

City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting

Del Pepper West End Service Center
4850 Mark Center Drive

Thursday, April 18, 2024
7 p.m.

P&RC Members

Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (Acting) (District II); Katy Matthews, Secretary (District III); Jeffrey Miller (District I); David Brennan (District III); Paul Komelasky (District I); Tookie Organek (student member); Geoffrey Goode (District II)

Absent: Steve Beggs, Chair (District II); Stuart Fox (District I); Rania Shuster (student member); Phillip Voorhees (District III).

RPCA Staff: James Spengler, RPCA Director, Jack Browand, Deputy Director, Park Services; Laura Durham, Deputy Director; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Jose Ayala, Principal Planner, Park Services; Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant, RPCA.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dana Colarulli, Acting Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Commissioner Assignments

Commission members continued to review available assignments and express their interest in these community initiatives. Members with existing assignments gave the following updates:

DISTRICT I: **Stuart Fox** was not in attendance. **Jeffrey Miller** gave an update on Monumental Sports. It was determined that the Arena will not be relocated to Potomac Yard. He mentioned attending the new art exhibit opening at the waterfront, “Interstellar Influencer”. It’s a great exhibit and just as nice to experience at night. He also attended the Waterfront Commission open house. Paul Komelasky stated that Jack Browand did a great job representing RPCA during last night’s discussion in Old Town North. The community had concerns about tree coverage and our arborists were on hand to answer questions.

DISTRICT II: Dana Colarulli reminded the commission of the flood mitigation plan discussion from last month's meeting. Based on that discussion, Stuart Fox penned a letter of support for the updated mitigation plan on behalf of the Commission. That letter was submitted to the City Council today. **Stephen Beggs** was not in attendance. **Geoffrey Goode** reported that Alexandria West will have a public meeting next week. On Monday, the PTA met to discuss the budget issues with the George Mason Modernization Plan. There is an idea to add \$.01 to the property tax rate. Revenue would be given to ACPS. He also reported that next Friday, George Mason will host Dragon Fest. This is an annual carnival held by the school and the Mobile Art Lab will be in attendance.

DISTRICT III: Katy Matthews stated that Minnie Howard remains on schedule. Inside the building, the pool has been filled, light fixtures have been installed and furniture is in place. Playground equipment has been installed and trees are planted outside of the building. Orientation should be in August. Demolition of the old building will happen this summer. **Phillip Voorhees** was not in attendance. **David Brennan** shared that Jim Gibson, who heads the Youth Sports Advisory Board, will attend one of the Commission's upcoming meetings. This will allow the Commission to give the board some direction. During the last Youth Sports Advisory Board meeting, they discussed ways to recognize athletes. They also discussed the Cameron Run redevelopment. ASA has created a proposal for a field house on that site.

STUDENT MEMBERS: Tookie Organek reiterated that there are no longer plans to build the sports arena in the city. **Rania Shuster** was not in attendance.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 21, 2024

ACTION: FY24.4.18.24A

Motion: Geoffrey Goode moved, and Katy Matthews seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

V. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

a. Staff Report Highlights

Division updates (staff reports) are posted at:

https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/prccombinedreport_4.18.24.pdf

- Laura Durham provided an update on the pool at Minnie Howard. RPCA has hired Bailey Stapleton as the new Aquatics Recreation Manager. She will manage the Minnie Howard site. The RPCA aquatics team has spent a good bit of time at Minnie Howard for training on the pump room and other functions of the site. Laura will work on planning a site tour for the Commission soon. The ribbon cutting should be in June.

- Jack Browand gave updates on the following projects:
 - North Potomac Yard Park is anticipated to open at the end of May. There will be a ribbon cutting at that location...date TBD.
 - The 4-Mile Run bridge project is complete. Railing needs to be installed.
 - The Hensley project is moving along, and it has received its demolition permit. The old restroom facility and office space will be removed soon.
 - Multiple construction bids have been received for the Colasanto Splash Pad project.
 - Waterfront Park will be closed for a few weeks to restore the turf area. This maintenance is done regularly throughout the year. It will re-open before Memorial Day.
 - The relationship with the contractor for the Simpson Dog Park has been severed. RPCA is moving forward with completing the project and is optimistic that it can be done relatively quickly. It's projected to open in late Spring or Early Summer.
 - The Mount Jefferson Park project is still on track. RPCA plans to have that portion of the park open in late May or early June.
 - As part of the City's 275th Anniversary. 275 trees will be planted throughout the City. Jack will provide additional information for those who are interested in taking part in the planting.

b. Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) Program Update

Soup Fick gave an update on the Winkler Botanical Preserve. They returned to offering summer camps last year and it included 6 sessions. They have extended camp to 7 weeks this summer and ages have been expanded to include 10 to 12-year-olds. There are several weekly themes for the camps. There are field trips planned throughout the school year beginning each fall. There are plans to expand the parking lot to 30 parking spaces and a bus turnaround. More information on the Winkler Botanical Preserve can be found here: <https://www.novaparks.com/parks/winkler-botanical-preserve>

c. Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) Program Update

Alan Rowsome and Rentz Hilyer gave an update on the NVCT Program. The presentation can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/nvct_prc_4.18.24.pdf

d. Alexandria West Small Area Plan Update

Jose Ayala gave an update on the Alexandria West Small Area Plan. The presentation can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/april_2024_awsap_update_-_park_and_recreation_commission_prc_4.18.pdf

VI. NEXT MEETING

May 16, 2024 – Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center

VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY24.4.18.24B

Motion: Katy Matthews moved, and Paul Komelasky seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:56 p.m. The motion passed by unanimous vote.