

Summary Minutes – DRAFT

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Alexandria City Hall, Room 2000

Members:

Present:

Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Art Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat leaseholder
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Acting Chair
Jacob Hoogland, Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
Kathy Siefert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Townsend A. (Van) Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St
Ryan Wojtanowski, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

Excused:

Morgan Delaney, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association

Absent:

Dennis Auld, Citizen, Park Planning District II
Trey Hanbury, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Patricia Miller, Alexandria Commission on the Arts

Vacancies: Citizen representative from Park Planning District III

At-large citizen representative from any group or area not listed above

City Staff:

Francine Bromberg, Acting City Archeologist
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Marketing, Special Events and Waterfront
Operations, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Lt. Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Lance Mallamo Office of Historic Alexandria
Sandra Marks, T&ES
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)

Guests:

Engin Artemel;
John Bordner
Nate Macek, Planning Commission

Ruth McKentz, Beautification Commission
David Speck
Julie Wannamaker

Welcome and Introductions

The Commission was called to order at 7:32 a.m. and Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from February 14 and February 19, 2013 meetings

Moved by Dunn seconded by Fox to approve the summary minutes of the February 14, 2013 meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Moved by Dunn, seconded by Van Fleet, to approve the summary minutes of the February 19, 2013 meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Discussion: City Manager Response – Waterfront Commission Budget Priority Letter

Windmill Hill Park

Commissioners were pleased most of their recommendations to the City Manager were reflected in the City Manager’s proposed FY2014 budget. Watters asked if it would have been useful for Windmill Hill Park funding to have been moved up further. Browand said Council’s decision to move funds up one year had been in response to staff’s recommendation to do so and that funding to initiate work on the project has already been set aside.

Marina dredging

Thayer said the Marina Committee had discussed whether the planned Marina dredging should be deferred until after the seawall had been stabilized when it had been briefed at its March 14, 2013 meeting about the City’s ongoing Marina facilities condition assessment. Gosnell said he thought the seawall should be prioritized ahead of dredging. Browand said the City is conducting a bathymetric survey to determine the appropriate timing for Marina dredging and seawall maintenance is among the factors being considered. Wojtanowski and Gosnell said it was important when considering issues related to the Marina utility upgrades to include conducting a risk assessment for the piers non-GFI plugs. Browand said these questions were among those being reviewed during the ongoing Marina facilities condition assessment and that the final report’s recommendations would be divided into three-tiers: “Must-Do’s (to be done right away), “Should-Do’s”, and “Could-Do’s” (optional). Hall said Captain John had raised these same concerns regarding the Marina facilities.

Public Comments:

Macek, former Commission chair, said Marina dredging is usually conducted every 10 years unless the impact of a big storm necessitates it being done sooner and that dredging had been included in the current budget as a placeholder to ensure that funding would be available to cover any costs that might develop. He said the last Marina dredging had been done during the 2007-2008 time period.

Report from Police Department

Hayes reported that statistics of crime incidents within the Waterfront area indicate a 42 percent decrease as compared to previous year data.

Hayes said APD will be conducting a public education effort to remind bicyclists that they need to adhere to traffic regulations. Baum said that, as a way to deter double parking by morning delivery trucks, locations should be identified that could be used between 7 and 9 a.m. by delivery trucks servicing local businesses and that this information should then be provided to local businesses.

Hall said tour buses will soon start bringing visitors to the Marina and she will be working with the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) staff to solicit the necessary bus permits and to educate carriers about the authorized locations for parking, loading and unloading. She urged Commissioners to remind business community members to participate in ACVA's campaign to educate motor coaches about the City's traffic and parking regulations. Gosnell said the APD presence should be increased during the two-week Cherry Blossom festival period to enhance enforcement.

Communications Center response when citizens report traffic and parking violations

Smedberg asked Hayes to ensure that Communications Center staff treats calls reporting motor coach violations (e.g., loading and unloading at inappropriate sites, blocking traffic, etc.) with the same attention given to other incidents reported to the Communications Center. Hayes said he would follow up on the issue but noted the Communications Center is no longer under APD jurisdiction.

Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Marina Facility Condition Assessment Study Update

Browand reported that the study is ongoing, that consultants facilitated two meetings, one with City staff and a second with the Marina Committee, Marina users and the general public to discuss issues of concern. He said additional staffing would be required for the City's planned examination of conditions of the Marina's underwater structures. He said the final results of the assessment are expected in late April or early May 2013.

Windmill Hill Park Bulkhead Update

Browand said staff expects to have the new fence installed within the first two week of April and noted that the installation delay had been caused by a difficulty in obtaining the fence posts.

City Marina Tree Trimming

Browand reported it had been completed.

Marina Fees Update

Browand reported that Council had, at its February 16, 2013 meeting, unanimously approved the fee increases recommended by the Commission. He said information to leaseholders had been sent out slightly later this year to wait for the proposed fee increase to be approved and that 40 leaseholders had thus far submitted paperwork for their leases.

Other

Special Events Policies and Procedural Manual – proposed policy amendment (Founders Park)

Browand reported that a policy modification is being proposed for events held in Founders Park that would permit small-scale events to be held there and he provided a detailed version of the proposed policy amendment. He said he had discussed the planned proposal with the Founders Park Community Association and they said they do not oppose it and he would ensure that Bernstein, the Commission’s Founders Park Community Association representative, has the proposed amendment.

In response to Manor’s question, Browand said plantings near the Food Pavilion area are the responsibility of the Realco Company and the General Services is responsible for the gazebo.

Marina security update

Browand reported that, as recommended by the Commission, responsibility for Marina security will be transferred from General Services to RPCA in FY2014. He said the City is preparing an RFP for Citywide contract security services during FY2014 and RPCA will to assume responsibility at that time. Hall said the advantage of RPCA’s being responsible is that it should have a better understanding of issues related to the Marina area, including how City jurisdiction meshes together with federal, state and District of Columbia jurisdictions in this area. Thayer said the Marina committee will be encouraging Marina leaseholders to report any property damage both to APD and the RPCA dockmaster and leaseholders should report all such incidents so that the City has a complete picture of security-related conditions at the Marina.

Waterfront Plan Implementation

Planning & Zoning

W2 Zoning Text Amendment Update

Williams said Council had, at its March 18, 2013 meeting, approved two text amendment recommended by the Planning Commission at its March 5, 2013 meeting. One reaffirms the City’s commitment to implementing the zoning of the Waterfront Small Area Plan and allows redevelopment to move beyond litigation that has held up the plan, and the second clarifies zoning text regarding the applicability of protest petitions.

Williams said the City’s next step, adopting an ordinance reflecting the changes, is likely to be completed within the next couple months.

Food Court/Torpedo Factory – Williams said the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) had reported that an upscale family restaurant is considering the Realco site as a possible location.

Development Updates

204-206 South Union Street – Williams reviewed final work being done on these historic buildings and said work is likely to be finished by June 2013

The Oronoco condominium - Williams reported staff is discussing with EYA the possibility of the Commission touring the site but that construction work will need to be further along before it can take place.

Budget Work Session on Capital Improvement Plan Budget

Williams reported that the Council budget work session on Wednesday March 20, 2013 would focus on the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY2014-23 and noted that the City Manager's proposed CIP budget includes many of the CIP items recommended by the Commission in its September 11, 2012 letter to the City Manager detailing the Commission's FY2014 operating budget and FY2014-23 CIP priorities.

Transportation & Environmental Services

King Street and Strand Backflow Preventer

URS As Built Survey Update

Williams reported that Emily Baker of T&ES had advised that consultants have begun gathering the data that will be used by both the landscape architectural design and flood mitigation consultants for their reports.

Backflow project

Williams reported that Baker said T&ES is advertising for consultants for the project and expects construction to begin in May/June 2013. Williams said Baker will update the Commission on these two projects at an upcoming meeting.

Beachcombers RFP

Williams reported that General Services (GS) had issued on February 28, 2013 a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a long-term lease agreement for The Beachcombers Building to be operated as a restaurant and said the RFP had been posted to the GS website. She said proposals must be received by June 10, 2013.

Hall, Smedberg and Van Fleet said they are disappointed that the RFP invites only restaurant-related uses, an issue that Commissioners have raised with staff, including GS Director McPike, several times. Dunn and Wojtanowski said they think the City action is consistent with the Commission's resolution passed its February 2013 meeting.

Union Street Corridor Study Update

Bicycle Corral.

Marks reported that the Transportation Commission had considered the Commission's recommendations for Union Street and had incorporated most of them into the Transportation Commission's recommendations. She said that the Commission's recommendation that the bicycle corral, for parking bicycles, be moved from its proposed location at the foot of King Street to a site around the corner had not been accepted since staff considered it important for the bicycle parking to be visible so that it is used and Council had approved the original site. She expected the bicycle corral to be in place within the next few weeks and hoped that this would discourage parking bicycles at trees.

Pilot for No Left Turns at Union/King Streets

Marks said data collection had just been completed during March to determine whether instituting no-left-turn might produce unexpected consequences for neighboring streets and

T&ES would present the data to the Traffic and Parking Board at its March 25, 2013 meeting. Marks said data on the impact of the change would be reviewed in fall 2013.

Designating parking areas for early morning deliveries

Marks said that this idea, raised by Commissioners, was a recommendation included in the Union Street Corridor Study and T&ES would be examining potential locations.

Reports from Commissioners

Marina Committee

Thayer said the major issues being followed by the Committee at this time include Marina security, leaseholder requests for additional parking being made available near the Marina, interest in having possible sandwich sources east of Union Street, a continuing concern about trash removal from the water, and the need to enforce a no-wake zone. Thayer said the Committee had scheduled an April 11, 2013 meeting with leaseholders to review Marina rules.

Art and History Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee

Mallamo provided the report on behalf of the Commissioners who sit on this committee since they were unable to attend the Commission meeting. He said each of the current Art and History Implementation Committee members also sits on a City Commission. He said the Committee will be reporting to each of the relevant City commissions about the committee's activities and he reviewed a formal meeting held in January 2013 at the Lyceum to discuss with members of all those City commissions how they would like to be advised about the activities of the Art and History Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee's activities.

Mallamo reported that the Naming Process developed by the Art and History Committee had been revised several times and Mallamo and Browand are working to docket it for Council approval. Mallamo said the first naming proposal received by the Committee had been submitted by Van Fleet, proposing that Waterfront Park be renamed Fitzgerald Park, and he would be discussing next steps with Van Fleet.

Mallamo said members of the Art and History Committee had held a one-day retreat in January 2013 to discuss ways to incorporate components of the Waterfront Plan, such as having public art reflecting City history. Mallamo said that although questions had been raised about whether funding has been identified for the history elements of the Waterfront Plan, the Office of Historic Alexandria budget includes funds that will be available for this purpose. Mallamo said he does not think that funding for the Waterfront Plan's public art elements will compete for funding with its history-related projects. He said the Waterfront's Oronoco Bay area is one of the first areas now being considered for implementing the Plan's art and history components..

Discussion

Mallamo said applications are being accepted for the expanded Art and History Committee and potential members do not have to be members of City commissions. Smedberg asked how widely the City's arts and culture communities will be engaged in the process and said it is also important for the City to reach out to members of the broader Alexandria community involved in the national arts community because they could provide useful insights for developing a vision of how the Waterfront Plan's art and history components might be incorporated into its

implementation. Mallamo said Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts, should have information about City outreach efforts to engage members of the City's broader arts community. Mallamo said innovative and creative ideas have been and will continue to be sought for ways to implement elements of the Waterfront Plan. Watters and Smedberg said a published document should be created to advertise the Art and History Waterfront Implementation Committee's outreach efforts to involve members of the City's broader arts community.

Williams said the City expects both the Art and History Committee and the Waterfront Commission to be involved in the process of developing the art and history implementation plans and she invited Commissioners to recommend people from the City's arts community whom they know to be interested in participating in the process to develop a vision for implementing the Waterfront Plan's art and history elements.

Fitzgerald Park Naming Proposal

Browand updated the Commission about the status of the staff review of Van Fleet's proposal that Waterfront Park be renamed Fitzgerald Park. Hall asked that the Commission be briefed on the status of actions related to the proposal at either its April or May Commission meeting.

Environmental Policy Commission

Wojtanowski reported that when the Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) had discussed the City Manager's proposed FY2014 operating budget at its meeting that week members had been concerned about the proposal to increase headway for the King Street Trolley from 15 to 20 minutes. He said the EPC considers the King Street Trolley to be a vital environment-friendly City service that helps to reduce vehicular traffic heading to the Waterfront area. Thayer said the Trolley's trip frequency should be increased, not decreased, since during peak periods in the summer it often leaves King Street Metro at full capacity and is unable to pick up passengers along King Street wishing to travel to the Waterfront. Siefert asked whether the schedule could be seasonally modified. Smedberg suggested the Commission convey by letter its position to Council on the proposed scheduling cutback for the King Street Trolley.

Wojtanowski moved that the Commission send a letter to Council expressing support for the King Street Trolley to operate continuously rather than having its schedule cut to a 20-minute headway as proposed, and for investigating ways to reallocate funds to support the Trolley service.

Macek, former Commission chair, said that City resources are wasted by not having the Trolley operate continuously rather than requiring drivers to park and wait to ensure they depart on a planned 15-minute schedule rather than having the Trolley run "at least every 15 minutes".

Marks said T&ES would provide additional details about options for potential cost-savings for the existing service.

Discussion: Changes in the Commission's chairing and membership in light of former Chair Nate Macek's recent resignation

Hall said she would be willing to continue to serve as Acting Chair, in light of Macek's recent resignation, until at least June 30, 2013, and suggested the Commission vote on a new Chair after new members had been appointed to fill existing vacancies. There was a Commission consensus that Hall should serve as Acting Chair until that time and Commissioners nominated Thayer to replace Hall as Vice Chair while she serves as Acting Chair.

Moved by Fox, seconded by Manor, that Thayer be elected as Acting Vice Chair of the Commission. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Van Fleet said that although he did not disagree with Hall's serving as Acting Chair, he thought that, on principle, the Commission's Chair should be a citizen member who does not represent commercial interests.

Hall said she had been actively working to recruit additional members to the Commission and reminded Commissioners that the requirement that they attend at least 75 percent of Commission meetings is especially important with the Commission's broad jurisdiction and the need to maintain the Commission's record of active involvement that had been successfully led by former Chair Macek. She said she had talked with one Commissioner about whether he wishes to remain on the Commission in light of his difficulty attending meetings.

Announcements / Public Discussion

Hall reviewed the schedule of upcoming Commission meetings.

Adjournment

Moved by Fox, seconded by Watters, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.