


# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER 

**SUBJECT:** AD HOC FORT WARD MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING GROUP

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I am pleased to share with you the good work and the contributions of the Ad Hoc Fort Ward Management Plan Implementation Monitoring Group. Members of the Monitoring Group have been actively engaged in guiding and supporting the implementation of the City Council approved Management Plan for the Fort Ward Park and the Museum Area. Attached is a summary of their major contributions and accomplishments over the past two years. You will note that significant progress has been made to implement key recommendations of the Plan.

Even though the Monitoring Group concluded its formal charge on September 09, 2017, City staff remains committed to continue community engagement to implement the Plan by direct communications with all stakeholder groups, including members of the adjoining neighborhoods, Fort Ward descendent community, and the Monitoring Group members. Phased implementation of the Plan will continue with future funding approved by the City Council.

I want to thank all members of the Monitoring Group for their time and commitment. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Councilman Chapman for his service and leadership to facilitate the work of the Monitoring Group.

### Attachments

1. Summary of Accomplishments: Ad Hoc Fort Ward Management Plan Implementation Monitoring Group
2. Roster of Ad Hoc Fort Ward Management Plan Implementation Monitoring Group

cc: Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager  
Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services  
Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria  
James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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**Summary of Major Accomplishments**

**AD HOC FORT WARD MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING GROUP**

September 01, 2017

Since its first meeting on September 9, 2015, the Ad Hoc Fort Ward Management Plan Implementation Monitoring Group has contributed significantly in the following areas:

**1. Drainage Improvements**

The Monitoring Group has worked with the City staff to plan and design the improvements to the storm water infrastructure serving the park, including the necessary archaeology associated with this effort. The initial project goal was to divert storm water away from the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery to minimize erosion inside the cemetery. Project design included a berm and a new alignment of the storm water structures. Staff completed construction of this project in close coordination with the Monitoring Group and Oakland Baptist Church. Post construction monitoring of the project site indicates that the drainage has been successfully diverted as planned.

**2. Fort Ward Oral History Project**

The Monitoring Group has received updates as Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) has continued to coordinate with the Fort Ward and Seminary Descendants Society and other members of the descendant community to develop a program to conduct oral history interviews of descendants of the Fort community as well as other individuals who may have knowledge about past activities and locations of graves within Fort Ward Park. Several descendants have attended OHA oral history training to enable them to conduct the oral history interviews. Staff and the Descendants Society have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate the work of obtaining additional oral histories.

**3. Archaeological Research**

The Monitoring Group has coordinated with staff as archaeological work has continued to pursue identification of grave and cemetery locations within Fort Ward Park. Archaeology staff conducted excavations in all areas of proposed ground disturbance associated with the placement of the storm water improvements on the east side of the

park to identify if graves were present. No grave sites were discovered, and the locations were cleared for the placement of the drainage system. In addition, staff continued to hold the City's archaeological summer camp in the park and excavated areas associated with the households of the African American families who lived at Fort Ward. Descendants came to the site and spoke to the campers about their family histories and experiences.

Staff also completed the archeological work in the former Maintenance Yard area and reviewed the results with the public. No additional burials were located. Known burial areas will be marked, area restored with regrading and reseeded, and existing fencing will be removed in preparation for the development of the Interpretive Plan.

Future archeological work in Fort Ward will continue, as needed, during the implementation of the Fort Ward Management Plan.

#### **4. Fort Ward Interpretive Plan Development**

A consultant team (DesignMinds) has been hired to lead the development of a Master Interpretive Plan for Fort Ward. The Fort Ward Interpretive Committee, consisting of members of the community working with OHA staff, worked much of the past year on identifying key themes and goals that the consultants will address in developing the Plan. They are beginning the planning process this summer and will be meeting Fort Ward stakeholders and presenting a project briefing at a meeting of the Fort Ward Interpretive Committee on September 14. The anticipated time-line for the development of the Interpretive Plan is approximately 18 months, with a draft Interpretive Plan expected in early 2018, and the finalized Plan and other project deliverables to be completed in October 2018.

Members of the Monitoring Group are represented on the Fort Ward Interpretive Plan Committee, and have engaged in discussions regarding future interpretation.

#### **5. Tree Management**

The Monitoring Group has discussed and advised staff on implementation of the tree management effort. Starting last fall, staff began planting replacement trees in suitable locations throughout the Park. 22 trees were planted by the City. In addition, volunteers from Trees Alexandria donated and planted 13 native trees at Fort Ward Park. Planting sites were reviewed and approved by the Office of Historic Alexandria. These sites were selected to provide tree canopy cover in areas of the park where trees have been removed, and in public areas where park users will appreciate the shade that the trees will provide as they mature. RPCA staff will continue tree management in the Park, including annual inspections and tree plantings, with available future resources.

## **6. Park Improvement Projects**

Several park improvement projects, consistent with the Council-approved Management Plan for Fort Ward have been completed:

- Removal of the off-leash dog exercise area and restoration of the grounds
- Installation of additional ADA compliant park furniture (picnic tables, trash cans)
- Installation of ADA compliant parking and pathway
- Repaving and restriping of the park loop road and all parking
- Development of the ADA path between and picnic shelter with pervious material (in design phase)

A total of \$771,821 in capital funds have been invested in the Fort Ward Park so far to implement the City-Council approved Management Plan for the Park. Moving forward, \$1,120,000 in capital funds have been approved in the FY 2018 – FY 2027 CIP for the continued implementation of the Plan.

## City of Alexandria - Ad Hoc Fort Ward Management Plan Implementation Monitoring Group Roster

Updated 8/31/2017

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Member Type/Group Representation</b>
Councilman John Chapman	<a href="mailto:John.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov">John.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov</a>	City Council Representative <i>Convener of the Monitoring Group</i>
Brenda Adams	bma815cap@aol.com	Ft. Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society (FWSAADS)
Stephen Beggs	<a href="mailto:steve@tartanproperties.com">steve@tartanproperties.com</a> <a href="mailto:stephenbeggs@hotmail.com">stephenbeggs@hotmail.com</a>	At Large Member
Ripley Forbes	<a href="mailto:rforbes@aol.com">rforbes@aol.com</a>	Park and Recreation Commission
Thomas Fulton	<a href="mailto:fultonoleary@gmail.com">fultonoleary@gmail.com</a>	Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA)
Susan Gitlin (Resigned 3/13/17)	<a href="mailto:smcg611@gmail.com">smcg611@gmail.com</a>	Environmental Policy Commission
Carol Johnson,	<a href="mailto:caj21va@aol.com">caj21va@aol.com</a>	Ft. Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society (Board Member -FWSAADS)
Judy Young Smith	jdsmith249@gmail.com	Seminary Civic Association
Michael Williams,	mabw12@aol.com	Oakland Baptist Church, Chairperson
McArthur Myers	<a href="mailto:alexslim62@comcast.net">alexslim62@comcast.net</a>	Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC)
Mary Jane Nugent (Resigned 6/15/17)	<a href="mailto:mj_nugent@hotmail.com">mj_nugent@hotmail.com</a> alt: mjn607@verizon.net	Alexandria Archaeology Commission

