

## Summary Minutes

### Alexandria Waterfront Committee Meeting November 16, 2010

#### Lee Center Gold Room

#### **Members**

Present: Engin Artemel  
Christine Bernstein  
Mel Fortney  
Linda Hafer  
Charlotte Hall  
Nathan Macek  
Jody Manor  
Peter Pennington  
Pete Peterson  
Van Van Fleet

Excused: Jay Atkinson  
William Cromley  
Doug Gosnell

Absent: Paul Smedberg

**City Staff:** Lt. Len Fouch, Police Department  
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager  
Jim Hixon, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Adrian King, General Services  
Jeremy McPike, General Services  
Nancy Williams, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)

**Guests:** Susan Cohen  
Harry Harrington  
Ofc. C. Hebron, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)  
Sarita Schotta

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Pennington, second by Bernstein to approve the October minutes as drafted. Motion carried on a voice vote.

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

Bernstein praised the tree planting at Founders Park.

**Report from General Services Department**

McPike introduced King, who provided an update on the Dockmaster Hut repairs. The City would rehabilitate the hut using different materials resistant to water infiltration, which causes decay, mold, and mildew. Contractors would gut the structure, leaving the existing frame in place. The design would mitigate the impact of diesel fumes within the hut. The City was working with a contractor to resolve the issue and hoped to have a rehabbed Dockmaster Hut in place before the spring boating season began around March 1.

**Report from Department of Planning and Zoning**

Williams provided an update on Waterfront Plan progress to date, including meetings held and general questions raised by interested stakeholders. An open house was planned for Monday, December 13 focused on Waterfront design, circulation, and parking issues. She anticipated public release of a draft Waterfront Small Area Plan in January, and presentation of the full plan at the Waterfront Committee's February meeting.

**Report from Police Department**

Fouch provided a brief report on Citywide, Old Town, and Waterfront-specific crime and security issues. He reported that there have been both compliments and complaints regarding enforcement of bicycle infractions along Union Street.

Fouch suggested the inclusion of police contact information on the Committee's website, which has been a useful tool employed by civic associations and other groups to improve communications with the police department. The Committee concurred and Macek said he would work with RPCA staff to add this to the Committee's web site.

Macek reported that the Committee's letter to Judge Moore regarding adjudication of bicycle citations issued along the Alexandria Waterfront would be held for an in-person meeting with the Judge.

Macek reported that Atkinson had reported that Transportation and Environmental Services planned to install a zebra crosswalk at the corner of Queen Street and North Union Street in an effort to mitigate issues at the intersection identified by the Committee.

**Discussion: Waterfront as an Economic Development Catalyst**

Hall and Manor led a Committee discussion of proactive ideas for improving the attractiveness of the Waterfront in the near-term. Hall noted that there were several improvements that could be accomplished by the spring of 2011 to fix existing problems. Manor said the existing Waterfront was an asset that did not

generate the revenue it could. He said the Waterfront was not well-utilized by local residents, but was by tourists, and the food pavilion had not achieved its full potential.

Committee members provided several suggestions:

- Sunday farmers market on the Waterfront, which would be an amenity for local people, generate tax revenue, and serve as a tourist attraction. A Sunday market could be held at a later time than the Saturday market at Market Square, and could be programmed so as not to cannibalize the Saturday market.
- A family-friendly place for children to eat, which could also attract people with dogs.
- Food carts similar to those proposed for Market Square for the spring and summer of 2011.
- A food hall or other venue.
- A standing craft fair offering high-quality, low- to mid-priced gifts unique to the City.
- Artists' involvement in dressing up the interior of the Food Pavilion.

Other fundamental issues to resolve include:

- Multiple agencies with responsibility over the Waterfront, making it difficult to get things done.
- Difficulty for visitors to find their way to King Street from the Water Taxi, which is not a friendly welcome
- Confusing territory between Waterfront leased space and City-owned space
- Difficulty programming activities at the Waterfront, such as Seaport Day.
- Panoply of street performers, which attract visitors but also impede pedestrian flow.

Moved by Pennington, second by Hafer for the Waterfront Committee to form a subcommittee to examine issues of economic development of the Waterfront, to be called the Economic Development Subcommittee. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Volunteers for the Committee included Hafer, Hall, Macek, Manor, Pennington, and Peterson, but all members of the Waterfront Committee may actively participate in the Subcommittee. The first meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. at the Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion.

### **Discussion: Meeting with City Attorney's Office regarding Waterfront Enforcement**

Macek and Pennington briefed the Committee on meetings held with Chris Spera and Joanna Frizzel of the City Attorney's Office and Fouch regarding enforcement issues along the Waterfront. Questions addressed were:

- ***Are ordinances adequate?*** Based on review of existing City Code, the answer is yes.
- ***Is the current response adequate?*** Answer again appears to be yes, given a memo distributed to Alexandria Police officers in 2009 that instructed officers to respond to incidents along the Waterfront as they would on land. Officers were also instructed to respond to incidents on vessels docked to Alexandria's pier beyond the pierhead line (and therefore in the Potomac waters of the District of Columbia) as they would any incident within the City of Alexandria, as Alexandria Police are most able to respond to any incident first. Per the memo, any cases stemming from activities on the Waterfront are to be reported to the Commonwealth's Attorney's office, which will then refer any cases beyond Alexandria's jurisdiction to the U.S. Attorney's Office or the D.C. Attorney General, as appropriate.
- ***What happens if Alexandria were to construct a pier into the District?*** This must be addressed by any agreement between Alexandria and the District governing construction of a pier into District waters, but it is clear that something similar to the intergovernmental compacts that currently exist between District, state, and local governments in the Washington region regarding law enforcement could be structured to govern a pier. For example, such an agreement currently exists for the Wilson Bridge, which crosses from Prince George's County, Md., through the District, into Alexandria, Va.

#### **Discussion: Meeting with Metropolitan Police Department Harbor Patrol**

Macek provided an update on the meeting he and Gosnell had held with Lt. Paul Niepling of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Harbor Patrol Unit. He noted that MPD recognized its responsibility to enforce water violations in the Potomac River off Alexandria, but that it can be difficult to effectively enforce at this end of the river given its width. MPD planned to conduct an enforcement campaign off Alexandria in 2011. MPD would also consider clarifying the "no wake" message on a new sign posted at the Wilson Bridge to specify that the policy applies shore-to-shore. MPD was also interested in working with RPCA to host a boater safety course in Alexandria for Virginia-based boaters. All boaters in District waters are required to complete a boater safety course, and MPD offers such courses free of charge.

#### **Discussion: Waterfront Committee Meeting Venue**

The Committee was generally supportive of moving Committee meetings to a venue on the Waterfront. Macek invited members to provide any leads on possible venues for the January and subsequent meeting, to be discussed at the December Committee meeting.

#### **Discussion: Waterfront Committee December Meeting Schedule**

Moved by Pennington, second by Hall, to hold the December Waterfront Committee meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 14. Motion carried on a voice vote.

**Announcements**

Pennington announced that the City's climate change action plan would be released in January and introduced at a series of community meetings.

Macek announced that the Holiday Boat Parade of Lights would be held Saturday, Dec. 4, at 6:00 p.m. at the Alexandria City Marina and the Waterfront Plan Community Open House would be Monday, Dec. 13, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Hafer announced that the Torpedo Factory Art Center's Holiday Open House would be Thursday, Dec. 2 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and the Art League's Holiday Fest would be Friday, Dec. 3 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Art League's Madison Annex facility, 305 Madison Street.

**Adjournment**

Pennington moved to adjourn, Bernstein seconded. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.