

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

Charles Houston Recreation Center

**Thursday, July 17, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Commission Members

Present: Dana Colarulli, Chair (District II); David Brennan, (District III); Stuart Fox, Secretary (District I). Jeffrey Miller (District I); Asa Orrin-Brown (District III); Katy Matthews, Vice Chair (District III); Joseph Fray (District II); Paul Komelasky (District I).

Absent: Geoffrey Goode (District II)

RPCA Staff: Hashim Taylor, Director; Beth Znidersic, Division Chief, Park Services; Lindsay Burneson, Division Chief; Oscar Mendoza, Park Services, Division Chief; Jose Ayala, Principal Planner; Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Office of the Arts; Tiffany Marbury, Administrative Assistant.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dana Colarulli, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He shared with the group that July is Park & Recreation month.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Dave Levy – Mr. Levy addressed three topics with the Commission:

1. **Protection of Forestry** – He expressed concern about the City’s loss of tree canopy and its impact on stormwater management.
2. **Invasive Plant Management** – He noted that the City may be transitioning to a new contractor for invasive species removal and raised concerns about the vetting process. He emphasized the importance of selecting a contractor with knowledge of Alexandria’s specific needs and proven experience in invasive plant management.
3. **Waterfront Protection** – He voiced opposition to placing the proposed stormwater pump station in Waterfront Park, citing concerns about man-made structures along the waterfront.

Jim Clark – Mr. Clark stated that for the last 10 years he’s actively removed invasive species from City parks. He is concerned that the City will abandon the invasive plant program it currently has with IPC.

Susan Berry – She shared that she and her husband received a Beautification Award from removing the invasive species and replanting native plants in her yard. She wanted to emphasize the importance of working with a company that knows the difference between good and bad plants.

Kathleen Kust – Stated that she is very familiar with the contractor IPC. She wants to recommend Alexandria continue to work with them to manage the invasive species.

Carter Flemming – Ms. Flemming wanted to reiterate the concerns about changing the invasive plant management contract to a general landscaping firm. She is in favor of Alexandria continuing their relationship with IPC.

Elizabeth Wright – Ms. Wright shared that she is chair of the Holmes Run Park committee. She said that there's a large amount of overgrown vegetation at the Cameron Station Dog Park. She would like someone to assess that area. She also spoke about the Waterfront Park pump station. She is opposed to losing public open space at the waterfront for that project.

Michael Foley – Mr. Foley discussed equitable distribution of turf fields. He stated that there is one club that has almost unlimited access to the turf fields. His son plays with the club, however his daughter plays field hockey, and they must travel out of the area for field space. He feels that is unfair that smaller clubs get pushed out and don't have the same access to fields.

Ms. Gardner – Ms. Gardner brought a list of all the invasive plants found in Alexandria. She shared the list with the Commission.

III. COMMISSIONER REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. There were no updates from RPCA outside of the items listed in the report. The commission did not have any questions.
- b. **Commissioner Reports**

District I

Commissioner Fox stated that the Waterfront Commission did not have a meeting this month, but he shared an update on the pump station. He thanked members of the public that spoke on the concerns of the pump station location. He clarified that the Park and Recreation Commission does not approve plans but will endorse and share their thoughts on proposed projects. The Commission has written 2 letters to the City and given numerous comments requesting that another location is found for the pump station. They have also requested that funding for park improvements are included in the plan. That request was approved and the City has allocated an additional \$45 million dollars in the CIP.

Commissioner Miller did not have an update. He did agree with many of the public comments that noted the importance of invasive species removal.

Commissioner Komelasky gave kudos to Beth and her team for the successful renovation of Montgomery Park.

District II

Commission Chair Colarulli reminded the Commission that they approved two letters at the last meeting, one endorsing the plan for Ewald Park, and the other endorsed the PGRS Open Space plan. He highlighted the recent registration numbers for OSTP and how well RPCA staff managed the volume of residents that want to participate in that program. Lastly, he noted that he actively volunteers to remove invasives and he appreciates the public comments on the topic.

Commissioner Goode was not in attendance.

Commissioner Fray did not have an update.

District III

Commissioner Matthews stated that there haven't been any recent updates on Minnie Howard. The fields are close to completion and RPCA has field hockey programmed as early as August at that site. She also gave kudos to City staff that supported the Little League All-stars Virginia State Tournament at Witter Field.

Commissioner Orrin-Brown attended the Alexandria Birthday celebration. He stated that he visits Ben Brenman Park often and there are areas that are stubborn when it comes to invasives. Jack Browand stated at a previous meeting that some jurisdictions have used goats for removal. He would like to further that conversation.

Commissioner Brennan shared that the Youth Sports Advisory Board does not meet in the summer, but he appreciated the public comments regarding field space and up and coming sports teams.

Student Members: Commission seats are currently vacant.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 26, 2025

ACTION: FY26.7.17.25A

Motion: Commissioner Orrin-Brown moved, and Commissioner Brennan seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

b. Public Hearing – Lockett Field and Schuyler Hamilton Jones Skateboard Park

ACTION: FY26.7.17.25B

Motion: Commissioner Matthews moved, and Commissioner Fox seconded the motion to open the public hearing. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Jose Ayala gave a presentation on the Schuyler Hamilton Jones Skateboard Park. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/29282>

Public Comment:

Mark, a local skateboarder, shared his enthusiasm for the plans to update this park. He's been skating at Jones Skateboard Park for years and he'd love to see modifications. He feels that most local skaters utilize parks outside of the City. Currently, his favorite place to skate is Freedom Plaza.

ACTION: FY26.7.17.25C

Motion: Commissioner Fox moved, and Commissioner Matthews seconded the motion to close the public hearing. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Commission Discussion:

Commission Chair Colarulli appreciated staff for the community engagement events they have had around this project. He mentioned the importance of safety improvements to the park. Commissioner Orrin-Brown had concerns about using short-term improvements due to their lack of durability, and the possibility of them limiting long-term plans. He also mentioned that there are “No Skateboarding” signs leading up to the skatepark.

ACTION: FY25.6.26.25.D

Motion: Commissioner Fox moved, and Commissioner Goode seconded the motion to endorse the amendment to section 5 of the 2015 Park Plan adding the updated language. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

c. Office of the Arts Public Art Update

Diane Ruggiero gave a presentation on Public Art in Alexandria. The presentation can be found here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/media/29283>

V. NEXT MEETING

September 18, 2025 – Lee Center

VI. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: FY25.7.17.25E

Motion: Commissioner Orrin-Brown moved, and Commissioner Matthews seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:01 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

These minutes are intended to serve as a summary of the meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript. A complete audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.