair the damaged observation deck in Oronoco Bay Park.

Bernstein reported that the Founders Park Community Association, at its annual meeting, commended RPCA for its maintenance of the park. The Association plans to continue its activities to maintain the park.

### **Report from Police Department**

Bergin reported that patrols in the Waterfront area will be expanded. There will be enhanced efforts to enforce bicycle regulations. Sporadic car break-ins are being investigated. Police are actively investigating a serious attack by several teenagers on a man fishing on the dock in the evening.

The Committee briefly discussed possible ways to enhance the security presence along the Waterfront and intends to consider the issue further.

### **Waterfront Small Area Plan**

Williams reported that several elements of the Plan had been modified prior to its forwarding to City Council for consideration at its May 14 meeting. The changes reflected public comments in recent months and actions by the Planning Commission at its May 3 meeting. About 50 public statements were presented at the Council meeting. Several Committee members present at the Council meeting said they were concerned that some of the public comments reflected objections to aspects of the Plan that did not exist, indicating a lack of public familiarity with Plan details and the need for more P&Z efforts to familiarize the public with the Plan. Williams said P&Z is developing responses to City Council requests for more detailed information on issues including parking, flood mitigation, zoning restraints on Waterfront hotels, the potential impact of the Plan on parks and on the Open Space Plan.

City Council will hold a work session on Saturday, June 11 to consider additional information received from P&Z. Williams said that after Council had approved the Plan P&Z would follow up with an in-depth financial study developing cost and revenue estimates for each of the Plan's alternative proposals, including the Open Space option.

Committee members commended the Council for its thorough review of the draft Plan and its insistence on further specifics. Artemel said that perhaps the Council should defer final action on the Waterfront Plan until September to make possible a careful review of any changes to the Plan during and after the June meetings. Smedberg said that, to clear up public confusion about the Plan, P&Z needs to do more to make the Plan's details clearer to the general public, including positioning the Plan more prominently on the City website.

Committee members speaking at the Council hearing included Macek, Bernstein, Cromley, Smedberg, and Van Fleet. Macek's statement to Council presented the Committee's conceptual position on the Plan – emphasizing openness, connectedness, flood mitigation, parking and other issues – but requested more time for the Committee to refine its comments to Council. Smedberg noted Van Fleet's concerns that above-ground parking might be excluded from existing City height restrictions. Smedberg said that, since redevelopment of the two Robinson Terminal sites is likely with or without a Waterfront Plan, he and several other Council members want more attention paid to the problems of parking and congestion in the area. Bernstein said she hoped the Planning Commission's definition of a boutique hotel as having up to 150 rooms would be reconsidered by the Council and P&Z.

Smedberg said the Plan should make clear that the City recognizes the specialness of the Waterfront. Cromley said that when considering Waterfront redevelopment options, people should remember that both landscape and architecture define the notable aspects of many of the world's great cities. Van Fleet said that officials should be more willing to consider a variety of options to fund alternatives such as open space, museums, and parks options since the City had not required Potomac Yards development to generate revenue to cover all of its elements.

Gosnell said that when the City considers the potential revenue and cost impacts of the Plan's various options, it should be remembered that two to three hotels might provide the revenue to

service a one million dollar City bond. Manor said increasing existing density limits would help City retailers by bringing more people into the neighborhood.

Moved by Artemel, seconded by Bernstein, that, reflecting the Committee's discussion at its April 28 work session, the Waterfront Committee supports in principle the Fitzgerald Square concept as an important element of the Waterfront Plan as an activity hub, and as the preferred alternative over the options presented by staff. The motion passed by a show of hands, 9-2, with Fortney and Van Fleet dissenting.

Harrington said that the Old Dominion Boat Club continues to meet with City staff, but has not reached an agreement with the City about Fitzgerald Square or relocation of its parking lot.

Committee members scheduled a May 26 work session to finalize a formal Committee position on the Plan that will be forwarded for consideration at the Council's June 11 work session. Williams said the Council may schedule an additional public hearing on the Plan June 25.

### **Request for Commercial Docking – Potomac Riverboat Co. (PRC) Minnie V**

The Committee returned to the request from PRC to dock the historic skipjack Minnie V at the City Marina, a plan which includes PRC building a floating dock at the Marina that will be available only for mooring the Minnie V.

Hall, speaking as a representative of PRC, reported that the Minnie V would be available for Committee members to view on Monday, May 23. Macek reviewed a document summarizing Committee members' comments on the docking request at the April Committee meeting. Browand reported that National Park Service approval is still pending for the NPS permits needed for the City to install the pilings needed for the Minnie V's floating dock. Gosnell said that though he supports bringing the Minnie V to the Marina on grounds it is an historic vessel, he asked how the decision might affect Committee consideration of future requests to dock other historic vessels at the Marina. Staff said that City regulations give any commercial operator the right to dock at the North Pier four times a month.

The Committee deferred action on PRC's Minnie V docking request until its June meeting.

### **Report on Waterfront Sunday Activities from Economic Development Subcommittee**

Hall reported that as part of the Committee-sponsored Waterfront Sunday activities offered weekly during the summer behind the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the Alexandria Seaport Foundation would be offering examples of miniature boat building the following Sunday. Memorial Day weekend will have no arts activities, but music was planned.

### **Announcements**

Consistent with the City's efforts to bring Tall Ships to the Waterfront, Hall reported that The Gloria, a tall ship from Colombia, would be anchoring off Mount Vernon Monday May 23 and proceed upriver Tuesday morning, anchor off the Alexandria Waterfront. It would be available for invitation-only tours. The ship is scheduled to continue upriver to the Port of Washington on Tuesday.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 9:30 a.m.