

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting**

**Patrick Henry Recreation Center
4653 Taney Ave.**

**Thursday, November 21, 2024
7 p.m.**

Commission Members

Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Jeffrey Miller (District I); Geoffrey Goode (District II); Joseph Fray (District II); David Brennan, (District III); Stuart Fox, Secretary (District I); Tookie Organek (student member)

Absent: Paul Komelasky (District I); Jacques Lecoq (student member)

RPCA Staff: James Spengler, Director; Jack Browand, Deputy Director of Park Services; Laura Durham, Deputy Director of Recreation Services; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant, RPCA; Ana Vicinanza, Urban Planner III; Tamika Coleman, Division Chief, Recreation Service; Judy Lo, Principal Planner.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dana Colarulli, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Gina Baum, former Commission Chair, congratulated Jim Spengler on his retirement. She then addressed the Commission on the importance of open space and noted that former Commission Chair, Judy Noritaki, was an expert on environmental policy and a steadfast protector of open space. She stated that protecting the City's open space should be the Commission's #1 priority. She is opposed to the plan to place flood mitigation pumps in Waterfront Park. She offered an alternative location, an existing inlet across from Windmill Hill Park (aka Lee Street Park). She urged the Commission to not jump to rubber stamping a plan that will set a precedent in building on park land. She also suggested that the Commission take this back to their communities/districts for feedback.

III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Staff Report Highlights

The staff report can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/prc_combined_reports_11.21.24.pdf

Staff Introductions – Judy Lo introduced Jesse Van Wick, the newly hired Urban Planner in Parks Services. Jesse is a licensed landscape architect with over 15 years of experience in

the field. In his role as Urban Planner, Jesse will manage, design, and implement a variety of capital improvement projects for the City's parks and public open spaces.

Director Recognition – Commission Chair, Dana Colarulli, recognized Jim Spengler, RPCA Director, for his 15 years of service to the city. After receiving a certificate of appreciation, Jim reminded the Commission of how important they are in supporting the city and its community. He noted that there was push back in building the Patrick Henry Recreation Center to the full-service center it is today. Years ago, the Park and Recreation Commission helped lead the charge in moving that project forward. Jim will retire from the city effective November 30.

Jack Browand gave an update on the following topics:

Ewald Park Pop-up – Pop up event occurred on November 16. More information to come on the renovation of Ewald Park. Another meeting will be held on December 11.

Tree Lighting Ceremony – The ceremony will take place in Market Square on Saturday, November 23.

Patrick Henry Completion Ceremony – There will be a completion ceremony for the Patrick Henry field on December 9 at 11 a.m.

Simpson Dog Park – The park is up and running. The only issue is that the grass panel is worn/gone. There will be replanting in the spring

Mount Jefferson Dog Park – Judy Lo is hard at work to wrap up punch list items at this location. Once these items are done, the city will take ownership.

Duke Street Dog Park – RPCA is working to deliver water to the Duke Street dog park and have a fountain installed.

Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery – We are currently in the community engagement phase of the process. There were 2 public meetings this week. Please notify Laura Durham if there are organized groups in the city that RPCA could meet with to discuss the process.

Winter Cheerleading Invitational – This event is scheduled for December 16th, at Alexandria City High School.

Minnie Howard Pool – The pool is open and functioning. There are a few punch list items that need to be taken care of.

Commissioner Assignments

DISTRICT I: Stuart Fox stated that the Waterfront Commission talked about Robinson Terminal North. They are pushing to have the area developed with the developer retaining ownership and maintaining the maintenance requirements while the City has a public access easement. They also talked about the waterfront flood mitigation project. **Paul Komelasky** was not in attendance. **Jeffrey Miller** enjoyed the opening ceremony for Potomac Yard Park.

DISTRICT II: Dana Colarulli did not have an update. **Geoffrey Goode** stated that there is a George Mason modernization meeting tonight. He does not have an update. **Joe Fray** wanted to highlight the program at the Buddy Ford Center, and the program involving invasive species.

DISTRICT III: Katy Matthews stated that the demolition phase of the old Minnie Howard building is almost complete. They are doing geothermal drilling. **David Brennan** stated that the Youth Sports Advisory Board did not meet.

STUDENT MEMBER: Tookie Organeck was excited to see the lights on the field and how they are being used. **Jacques Lecoq** was not in attendance.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 17, 2024

ACTION: FY25.11.21.24A

Motion: Katy Matthews moved, and Geoffrey Goode seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes—the motion passed unanimously.

V. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

a. Eco-City Homes Recognition Program

Samantha Heitsch, Sustainability Coordinator, shared the importance of the Eco-City Homes Recognition Program. More information on the program can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/eco-city-alexandria/eco-city-homes-recognition-program-0>

b. WSAP Implementation Update – Pump Station Analysis

Matt Landes, Division Chief, DPI, gave an update on WSAP Implementation. The presentation can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/2024-11-19_wfi_present_wfc-prc_v2_0.pdf

ACTION: FY25.11.21.24B

Motion: David Brennan moved, and Geoffrey Goode seconded the motion for the Commission to write a letter to City Council expressing their preference for the pump location to be on Prince Street (option 2), outline the recommended features for that facility, and the preservation of tree canopy in all the park. Please include that in an ideal world, park space would not be lost. The Commission strongly encourages the City to re-

examine options to relocate the Pump station that do not impact Waterfront Park as soon as possible.

c. Youth Sports Advisory Board Update

Jim Gibson, Youth Sports Advisory Board Chair, updated the Commission on recent Board activities. The group has drafted the following Mission Statement: “Our Mission is to be actively involved in maintaining optimum level of sports and recreational programs, policies, and facilities as advocates for youth sports participants in the City. To support positive guidance and encourage participation in youth sports. To offer hands-on data and feedback to the recreation department to maximize resources and accommodate needs.”

They are currently working on a succession plan and encouraging residents with a passion for youth sports to apply to be a member of the Board. Mr. Gibson also invited members of the Commission to join the Sportsman’s Club.

VI. NEXT MEETING

January 16, 2025 – Patrick Henry Recreation Center

VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY25.11.21.24C

Motion: Stuart Fox moved, and Katie Matthews seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:07 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.