

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

Virtual Meeting – Zoom Platform

**Thursday, February 20, 2025
7 p.m.**

Commission Members

Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Geoffrey Goode (District II); Joseph Fray (District II); David Brennan, (District III); Asa Orrin-Brown (District III); Jacques Lecoq (student member); Stuart Fox, Secretary (District I); Tookie Organek (student member)

Absent: Jeffrey Miller (District I); Paul Komelasky (District I).

RPCA Staff: Jack Browand, Interim Director RPCA; Laura Durham, Deputy Director of Recreation Services; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant; Judy Lo, Principal Planner; Jose Ayala, 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

None.

III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Commissioner Assignments

DISTRICT I

Stuart Fox shared the following update. The Waterfront Commission met this week and discussed two main topics:

1. Robinson Terminal North Draft Letter – The commission reviewed but did not approve a draft letter, opting to make some revisions. The key concerns were:
 - Ensuring the open space (eastern waterfront park) remains under HOA ownership with a public access easement instead of being donated to the city.
 - Addressing concerns about the development timeline. The western parcel (non-waterfront side) is set to be developed first, raising concerns that the eastern side (which includes the public amenities) may be delayed indefinitely. The commission plans to strengthen the letter's language to insist that the eastern side is developed simultaneously with the western side.

2. Waterfront Flood Mitigation Update – Matt Landis provided an update, which largely reiterated what he had previously presented to City Council. No new information was shared.

Jeffrey Miller and **Paul Komelasky** were not in attendance.

DISTRICT II

Dana Colarulli shared the following updates:

- Skate Park Interest: There's ongoing interest in the skate park, with activation events and a survey conducted to gather feedback. Additional engagement sessions are scheduled for the end of March, with results and recommendations to be presented at the April Commission meeting. Despite concerns raised on social media, it's unclear if those individuals have provided feedback through official channels. The skate park has been around for 20 years without updates, and there's clear public interest in improving it. While there's no dedicated funding yet, the commission hopes to assess the situation and decide on a plan forward, possibly advocating for funding and exploring matching funds options. There's significant public frustration about the skate park's lack of development, and the commission is eager to see the results of the survey and recommendations in April.
- The Beautification Commission and Environmental Policy Commission have been discussing leaf blowers with the City Council and may ask the Parks and Rec Commission to sign a letter in support of transitioning away from gas-powered leaf blowers. The focus would be on encouraging sustainable alternatives like raking, leaf mulching, and adopting a sustainable leaf management policy. Additionally, there would be a push for educating residents and businesses about these changes. The letter would be high-level, with the aim of promoting a reasonable transition over time. The commission is being asked if they are amenable to signing the letter in support of this initiative, and if there are areas in the city where leaf blowing could be more clearly defined or regulated.

ACTION: FY25.2.20.25A

Motion: Stuart Fox moved, and Asa Orrin-Brown seconded the motion that Commissioner Fox, Orrin-Brown, and Colarulli will write a letter on behalf of the Commission in support of the City transitioning away from gas-powered leaf blowers. The Commission supports the incentive program and educating the public, however, there is concern about fines that may be imposed on residents. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Geoffrey Goode shared the following update. The George Mason update from the Superintendent Advisory Group meeting on the 27th included the following key points:

- Recreation Access: There will be dedicated office space and accessible bathrooms after school hours, similar to the MacArthur setup.
- Timeline: No major changes—everything is proceeding as previously planned.

- Development Special Use Permit: Will be submitted soon for a Planning Commission hearing in the spring, followed by City Council review.
- Multimodal Transportation Study: Nearly complete (or possibly already submitted), focusing on how students get to school but not directly overlapping with the commission's main concerns.
- Open Space: No changes to the planned open space, which aligns with the issue previously raised in the commission's letter.

The open space layout remains unchanged, featuring one diamond field, unlined green space, and a small turf area that isn't suitable for organized sports. There are no negative changes, which is positive. The biggest takeaway is the inclusion of facilities and access for Parks and Rec staff, which is a beneficial update.

Joe Fray did not have an update.

DISTRICT III

Katy Matthews gave the following update: The Mini Howard project is nearly complete, with only a few remaining tasks. Work continues on the geothermal well in the area of the old building, along with debris removal and grading.

Asa Orrin-Brown gave the following update: There's been a lot of interest in Ewald Park, along with discussions about the skate park. He attended and enjoyed the Patrick Henry Comic Con event. The event featured an amazing balloon artist, making it even more enjoyable.

David Brennan shared the following update: The Youth Sports meeting went well, with Beth providing updates on park improvements, capital projects, and future plans. There was strong representation from various sports affiliates, and leagues seemed to be running smoothly through fall and winter.

- City Rec Sports Growth: City basketball saw strong growth, and Rec sports continue to reach various groups.
- Little League Transition: T-ball and coach pitch registration, now under Little League instead of the city, is trending similarly to past years, with some numbers still in flux.
- Facility Access Concerns:
 - Lack of Transparency: Many affiliates expressed frustration with the process for accessing ACPS facilities, struggling to understand how space is allocated.
 - Wrestling Program Relocation: Alexandria Wrestling moved from the high school to Episcopal due to access challenges.
 - Hockey Facility Access: Unclear ownership and process for using the hockey facility behind Minnie Howard have made it difficult for lacrosse and other groups to gain access.

- Minnie Howard Gym Issues: Reports suggest the Mini Howard gym was effectively unusable for programming this winter, though this needs confirmation.

*Laura Durham, Deputy Director, provided the following response: The gym was designed to be accessible, but security issues related to how it is accessed remain unresolved. The main concern is that the gym is not properly secured from the rest of the school, as originally intended, and this issue is still being worked on.

STUDENT MEMBER: Tookie Organek did not have an update. **Jacques Lecoq** stated that he attended the Alexandria Holiday Invitational and it was a nice event.

Commission Chair Dana Colarulli delegated authority to Vice Chair Katy Matthews to preside over the remainder of the meeting before departing shortly after due to a prior engagement.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2025

ACTION: FY25.2.20.25B

Motion: David Brennan moved, and Dana Colarulli seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes—the motion passed unanimously.

V. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

a. Ewald Park Improvements Update

Principal Planner Judy Lo provided an update on Ewald Park Improvements. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/25519>

b. Resource Allocation & Cost Recovery Update

Laura Durham, Deputy Director, gave an update on Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery.

- The public engagement process, including six sorting sessions and a survey with 534 responses, was completed in January.
- The data is being analyzed, and after reviewing it with the City Manager's office, it will be presented to the commission for discussion.
- In the sorting sessions, some service categories shifted between tiers, with 8 moving down and 4 moving up. There was a higher concentration of responses in the middle tier in the survey, which may skew the data.
- The commission will have a detailed discussion on the potential changes to the policy and their impact, including possible fees and service delivery adjustments.

The team is now preparing to bring forward recommendations in early March for the commission's review and discussion.

c. Open Space Right-of-Way Update

Jose Ayala, Principal Planner, presented the Open Space Right-of-Way Update. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/25400>

d. CDD21 Amendment per Alex West Small Area Plan

Jared Alves, Urban Planner, gave an update on the CDD21 Amendment per Alex West Small Area Plan. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/25401>

e. Staff Report Highlights

The staff report can be found here: https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/prc_combinedreport_2.20.25.pdf

Jack Browand gave the following announcements:

- City Budget for FY 26:
 - The city budget announcement will be on Tuesday, March 25 at City Council, followed by the first work session on the CIP on Wednesday, March 26.
 - There will be weekly work sessions until the budget is adopted in early May.
- Needs Assessment:
 - The needs assessment postcards were sent out on Friday, February 7, and responses are expected by early March. Preliminary data will be shared with the commission later this spring.
- Patrick Henry Turf Field:
 - The synthetic turf field at Patrick Henry is now available for use, although it hasn't been programmed yet due to some ongoing landscaping.
 - The dedication ceremony for the field will be on March 18 from 1–2 PM, marking the completion of the project that began 6 years ago.
- Meeting Location Preference:
 - The commission was asked if they have any preferences for where to meet in person for future meetings. They agreed to let Jack determine the meeting location.

VI. NEXT MEETING

March 20, 2025 – Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center

VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY25.2.20.25B

Motion: Geoffrey Goode moved, and Joseph Fray seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting minutes provide a brief summary of discussions. Access the recorded meeting here:
[Full Meeting Recording](#)