

**City of Alexandria  
WATERFRONT COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, January 17, 2023  
City Hall Sister Cities Conference Room  
301 King Street  
7:30 a.m.**

**Commission Members**

***Present:***

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, Historic Alexandria Foundation  
Marcee Craighill, Representative, Alexandria Commission for the Arts  
Robert Cvejnovich, Representative, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)  
Stuart Fox, Representative, Park and Recreation Commission  
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners  
Trae Lamond, Representative, VisitAlexandria  
Nathan (Nate) Macek, Representative, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission  
Brian McPherson, Citizen, Park Planning District III  
Lebaron Reid, Commissioner At-Large  
Louise Roseman, Citizen, Park Planning District I  
Barbara Saperstone, Citizen, East of Washington St. and South of King St.  
Clair Sassin, Representative, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Kathy Seifert, Representative, Alexandria Seaport Foundation  
Stephen Thayer, Citizen, East of Washington St. and north of King St. and Chair, Waterfront Commission  
Patricia Webb, Citizen, Park Planning District II

***Excused***

Kristina Hagman, Representative, Founders Park Community Association  
Charlotte Hall, Representative, Old Town Business Association (OTBA)  
Esther White, Representative, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

**Call to Order:**

Chair Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. He reported that, pursuant to the City's Electronic Participation Policy, he had approved three Commissioners' requests to participate electronically for reasons authorized by the policy. Councilmember Sarah Bagley is in Atlanta on business. Patricia Webb, due to a medical issue is participating from South Carolina. Doug Gosnell, due to a medical issue, is participating from Florida.

**Items for Action**

**APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 15, 2022 MINUTES**

- **Motion:** Roseman moved, and Fox seconded that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY UPDATE** - Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA, Commission Staff Liaison

Browand reported that the Commission's Electronic Participation Policy needs to be amended to reflect updates to state law governing electronic participation in meetings. A Commission will now be able to hold up to 25 percent of its meetings as fully virtual meetings, but virtual meetings cannot be held in back-to-back months. The Waterfront Commission would be able to hold up to three virtual meetings in a calendar year.

- **Motion** – Macek moved and Roseman seconded that the Commission's Electronic Participation Policy be amended and updated to include the requirements of state law. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Items for Information**

**WATERFRONT SMALL AREA PLAN OVERVIEW** KARL MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

One of the reasons the briefing had been arranged was to provide context for current Commissioners who were not serving when the City developed the Waterfront Small Area Plan (Waterfront SAP) and had not participated in the Commission's earlier reviews of public and private realm proposals for Waterfront sites to determine whether they were consistent with the Waterfront SAP's principles.

Moritz commended several of the Commission's detailed reviews of proposed plans since the Waterfront SAP's passage in 2012.

- Developer proposals for the Robinson Terminal South site, Hotel Indigo site, and Robinson Terminal North (RTN) site (with RTN planning later paused by the site owners due to cost increases) and
- City's ongoing revisions of the Flood Mitigation Project plans approved in 2014 but needing redesign due to cost increases since that time.

Moritz presented highlights of Waterfront planning since the 1970s. *For details see the presentation posted at the above link.*

- **1970s** – City leaders and residents began thinking about how to transform an aging industrial area into a vibrant and revitalized area with more and better public spaces and sensitive infill development to maximize the amount of Waterfront park space,
  - **Torpedo Factory Art Center's influence** – City's transformation of The Torpedo Factory into an art center in the 1970s also influenced thinking on how the broader area might develop.
- **Waterfront planning since 1982**
  - Early Waterfront Plans in 1982 and 1992
  - January 2012 – Current Waterfront SAP adopted
  - March 2013 - Waterfront Zoning adopted
  - June 2014 – Schematic Landscape (Olin Plan) and Flood Mitigation Design adopted
  - 2018 - Windmill Hill Park – incorporated into Waterfront Schematic Landscape Design.
  - 2018- Old Town North SAP approved. Incorporates Waterfront SAP principles.
  - March 2019 – Interim Waterfront Park opened
- **Waterfront SAP – key elements:**
  - **Open space** - Maximizing public open space.

- **Public access** - Providing uninterrupted public access to the Waterfront for all.
- **Revised density**- Zoning appropriate for redevelopment planned to help generate income to help fund development of Waterfront public spaces.
  - Original three hotel sites proposed by staff were reduced to two in the 2012 Waterfront SAP
  - Robinson Terminal North site– Owner paused plans for a hotel, residences and public spaces for cost reasons. No alternatives yet proposed.
- **Art and history** – Weaving it throughout the Waterfront’s redesign and planning. An art and history plan was created by the Archaeology and Arts Commissions as part of the Waterfront Small Area Plan approved in 2012.
- **Waterfront landscape design** - The Olin Studio, landscape architects, created a comprehensive and detailed vision for the open spaces and parks (the Olin Plan) – developed with extensive public engagement.
- **Waterfront flood mitigation** –
  - Incorporated in the 2014 schematic landscape and flood mitigation design. Currently be revised with extensive input from the Waterfront Commission.
  - Additional public engagement on options is planned once the City hires a contractor to be responsible for the project’s further design work and building.
- **Parking** –Problems receiving attention throughout the area.
- **Public engagement** - Detailed public engagement during all stages of development and implementation of the Waterfront SAP.

**Commissioner comments/questions**

- **Saperstone** - Is there a plan for a community center on south end? A: The Olin Plan’s design proposed a “civic building” with programming to be determined.

**Public Comments**

- **McArthur Myers** Where would the civic building be? **A:** No decisions have been made – but the space envisioned for the building would be next to the Hotel Indigo. There are a number of options for future public spaces and a civic building in this area.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN WATERFRONT HERITAGE TRAIL SIGNAGE - UPDATE ELEANOR BREEN, CITY ARCHEOLOGIST, OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA**

Breen presented a status report of actions related to the City’s African American Waterfront Heritage Trail’s signage. The project is guided by principles of the Waterfront History Plan (2012) and highlights the contributions of Black Alexandrians, free and enslaved, to the history of Alexandria’s waterfront. Breen noted that she and McArthur Myles, a member of the African American Waterfront Heritage Trail Committee, had each previously briefed the Commission on the project. She recognized Mr. Myles, who was also at the meeting.

- **Trails** - Two trails spanning three miles.
  - North Trail, launched in 2021, begins in Old Town North at the corner of Fairfax and Montgomery Street and stretches to the foot of King Street.
  - South Trail, which launch February 4, 2023 with an event at the Lyceum, goes from the foot of King Street to Jones Point Park

- **Website** - Project website includes all the historical information, including reference citations, and a self-guided online tour. A StoryMap covers 30 virtual stops along the trail representing over two centuries of Alexandria's history.
- **Adding physical signage to the Trail's virtual signage** - OHA has funding to add historical markers for approximately ten of the 30 virtual stops along the African American Waterfront Heritage Trail during the current fiscal year. Two orientation stations are also planned.
  - **Orientation stations** - proposed for behind The Charthouse (near the Water Taxi) and outside the Archaeology Museum (inside Torpedo Factory Art Center).
  - **Historical Markers planned-**
    - Founders Park - Retrocession and Fishtown signs
    - Oronoco Bay Park - African American neighborhood sign and RiverRENEW sign for West's Point
    - Waterfront Park - signs for Captain George Henry who self-emancipated, and the River Queen, an excursion boat for African Americans after the Civil War
    - Point Lumley Park – Shipbuilding sign.
    - Windmill Hill Park – Hayti sign and Civil War sign.
    - Zion Baptist Church (S. Lee Street) –
    - Torpedo Factory – an early desegregated mid-20<sup>th</sup> century workplace

**Heritage Trail Committee members** - Breen thanked members of the African American Heritage Trail Committee, past and present: Councilman John Chapman, Susan Cohen, Gwen Day-Fuller, Indy McCall, Maddy McCoy, Krystyn Moon (Chair), McArthur Myers, and Ted Pulliam. Breen gave special thanks to McArthur Myers for his work as an advocate for adding physical signage to the Trail's virtual signage.

**Additional support for the project**

- VISITALEXANDRIA is actively publicizing the African American Waterfront Heritage Trail's stops.
- RiverRENEW will incorporate signage information at historic West's Point,

**Commissioner Comments/Questions**

- **Artemel/historical marker sponsorship** - The area she represents, Oronoco Bay Park north to the GenOn site, is interested in illuminating neighborhood history and appreciates the work done on the Waterfront Heritage's North Trail.
  - Will neighborhoods interested in having a historical marker for their neighborhood be able to sponsor one? A: Yes. Contact OHA.

**Public Comments:**

- **McArthur Myers** - Provided additional information on the River Queen, which was remodeled after the Civil War as a steamer that catered to African Americans for day trips.
- Q: Are the GenOn site developers working with the City on this trail? A: No. The City trail does not extend that far north. Hilco is developing its own history plan for the GenOn site.

**City Updates**

**PUBLIC SAFETY** – No report.

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

- **Upcoming event** - George Washington Birthday Parade - February 20,
- **2 King Street** - In November 2022 Council authorized the surplus of 2 King Street so it could be offered for sale. General Services (GS) is in the final stages of developing an RFP that will be submitted for Council's approval by February 2023.
  - **Background:** Because 2 King Street is an extension of Waterfront Park, the Waterfront Commission and Park and Recreation Commission developed guidelines for its potential sale.
    - The Commissions' joint December 19, 2022 letter to Council conveyed these recommendations: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2KingJointSubcommPRCWCLetterDec2022v2.pdf>
    - Council accepted those recommendations.
    - General Services is incorporating them into the RFP being developed.
    - **Next steps** – RFP to be issued after Council approval.
      - If a potential sale develops, the issue will be brought back to both Commissions for discussion.

**Commissioner Comments/Questions**

- **Trail flooding in parks.** Any plans to regrade the trails in Founders Park, Oronoco Bay Park and/or Windmill Hill Park to address ponding along trails after it rains?
  - A: Staff is reviewing Windmill Hill Park to consider options. All Waterfront parks are reviewed annually to identify needed spot repairs. Full-scale regrading of trails is lengthy and expensive and usually done as part of a major park renovation.
- **Status of Robinson Landing railing installation?**
  - A: EYA is installing their portion. The City portion, a permanent railing along the promenade, will follow. Funding is available. Timing is not yet known due to supply uncertainties.

**WATERFRONT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (Implementation Project) – Matthew Landes, Division Chief, DPI**

- **Note:** Timeline and activity details for the Implementation Project's Progressive Design-Build procurement process are updated regularly on the project website.

**Timeline Overview:**

- **February 2023** – Step 2 in the two-step process – issuing an RFP to the short list of four contract candidates winnowed down from the original eight invited to submit Statements of Qualifications.
- **Spring 2023** – A briefing update on procurement process.
- **Summer 2023** – Likely City decision on Design-Build contractor
- **Summer 2023/ Federal BRIC grant news** – City expects to hear on whether its revised \$50 million grant proposal for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program is approved. (Note: A highly competitive grant program.)
- **2023/After Design-Build contract is awarded -**
  - **Design and review** - At least 1-1/2 year process.
  - **Construction start** – Likely in 2025
  - **Public engagement** - Active community engagement throughout the design and construction phases.

**Public Comments/Questions**

- Q: Area covered by the Waterfront flood mitigation project?
  - A: Duke Street through Queen Street. The major park improvements planned are in Point Lumley Park, Waterfront Park, the right-of-way along the Waterfront running up to Queen Street, plus the possibility of some not-yet-determined improvements in Founders Park.
- Q: Has the City decided on whether to put underground stormwater storage tanks and/or a pump station in Founders Park?
  - A: No decisions have been made. The contractor eventually chosen will conduct further cost-benefit analyses of options to determine their viability.
- Q: Concern about potential risks of disturbing contaminated soil in Founders Park.
  - A: Health and safety plan - Before any soil removal can be considered, the contractor is required to create a health/safety plan. **Note:** There is contaminated soil throughout the Waterfront’s core area, left by the historic Waterfront’s previous industrial activities.
  - Phase 1 and phase 2 environmental assessments posted on the City’s website.
  - Robust public engagement will be conducted on all aspects of the project.
- Broward: The City has made no decisions related to Founders Park or any other Waterfront Implementation Project options. Any rumors to the contrary that might be circulating have no basis in fact.

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

- **Special Use Permits (SUPs)** - No pending SUP applications for Waterfront Plan area
- **Potomac River Generating Station (GenOn site) / Community Engagement) –**
  - **Hilco project details** - Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP) , the site owner, posts detailed information on project plans and community engagement at: <https://www.hilcoredev.com/projects/hrp-alexandria>
  - **January 30, 2023** – Hilco Community meeting – Hybrid (virtual and in-person) will consider:
    - **Infrastructure DSUP**- DSUP application will be reviewed. Hearing likely in June 2023.
    - **Remediation and abatement plans** – Phasing plans to be discussed.
    - **Historic interpretation** – A plan for the site is being developed.
  - **February 1, 2023 - Design** - Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC) review of Hilco’s design and approach for the first three blocks.
  - **Spring 2023 – Community Engagement /Open Space and Parks** – Public engagement will begin on Hilco’s plans for open space and parks.
- **10 Duke Street** – Permits for deconstruction being discussed with staff

**Commission Reports / Subcommittee Reports / Announcements**

- **Commissioners briefing their constituencies –**
  - **Chair Thayer** reminded Commissioners to share information from Commission briefings with the entities they represent on the Commission so that they can provide feedback to the Commission on these topics.
- **Boes/ Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)** – Energy and Climate Change Task Force has issued an Action Plan draft, including the energy implications of the GenOn site development. He recommended they brief the Waterfront Commission.

- **Council Member Bagley/ *Parking enforcement update*** – She has followed up on enforcement problems flagged by Commissioners and residents and has been discussing these concerns with staff. A fuller update will be coming as more information becomes available.
- **Roseman/ *Task Force on 100 block of King Street*** – The City has established a Task Force to oversee issues related to the permanent pedestrianization of the 100 block of King Street, including the possibility of installing a mural on the pavement. The Task Force has not held its first meeting.
- **Sassin/ *Tall Ship Providence*** – Dock that will be used by the Tall Ship Providence at Waterfront Park is expected to be ready for installation in April 2023. It will be floated down from Baltimore where it is being constructed.
- **Saperstone -** Parking for the annual New Year’s Eve fireworks needs to be better managed in the future.

**Next Meeting:**

- **Proposed Discussion Topics / Items of Information** –TBD
- **Date** - February 21, 2023

**Adjournment**

- **Motion** – At 8:45 a.m. Macek moved and Lamond seconded that the meeting adjourn. Approved by unanimous voice vote.