

Summary Minutes
ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, May 20, 2014
City Hall
Sister Cities Conference Room

Commission Members

Present

Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Howard Bergman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Suzanne Bethel, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
John Bordner, Citizen west of Washington St.
Morgan Delaney, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Arthur Fox, east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholder
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Jacob Hoogland, Alexandria Archeological Commission
Mari Lou Livingood, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
Stephen Mutty, Citizen Park Planning District I
Paul Smedberg, Member, 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

Absent:

Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II

Vacancy:

Citizen Park Planning District III

City Staff:

Emily Baker, Director, Project Implementation (DPI)
Fran Bromberg, Acting City Archeologist
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Commission Staff Liaison, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Tom Canfield, Planning and Zoning (P&Z) City Architect
Tony Gammon, DPI
Dirk Geratz, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Faroll Hamer, Director, P&Z
Lt. Don Hayes, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
James Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Hillary Poole, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning (P&Z) & Department of Project

Implementation (DPI)

Guests:

Bert Ely, Friends of the Waterfront, Old Town Civic Association
Chris Furlong, CityInterests
Dene Garbow, Harborside
Mel Garbow, resident
Skip Graffam, Olin Design Studio
Tony Kupersmith, resident
Karen Pallansch, CEO, Alexandria Renew Enterprises (AlexRenew)
Val Hawkins Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)
Ruth McKenty, Beautification Committee
John McPherson, resident
Randy Rundol, resident
Pete Sidle, resident
David Speck, resident
Dan Straub, Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC)

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from April 15 (not 17), 2014

Moved by Dunn, seconded by Muttu, to approve the April 15, 2014 summary minutes.
Passed by unanimous voice vote with no corrections.

AlexRenew Potomac Interceptor Cleaning Project Update

Pallansch reviewed AlexRenew's advanced wastewater treatment and reclamation mission, its governing structure, history, billing and operations. AlexRenew was formerly known as the Alexandria Sanitation Authority. Pallansch reviewed the plans for its South Carlyle project and its Four Mile Run Pump Station Upgrade as examples of how it produces clean and safe City water. Pallansch reviewed AlexRenew's environmental projects in the City such as stream cleaning, participation in the Alexandria Seaport Foundation's STEM on the Potomac, and Earth Day. Pallansch said AlexRenew expects its new STEM education facility to replace its existing education facility in 2015. She said their annual open house is planned for September 20, 2014. Pallansch said it was necessary to re-let the Potomac Interceptor Cleaning Project because the initial contractor did not have the capacity to address the pipe conditions found after the work had begun. She said AlexRenew expects work to resume in fall 2014.

Livingood commended AlexRenew's educational presentation to the 360 students from TC Williams' International Academy who participated in the Seaport Foundation's 2014 STEM on the Potomac program.

In response to Tony Kupersmith's question, Pallansch said the plant has a daily treatment capacity of 54 million gallons a day and treats on average 40 million gallons daily. She said recent downpours had produced up to 120 million gal/day and resulted in one overflow event.

Unit Block King Street Update

On behalf of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Browand reported that the pedestrian plaza planned as a pilot project for the unit block of King Street will be implemented only after the City has identified a funding source to cover its maintenance costs. He said staff could not predict when that would be. He said traffic flow through the plaza will be maintained for the King Street Trolley and motor coaches.

Questions re: construction activity at the foot of King Street that morning

Hall asked staff to explain the construction equipment put in place that morning at the foot of King Street. Baker said the contractor had begun to install the tide gate device for the King Street Backflow Valve Project, the project designed to lessen the area's nuisance flooding events caused by tidal back-up in the storm sewer system.

Hall said staff had previously told the Commission the installation would not impact traffic or access to the street and she was concerned it would impede vehicular access to the Old Dominion Boat Club and other entities on the block. Baker said the construction should create only a minimal traffic disruption. Baker said work would generally be done between 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. but would continue into the evening if an activity begun that day needed to be finished.

Hall suggested the Alexandria Police Department (APD) be asked to manage traffic during the construction to minimize disruption of deliveries to the Waterfront Market, motor coaches bringing passengers to the Marina, and ODBC members accessing their clubhouse. Baker said she did not expect construction-related traffic tie-ups.

Hall said insufficient advance notice about the construction's start date had been given to businesses in the affected area. Baker said the City had notified all businesses on the block. Hall said if the City had given fuller advance notice to businesses in the immediate area, businesses such as the Potomac River Company could have advised their visitors to use an alternate route starting that morning.

Marina Subcommittee: Public hearing May 14, 2014 at Lee Center

Thayer reported on the Marina Committee's three-hour meeting held May 14, 2014 to review the Olin design team's updated design alternative, reflecting the outcome of the City-ODBC Negotiations, for the Waterfront's core area, extending from Duke Street to Queen Street,

Thayer said the overall purpose was to solicit comments on the landscape design as it affects the Marina area. He reviewed meeting comments from the public about the element in the plan that would restrict Marina slip holder leases to commercial vessels as the Waterfront Small Area Plan is implemented. The Marina currently offers slip leases to both commercial vessels and pleasure boats. He said staff had explained the current plan is to provide Marina slips only for transient pleasure boats and there was much concern voiced by attendees..

Thayer said the meeting was attended by Commissioners Hall, Fox, and Gosnell, and City staff Hamer (P&Z), Browand, Spengler, Hixon, and Deputy Dockmaster Wade Weeks (RPCA), and over 50 slip holders and other members of the public. Thayer thanked Hamer for the information she had presented, including the fact that the Waterfront Plan had anticipated the possibility that a Robinson Terminal South (RTS) redevelopment would include a pleasure boat marina that could accommodate over 100 boats but the new RTS owners' redevelopment plan does not include a marina. He said Hamer had also reviewed the proposed agreement between the City

and Old Dominion Boat Club that gives the Marina's southern pier to ODBC, on a temporary basis that might become permanent, in exchange for the City taking out the northern pier.

City's Marina cost/benefit analysis as presented at the meeting

Thayer said Spengler had reviewed for meeting attendees the cost/benefit analysis RPCA had conducted for the Marina. Thayer said the RPCA analysis as presented had identified only slip holders as benefiting from the City's Marina-related funding.

Public comments at the public meeting

Thayer said meeting attendees had said the cost/benefit analysis should reflect that the general public regularly visits the Marina docks for photo opportunities, events held near the gazebo, and simply to enjoy the view as an extension of the Waterfront park areas. Thayer said slip holders had said the Marina's presence reflects the maritime history of the City. He said slip holders also said the City's cost/benefit analysis should reflect the economic benefits to the City from having pleasure boats at the Marina. He said pleasure boat slip holders and their guests frequent local restaurants and other businesses, business that the City would lose if residents were forced to move their pleasure boats elsewhere. He said some slip holders said they only bought their boats after being offered a Marina slip. Thayer said slip holders said the plan to eliminate the Marina's pleasure boat slip leases for residents is inconsistent with the Waterfront Plan's goal to facilitate public access to the Waterfront.

Thayer proposed the following recommendation be added to the draft letter to City conveying a Commission position on the landscape design and flood mitigation plans.

"That the City undertake a study that evaluates all aspects of having publicly managed pleasure boat slips on our Waterfront in a number at least equal to the number of pleasure boat slips currently at the Marina and that the study should include a cost - benefit analysis that includes direct costs in revenues received from pleasure boats, leaseholders and transient, and benefits to the community.

"Possible solutions discussed at the meeting included (a) to maintain and extend pleasure boat slips beyond the current pier line in a manner that permits a mix of pleasure and commercial vessels; (b) to build the Old Dominion Boat Club boat pier off their new location and dedicate the current A/B dock and the present ODBC north pier for pleasure boat use; and (c) identify options for additional public piers and/or docking areas on the Waterfront in Old Town."

Discussion

Baum said the cost/benefit analysis for the Marina relates to the difference between the actual per slip maintenance and CIP costs versus pleasure boat-related revenues received from the Marina. Thayer said there should be a way to include mixed pleasure-commercial use for the Marina since its part of the Waterfront's attractiveness and the cost benefit analysis should be expanded to reflect additional factors. Livingood recommended the Marina Committee review the National Marine Manufacturers Association's cost/benefit analyses of the economic impact of the recreational boating industry. She said the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries' also compiles statistics on recreational boaters.

Slip holder follow-up to the public meeting

Gosnell said slip holders have, since the public meeting, said they support finding a way to preserve pleasure boat slips at the Marina for their own use and for that of City residents in the coming - even if this means raising slip rental rates after a more detailed cost/benefit analysis has been done. Gosnell said that, after the Marina Committee meeting, about 500 emails had been received from slip holders. He said 30-40 people said they had bought their boats only after getting a Marina slip and about 30 people had moved to Alexandria to be eligible for having a Marina slip. Gosnell said initial comments indicated leaseholders would probably accept an annual leaseholder fee of perhaps \$2000/year. He said figures provided by a leaseholder survey after the public meeting show that, in the aggregate, slip holders bring as many as 10-12,000 guests to the Marina over a year, visits that contribute to the City economy.

City's cost allocation and recovery analysis is not a fee-determining process

Baum said the economic constraints facing the City have created the need for RPCA to implement a cost recovery program for its activities to help staff identify how taxpayer dollars can be best allocated to a mix of activities that benefits the largest number of City residents. Browand said the cost allocation and recovery analysis process approved by City Council the previous year is not a "fee-determining" process but a process to determine the relative value of an activity to City residents and to identify ways to cover its costs.

Browand said City staff does not consider the entire Marina as benefiting only slip holders and recognizes it also serves, in part, as an open park and plaza. He said staff is looking at how different Marina activities benefit different groups. He said staff will continue to discuss these questions with the Commission in the coming months. Manor said it would be shortsighted not to recognize having private boats at the Marina contributes to the Waterfront's appeal to visitors.

The need for a single City Department to coordinate Waterfront management

Manor said the multiple City departments (e.g. RPCA, T&ES, GS) that manage Waterfront-related activities should be replaced by a single City department responsible for managing all Waterfront-related activities.

Downs said West End residents have expressed anger at public meetings that so many City resources are devoted to Old Town's needs but not to theirs, especially for West End park maintenance. She said this problem will only increase as parks and arts-related funding comes under increasing budget pressure despite the fact that the West End is the City's fastest growing area. Bergman said the cost of putting in additional slips needs to be included in the analysis.

Public Comments

John McPherson, a resident and 20-year slip holder at the Marina, said the City should recognize the true cost of the City-ODBC agreement. He said the Marina's loss of the A/B pier, now used for pleasure boat slips, and the additional loss of the E/F dock and half of the H dock should be valued at least a couple million dollars. He said the Waterfront Plan should recapitalize these replacement costs. He said Waterfront visitors want to see boats, not empty slips, and slip holders are some of the City's best ambassadors.

Pete Sidle, a slip holder and resident, said the Waterfront Plan plus the grant of the City's A/B dock to ODBC will have the long-term affect of eliminating boating by private citizens. He said

the City should ask whether it should offer private citizens the chance to have a place to moor their boats near where they live.

Tony Kupersmith said the City should factor into its cost/benefit analysis the loss of property tax revenues from pleasure boats leases at the Marina.

Landscape Design and Flood Mitigation (Commission Action)

Williams introduced Skip Graffam of the Olin design team to provide an overview of the design revisions to the Beachcomber/Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) area made in response to the City's agreement with ODBC. He said the plan to provide ODBC parking at the Beachcomber site would free up King Street to be used as a continuous open site, offers the option to build outside the flood plain, and lets the Waterfront promenade be continuous. He said the planned Fitzgerald Square will now become the gateway into the City Marina. He called attention to the river views now opened up at the foot of King Street, the open spaces that will now be possible, and the fountain proposed at the foot of King Street, and the design goals to preserve open space for family activities and to include a civic building.

Watters presentation of the Commission position proposed by the special committee created to review the landscape design and flood mitigation plans.

Note: The letter as approved is posted on the City website.

Watters, chair of the Commission's special committee created at its March 18, 2014 meeting to compare the Waterfront Plan's goals for flood mitigation and landscape design with the design that has been developed and to recommend a Commission position for Council on the design plans, thanked Graffam for presenting the latest version of the design and presented a draft Commission letter summarizing a proposed Commission consensus position about the designs. Watters said Commissioners should remember the Olin design is only a "comprehensive concept design" whose details are not set in cement. She said in some places a 15 percent design concept had been completed and in other places a 30 percent design. Watters said the Committee thought the design a beautiful plan and had proposed a Commission letter to Council that supports the plan with some caveats.

Watters reviewed highlights of the draft letter's judgments that the design:

- (1) successfully provides uninterrupted access along the entire length of the Waterfront;
- (2) weaves art and history in ways that reflect Alexandria's past, its present character, and its goals for future;
- (3) incorporates planned flood mitigation measures to accomplish the Waterfront Plan's goal of eliminating 90 percent of current flooding events.

Watters said among issues needing further work are:

- (1) many of the design's public domain goals can be accomplished only with adequate City funding and need realistic capital and maintenance cost estimates, which Olin will provide;
- (2) a sequencing plan is needed to guide the City's priority implementation of public improvements, including elements of the flood mitigation design;
- (3) plans for vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, water transportation plans, and parking, are needed;

- (4) the Waterfront Plan's goal of preserving the City's working Waterfront, accommodating both commercial and private needs by fully functioning piers available to their users without disrupting other uses, should be reinforced;
- (5) the Seaport Foundation workshops should be kept as a functioning part of the Waterfront; and
- (6) a plan for overall governance, operation and maintenance responsibilities is needed.

Discussion

Mutty proposed language for the letter that reflected the earlier Thayer language regarding the need for further study of the costs and benefits of preserving Marina pleasure boat slips that recognizes their contribution to the overall Waterfront. Dunn and Watters said it would be premature for the Commission to consider the proposed language before the Marina Committee reviews the issue. After discussion, Mutty withdrew his proposed language.

Baum said the Park and Recreation Commission is concerned about the City's offer to ODBC of a surface parking lot. Watters said the Commission can take this question up at a later time. Van Fleet said the question of whether there should be surface parking along the Waterfront is always contentious but it should be recognized all NPS facilities on the river have surface parking lots.

Thayer said the City should consider three basic questions about pleasure boat slips further: (1) Is the presence of long-term pleasure boat docking in Old Town reflective of the concept and character of the Port City? (2) If yes, what are the costs and benefits? and (3) How can this be accommodated in Old Town and what possible solutions should be considered?

Hall said a part of the Commission's proactive approach on this issue will include the Marina Committee's review of RPCA's cost/benefit analysis and continued Commission discussion of this issue.

Bergman moved, and Dunn seconded, that the Commission approve the draft letter as presented.

Gosnell said language should be added requesting that a viability study of pleasure boat piers be conducted if the final ODBC agreement does not provide additional pleasure boat slips. Dunn said adding specific language to the letter would be premature. Watters said the draft letter was designed to reflect a sense of the Commission consensus on these issues. She said Commissioners are welcome to contact Council individually on additional matters of concern. Thayer said the language should not be added to this Commission letter. He said the Marina Committee would propose further Commission action after the Committee reviews the questions about pleasure boat leases in more detail. He said the Marina Committee will begin its consideration of the question at its June 12, 2014 meeting.

Commissioners passed the Bergman/Dunn motion by voice vote with one dissenting vote (Gosnell).

Agency Reports (Attached) - No discussion.

Reports from Commissioners - No discussion.

Announcements/ Public Comments

There were no additional public comments.

Hall said there will be a May 29, 2014 community meeting on the Lower King Street Multimodal Feasibility Study (100 block). She asked Commissioners to publicize the meeting to their constituencies and encourage their attendance.

Hall said there would be a June 3, 2014- Planning Commission public hearing on the Landscape Design and Flood Mitigation plan.

Hall said the Commission's annual Waterfront Walk is June 7, 2014 and open to the public.

Thayer said the Marina Committee will meet on June 12, 2014.

Hall said Council's June 14, 2014 meeting will hold a public hearing on the landscape design and flood mitigation plan.

Browand said the City Jazz Festival in Waterfront Park was set for Monday, May 26, 2014 and the City's birthday celebration was set for July 12, 2014 in Oronoco Bay Park.

Bromberg (Acting City Archeologist) announced that, in connection with planning for the War of 1812 signs being installed along the Waterfront, the National Park Service had sent staff information about a planned Wayfinding sign kiosk that the City and NPS in Waterfront Park to identify the full Star Spangled Banner Trail. She said three signs are planned for the three-sided kiosk with each side measuring about 4 by 3 feet. She said the City-NPS agreement permits the City to move the sign if it wishes and NPS will pay for the kiosk.

Hall asked that, in light of the Commission's continuing interest in Waterfront signage, staff include signage updates as an agenda item.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.