

ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Monthly Meeting

Sister Cities Conference Room

City Hall

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)

Marcee Craighill, Representative, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Robert Cvejanovich, Representative, Old Town Civic Association (OTCA)

Stuart Fox, Representative, Park and Recreation Commission

Kristina Hagman, Representative, Founders Park Community Association

Charlotte Hall, Representative, VisitAlexandria

Trae Lamond, Representative, Old Town Business Association (OTBA)

Nathan (Nate) Macek, Representative, Alexandria Planning Commission, and Vice-Chair, Waterfront Commission

Brian McPherson, Citizen, Park Planning District III

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 (via electronic participation)

Esther White, Representative, Alexandria Archaeological Commission

Excused

Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina Pleasure Boat Owners

Lebaron Reid, Commissioner At-Large

Vacancy:

Representative, Historic Alexandria Resources Foundation

City Staff

Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, Alexandria Police Department (APD)

Jack Browand, Commission Staff Liaison, and Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)

Alexandria (Alex) Carroll, Principal Planner/Complete Streets Program Manager, Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)

Mike Durham, Dockmaster, RPCA

Catherine Miliaris, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning (P&Z)

Iris Portny, Commission Recording Secretary, RPCA

Guests

Bert Ely
Patricia Washington, VisitAlexandria

Call to Order: Stephen Thayer, Chair

Thayer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. He announced that pursuant to the Commission’s Electronic Participation Policy Subsection 2 Commissioner Webb was participating electronically by phone due to a medical condition.

Items for Action

ITEM 1: APPROVAL of OCTOBER 18, 2022 MINUTES

Macek proposed and Lamond seconded that the minutes be approved with technical corrections. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items for Information

ITEM 1: [RESIDENTIAL PAY-BY-PHONE PARKING UPDATE](#) – Katy North, Division Chief, Mobility Services, T&ES.

Background

- ***History:*** Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group recommended the program in 2015. Council approved a pilot program in 2016.. Program made permanent in 2019. 2019 boundaries were east of Washington Street, south of Princess Street and north of Wolfe Street. Residents within boundaries set for the program could request their block be included in the area requiring people parking without a resident or guest permit to pay for parking. Residents with District 1 and 2 stickers did not need to pay. [2015 OTAPS Work Group recommendations](#)

June 2022 update – Council approved several changes to the program that went into effect in September 2022. The goal is to increase incentives for people without resident or guest parking permits to park off-street in garages rather than on residential streets. [Updated information](#)

- ***Encouraging garage use*** – In addition to increasing Pay-by-Phone Parking’s hourly rates and expanding neighborhood areas eligible to participate (details on website) the Courthouse Square garage rate is reduced to \$1/hour all day on weekends and weekdays after 5 pm., maximum \$5.
 - ***Streets eligible for Pay-by-Phone participation*** now include those adjacent to a commercial street, to an existing pay-by-phone block, or to the Waterfront.
 - ***Windmill Hill Park neighborhood:*** In response to resident requests, several blocks south of Wolfe Street and several blocks south of Windmill Hill Park have been approved for Pay-by-Phone parking..
 - ***Exception:*** Streets adjacent to Windmill Hill Park keep unrestricted visitor parking.

Next Steps:

Staff is monitoring how the changes impact on-street visitor parking and whether use of off-street parking in garages increases. If needed, staff will consider increasing Pay-by-Phone hourly rates.

Commissioner Comments/Questions

- **Thayer/Impact of program updates?** Is data available on the impact of recent changes? A: Not yet. Data being monitored to see if further changes are needed.
- **Saperstone/Parked vehicles blocking residents’ driveways.** City action is needed to help deter parked cars blocking residents’ driveways, a frequent problem for residents near Duke/Union. Parking Enforcement Officers do not work on weekends and holidays, including Friday nights. Can the City add signage or fluorescent street striping to help deter this? **A:** North will look into possible actions.
- **Bagley/Actions to encourage use of City garages -** Status of implementing real-time parking signage for garages? Can Wayfinding signage publicizing nearby garages be made more visible? **A:** Equipment will be installed to show the number of available garage spaces. Additional wayfinding signs being considered for Duke Street and/or King Street to publicize parking at the Courthouse Square garage.
- **Restaurant and Retail staff parking/**
 - **Lamont** – Can it be made free for employees? **A:** City program lets employers sign up to provide employees access to \$1 parking after 4 p.m. and on weekends. Also, when equipment in City garages is upgraded it may be easier for businesses to validate parking.
- **Hall/ Woodrow Wilson Bridge/Jones Point parking -** City should explore whether the National Park Service can reopen public parking under the bridge that was closed after 9/11. The City’s free morning and evening shuttles to and from Old Town were very helpful for restaurant, retail and City employees.

Public Comments

- Bert Ely/PEOs City should increase pay rates for parking enforcement officers to encourage more people to apply.

ITEM 2: [VISION ZERO PROGRAM UPDATE](#) -Alexandria Carroll, Principal Planner/Complete Streets Program Manager, T&ES

Overview:

- **Vision Zero Action Plan** – Approved by Council in 2017. Its goal is to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028.
- [City’s Annual Vision Zero Work Plan](#) – Plan and related data, e.g., crash data by street, neighborhood, and year, is posted on-line.
- **The High-Injury Network** - Identifies corridors where fatal or severe accidents have occurred repeatedly. Most crashes are located along major corridors such as Washington Street and Duke Street.
- **Pedestrian crashes** - Most are between pedestrians and vehicles, but the Waterfront area also has conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles.
- **Recent Waterfront-related actions** - reduced speed limits; turn-calming and pedestrian refuges at multiple locations such as Washington/King, Washington/Cameron and Washington/Prince; high-visibility crosswalks installed around town; walk signals that give

pedestrians a head-start when crossing an intersection, adding No Turn on Red at many intersections and new bicycle markings

Upcoming work

- Improved access to and from the Mount Vernon Trail where it meets Pendleton Street (recommended by the Alexandria Mobility Plan). Work scheduled for spring 2023.
- A grant-funded study of two high crash intersections on Route 1 - Duke/S. Patrick and Duke/S. Henry to help understand why crashes are happening and develop preventive countermeasures.
- Installing No Turn on Red restrictions on high traffic corridors
- Installing dynamic speed signs, showing real-time speeds, at key locations around the City.

Commissioner Comments

- ***Union/King intersection*** – Any plans for actions to reduce conflicts at this high-volume pedestrian intersection?
 - ***A: Vision Zero Action Plan*** - Doesn't address Union/King because this is not a high crash intersection. Pedestrian congestion fortunately keeps vehicle speeds slow.
 - ***A: City's 2012 Union Street Corridor Study*** included some recommendations for this area.
 - ***A: King Street pedestrian block planning*** - As permanent design details are developed for the Unit Block and 100 block the King/Union intersection may receive a closer look.

Note – [***Waterfront Commission 2012 Letter***](#): Waterfront Commission's October 2012 letter to the City Manager endorsed a number of recommendations from the Union Street Corridor Study.

Public Comments

- ***Bert Ely/Scooter-Pedestrian sidewalk conflicts*** – City action is needed to increase public awareness that e-scooters should not be ridden on sidewalks. Is there data on sidewalk crashes between pedestrians and scooters?
 - A: No. A more granular analysis would be needed to break out this data.

ITEM 3: TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER (TFAC) STAKEHOLDER TASK FORCE Update - Kristina Hagman, Waterfront Commission TF Representative

TFAC Task Force Information –

Task Force meetings are open to the public. Total of five meetings to be held. City Manager Parajon will then recommend next steps to Council.

Upcoming TFAC Task Force Meetings

- Meeting 3 - December 7, 2022 - Topic – Marketing/ Placemaking.
- Meeting 4 - January 18, 2023 TF meeting – Topic – Governance/ Financial Structure Models *
- Meeting 5 - February 15, 2023 – Final meeting and wrap-up.

*Hagman is unable to attend January 18 meeting. Waterfront Commissioner Hall, who represents the Old Town Business Association on the TFAC Task Force, will provide an update to the Commission at the January meeting.

TFAC Stakeholder Task Force is not discussing the 2021 TFAC Implementation Strategy developed by staff and presented to the Waterfront Commission and Council in December 2021.

- [Waterfront Commission letter](#) – A December 10, 2021 letter to the Mayor and Council conveyed Commission comments on the 2021 proposals.

Hagman reviewed some of the highlights of TFAC Task Force issues raised by participants thus far.

- ***Storage space*** – More is needed, especially for artists and the Archaeology Museum. Off-site storage might be best use of space.
- ***Entrances*** - need to be made more welcoming and accessible
 - ***Marina entrance*** - Elevators create a barrier with visitors needing to go around the elevators to access the main spaces.
 - ***Union Street entrance*** - Steps make the entrance unwelcoming
 - ***King Street alley entrance*** - Dark with faded signage
- ***Improve visitor traffic flow throughout the building*** – Hire a flow specialist to design ways to increase visitor traffic to the third-floor galleries – especially since third floor artist galleries do not have reduced rent rates.
- ***Roof-top space ideas*** - Solar panels? Sculpture garden? Artist sessions? Renovating the rooftop to support a restaurant and/or event space is probably too expensive.
- ***Archaeology museum*** – Archaeology TF representative said they would welcome a dedicated, off-site archaeology facility
- ***Founders Gallery proposed*** - a dedicated shared space for TFAC founding artists since many of them are often not at their individual galleries.
- ***Restrooms*** – Need improvements and to be more accessible.
- ***Patio events***– Would like TFAC to be able to use the patio for events several times a year.
- ***Children’s programming*** – More should be added, including programs with TFAC artists.

Commissioner Comments

- ***Thayer and Macek:*** Ideas from the Commission’s December 6, 2021 letter to the Mayor and Council on TFAC programming, governance, financing and space allocation should be considered when the December Task Force meeting discusses marketing/placemaking and the January meeting considers governance and financial structure models.
 - Commission’s 2021 suggestions included:
 - Adding arts-related activities to the mix of working artist studios could attract more visitors and help generate income to sustain TFAC.
 - Adding an event space on the rooftop, third floor or elsewhere in the building would help draw visitors throughout the building.
 - Adding activities such as performing arts, culinary arts, and other activities should be considered.
 - Financial model should consider partnerships with various private and non-profit stakeholders.

- **A: Hagman:** The Arts Alliance, which includes the Alexandria Symphony and other arts organizations, is a member of the TFAC Stakeholder Task Force – but have said the facility’s acoustics would need to be significantly upgraded for performances.
- **Roseman** –Has the Task Force been looking at the experiences of other cities’ arts centers? A: The Torpedo Factory is seen as a unique art center, but other arts-related sites were considered, e.g. Taos, NM, Santa Monica, CA, New York City, and Asheville, NC.
- **Fox** – Renovating the TFAC rooftop to make it suitable for activities would be expensive – but the result would be a very valuable event location.

Marketing/Placemaking - ideas for December TF discussion

- **Fox** – Work with the Old Town North (OTN) Arts Alliance to extend the arts district further north. A: **Artemel** –OTN Alliance has created a plan that uses TFAC and the GenOn site as anchors for an Arts and Cultural District Walk Plan into which future plans can be incorporated as they are developed.
- **Fox** – Consider whether tax-exempt financing for TFAC improvements could be available through the IDA.
- **Boes** – Think about holding events in the art center
- **Hall** – Work with VisitAlexandria which actively promotes arts-related events.
- **Roseman** – Lower King Street pedestrian blocks - Incorporate street murals into their design to draw visitor attention to TFAC’s being nearby.
- **Macek** – Expand the variety of TFAC uses to attract more people.. The Commission’s 2021 letter to Council recommended that “activated uses” would o draw people into the TFAC – not necessarily a restaurant.

Public Comments

- **Gina Baum** – Adequate funding sources should be identified to activate TFAC’s Waterfront entrance to make it more welcoming to City visitors arriving by the river.

City Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY – Jamie M. Bridgeman, Captain, APD

Bridgeman addressed questions raised earlier in the meeting:

- Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs)
 - Why do PEOs not work on holidays? They are non-essential City personnel – as are most City employees. APD offers them overtime to work on holidays, but most have other jobs.
 - Continue to report parking-related problems when they happen, even on holidays and weekends.
 - Can PEO staffing levels be increased? PEO vacancies are advertised continuously on the City website. Current openings are for the midnight and evening shifts. Currently 11 PEOs cover the whole City.
- Overtime budget – APD has proposed overtime funding to add Sunday coverage for the King Street’s unit and 100 blocks.

Commissioner comments

- Macek - The extra overtime funding should also consider the busy spring times, e.g. between Memorial Day and the Cherry Blossom festival.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS and ACTIVITIES

Visit Alexandria Update December 3 Holiday Activities – Patricia Washington

Washington reviewed highlights of the upcoming December 3 holiday events:

- December 3 programming has been expanded to Old Town North. The Old Town North Alliance and the Old Town North Community Partnership have created programming to activate Oronoco Bay Park.
Coordinated parking, traffic and safety planning covers activities throughout the day– covering the Scottish Christmas Walk Parade, the Dockside Boat Parade activities in Waterfront Park, and the Boat Parade.

COMMUNITY UPDATES - Jack Browand, Deputy Director, RPCA

- **Tree Lighting** – Saturday November 19 at City Hall. 2 trees. A second tree is at Waterfront Park
- **Robinson Landing Railing** - Private portion's installation has begun. City portion will be installed within the next couple months.

WATERFRONT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – No report.

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

- **The Juice Box trailer** - Special Use Permit (SUP) hearing for their temporary trailer at 500 N. Union Street (the former Robinson Terminal North site).
- **Potomac River Generating Station (GenOn site)** –
 - Hilco's virtual community meeting on the DSUP for its Infrastructure Plan DSUP was held the previous week.
 - Next steps: Coordinated Sustainability Strategy work sessions
 - November 21 - Environmental Planning Commission work session
 - December 6 - Planning Commission
 - December 13 - City Council

Commissioner Reports / Subcommittee Reports / Announcements

- **Hall/ Upcoming Old Town Business Association events:** Old Town Cookie Crawl (November 19), Plaid Friday (November 25); Small Business Saturday (November 26), Scottish Christmas Walk (December 3?).
 - Events listed at: visitalexandria.com and oldtownbusiness.org
- **Bagley/Council - Waterfront Plan Implementation**
 - **FEMA Flood Mitigation BRIC grant application** The previous Saturday Council discussed and supported the City's plan to resubmit its \$50 million grant proposal for the federal Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program

administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The funding would be applied to the City's Waterfront flood mitigation project.

Next Meeting – January 17, 2023

- Agenda: January 2023 meeting will receive an overview of Waterfront Plan-related issues from Planning and Zoning Director Karl Moritz.
- No Waterfront Commission meeting in December 2022

Adjournment

At 9:40 a.m. Macek moved and Roseman seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.