



# *Alexandria Waterfront Commission*

*Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities*

*1108 Jefferson Street*

*Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

June 24, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor & members of City Council

Re: Proposal to Surplus a portion of 2 King Street

At the Alexandria Waterfront Commission monthly meeting on June 21, 2022, the City's Department of General Services informed the Commission about a staff recommendation that City Council, at its meeting on June 28, 2022, declare a portion of the open space property at 2 King Street as surplus property. This action would set in motion a process to request proposals from interested purchasers to develop the property.

The 2 King Street parcel has a lengthy history of disputed ownership which was resolved with the City's 2014 agreement to exchange land with the Old Dominion Boat Club. The acquisition of this land required City leaders to expend precious financial and political capital, so any decision to sell this parcel should be carefully considered.

The Waterfront Commission believes that the declaration of surplus property is premature at this time. We recommend an interim step in which City staff articulate the expected benefits and costs of public versus private ownership of the property, given the multiple potential uses of this site. Only once the benefits and costs have been evaluated can an informed decision be reached regarding a declaration of surplus property. This evaluation will also highlight the potential public features of the site, under either public or private ownership, which must be fully considered in advance of any property sale. This may include features such as restrooms; indoor, outdoor, or covered outdoor recreation space; meeting rooms; visitor information; arts and cultural uses; police/public safety offices; or other amenities. In addition, the evaluation should consider measures to address flooding and stormwater management under public or private ownership, which are significant issues at this location.

As General Services staff noted, the Waterfront Small Area Plan does not articulate a specific vision for this site but does generally address the features desired of public and private uses in this area of the waterfront. To the fullest extent possible, use of this site should be supportive of the aims and objectives of the Waterfront Plan. The City should articulate for the community how any recommended use of this land aligns with the Waterfront planning vision.

We also note that the pilot closure of The Strand and unit block of King Street to vehicular traffic began on Memorial Day and is scheduled to end on Labor day and is not yet complete. Any permanent decision on the final use of these blocks will influence potential uses of this site

relative to adjacent buildings, public streets, and Waterfront Park. We believe permanent decisions regarding the future of this location should await the outcome of the temporary pilot program.

If the City eventually acts to declare the property surplus, we encourage articulation of the public and private features desired in any development of this site prior to issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP). We encourage the City to circulate a draft of the RFP for review and comment by City commissions such as the Waterfront Commission and Park and Recreation Commission in advance of formal publication.

In the event the property is eventually sold, we request reinvestment of the sale proceeds in waterfront capital improvements.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide further feedback on the use of a 2 King Street as the City's deliberations advance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Thayer".

Stephen Thayer, Chair  
Alexandria Waterfront Commission

cc: Waterfront Commission members  
James F. Parajon, City Manager  
Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager  
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager  
Laura Triggs, Deputy City Manager  
Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services  
Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning  
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Terry Suehr, Director, Project Implementation  
Jack Browand, Staff Liaison, Alexandria Waterfront Commission