

City of Alexandria
WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 21, 2023
City Hall Sister Cities Conference Room
301 King Street
7:30 a.m.

Commission Members

Present:

Agnes Artemel, Citizen, East of Washington St. and North of Pendleton St.
Sarah Bagley, Member, Alexandria City Council
Eldon Boes, Representative, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Maureen Cooney, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Marcee Craighill, Representative, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Robert Cvejanovich, Representative, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Stuart Fox, Representative, Park and Recreation Commission
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners
Kristina Hagman, Representative, Founders Park Community Association
Charlotte Hall, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Trae Lamond, Representative, Old Town Business (OTB)
Nathan (Nate) Macek, Representative, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission
Brian McPherson, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Lebaron Reid, Commissioner At-Large
Louise Roseman, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Barbara Saperstone, Citizen, East of Washington St. and South of King St.
Clair Sassin, Representative, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Stephen Thayer, Citizen, East of Washington St. and north of King St. and Chair, Waterfront Commission
Patricia Webb, Citizen, Park Planning District II (remote participation)
Esther White, Representative, Alexandria Archaeological Commission (remote participation)

Vacant

Representative, Alexandria Seaport Foundation

STAFF:

Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison/Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Michael Durham, Dock Master, RPCA
Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner, P&Z
Daniel Johnson, Assistant Dock Master, RPCA
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Guests

Gina Baum, resident; Christine Bernstein, resident; Bert Ely, Old Town Civic Association; Jody Manor, resident; Deb Roepke, Alexandria Seaport Foundation; Amy Rutherford, Old Town Business Board of Directors and owner, Red

Barn Mercantile and Penny Post; Scott Shaw, Alexandria Restaurant Partners, and Old Town Business; Daniel Straub, resident

Call to Order:

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

Remote participants:

Thayer reported that, pursuant to the City's Electronic Participation Policy, he had approved four Commissioners' requests to participate electronically for reasons authorized by the policy.

- Councilmember Sarah Bagley, participating from Alexandria due to business and personal reasons; Brian McPherson, participating from his office in Alexandria due to business and professional reasons; Patricia Webb, participating from South Carolina due to a medical issue; Esther White, participating from Maryland due to a business and personal commitment.

Items for Action

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 17, 2023, MINUTES

- **Motion:** Roseman moved, and Artemel seconded that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items for Information

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS - Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA

- Browand introduced Daniel Johnson, the new Assistant Dock Master.

PROPOSED OLD TOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE DISTRICT (BISD) APPLICATION UPDATE -

Charlotte Hall, CEO, Old Town Business, Amy Rutherford, President of Old Town Business Board of Directors and owner, Red Barn Mercantile and Penny Post, and Scott Shaw, Alexandria Restaurant Partners

Background: In summer 2022 City Council approved a process for creating Business Improvement Service Districts (BISD) throughout Alexandria. In 2022 Old Town Business (OTB) made advocating for creating an Old Town Business Improvement Services District (BISD) their priority. The Old Town BISD, if approved, would take over and expand services currently provided by OTB. OTB Board has decided to dissolve OTB December 31, 2023

OTB BISD advocacy/ outreach – OTB is encouraging owners of taxable property within the proposed BISD district to sign the petition to Council supporting the BISD and to send Council supportive letters, OTB Board members are meeting with individual business owners and holding public forums to explain the proposed Old Town BISD services and benefits, Five more OTB public forums are planned; Old Town BISD details are on the OTB website.

May 31, 2023 - Petition deadline – Pro-BISD petitions to Council need 60% of eligible property owners within the proposed BISD district to sign - 300 signatures for the Old Town BISD.

June 2023 – City Council public hearing is expected.

Commission comments (BISD)

Issues raised included:

- **Waterfront Commission previously endorsed the advantages of a BID** – In November 2016 Commission recommended the City consider creating a Business or Community Improvement District as an alternative source of funding for services needed in the Waterfront area.

- **Business concerns raised.** A: Concerns have related to aspects of the proposed 2016 Old Town BID which differs from the current BISD proposal.
- **City oversight?** - A: City will review the BISD's proposed annual budget each year and two City staff will sit on the BISD Board. BISD's governance would be like Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP)
- **BISD boundaries** - Is expansion anticipated beyond the proposed King Street area? A: No.
- **Airbnb** - Would BISB include Airbnb? A: Yes.
- **Governance** – Will Board members represent geographic areas? A: Being considered.
- **Parking** – Proposal for BISD to help coordinate use of parking app was commended.

Public Comments

- **Parking** – Improvements should be a priority.
- **Business to residential building conversions** – Planning needs to anticipate this.
- **Benefits** - Businesses such as Airbnb will benefit from the BISD.

Motion (BISD): Macek moved and Gosnell seconded that (a) the Commission supports the Old Town BISD concept as consistent with the Commission's previous position that a BID be created as a way to provide sustainable funding for the Waterfront and King Street generally and (b) directs the Chair to send a letter to City Council conveying the Commission's support for the proposed BISD. **Vote:** Passed by voice vote with one abstention (Hall). Council Member Bagley is a non-voting Commission member.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT - Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA and Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner, P&Z

Overview: 1989 was the last time the City's Public Open Space Zone Text was updated comprehensively. In 2019 City Council reinstated the Ad Hoc Open Space Steering Committee to advise RPCA and P&Z staff to update the Public Open Space Zoning Text with current uses of public open spaces and parks. Proposed text changes will make more efficient and less expensive for staff to implement park plans after they have been approved following considerable public engagement. The SUP process for park improvements, which the amendments streamline, takes between three to four months of staff time that can include up to five staff from different agencies after a decision to apply for an SUP is made.

Commissioner comments/questions

- Park and Recreation Commission's (P&RC) has unanimously supported the proposed language changes.
- P&RC noted that eliminating an SUP for more common uses would remove one of the available public input opportunities for controversial projects. A: Projects would still go through an SUP as needed.
- Any impact on Waterfront parks? A: Adding lighting or a shade structure would not require an SUP. The civic building proposed by the Olin Plan would still require a SUP.
- Would Founders Park's designation as a passive park be changed by the proposed amendments? A: The proposed text language does not change a park's designation.
- Since Waterfront Parks are not zoned Public Open Space but Waterfront Parks and Recreation, perhaps that zone text should also be reviewed. A: RPCA and P&Z are also looking at other zoning options also.

Public Comments- None

Motion: Roseman moved, and Hall seconded that the Commission supports the proposed Public Open Space Zone Text Amendments. **Vote:** Motion approved by voice vote with two abstentions: Macek because the Planning Commission will be considering this and Hagman because she plans to review additional information. Council Member Bagley is a non-voting Commission member.

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY – Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD

- **Buskers/Noise Ordinance Violations** – Bridgeman reviewed options APD has for responding to noise ordinance violations.
- **Weekend Waterfront patrols** – Bridgeman reported he had recommended the overtime budget be increased for weekend patrols starting in April and two officers will be added for Sunday nights.

Commission comments

- **Parking** - Enforcement needs to be improved. City needs more Parking Enforcement Officers. A: Traffic and Parking Board is the place to address these resident concerns.
- **Parking** – Council Member Bagley: City Manager has been asked to review whether there are measures that could improve the PEO recruitment process and should be reporting to Council soon.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES – Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA

- Waterfront Park’s new Public Art exhibit has been installed.

WATERFRONT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – Nothing new to report.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES - No report

Commission Reports / Subcommittee Reports / Announcements

Hall: April 8: Old Town Bunny Hop; April 23: Parkway Classic; April 26: Spring to Action. Merchants on the 100 block of King Street are renewing valet parking on Lee Street. The King Street pedestrian pop-ups on resume in May.

Next Meeting: April 18, 2023

Adjournment: Motion – At 9:35 a.m. Macek moved and Lamond seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.