

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting - Virtual
Tuesday, October 20, 2020
7:30 a.m.**

Commission Members

Present:

Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Eldon Boes, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
John Bordner, Citizen, west of Washington St
Rich Brune, Citizen, Park Planning District III'
Susan Cohen, Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Doug Gosnell, Representative, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners
Beth Gross, Founders Park Community Association (FPCA)
Charlotte Hall, Representative, VisitAlexandria
Trae Lamond, Representative, Old Town Business and Professional Association (OTBPA)
Mark Ludlow, Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)
Nathan (Nate) Macek, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission
Danielle Romanetti, Representative, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Louise Roseman, Citizen, Park Planning District I
Kathy Seifert, Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Stephen Thayer, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of King St. and Chair
Christa Watters, Citizen, east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.
Patricia Webb, Park Planning District II

Excused:

Robert Cvejanovich, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)
Mohamed E. "Mo" Seifeldein, Member, Alexandria City Council

Vacancies

Representative, Historic Alexandria Foundation
Citizen, east of Washington St. and south of King St

City Staff

Jamie Bridgeman, Captain, Alexandria Police Department (APD)
Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Division Chief, Park Planning, Design & Capital
Development, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Matt Landes, Acting Division Chief for Waterfront Plan Implementation, Department of Planning and
Implementation (DPI)
Catherine Miliaris, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)
Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA
Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, RPCA, Office of the Arts
Michael Swidrak, Urban Planner, P&Z

Guests

Duncan Blair, Esq., Land, Carroll & Blair PC

Pat Brogan
Brian Buzzell
Bruce Catts, President, Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC)-
Jack Connor Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC)
Bert Ely, Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, and OTCA
Stuart Fox
John (Jody) Manor
Barbara Saperstone
Michael Simmons

Call to Order - Stephen Thayer, Chair

Thayer called the virtual meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and read the following statement regarding the Continuity of Government ordinance authorizing all Commissioners and staff to participate by a Zoom Webinar. Members of the public were also accessing the meeting electronically.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the October 17, 2020 meeting of the Alexandria Waterfront Commission is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020 or Sections 4-0.00(g) in HB29 and HB30 to undertake essential business. All of the members of the Board and staff are participating from remote locations through a Zoom Webinar. This meeting is being held electronically, unless a determination is made that it is safe enough to be held in person in the City Council Chamber at 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA. Electronic access will be provided in either event.

***Public comments** - In addition, the following Commission meeting procedures were reviewed: Public comment will be received consistent with the adopted Commission policy regarding public participation. Comments will be taken after each agenda item and at the end of the meeting. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker and no more than 15 minutes per agenda item. For virtual meetings public comments can be made through the conference call or Zoom participation. Speakers were asked to identify themselves by first and last name.*

Action Items:

ITEM 1: Approval of February 18, 2020 Minutes

Motion: Macek moved and Hall seconded that the February 18, 2020 minutes be approved. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM 2: Approval of September 15, 2020 Minutes

Motion: Macek moved and Hall seconded that the September 15, 2020 minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Commission Discussion:

“Adoption of an Electronic Meeting Policy”- In response to a Commissioner request, staff will simplify the minutes’ reference to State policy on electronic meetings. Commissioners briefly re-visited the

October 2020 agenda item “**Robinson Landing Development Capital BikeShare Location**” as discussed on p.5 of the minutes. A Commissioner question was raised about how permanently locating a station in the Point Lumley Park improvement area might relate to the private bequest for funding the City’s planned improvements to Point Lumley Park that are consistent with the Waterfront Plan. The question had not been raised at the October meeting. The Chair said the issue is whether putting a permanent BikeShare station in the Point Lumley Park improvement area might jeopardize the private bequest

ITEM 3: Old Dominion Boat Club DSUP Application

Duncan Blair, Esq., Land, Carroll & Blair PC; Catherine Miliaras (P&Z); and Michael Swidrak (P&Z)

Thayer recused himself from the Commission’s ODBC discussion. Hall chaired discussion of this agenda item.

- Michael Swidrak (P&Z) and Duncan Blair (representing ODBC) reviewed design changes for the pier that ODBC proposes to build adjacent to its clubhouse at 0 Prince Street. ODBC submitted its original design for DSUP review in June 2019. City staff and ODBC meetings since then produced the changes. Blair introduced Jack Conner, an ODBC member who has been working with Blair on the revisions. The revised design is significantly smaller than ODBC’s original design and is much smaller than the Waterfront Park pier that Council recently approved to support the Tall Ship Providence. Blair said ODBC’s plan no longer envisions holding private social events on the proposed pier. The pier’s main purpose will be to dock and birth kayaks and other personal water craft of ODBC members and guests. The proposed pier and wharf design has been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.
- Browand said the proposed design elements are fully within ODBC’s riparian rights area.¹ They are permissible, allowable, and consistent with the Waterfront Plan and the City-ODBC property exchange agreement.

Next steps: The staff report supporting the revised design was expected that week. The Planning Commission will review the revised proposal in November 2020.

Commission Discussion

- ***The design’s consistency with the Waterfront Small Area Plan (SAP)?*** A: Staff said the City’s agreement with ODBC is separate from the Waterfront SAP but ODBC’s landscape plan is consistent with the Waterfront Plan’s public space landscape design.
- ***Impact on the 2014 City-ODBC land exchange agreement?***² A: The area for the proposed ODBC pier is consistent the terms of the City-ODBC agreement. Riparian rights for 0 Prince

¹ **Note:** Riparian rights give a property owner the right to use the water and the water’s surface adjacent to their private property.

² 2014 ODBC-City property acquisition and exchange agreement link:
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/PropertyAcquisitionandExchange%20Deed150008515.pdf.pdf>

Street were transferred to ODBC. The Waterfront Promenade remains City property. Under common law, the property owner has the right to build piers and wharfs to access the water.

- ***Private social events on the pier?***

A: No. Blair said the fixed pier portion provides a pedestrian walkway for ODBC members to access the water and could, at some point in the future, become part of a permanent ODBC marina if one is built. The proposed floating pier, narrow and in a shallow water area, will be used for launching kayaks, windsurfing boats, and other personal water craft.

- ***Environmentally friendly craft*** - Support for the floating wharf as a way to encourage use of kayaks and other environmentally friendly craft.

Motion: Gosnell moved and Brune seconded that the Commission support the ODBC proposal. The motion was approved by voice vote with no votes in opposition, four abstentions, and one recusal (Thayer). Macek, the Planning Commission's (PC) representative, said he was abstaining because the PC would be considering the ODBC proposal. Thayer recused due to his ODBC membership.³

ITEM 4: Proposal to change the start time of Commission meetings

A new item was added to the agenda at Commissioner Romanetti's request. She proposed that the Commission consider starting its regular meetings at 8 a.m. rather than 7:30 a.m. The later start time would make it easier for people with children to join the Commission.

Commission discussion:

- The Chair said starting meetings at 7:30 am and ending between 9 and 9:30 a.m. makes it easier for staff to attend and for Commissioners to leave for responsibilities such as work. Also, a later start time might result in a Commission meeting losing its quorum if Commissioners need to leave.
- Making it easier for people with younger children to serve on the Commission would be a good thing since this is an important Waterfront constituency, but how to do that is complicated.
- When the Commission had previously considered changing its regular monthly meetings to an evening time slot it was discovered that a regular monthly evening meeting time would conflict with evening meetings held by many of the constituencies represented by members of the Commission.

Next step: Commissioners will consider the matter further at their November 17, 2020 meeting. Browand asked Commissioners to send proposals to him and to the Chair for discussion at that time.

ITEM 5: FY 2022 Budget Priorities – Commission discussion

Thayer and Browand asked Commissioners to begin thinking about developing the Commission's annual letter to the City Manager recommending Waterfront-related priorities for the coming year's budget. Thayer recommended Commissioners review the Commission's October 4, 2019 letter to the City Manager that was sent as staff was developing the FY2021 budget.⁴ (Link to the letter is below).

³ Abstentions were Romanetti, Macek, Roseman and Watters.

⁴ Commission's October 2019 letter to City Manager.
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/info/WaterfrontCommissionPrioritiesforFY2021.pdf>

Browand reminded Commissioners that the City Manager’s proposed budget is released in February each year, close to the Commission’s February meeting, and public outreach for comments starts soon after.

Commission highlighted:

- This year’s Waterfront-related budget priorities need to be considered in the context of prioritizing City actions supporting residents and businesses during COVID. Several Waterfront-related priorities were identified: funding staff and maintenance activities, the King Street pedestrian plaza and Waterfront Park’s public art project.
- The Commission will need additional budget guidance from the City Manager before finalizing its recommendation for FY2022 spending priorities.

Public Comments- None

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY – Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD

- Bridgeman reported that officer patrols of the 100 block of King Street continue seven days a week from 4pm – 10 pm. An arrest has been made in the case of business larcenies in Old Town.

COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATES – Jack Browand, Division Chief, RPCA.

Waterfront Park Public Art Update - Diane Ruggiero, RPCA

- Planning for the 2021 public art project is ongoing. Artist Mark Reigelman is considering installing in the Waterfront Park area pilings that mimic the topography of the nearby river bottom that would be 6 feet apart to provide safe COVID-related access for visitors. Each year the project is installed during the week of the Cherry Blossom Festival and kept in place from March through November. The current Waterfront Park art installation will remain up through November 8 and then be moved to outside the Old Town Pool. The ground mural will remain in place until February when work begins on preparing the ground for the 2021 art project.

Commission Comments

- ***Type of lighting to be used for the Waterfront Park art project.***
- ***Torpedo Factory Action Plan*** – Commissioners requested a briefing on City plans for the Torpedo Factory.

Public comments - None.

FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT: Matt Landes, Acting Division Chief for Waterfront Implementation (DPI)

- Landes reported that work is moving forward on the project for the area in the core Waterfront area between Duke Street and Queen Street. Public input will be important as options for revising the original design are developed in response to the changing budget environment. DPI has contracted with Carollo Engineers to work on the design-build project. Among other tasks, they are evaluating engineering options to address increasing construction costs and increasing risks of nuisance flooding. Potential modifications to the Olin Plan are being considered as an option, as well as opportunities for incorporating new technologies and design strategies to address flood

mitigation. CIP funding for the flood mitigation project has been deferred from the FY2021 budget to FY2022.

Next Steps –

- **Public outreach** - Staff will be engaging the Commission and the public for guidance and feedback in coming months. COVID's financial impacts on the Capital Improvement Plan and Waterfront Plan implementation are being assessed. Technical ideas will be evaluated. Ideas will be presented to the community for comment.
- **Commission subcommittee** - Thayer said the Commission will create a Subcommittee to review plans for modifying Waterfront Plan implementation. This approach has been used in the past to evaluate major Waterfront projects such as the Robinson Terminal South and North projects that were in development and has worked well. He invited Commissioners interested in participating to contact him and Browand. All Commissioners will be welcome at the meetings.

Public Comments – None.

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

- **Robinson Landing** - Miliaris reviewed the status of work and occupancy for Robinson Landing's different sections. Most of the site work is done, including that for the Waterfront Promenade. The non-retail area on Robinson Landing's southern area should be completed in October. Retail in the northern area should be finished by year's end. Restaurants are expected to begin opening in March 2022.
- **10 Duke Street** – EYA has completed site work near the building. A temporary fence to be installed.
- **ODBC pier** – Planning Commission's November 5, 2020 meeting will consider it
- **101 N. Union Street** (near Vola's). Work investigating the building integrity will begin in a few weeks.
- **Robinson Terminal North/ RiverRENEW** – Excavation and right-of-way permits have been issued. Demolition permits are pending. Work is expected to begin in November. Tunnel construction will not begin for another several months. Neighbors nearby have received a letter from AlexRENEW advising of upcoming construction.

Commission discussion highlighted:

- **Misha's** - Question on the status of Misha's on Prince Street.
- **River RENEWS SAG:** Thayer reported that Council has created a new River RENEW stakeholder advisory group (SAG) and applications start November 6. Since the Waterfront Commission does not have a stakeholder seat on the SAG Thayer encouraged Commissioners to visit the River RENEW SAG website and consider applying for a position that they fit.

Commission Reports / Announcements

- **Border** (Ad Hoc Committee on Waterfront Construction) – The next virtual meeting is the day after Election Day.
- **Cohen** (Commission on the Arts) - Work has been completed on the City's African American Heritage Trail between from King Street and Canal Square. The trail was chosen as the first trail

to implement from the Waterfront Art and History Plan that was created for the Waterfront Small Area Plan. A smart phone app has been created to guide people along the trail. She proposed an update from the City Archaeologist on the project.

- **Gross** (Founders Park Civic Association) – She thanked the City for its work on Founders Park this past summer.
- **Hall** (VisitAlexandria) - She thanked City staff, especially T&ES, for their continuing responsiveness to local business concerns about problems such as those related to Robinson Landing construction. OTBA activities have included the Old Town Oyster Week, restaurants working with the City on winterization plans that will allow outside dining on the 100 block of King Street in colder weather, and plans to put new plants in the planters along the 100 block of King Street. The Alexandria Health Department has provided five port-a-potties for visitors to the Waterfront so the public won't need to use nearby restaurants' restrooms.
- **Thayer** thanked Hall for her continuing vigilance seven days a week monitoring the Waterfront area, especially the 100 block, to ensure that restaurants and businesses can provide visitor-friendly service.
- **Park usage up - Browand** reported that Google Analytics has shown a 46 percent increase in usage of City parks during the pandemic period. Commissioners requested a briefing, if possible from Department of Health, on how activities being offered during COVID are consistent with safety practices. Macek suggested staff update information about Waterfront parks on the City website, including which parks have picnic tables so that people picking up nearby restaurant take-out know where they can eat outside.

Public Comments – Comments were invited. There were none.

November Discussion Topics / Items of Information

Among the topics proposed were an African American Heritage Trail update, Torpedo Factory Action Plan, changing the Commission's monthly meeting start-time, and a possible Health Department briefing on COVID safety practices that are followed for Waterfront activity areas.

Next Meeting: November 17, 2020 - Virtual

Adjournment – Macek proposed and Baum seconded that the meeting adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote at 9:50 a.m.