

**Joint Meeting
Alexandria Waterfront Commission &
Park and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, January 21, 2014
The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street
7:30 a.m.**

Waterfront Commission Members

Present:

Dennis Auld, Citizen Park Planning District II
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
Stewart Dunn, Alexandria Planning Commission
Arthur Fox, east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Chair
Mari Lou Livingood, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)-
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

Excused:

David Speck, Citizen Park Planning District III
Stephen Muttly, Citizen Park Planning District I

Absent:

Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Leaseholder
Jacob Hoogland, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Vacancy:

Representative, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Park and Recreation Commission Members

Present:

Judy Guse-Noritake, Planning District I, Chair
Stephen Beggs, Planning District II
Rich Brune, Planning District III
William Cromley, Planning District I

Absent:

Jennifer Atkins, Planning District II
Judith Coleman, Planning District III
Ripley Forbes, Planning District II
Brian McPherson, Planning District III
Emma Schutzius

City Staff

Emily Baker, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Jack Browand, Division Chief, Commission Staff Liaison, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Tom Canfield, City Architect, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Al Cox, Architect, P&Z
Michael Cross, Alexandria Fire Department (AFD)
Anthony Gammon, (DPI)
Faroll Hamer, Director, (P&Z)
James Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, P&Z
Hillary Poole, T&ES
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, P&Z/DPI

Guests:

Engin Artemel, Rivergate Townhouses
Will Belcher, The Olin Studio
Christine Bernstein, citizen
Brian Buzzell, citizen
Yvonne Callahan, President, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Dennis Carmichael, Parker-Rodriguez, Inc. (Olin Team)
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee
Jordan Creed, Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Shirley Downs, Alexandria Commission for the Arts.
Bert Ely, Friends of the Waterfront, Old Town Civic Association
Skip Graffam, The Olin Studio
Hal Hardaway – Waterford Place Homeowners Association
Val Hawkins, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)
Craig McClure, Parker Rodriguez, Inc. (Olin Team)
Ruth McKenty, Alexandria Beautification Commission
Sarah J. Napier, URS Corporation
Joanne Platt, citizen
Mark Pirello, Moffat and Nichol (Olin Team)
Dan Straub, Alexandria Urban Design Advisory Committee, (UDAC)
Tom Tuttle, Alexandria Seaport Foundation

Welcome and Introductions

Hall called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from December 17, 2013

Motion: Moved by Bergman, seconded by Thayer, to approve the summary minutes of the December 17, 2013 meeting with corrections. The motion passed by voice vote, with none opposed and one abstention (Bordner).

Project Updates

Unit Block of King St. Pedestrian Plaza

In response to Commissioner's questions raised at the December 2013 meeting, Poole provided information about proposed turning movements for the Trolley and motor coaches and planned parking spaces for police and DASH service vehicles on the unit block.

In response to Smedberg's question about timing of the block's planned temporary pedestrianizing, Baker said staff would provide information on proposed temporary improvements. She said T&ES continues to work with DASH to ensure that two Trolleys would not be parked together on the block, with this change taking place already. Baum said that with the opening of the new Waterfront Market at King/Union, where the Trolleys are now parked, the City should consider changing the planned pedestrianized half of King Street from the block's south side to the north side. Poole said the design for the temporary pedestrian mall reflects the decision Council made in December 2012.

Manor said the increased pedestrian traffic that would be encouraged by creating a pedestrianized unit block of King Street supports the idea for raising the pedestrian crosswalks on Union Street to increase pedestrian safety. Poole said the option of elevating the crosswalk would need careful consideration in light of its impact on practical concerns, such as Union Street being a primary route for Fire Department vehicles and potential conflicts of raised crosswalks with future flood control measures. Poole said staff has asked The Olin Studio to consider incorporating the idea of raising the crosswalks in their final design for this area, and that design will take into account flood mitigation measures.

Motion: Van Fleet moved and Wojtanowski seconded that the Commission invite DASH General Manager Sandy Modell to its February meeting to discuss the question of whether the King Street Trolley schedule could be modified to have trolleys run on a continuous loop rather than at set intervals. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Hall said the option of moving parking for DASH service vehicles to the Beachcomber parking lot should be considered. In response to Smedberg's question why the temporary pedestrian plaza design does not include a fully pedestrianized unit block, Poole said the full pedestrianized build-out will be incorporated into the final design. Baker said the unit block's temporary pedestrianization is designed to activate this area of the Waterfront as soon as possible to avoid waiting for implementation of the final Waterfront design.

Beachcomber Request for Proposals (RFP)

McPike said staff continues to evaluate the financial analyses related to the proposals received under the Beachcombers RFP and will provide the Commission information once it becomes available. Smedberg said the apparent difficulty determining the viability of the proposals' financial analyses might indicate the proposals' assumptions are not reliable. In response to questions, McPike said he could not indicate whether all the proposals were for restaurants. Auld said the Council should avoid making any decisions about the Beachcombers proposals until the City had resolved the Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) issue.

220 South Union Street (Carr Hospitality hotel)

Cox shared changes recommended by staff to Carr Hospitality's proposed hotel design. He said the design for the Duke Street frontage has been the most problematic. In response, Cox said both the Planning Commission and members of the public have recommended the design incorporate more features of authentic Old Town architecture and staff has used 110 South Union Street's design as a reference. Cox said the revised design reduces the building's mass by incorporating the character of a 19th century warehouse into a 21st century building. The hotel proposal is scheduled for a City Council public hearing on January 25, 2014.

Discussion:

Cromley said the staff suggestions brought major improvements to the original design. In response to a question, Cox said the City requires a LEED Silver design and has urged that the design incorporate a green roof. Van Fleet said the design was too massive. Watters said the Commission should not try to open up a decision previously made by the City Council through the guidelines and zoning they approved for the Waterfront redevelopment sites following public input.

Hall introduced Hal Hardaway of the Waterford Place Homeowners Association (HOA) and said she, Fox and Williams had attended the recent Waterford Place HOA annual meeting. Hardaway said the Waterford HOA's members live within the area bounded by the 300 block of South Union Street, Duke Street and Wolfe Street and its members' main concerns include the planned hotel's mass and scale, its impact on traffic and parking, and the impact on the neighborhood during the hotel's construction. He said the Waterford Place HOA planned to submit a letter laying out their concerns.

Ely said he thought the building could be scaled back if Council chose to do so and asked when the revised drawings would be available online. Moritz said the City would post the updated staff drawings to the City's website as part of the staff report to Council prior to its January 25, 2014 meeting. Moritz said the City had not yet seen Carr Hospitality's revised drawing for the hotel. Callahan asked what the Planning Commission had asked staff them to do after its meeting. Cox said the Planning Commission had wanted some elements of the design to be modified and a financial analysis conducted. Moritz said he did not know whether the financial analysis would be finished prior to Council's meeting that week.

**Joint Meeting of
Waterfront & Park and Recreation Commissions:
Olin Team Work Session**

Olin Studio Work Session: Waterfront & Park and Recreation Commissions

Note: The Olin presentation will be posted to the Commission's website after it is presented to the public meeting with The Olin Studio design team, rescheduled for February 6, 2014.

Williams introduced Graffam's presentation reviewing highlights of the evolving design schematics for the Waterfront Core Area, extending between Duke and Queen Streets and between the western side of Union Street and the river. She said the details developed by The Olin Studio team reflect Commission and community input received during November 2013 and

December 2013 meetings. Graffam introduced Belcher (Olin Studio), Carmichael and McClure, (Parker Rodriguez, Olin team project design partners), and Pirello, (marine engineer, Moffet & Nichol). He said, today, the team is presenting two design Alternatives to the Commissioners for the Core Area for feedback; these same Alternatives will also be presented at the public meeting originally scheduled for that same evening but rescheduled for February 6, 2014 because of the day's snow closings.

Timing for stakeholder feedback to the Olin team

Graffam said it is likely the City will request that public comments be submitted within a week of the upcoming public meeting so The Olin Studio design team can consider them as they further refine their design concepts. Hall asked Commissioners to encourage their constituencies to try to submit their comments on the Olin schematics within a week of the public meeting. Williams said all comments received will, however, be posted to the City's website.

Graffam said the team had chosen to focus first on developing distinct design concepts for this mile-and-a quarter Waterfront Core Area because it is the area where current form, relationship of spaces, operations and programs will be most changed by the Waterfront design.

Focus of design schematics to date

Graffam said that to this point the design schematics have mainly focused on shapes and views, not on specific placement of parks and/or other programming elements. He said elements included in either of the two Alternatives presented could be pursued as is or mixed within a modified version. At any rate, he stated how the design will evolve will reflect stakeholder feedback received at the Commission and public meetings reviewing them.

The Market Square – Fitzgerald Square relationship

Graffam said both design alternatives reflect an understanding that Market Square and Fitzgerald Square fill different City functions: Market Square is the City's heart and Fitzgerald Square will be a gateway to the City from the water. He said the design for Fitzgerald Square has evolved into a more compact space that still accommodates civic activities at the water's edge.

Design Elements Included

Graffam said that among the key elements included in the design schematics are (a) a continuous path along the Waterfront; (b) a gathering space at the foot of King Street to create vitality; (c) incorporating the City's flood mitigation plan being developed; (d) incorporating ecological and sustainable systems, including storm water runoff; (e) programmatic elements that incorporate art and history, and (f) the need to locate the Seaport Foundation and its programs along the Waterfront. He said a charette with the art and history stakeholders of the Art and History Plans is being planned to discuss ideas for incorporating art and history into the City's design.

Discussion:

ODBC

Wojtanowski asked how the design reflects the fact that the City has not yet resolved the ODBC issue. Graffam said The Olin Studio is ready to modify their design if needed. Wojtanowski asked how the design accommodates the needs of the City's working Waterfront of which the Dandy is part. Graffam said the team assumes these activities will be relocated to the Marina.

Wojtanowski said the City should look at the possibility of getting environmental credits at the north end if Alternative B's option of creating water space by opening up the lower end of King Street were included.

The need to consider maintenance costs.

Commissioners said operational and maintenance costs need to be factored into the design options, and included examples such as those related to the proposed ice rink and likely silting at the foot of King Street. Noritake said extending the waterway up to foot of King Street would create serious maintenance issues. Smedberg said some design elements might create higher operating and maintenance costs than the City is used to. Graffam said the Olin team will include operating and maintenance cost estimates for the design's elements. He said there will be major expenses related to the pier, promenade and hardscape, and these elements may be modified as the design process proceeds.

Noritake said a site will be needed for stationing a recreational staff person during events and other high-usage times and a maintenance building should also be included. Smedberg said that when the designers consider the Market Square – Fitzgerald Square relationship, they might consider the option of having the King Street Trolley stop at Market Square as a way to lessen the traffic management complexity at the foot of King Street. Graffam said they had built their design using current Waterfront elements but they could be changed as needed. In response to Brune's question, Graffam said bikes and dogs would be integrated within the design, that bikes are included in "vehicular circulation", but that the design's goal is not to have cyclists ride along the Waterfront promenade.

Seaport Foundation

Livingood said that when the design team considers having a "civic center" on Duke Street they should recognize that the Seaport Foundation currently provides significant community programming and should remain at this site. Noritake said the civic building should include the Seaport Foundation as well as other civic organizations that want to offer environmental and other educational programs.

Manor said that when people consider the design options being presented for the City's Waterfront they should recognize that this a design that will be created not only for the City's near-term future but for its long-term and, as such, will eventually be used by people in some ways that are not even anticipated.

Public Restrooms

Noritake said several restroom locations will be needed, not a single central restroom location. Graffam said possible locations identified so far include the waterside pump station building; the civic building, the Marina's pump station, and the Charthouse location. She said any buildings that will host civic activities should include restrooms.

Fitzgerald Square and the diagonal walkway design option

Most Commissioners were enthusiastic about Alternative B's diagonal walkway extending from King Street to the foot of Duke Street near the Beachcombers, opening up views of the Bridge

and Fitzgerald Square and facilitating circulation from the waterside promenade to King Street. Cromley said he thought it was too directive and would discourage meandering and small impromptu clusterings and he preferred Alternative A's focus on street ends that draw people to the Waterfront.

Noritake said she thought both design options had effectively captured the spirit and scope of the City's Waterfront and reflect many people's thoughts on how to improve it. She said Waterfront Park should have more lawn and less gardens and the park's Waterfront steps will be important. Noritake said that when designers consider a splash fountain, they should think of those in Atlanta that are flush with the ground and can be used when the water is turned off.

Public Comments:

Bernstein said a focal point placed at the end of King Street should be historic in nature, not something commercial like an ice rink. Another speaker said it is important to know the operation and maintenance costs for the new restrooms being considered.

How to accommodate pleasure boats

Hall asked how the design will accommodate pleasure boat slip holders at the Marina and transient recreational visitors to the City. She said that, for example, pleasure boat slip holders at the Marina had asked for floating docks. Pirello said the team is considering ways to accommodate transient and permanent recreational boaters. Williams said there may be opportunities to site transient boat slips at Robinson Terminal North and South as well as Point Lumley. Thayer said the Marina currently has few transient slips and if any were removed this would further aggravate the problem. Livingood said there is significant federal funding available for transient boat access.

Beggs said the design should accommodate the need to provide access to the river for canoes and kayaks, and compared current obstacles impeding such recreational access to having "a glass wall" between these boaters and the river.

ADA accessibility

Hall said it is important for the design to accommodate ADA requirements. Graffam said it will. Browand said the City recognizes that a few areas of the Marina do not currently meet ADA requirements. Staff will identify opportunities to bring parts of the Marina into compliance as part of Waterfront Plan implementation and when significant repairs or replacements are necessary.

Delivery trucks and motor coaches

Hall said the design will need to address where to relocate the delivery trucks and motor coaches that currently use the foot of King and The Strand after this site is pedestrianized. She said the neighborhood would face significant problems if they were to move up to Union Street because no other space is provided for them.

Hall said both design options offered beautiful choices for the Waterfront but the importance of addressing practical considerations within the design must not be overlooked.

Report from Commissioners

Commissioner Bergman, Founders Park Community Association

Bergman reported that FPCA had very helpful meeting with Hamer and Williams to discuss FPCA's concerns about the importance of retaining Founders Park as a passive park consistent with the Waterfront Plan's goal to protect and retain the current character and use of the park and to protect and beautify the park. He said within those parameters FPCA is wide open to discussing a variety of ideas that might develop over time.

Announcements/Public Comments

Hall invited public comments on issues not already covered. There were none. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.