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The Alexandria Wetland Sanctuary

EXHIBIT NO. 1



A Proposal for Alexandrians

The Issue . . .

There are a number of proposals competing for approval by the Alexandria City Council for what is to happen to the Old Town Yacht Basin. This is the site of an old marina on South Union Street that has been out of use for over ten years. It is now the property of the US Park Service. The Park Service will deed the property over to the City of Alexandria once a proposal for its use passes both the Park Service and the City Council. It looks like time for a decision on this potentially very lovely waterfront area is finally at hand.

As part of "Windmill Hill Park" which incorporates Potomac Park between S. Lee and S. Union, and Pommander Walk Park (the "Dog Park") what we propose as the future for the Old Town Yacht Basin is to transform it into a Wetland Sanctuary.

"We" are a citizen committee of the Waterfront Alliance, a civic association of Alexandrians who are concerned about how our waterfront is to be developed.

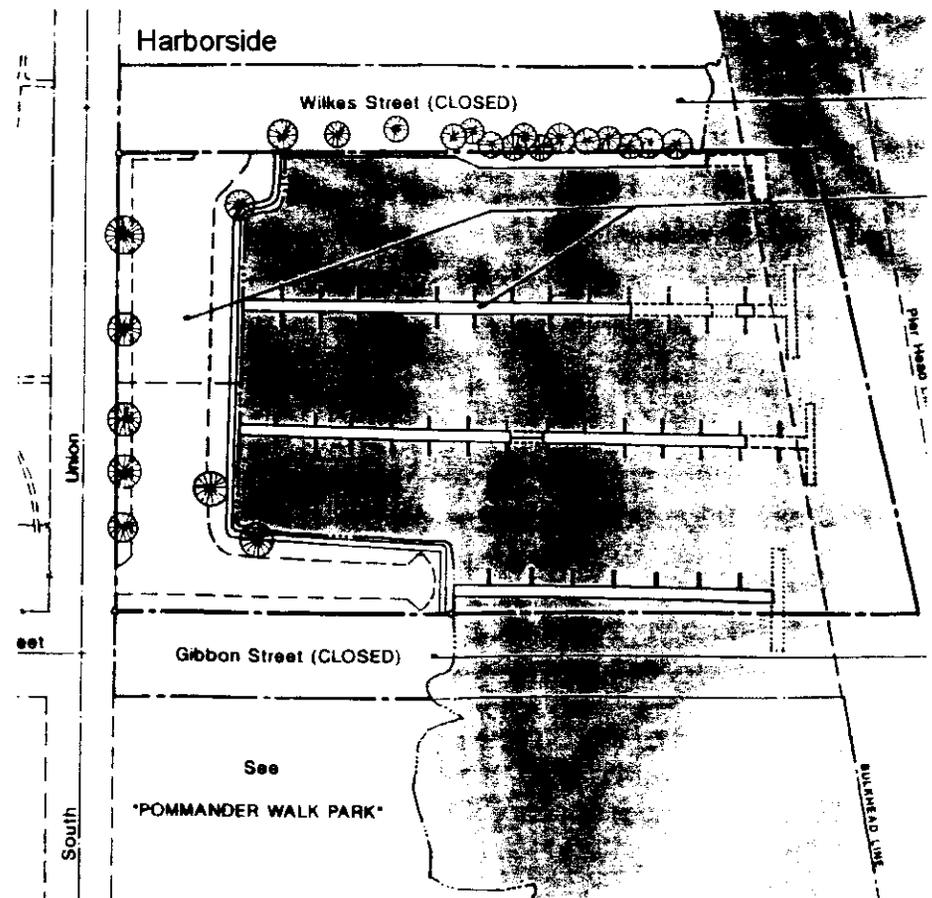
The Concept . . .

The US Park Service drawing on the opposite page shows the current situation. The area within the dark line is the so-called Old Town Yacht Basin. Old, but sturdy, piling and deteriorating wooden walkways are all that remain of the old marina. The closed extensions of Wilkes and Gibbon Streets East from S. Union Street are City property. The open area between S. Union and the former yacht basin is US Park Service property.

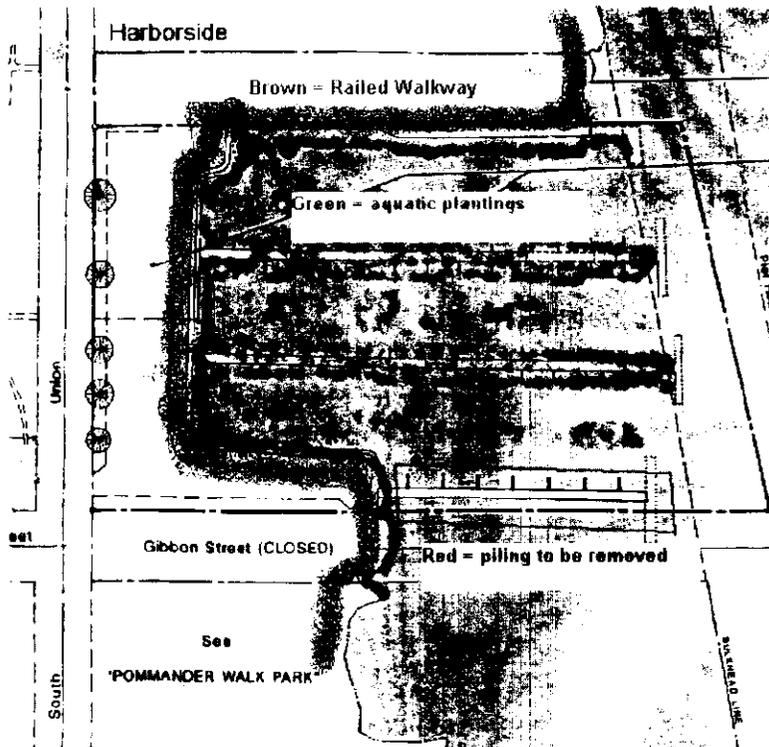
Today the old yacht basin is alive with aquatic life and all kinds of birds. One area birdwatcher has identified over 70 different birds that visit the basin. Many nest there. Virtually all the fish of the Potomac inhabit the basin. There are also turtles, otters and beavers. The place is a natural tidal basin that was dredged when it was a marina. It has now silted up again. At extreme low tide the basin is exposed river bottom all the way

out to the "Bulkhead Line" you can see on the drawing. According to a US Park Service Ranger, dredging operations when the basin was a marina disturbed natural soil conditions favorable to the growth of aquatic plants. The addition of appropriate soils will correct this condition, however.

After the natural tidal vegetation becomes established, the Sanctuary will look like all other Chesapeake wetlands. Dun in winter, in spring the basin will burst into life and color and be a joy for all of us to spend some tranquil moments there communing with our natural neighbors.



Proposal specifics. . .



1. Clean up the basin by removing deteriorating walkways, metal signposts and lamps. Remove piling in the red area to clear Gibbon Street's view down to the river.
 2. Plant natural Chesapeake tidal plants in green areas and in and about the remaining piling.
 3. Extend the path along the river in front of Harborside so that it follows on around the Sanctuary. We propose a wooden walkway for this similar to those in the Dyke Marsh. Post placards along the way describing the inhabitants of the Sanctuary and the basin's history. Connect it with a path through the dog park to Ford's Landing. And landscape the open park areas to integrate the Sanctuary with the rest of Alexandria's waterfront parks.
- Call (703) 548-6538 or email your comments to rivergarden@prontomail.com