

MINUTES

Thursday, MARCH 22, 2022
City of Alexandria
WATERFRONT COMMISSION
FLOOD MITIGATION COMMITTEE
Work Session - In Person Only
5 p.m.

Flood Mitigation Committee Members

(All Flood Mitigation Committee members are also members of the full Waterfront Commission)

Present:

Kristina Hagman, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)

Trae Lamond, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)

Nathan (Nate) Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission, Vice Chair, Waterfront Commission, and Chair,
Flood Mitigation Committee

Esther White, Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)

Additional Commission Members present

Stephen Thayer, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of King St., and Chair, Waterfront Commission

City Staff

Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Deputy Director, Park Services
Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)

Matthew Landes, Division Chief and Waterfront Program Manager
Department of Project Implementation (DPI)

Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Terry Suehr, Director, DPI

Guests

Sara Igelski, Carolla Engineers

Daniel Straub

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Macek called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was being held for Committee members to discuss which elements to include in a proposed draft Waterfront Commission letter to Council recommending what should be included in Phase One implementation of the Waterfront Plan as it is revised to fit the available budget, new information and current priorities.

DISCUSSION – FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMISSION

DPI Reference Document

“Waterfront Implementation Project: Waterfront Commission – Project Update - 2/15/2022”

- Posted to: <https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/recreation/info/wc=floodmitigationupdate=15feb2022.pdf>
- Briefing reflects staff's incorporation of Committee feedback at meetings begun in April 2021 to review options being developed for revising the Phase One Implementation of Waterfront Plan/Flood Mitigation Project.

Discussion Topics:

1. Overall endorsement of scenarios afforded within \$102 million CIP budget 2. Prioritize Waterfront Plan Phase One Elements

(referencing the cost breakdown for each element)

3. Is There Other Guidance That Committee Recommends The Commission Include As Guidance For City Staff?

1. Overall endorsement of scenarios afforded within \$102 million CIP budget

- **What Fits Within The \$102 Million budget? - Potential cost savings.**
 - The cost breakdown for individual project elements may be modified as additional data is finalized.
 - **Point Lumley Shoreline Alternative to the new bulkhead originally planned (Duke to Prince St.)**
 - **Hybrid Shoreline with Landscape Based Flood Protection (Ha Ha wall)** frees up additional funds for Waterfront parks and amenities.
 - **Potential savings - \$21 million** - Naturalized shoreline alternative (\$7 million) vs bulkhead (\$28 million)
 - **Note:** Staff said the Point Lumley shoreline alternative would be used as the baseline for what the City can afford but additional ideas may be developed by the design-build team.
 - **Note:** Staff said the two grants for which the City has applied prioritize hybrid naturalized shorelines over hard bulkheads
 - **Committee comments**
 - **Wales Alley to King St. shoreline** - if possible, should mirror the Point Lumley shoreline design.

2. Prioritizing Waterfront Plan Phase One Elements – referencing Council's 2014-2015 guidance on implementation priorities

- **Committee comments:**

- **High priority elements:** Invest in features that will have the greatest impact on how Waterfront public spaces will be used rather than in decorative features. e.g. impact on types of activities, numbers of people supported,
- **Low Priority elements:**
 - Duke to Prince Street promenade (new bulkhead)
 - Funds saved can be used for other elements, such as Waterfront park improvements
 - Strand Street pavers using Olin Plan common elements design

Additional questions:

- ***Funding archaeological work as needed*** – Do the project’s current budget estimates include funds that may be needed for archaeological work as project digging proceeds, e.g. in Founders Park?
 - A: Yes. Contingency funding built into the budget would cover these costs. Alexandria Archaeology has already conducted desktop archaeological research for the area. Scope of work for additional documentary studies has been discussed. Alexandria Archaeology will be involved in any archaeological monitoring for the area covered.
- ***Flexible design-build contract?*** Will the design-build contract allow the contractor to propose additional flood mitigation options not yet been considered? A: Yes. Flexibility will be built into the contract. Staff will continue to look for performance-based outcomes that are cost-effective and respond to community priorities.
- ***Is the Waterfront flood mitigation project coordinated with other City flood mitigation projects? Do they compete for funding?*** A: Coordination is ongoing. The City’s Flood Action Team coordinator sits in DPI. However the Waterfront project, which is part of a small area plan, is funded by the CIP budget and the City’s other flood mitigation projects are funded by the City’s stormwater utility fee. DPI recommends that waterfront flood mitigation should be allowed to proceed separately from other flood mitigation planning.

Additional Comments:

Founders Park Community Association (FPCA) - Hagman, the Commission’s FPCA representative, read the following statement. She noted it was based on many hours of discussions she had held with FPCA members to listen to their concerns.

**Statement of the Founders Park Community Association
to the Flood Mitigation Committee of the Waterfront Commission, City of Alexandria
March 22, 2022**

1. The Founders Park Community Foundation understands the need for stormwater mitigation in the King Street/Union Street corridor and the community stands ready to participate in the City’s process of determining which mitigation projects will be implemented.

However, we are concerned that any mitigation projects will adversely impact existing parkland and other public spaces and permanently change their character. The options presented by the Waterfront Commission so far have been either large pumps, or smaller pumps with underground chambers in both Founders Park and Water-Front Park. We are concerned that these recommendations or a scope of work outlining these objectives in the draft of the Request for Qualifications in the next few months could limit what the design builder will consider as possible solutions. We believe the contractor should have maximum flexibility to consider many alternatives within the budget.

2. We are interested in understanding if the chambers might prevent natural soil absorption of rainwater as currently occurs and which has made Founders Park resilient, able to recover rapidly from storm events. Could there be a scenario where, having the PVC storage chambers just under the grass and shrubs could cause the floodwater to stay closer to the surface and move farther west, from the river, toward homes?
3. The community respectfully requests that as part of **any** mitigation project, the City of Alexandria commit to restore parklands/public spaces to essentially the same state they are in today and avoid displacing mature trees in affected parkland and other public spaces. Additionally, we ask to not just restore parklands/public space within Founders Park, but rather improve the park. FPCA stands ready to help with ideas.

Additionally, while we understand that the decision is not made yet and the city is just past the concept phase and is entering studying the feasibility of various options. We respectfully ask that if underground chambers are eventually found as a solution to pursue, FPCA has two items to address:

4. The community respectfully requests the City of Alexandria avoid displacing mature trees in affected parkland and other public spaces.
5. And that we are informed in a timely manner as new information is discovered that will factor into the analysis, as examples, the geo-technical report and safety of the soil for the residents and park participants.

Thank you for continuing to make the community a part of the process of determining which mitigation projects will be carried out.

***** FPCA statement ends *****

SUM-UP: Draft Commission letter - Points proposed for inclusion

- **Funding flood mitigation and Waterfront parks** - Council's priorities for the CIP budget's \$102 million for Phase One Waterfront Plan implementation covered flood mitigation, Waterfront parks and amenities.
- **Preserving parks** – To the extent possible, mitigate the Flood Mitigation Project's impact on parks, restore parks to their original condition after work is completed and. avoid removing old trees.

- **Prioritizing public space usage** - Prioritize features that will have the greatest impact on how Waterfront public spaces will be used, rather than decorative features. e.g. those elements that impact types of activities and support greater numbers of people,
- **Potential cost savings** - To realize cost savings, a hybrid shoreline, including a naturalized shoreline and landscape-based flood mitigation, should replace the new bulkhead between Duke and Prince Street originally proposed and substitute asphalt for decorative street pavers proposed by Olin plan.
- **Preserve the Olin landscape design's concept** – While considering changes to offer cost savings is needed, the City should remain committed to completing the Olin plan's waterfront parks as funds become available
- **Archaeology** - Ensure archaeology costs are considered as part of the project costs.
- **Green Building Policy and Green Infrastructure Policy** – As the design-build project proceeds, support continued innovation for managing stormwater on-site and achieving water quality goals on-site.)
- **O&M/underground rainwater storage tanks** – The importance of the City committing to fund ongoing operation and maintenance costs, especially for flood mitigation elements and underground rainwater storage.

Additional issues:

- **City-wide flood mitigation planning** - Consider how and whether information about the City's non-Waterfront flood mitigation projects might be shared with the Waterfront Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Daniel Straub – Enthusiastic about the urban design aspects of the original plan for a continuous Waterfront promenade but questioned whether the potential cost savings that would be realized from including a hybrid shoreline would be great enough to justify disrupting the Olin landscape design's original vision for a continuous promenade along the water's edge.

NEXT STEPS:

- Committee meeting Thursday April 7 to review a working draft of the Commission letter. (Either 5 or 5:30 p.m.)
- Next Waterfront Commission meeting is April 19.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.