

Minutes
City of Alexandria, Virginia
WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – Virtual
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
7:30 a.m.

Commission Members

Present:

Agnes Artemel, East of Washington St. and North of Pendleton St.
Sarah Bagley, Member, Alexandria City Council
Eldon Boes, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Robert Cvejanovich, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners
Kristina Hagman, Founders Park Community Association
Charlotte Hall, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Judy Heiser, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Trae Lamond, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Nathan (Nate) Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission
Brian McPherson, 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
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Scott Shaw, 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
Robert Weinhagen, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Esther White, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Vacancy:

Representative, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission

City Staff

Eleanor Breen, City Archeologist, Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA)
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Mike Durham, Assistant Dockmaster, RPCA
Matthew Landes, Division Chief, Waterfront Program Manager, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)
Catherine Miliaris, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Diane Ruggerio, Deputy Director, RPCA, Director, Office of the Arts

James Spengler, Director, RPCA

Terry A. Suehr, Director, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)

Guests

Christine Bernstein	Yvonne Callahan
Matthew Carroll	Bert Ely
Bhaumik Hotha	Stephanie Landrum (AEDP)
Jeff Lipsky	Christina Mindrup,(AEDP)
Amy Morton	Jeffrey Scott
Carole Sieling	Dena Stoner
Daniel Straub	Patricia Washington
Ivy Whitlatch	

Call to Order – Stephen Thayer, Chair

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

Discussion Items for Action and Information

ITEM 1: APPROVAL of FEBRUARY 15, 2022 MINUTES

Motion: Rose man moved, and Macke seconded that the February 15, 2022 minutes be approved as amended. Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

ITEM 2: [WATERFRONT SHIP HULL RESTORATION](#) (Historic Ship Timbers Stabilization Project)

Breen reviewed Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology’s projects infusing the City’s history and archaeology along the Waterfront and the City’s work preserving historic ship timbers unearthed during excavations for the Hotel Indigo and Robinson Landing sites. She expressed appreciation to the City’s partners on these projects, including developers, artists, community historians, volunteers, VisitAlexandria, City Commissions, and others.

- Topics highlighted were:
 - ***African American history*** - Projects such as the community-driven African American Heritage Trail, which will eventually stretch from Jones Point to Tide Lock Park, and Waterfront Park’s 2020 Site See public art exhibit “Wrought, Knit, Labors and Legacies”, and new signage on Alexandria’s historic role in the slave trade.
 - ***Historic ship timber preservation project*** – https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/ShipsUpdate_March_2022.pdf
Breen thanked Browand (RPCA) and Landes (DPI) and others for their assistance with the inter-department planning for the moving the Robinson Landing site’s historic ship timbers from their tanks in the DASH Bus Barn to storage at the bottom of Ben Brenman Pond where their condition will be regularly monitored. Signage and family-friendly events related to the historic timbers is planned.
 - ***The Waterfront Museum Feasibility Study*** is being conducted at Council’s direction.

The concept was first proposed during development of the Waterfront Small Area Plan's Waterfront History Plan written by the Alexandria Archaeology Commission.

Commission Comments

Thayer thanked Breen for the update.

ITEM 3: [TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER \(ART CENTER\) ACTION PLAN – NEXT STEPS](#) - Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, RPCA and Director, Office of the Arts, Christina Mindrup, AEDP, Stephanie Landrum, AEDP, and Terri Suehr (DPI)

Ruggiero reported that Council approved the Action Plan for Vibrancy and Sustainability (Action Plan) and principles for implementing it In December 2021.

- Key objectives include:
 - **Governance** – Staff and partners (AEDP) to explore creating a separate public entity to consolidate governance of the Art Center with Old Town North's artistic real estate assets.
 - **Stakeholder participation** - Create a Stakeholder Task Force to develop a coherent vision and mission to guide planning for the Art Center and the connected Arts District.

Follow-up actions:

- **Old Town North (OTN) Arts and Culture District** – Mindrup (AEDP) reviewed AEDP's proposal to use the City's Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to create a new public real estate entity that would facilitate financing of the Arts and Culture District plans.
- **Governance** - AEDP and the City Manager's office will evaluate how and whether a separate public entity could include governance of the Art Center and OTN Arts and Culture District's real estate assets.
- **Stakeholder Task Force** – City Manager's office is developing a list of stakeholder groups and organizations involved with the Art Center. Task force appointments are expected to be made in Spring 2022.
- **Implementing Action Plan options** – Several actions have already been initiated:
 - Third floor studio space is being converted to a rentable flexible meeting space.
 - Printmakers have been moved from third floor to first floor.
 - Re-jurying the Art Center's current resident artists is under way.
 - Art Center operating rules and procedures are being updated.

Commission Comments

- **Stakeholder Task Force** - Thayer said the Waterfront Commission should be considered for the Stakeholder Task Force.
- **Resident/non-resident lease rates** – Has City considered differential rates for City residents and non-residents? A: It's been discussed but not implemented at this time.
- **Potential impact of the proposed governance model on plans to upgrade the Art Center?** A: Council has tasked staff to examine whether IDA financing would be available under different Art Center governance models being considered. The City would not have the funds that would

be needed for major upgrades of the Art Center's building.

- **Concern that some Art Center studios are often closed on weekdays**, undercutting the Art Center's vibrancy and appeal to visitors. The City should consider ideas to address this.
 - A: The City is considering, among other issues, whether and how to update lease requirements for the hours leaseholders work in their studios.
- **Artist/public studio interactions** – Does the jurying process consider whether an artist is comfortable interacting with the public while working? Not all artists are comfortable working this way.
 - A: Yes. This is among the criteria considered.

Public Comment

- **Christine Bernstein** - Concerned that the Waterfront Park Site-See public art exhibits are not staying focused on City history and do not give preference to local artists.
- **Commissioner response** - Macek encouraged the Office of the Arts to conduct systematic consumer research to gather data on public satisfaction with Site-See art projects that can be considered when choosing future Site See projects.
- **Motion:** Macek moved and Roseman seconded that the Waterfront Commission notify the City Manager that the Commission requests membership on the TFAC Art Center Stakeholder Task Force. Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

April 2022 Commission Meeting – Virtual vs. On-Site

Thayer announced that since COVID rules no longer apply the Commission's April 2022 meeting will be held on-site at a location to be determined. The meeting will be governed by the Commission's Electronic Meeting Policy for in-person meetings. Meetings require an in-person quorum (11 of 21 Members), and additional Members may attend by phone if approved by the Chair - [Electronic Meeting Policy](#)

In response to a question, Browand said the criteria for when virtual City meetings can be held are based on safety, not convenience. The City is governed by State law regarding COVID-related virtual meetings.

Committee Updates & Announcements – None.

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY

No report. Captain Jamie Bridgeman (APD) was unable to attend. Commissioners were advised they could contact him directly if questions arise. He plans to be at the April Commission meeting.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES – Catherine Miliaras, Principal Planner, P&Z

- **HILCO power plant site (former GenOn site)**
 - March 31 - HILCO Redevelopment Partners (HRP) will hold a community meeting on HRP's transportation plans for the site.
 - April 19 – HRP will brief the Waterfront Commission on the site's

redevelopment concept.

Commission comments - Private Development

- **101 Duke Street (Solo Garage site)** – Start date for demolition/construction for the townhouses to be built there?
 - A: Probably in the next few months. A community pre-construction meeting will be held before demolition can begin.

COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATES – Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA

- ***Waterfront Park***
 - Site-See installation should be finished this month.
 - Lawn panel area will be closed for several weeks during reseeding of the grass area.
- ***Robinson Landing/ Roberdeau Park***
 - Trail area: EYA has fixed the drainage issue at bottom of stairs. RPCA and Harborside will be realigning the trail to keep it in the riverside walkway area and outside the plantings.
- ***Windmill Hill Park*** – Shoreline landscaping is in progress now that the shoreline is established. Goose deterrent poles will soon be removed.
- ***Robinson Landing (RL) railings*** –The City and EYA have both received approvals for their railing designs.
 - ***Robinson Landing Active Boating area*** – Doesn't require a railing – staff will be considering options for activating the area.
- ***Seaport Center*** - Council approved the Alexandria Seaport Foundation's request to amend their City license to allow them to build a second Seaport Center.
- ***Waterfront Commission Flood Mitigation (FM) Committee*** - Landes reported the Commission's FM Committee will meet March 22 at 5 p.m. to discuss recommendations to the full Commission regarding updates to the Flood Mitigation Project and Waterfront Plan Phase 1 implementation.

Commissioner Comments

- Seifert thanked the Commission for supporting the Seaport Foundation's proposal to build a second Seaport Center.

Public Comments - None.

April 19, 2022 Commission Meeting – Suggested Discussion Topics/ Items of Information

- HILCO briefing (HILCO representatives)
- TFAC update as needed.
- Overview of commercial boat operations in the City
- Commission's Annual Waterfront Study Tour by Boat – date to be set.

Adjournment

Motion: At 9:05 a.m. Macek moved and Saperstone seconded that the meeting adjourn. Passed by unanimous voice vote.