

**Minutes
City of Alexandria, Virginia
WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 28, 2023
City Hall - Sister Cities Conference Room
301 King Street
7:30 a.m.**

Commission Members

Present:

Jan Abraham, East of Washington St. and South of King St.
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, Representative, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Marcee Craighill, Representative, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Stuart Fox, Representative, Park and Recreation Commission
Charlotte Hall, Representative, Old Town Business (OTB)
Nathan Macek, Representative, Alexandria Planning Commission, Waterfront Commission Vice-Chair
Brian McPherson, Citizen, Park Planning District III
Claire Mouldoux, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Lebaron Reid, Commissioner At-Large and Commission Chair
David Robbins, Representative, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners
Deb Roepke, Representative, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Louise Roseman, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Clair Sassin, Representative, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Sydney Smith, Representative, Founders Park Community Association
Patricia Webb, Citizen, Citizen, Park Planning District II
Esther White, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Unexcused

Robert Cvejnovich, Representative, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Lawrence Gillespie, Citizen, East of Washington St. and north of King St

Staff: Jack Browand (Commission Staff Liaison & Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, RPCA), Erin Bevis-Carver, (Division Chief, Sanitary Infrastructure Division, TES), Courtney Ballantine (Acting Captain, APD, Commander, Community Relations Division), Meika Daus (Public Art Senior Manager, RPCA), Matthew Landes (Portfolio Manager/Division Chief, Project Implementation), Catherine Miliaras (Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning/P&Z), Iris Portny (Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA), Diane Ruggiero (Deputy Director, Office of the Arts, RPCA)

Guests: Yvonne Callahan, Tom Foley, Kristina Hagman, Ellen Mosher, Scott Thorsen (Old Town Neighbors) and Steve Skippen (Skanska project manager) and representatives from the Skanska-JMT-LAI flood mitigation team.

Call to Order: Lebaron Reid, Chair

Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and reported the following Commissioners were participating virtually: Cooney, Webb and White

Items for Action

APPROVAL of OCTOBER 17, 2023 MINUTES

Macek moved and Hall seconded that the minutes be approved with minor technical revisions. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

Items for Information

ITEM 1 [2024 Site/See Public Art at Waterfront Park - Update](#) – Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts, RPCA, accompanied by Meika F. Daus, Public Art Senior Manager

The Site/See Public Art series is Waterfront Park’s annual public art series. Each year a new work is installed in March in time for the Cherry Blossom Festival and remains on site through November.

The 2024 art project, “Interstellar Influencer”, is by Studio KCA, an award winning public art team whose work has a strong environmental element. It will be a metal sculpture that imagines the asteroid that collided with earth 35 million years ago to create a crater that produced the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The art work’s goal is to convey the fragility of shared existence on our planet.

Commissioner Comments

- **Claire Mouldoux**, VisitAlexandria Representative, said the Site-See series’ variety of art projects inspired by the City’s history, archaeology, black history and the whimsical “I Love You” sculpture that celebrated the City COVID, have been very popular visitor attractions.
- **Roseman**: Will the City eventually install permanent public art in the waterfront parks? A: Yes. After the Waterfront Flood Mitigation construction is completed.

ITEM 2: [POTOMAC RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION UPDATE](#)/ ALEXANDRIA TOWN GAS (ATG) ORONOCO OUTFALL REMEDIATION PROJECT - Erin Bevis-Carver, Division Chief, Sanitary Infrastructure Division, TES [Outfall Remediation Project Page](#).

- **Agreement details** -See Item 2’s PPT link posted above for details of the City’s remediation agreement with Potomac River Keepers (PRK), reached shortly after PRK sued the City in 2022 after coal tar discharges were discovered seeping through the Oronoco Street outfall. Wells will be installed to remove coal tar, stormwater pipe will be sealed, and sediment remediated.
- **RTN pier/2025**: To learn if coal tar sediment has migrated near the pier, RTN owners will remove parts of the pier in 2025 so T&ES can see if remediation is needed.
- **Using mussels to filter**: City may introduce mussels to help filter the water. PRK’s 50 Million Mussels project is doing this in the Anacostia River and PRK plans a [million mussels](#) along National Harbor.
- **History** –A Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) near North Lee and Oronoco Streets, active 1851-1946, was the source of soil and groundwater coal tar leakage.

Commissioner Comments

- **Impact on Marina and waterfront parks?** Will remediation work in the Oronoco Outfall area impede access to the City Marina or waterfront parks? A: Too soon to tell.

Public comments

- **Mussels Project** - Where might the Alexandria mussels be located? A: Not yet determined.

ITEM 3 [WATERFRONT SMALL AREA PLAN \(WSAP\) IMPLEMENTATION](#) – FLOOD MITIGATION
UPDATE -Matthew Landes, Portfolio Manager/Division Chief, Department of Project Implementation (DPI)

Project Team – Staff from all City departments are working with the design/build consultant team.

Design-Build Project Team

Landes reviewed the Skanska, JMT, & LAI design build project team recently hired by the City as advisors for revising and implementing the Waterfront Small Area Plan (WSAP). Steve Skippen (Skanska Senior Project Manager) introduced team members present at the meeting, including their construction manager, engineer, civic engagement specialist and landscape architect. Company responsibilities include:

- Skanska (construction and project development)
- JMT (transportation infrastructure improvements, including Waterfront projects)
- LAI: (Landscape architecture, urban design and planning)
- McLean Contracting (Marine subcontractor, working on WSAP bulkhead)
- Carolla – Owner advisor working with City to oversee the design-build process

Background: In 2021, when DPI prepared to implement the WSAP approved by Council in 2014 they saw the City's approved 10-year Capital Improvement budget no longer covered all of the WSAP flood Mitigation and Open Space elements. New technologies and best practice designs had also changed. The project scope needed to be modified to fit the City's available budget.

- In 2021-2022, to ensure community input, DPI invited the Waterfront Commission, through its Flood Mitigation Committee, to help DPI reexamine the City's 2014 Waterfront schematic design to identify more resilient and cost efficient alternatives.
- The Commission's May 16, 2022 recommendations to Council and the Mayor are here: [Waterfront Commission Letter to City Council - Flood Mitigation](#)

Project Scope Highlights: **Area covered:** Duke Street to Founders Park: **Flood Mitigation:** addressing three flooding types; **Stormwater management/pump stations and underwater detention tanks** (Studying possible locations. No final decisions made.) **Point Lumley shoreline**/hybrid bulkhead and landscape-based flood protection is being studied as an alternative to the full bulkhead originally proposed. **Lower King Street project**/Being reviewed holistically re: how area connects to Waterfront Park and The Strand.)

Schedule Milestones

- Summer 2024 – design to be brought before the community.
- Fall 2025 – Construction starts – after City's 275th Birthday Celebration.
- Winter 2028 – Target completion date.

Civic Engagement Currently Planned (Near -term)

- November 28 (Update to Waterfront Commission);
- December TBD – Waterfront Community Walking Tour.
- January 16 – Update Waterfront Commission.

- February 20 – Update Waterfront Commission.

Commissioner comments

- **Design report** – Expected in spring 2024.
- **Budget/Robbins** –Is budget final or are additional grant sources being reviewed? A: Budget is final. Design/build contract can be modified if additional funding sources become available.
- **King Street improvements budget/Macek**: Funded by WSAP budget? A: No. Separate funding.
- **Parks & public space improvements/Macek**: Commission has emphasized funding and implementing quality WSAP open space improvements as priorities along with flood mitigation.
- **Founders Park/Smith** – Mature trees need to be preserved. A: City already planning this.

Public comments

- **Watershed flooding/Kristina Hagman**: Can Waterfront flooding be reduced by capturing and redirecting stormwater runoff uphill from the Waterfront? A: Upstream Watershed areas were reviewed to determine which controls might be feasible. The City’s ability to manage stormwater in upstream watershed areas is limited by much of the runoff coming from private property.

City Updates

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

- **Robinson Landing**– Work continues on a removable railing along the water’s edge of the promenade’s City portion to improve pedestrian safety while preserving boats’ access to the dock.
- **Oronoco Bay Park structures** – Aging wooden observation decks need replacement.
- **Three big December events** – The City’s big December events - Scottish Christmas Walk, Parade of Lights and First Night Alexandria - are coming up.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Courtney Ballantine Acting Captain, APD, Commander, Community Relations

- **Police presence at City’s big December events** – A command post will be set up.
- **Parking Enforcement Pilot project** – A contractor has been hired to provide parking enforcement officers to support City Parking Enforcement Officers in Old Town. Contractors are expected to begin in the next few weeks with two staff and one supervisor for two shifts, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m. City parking enforcement supervisors will supervise them. If successful the program will expand.

Commissioner Comments

- **Hall**: Improving Old Town’s weekend parking enforcement should be a priority. City supervisors should work on weekends. A: Private contractors on weekend shifts are likely to be added.
- **Council Member Bagley**: The start of the City’s use of a private contractor to supplement City Parking Enforcement Officers is an important step.

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

- **Robinson Terminal North (RTN) redevelopment** – Rooney Properties submitted a new proposal for the site’s East and West parcels on North Union Street. Staff is reviewing Rooney’s Concept 1 proposal (a bare bones zoning analysis), a mix of multifamily residential, ground-floor retail, a restaurant, mixed-use residential buildings and underground parking. The next phase will include proposed architectural design. The owner plans to complete the project by 2025.

Commissioner Comments –

RTN/Hotel? Does the proposal drop the hotel in the original RTN redevelopment proposal? A: No. Staff will review the proposal against the Waterfront Small Area Plan (WSAP) guidelines. WSAP proposed - but did not require - adding two Waterfront hotels, one north and one south of King Street.

- **301 N. Fairfax Street redevelopment** - The proposal is to replace an empty 1970s era three-story office building on the site with a four-story 48 unit condo building with at grade parking and a rooftop terrace. The proposed building requires a targeted master plan amendment to rezone the parcel. The proposal includes features such as underground utilities, streetscape improvements, two affordable units, and monetary contributions to the public art and urban forestry funds.

Next steps: Planning Commission December 5; City Council December 16.

Public Comments: 301 North Fairfax Street/

- Scott Thorsen: Members of his group, Old Town Neighbors, and members from three other homeowner groups are working together to oppose the redevelopment design proposed for 301 N. Fairfax Street. Also present: Yvonne Callahan, Tom Foley, and Ellen Mosher.
- They were presenting their concerns to the Waterfront Commission because they felt the 301 parcel falls within the area covered by the Waterfront SAP and should be reviewed for consistency with WSAP design guidelines. They had presented their concerns to the BAR and will do so again when the Planning Commission and City Council review the proposal.

Commissioner comments:

- Q: Will setbacks be like Old Town North's? A: No. Proposes five foot vs. 16 foot requirement.
- Q: Biggest concern? A: Size and scale.
- Q: Is proposed development consistent with the height requirement for this site? A: Miliaris. Yes. A: Thorsen: His group sent P&Z Director a letter asking for the City's official interpretation of the zoning ordinance.

Commission Reports / Subcommittee Reports / Announcements

- **Claire Mouledoux/Visit Alexandria** – Reviewed Waterfront events and attractions that Visit Alexandria is highlighting in “What’s New in Alexandria”: Site/See public art: new history experiences showcased by signage for the African American history trail, the Tall Ship Providence Heritage Center and new dining experiences. Activities planned for the next Saturday (Scottish Christmas Walk and Holiday Boat Parade) were reviewed, including publicity for the weekend’s traffic management plans. **Event details:**
- **Hall/First Night Alexandria**- Reviewed planned activities to be held at the Waterfront.

Proposed Discussion Topics / Items of Information – Future Meetings

- **Next Meeting: December 19, 2023** canceled. No time-sensitive matters before January.
- **January 16, 2024 meeting** – Tentative update of Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) Open Space Update

Adjournment At 9:35 a.m. Bagley moved and Abraham seconded that the meeting adjourn. Approved by unanimous voice vote.