

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

23
3-12-02

DATE: MARCH 7, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE BELLE HAVEN MARINA

ISSUE: Consideration of the resolution in support of the continued operation of the Belle Haven Marina.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the attached resolution and forward it to the members of the City's congressional delegation.

DISCUSSION: The 50-year-old Belle Haven Marina is located on the Potomac River south of Alexandria in Fairfax County. Belle Haven Marina, Incorporated operates the marina as a concession by the National Park Service. Last summer, the Park Service had sought to close the marina site at the end of 2001, citing a 1998 federal law that prohibits automatic contract extensions for park concessionaires in favor of competitive bidding. The Park Service also wanted to redevelop the site due to erosion and infrastructure problems. Supporters of the marina expressed strong objections to the closure proposal noting that the marina is the only Washington, D.C. area marina that combines sailing, power boating, canoeing and kayaking with the largest full-time sailing school and boat rental operation in the mid-Atlantic region.

In early February the Park Service gave the marina operator a one year contract to continue operations at least through the end of the calendar year with an option to renew the contract for two additional years. The Park Service will conduct an environmental assessment study of the marina and expects to have the study results by mid-2003.

The Belle Haven Marina provides an important affordable public water-oriented facility for the area, and its closure would result in a significant reduction in boating resources for the Northern Virginia region. The attached resolution (Attachment 1) requests our congressional delegation to support the efforts to retain this important Potomac River resource.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has adopted a similar resolution in support of the marina.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: December 3, 2001 letter from Katherine K. Handley

Attachment 3: Material from Friends of Belle Haven Marina

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, since the mid-1940's, the Belle Haven Marina has functioned as a concession from the National Park Service and the George Washington Memorial Parkway; and

WHEREAS, over that period, the marina has provided a useful recreational service to thousands of Northern Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the marina provides not only boating slips for the owners of boats who patronize the services of the marina, but a sailing school for new sailors; and

WHEREAS, the Belle Haven Marina offers an affordable rental service to daytime boaters who wish to sail or canoe on this beautiful stretch of the Potomac River and;

WHEREAS, supporters of the marina and the National Park Service have committed to protecting and preserving its adjacent neighbor, the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh; and

WHEREAS, the Belle Haven Marina is considered a significant resource for residents of Fairfax County and its neighbors in Alexandria;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alexandria City Council, requests the support of the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation for the continued safe operation and eventual improvement of the Belle Haven Marina and its environs to accommodate an appropriate and balanced number of motorized and non-motorized water craft provided adequate safeguards exist to protect and preserve the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 12th day of March 2002.

KERRY J. DONLEY MAYOR
*On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia*

ATTEST:

Beverly I. Jett, CMC City Clerk



KATHERINE K. HANLEY
CHAIRMAN

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

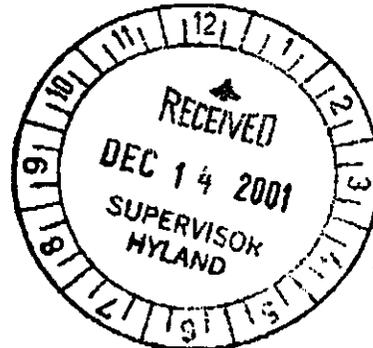
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22035

Suite 530
12000 GOVERNMENT CENTER PARKWAY
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22035-0071

TELEPHONE 703/324-2321
FAX 703/324-3955
<http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/chair.htm>

December 3, 2001

The Honorable John Warner
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-4601

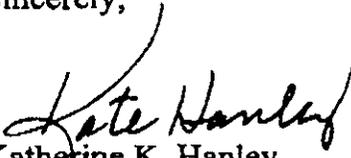


Dear Senator Warner:

At the meeting of November 19, 2001, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the attached resolution requesting your support for the continued safe operation and eventual improvement of the Belle Haven Marina and its environs. The Marina, which has been in existence since the mid 1940's, is a significant resource for the residents of the Mount Vernon District and Fairfax County as well as our neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,


Katherine K. Hanley

Attachment

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Members, Fairfax County Congressional Delegation
Audrey Calhoun, Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway

This was addressed and sent individually to all members of the Fairfax County Congressional Delegation

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, held in the Board Auditorium in the Fairfax County Government Center at Fairfax, Virginia, on Monday, November 19, 2001, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolution

Whereas, since the mid-1940's, the Belle Haven Marina has functioned as a concession from the National Park Service and the George Washington Memorial Parkway; and

Whereas, over that period, the marina has provided a useful recreational service to thousands of Northern Virginians and has achieved a safe and unblemished record of performance to the National Park Service ("NPS"); and

Whereas, the marina provides not only boating slips for the owners of boats who patronize the services of the marina, but a sailing school for new sailors; and

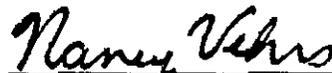
Whereas, the Belle Haven Marina offers an affordable rental service to daytime boaters who wish to sail or canoe on this beautiful stretch of the Potomac River; and

Whereas, supporters of the marina and the NPS have committed to protecting and preserving its adjacent neighbor, the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh; and

Whereas, the Belle Haven Marina is considered a significant resource for residents of the Mount Vernon District and Fairfax County as well as our neighbors; and

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in recognition of these statements, requests the support of the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation for the continued safe operation and eventual improvement of the Belle Haven Marina and its environs to accommodate an appropriate and balanced number of motorized and non-motorized water craft provided adequate safeguards exist to protect and preserve the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh.

A Copy Teste:



Nancy Vefirs
Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

home page

Dedicated To The Preservation Of A Valued Community Resource



The Marina Will Be Closed Unless You Help. Take Action Now!

Fairfax Marina Gets Reprieve

By TRIGIE EALEY

Journal staff writer 2/6/2002

Belle Haven Marina Inc. has received a one-year contract to continue operating the Fairfax County area marina while the National Park Service performs an environmental assessment of the land. The federal agency had sought to close the Potomac River marina site it owns at the end of 2001, citing a 1998 federal law prohibiting automatic contract extensions for park concessionaires in favor of competitive bidding. The agency also sought redevelopment of the site because of major erosion and infrastructure problems.

Jacqueline Lavelle, Park Service concession specialist, said the marina was given neither an extension to its original 1992 contract nor a new contract. "It's a temporary contract containing the same terms and conditions of the previous contract," Lavelle said Tuesday. The deal will keep Belle Haven Marina in business at least through the end of the year. The concession contract includes an option for the Park Service to renew the contract for two additional years. Business owner George Stevens said he was pleased to keep the 50-year-old marina operational.

"It all looks good for the marina," Stevens said. Located on the George Washington Memorial Parkway in the Alexandria section of Fairfax County, the marina includes dry and wet slips for boat storage. It also offers boat rentals and a sailing school for children and adults.

The Park Service last summer announced plans to close the marina, following years of debate over erosion of the Potomac River shoreline and the need for repairs, along with the seemingly contrary needs of the busy marina and nearby tranquil and environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh. The Park Service and Stevens clashed for years about the extent of repairs and maintenance needed at the marina and who should pay for the work. Without the temporary contract, the marina would have closed Dec. 31, 2001. The environmental assessment study is needed to determine if construction or other changes at the marina - possible with a new concessions contract - will harm the environment and specifically Dyke Marsh. A group called the Friends of Dyke Marsh has said it supports the marina as it is, but opposes expansion.

Lavelle said the Park Service hopes to have the environmental study completed by mid-2003, to allow another 18 months needed to seek new concessionaire bids. With the extensions, Stevens' contract would keep the marina operating through the entire process. A new contract would be awarded by the end of 2004.

In seeking to close the marina, Park Service officials cited a 1995 Park Service feasibility study that concluded "it is financially infeasible for any potential concessionaire to redevelop Belle Haven without the NPS contributing at least \$1.5 million toward rehabilitation." The agency, officials said, simply does not have the money for the marina, when national parks, such as Yellowstone in Wyoming, also are competing for limited funds. Stevens said he cannot afford the costly repairs either.

Supporters rallied behind the only Washington, D.C., area marina that combines sailing, power boating, canoeing and kayaking with the largest full-time sailing school and boat rental operation in the mid-Atlantic region.

Local officials, including Alexandria Mayor Kerry J. Donley, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Katherine K. Hanley, D-at large, and U.S. Rep. James P. Moran, D-8th District, have written numerous letters of support for the marina to federal officials. On Nov. 19, the Fairfax County Board passed a resolution calling calling the marina a "significant resource for residents of the Mount Vernon District and Fairfax County as well as our neighbors.

[Back to Friends' Home](#)

The Friends of Belle Haven Marina est. 1992

P.O. Box 7093
Alexandria, Virginia 22307

<http://saildc.com/friends/>

Dedicated To The Preservation Of A Valued Resource

September 10, 2001

To: Honorable Mayor Kerry Donley and Members of the Alexandria City Council ,

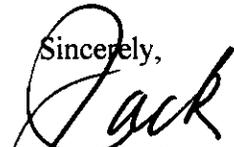
From: Jack Hughes

Dear Friends,

Please review the attached materials in support of a resolution by the Alexandria City Council for the continued operation of Belle Haven Marina. As you know, Congressman Jim Moran has included additional funding for the marina in the House version of the Appropriation Bill now before Congress. Alexandria citizens represent a large majority of the marina users and it is a vital resource to the City.

We are seeking supportive action from the City Council in the form of a resolution of support similar to the resolution passed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on August 6th, 2001.

Sincerely,


Jack Hughes

The Friends of Belle Haven Marina est. 1992

P.O. Box 7093

Alexandria, Virginia 22307

<http://saildc.com/friends/>

Dedicated To The Preservation Of A Valued Resource

September 10, 2001

Belle Haven Marina has provided recreational access to the Potomac for fifty years and is heavily supported by The Friends of Belle Haven and the community at large. About 700 concerned citizens turned out to fill the auditorium of Sandburg Middle School to near capacity on Monday, May 21st, when Congressman Moran came for a Town Hall meeting to discuss the future of the marina. The Friends of Belle Haven believe that it is important for the NPS to maintain a full service marina at Belle Haven and for our elected officials to ensure this result occurs.

Here are some important facts:

- 1) The marina is a public facility. Belle Haven Marina provides more recreational opportunities on the water than any other marina in the upper Potomac River region.
- 2) Belle Haven Marina is the only facility in the Washington, D.C. area that provides sail, power, canoe and kayak opportunities for users at one location. It currently operates the largest full time sailing school and boat rental operation in the mid - Atlantic region.
- 3) Approximately 400 local youngsters participate in the Youth Sailing Program every year. Approximately 600-800 adults learn to sail each year.
- 4) Over 7000 Washington area citizens have signed once a year rental agreements in just the last three years. The average rental boat leaves the dock with 3 to 4 people. Consequently some 21,000 to 28,000 boaters have used the marina's boats in the last three years. This number is significantly higher when the follow up visits made by the majority of the users is added..

Belle Haven Marina has served the boating public in an environmentally sensitive manner for almost 50 years. Local conservationists have stated that the marina has been run in a responsible and environmentally sensitive manner. Belle Haven Marina was audited by the National Park Service the last week in August and reported no environmental hazards at the facility.

Belle Haven Marina accommodates 135 privately owned boats on land, water slips, racks and moorings. Belle Haven Marina has been at capacity for the last 18 years. Currently, it has a 3 to 5 year waiting list.

Boaters on the upper Potomac have lost Anacostia Marina, Old Town Yacht Basin, 400 slips at National Harbor and now Jack's Boathouse. This represents a loss of more than 1000 slips in the National Capital Region. Furthermore, Belle Haven Marina remains the only public access marina on the Virginia side of the Potomac between National Airport and Pohick Bay.

The Friends of Belle Haven Marina have developed an alternative proposal that addresses all of the NPS concerns and yet maintains citizen access to this important boating center on the upper Potomac. We have been guided by several principles:

- (1) to ensure that the marina operates in such a way that the Dyke Marsh area is protected;
- (2) that a full range of boating interests is protected, including the sailing school and the families that want to enjoy their boat on the upper Potomac; and
- (3) a viable operation that will allow a concessionaire to recoup his/her investment in the operations while allowing the concessionaire to maintain a safe and friendly boating operation.

Belle Haven Marina has been neglected by the National Park Service for the past two decades, meaning that no major improvements (with the notable exception of paving the road surface) have been made to the marina facilities during this period. There has been no long term planning or investment made to the marina's boating facilities by the Park Service. Moreover, the concessionaire has been given short term contracts of less than one year to manage the Marina.

The Friends of Belle Haven proposal calls for the sharing of the responsibility of the marina upgrades by the National Park Service and the future concessionaire. The Park Service would be responsible for the restoration of the shoreline and the property within the shoreline and the concessionaire would be responsible for the construction of new docks.

The Friends envision the property to be used in the following manner:

Beginning at the trailer parking area on the entrance road and continuing to the office, all dry storage for boats would be eliminated on both sides of the road and turning area. This would increase the number of parking slots by approximately 25 spaces.

Along the seawall facing the river continuing to the south end of the peninsula, there would be only parking for automobiles, again resulting in 27 additional slots. While this will reduce an equal number of dry storage spaces for boats, this overall increase of approximately 52 parking spaces would increase total spaces to 81, thereby addressing NPS concerns about the need for additional parking.

The school dock for the sailing school would be maintained in its current location. The area from there to the marina office will be the only dry storage location for boats. To further protect the Dyke Marsh area, all wet slips on the back creek facing the marsh and all wet slips along the south facing seawall of the peninsula on the marsh side would be eliminated. This would result in the loss of 24 wet slips, but would further protect the marsh area.

The current wet slips along the river facing seawall would be removed and three new docks capable of providing 30 slips each would be built in their place. This nominal increase in slip capacity in this area will enhance the public's access to the river while answering an NPS concern about the safety of the deteriorating fixed piers in their current locations.

An upgrade to the canoe and kayak racks capable of storing 30 canoes and kayaks would replace the existing racks. The mooring field used for sailboats only would be maintained at its current location.

This proposal addresses all concerns stated by the Park Service. It also ensures continued public access to the river, a clearly stated goal of the Park Service in providing service and access to the public in the Dyke Marsh area.

The Friends retained the services of PCCI Engineering, an Alexandria based engineering firm, that specializes in contracts with the Navy. Based on their studies, the total cost of renovation is approximately one million dollars. Nearly ½ of this amount is for the replacement of docks and other incidental improvements, which would be provided by the concessionaire. The other improvements outlined in our proposal would be provided by the Park Service.

While there may be some adjustments to our proposal, it is clear that our proposed solution to the marina problem is economically feasible and would clearly serve the public interest.

23
3-12-02

FRIENDS OF THE BELLE HAVEN MARINA
PO Box. 7093 Alexandria VA 22307

March 5, 2002

The Honorable Kerry Donley
Mayor
City of Alexandria Virginia

Dear Kerry,

The Friends of the Belle Haven Marina wish to thank you and the Members of the Alexandria City Council for your continued support of the marina, which now faces an uncertain future. With your continuing support the National Park Service will be encouraged to maintain the current operation which so benefits the citizens of Alexandria, its principal users.

Currently the marina is operating under a temporary one year lease extended by the National Park Service on December 19, 2001. The NPS is now conducting an environmental assessment of the park area with particular reference to the Dyke Marsh. When completed, the Park Service will make a decision on the future of the marina, which has coexisted compatibly with the Dyke Marsh for half a century. Also, the marina has received consistently favorable ratings from the Park Service in its environmental audits and is currently being certified as a "Clean Marina" by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, at the College of William and Mary.

We believe it is important to take notice of the positive contributions of the marina to the Northern Virginia area and particularly to the city of Alexandria. As its principal users, Alexandrians should not be denied the opportunity to boat in safety from this close in marina. It is important to note that if Belle Haven is closed the seaport of Alexandria will be without a multi-use marina.

Accordingly, the Friends of the Belle Haven Marina do respectfully request your approval of a resolution for the continued operation of the marina and to forward this resolution to the National Park Service as well as the Congressional delegation of Northern Virginia. We understand such a resolution will be presented at the March 12, 2002 meeting of the Alexandria City Council.

Sincerely,



Jack Hughes
Friends of the Belle Haven Marina

FRIENDS OF THE BELLE HAVEN MARINA
PO Box. 7093 Alexandria VA 22307

March 5, 2002

The Honorable Beverly I. Jett
Clerk of Council
City of Alexandria Virginia

Dear Beverly,

The Friends of the Belle Haven Marina wish to thank you and the Members of the Alexandria City Council for your continued support of the marina, which now faces an uncertain future. With your continuing support the National Park Service will be encouraged to maintain the current operation which so benefits the citizens of Alexandria, its principal users.

Currently the marina is operating under a temporary one year lease extended by the National Park Service on December 19, 2001. The NPS is now conducting an environmental assessment of the park area with particular reference to the Dyke Marsh. When completed, the Park Service will make a decision on the future of the marina, which has coexisted compatibly with the Dyke Marsh for half a century. Also, the marina has received consistently favorable ratings from the Park Service in its environmental audits and is currently being certified as a "Clean Marina" by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, at the College of William and Mary.

We believe it is important to take notice of the positive contributions of the marina to the Northern Virginia area and particularly to the city of Alexandria. As its principal users, Alexandrians should not be denied the opportunity to boat in safety from this close in marina. It is important to note that if Belle Haven is closed the seaport of Alexandria will be without a multi-use marina.

Accordingly, the Friends of the Belle Haven Marina do respectfully request your approval of a resolution for the continued operation of the marina and to forward this resolution to the National Park Service as well as the Congressional delegation of Northern Virginia. We understand such a resolution will be presented at the March 12, 2002 meeting of the Alexandria City Council.

Sincerely,



Jack Hughes
Friends of the Belle Haven Marina

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM JACK HUGHES, FRIENDS OF BELLE HAVEN MARINA
703 765 7464



SUBJECT AGENDA ITEM FOR MARCH 12, 2002 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CONTINUATION OF THE BELLE
HAVEN MARINA

Sent to CC

23, 3/12/02

The Friends of Belle Haven Marina est. 1992

P.O. Box 7093

Alexandria, Virginia 22307

Dedicated To The Preservation Of A Valued Resource

Honorable Mayor Kerry J. Donley
and Members of City Council
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

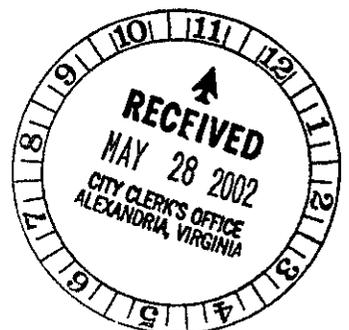
Dear Honorable Mayor Kerry J. Donley and Members of City Council;

The Friends of Belle Haven Marina wish to thank you for your resolution supporting Belle Haven Marina. We appreciate your strong support in maintaining this multi-use marina for all the citizens of the metropolitan area. The extreme shortage of boating facilities on the Potomac makes the continued operation of Belle Haven essential. We are proud of both our safety and environmental records, and are sure that the National Park Service will agree that the existence of the marina in no way threatens Dyke Marsh and our adjoining waters. We shall keep you informed of the National Park Service's Environmental Assessment process as it proceeds.

Best Regards,

Janice Olshesky
Janice Olshesky
President

5-23-02





City of Alexandria, Virginia

*301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314*



23
3-12-02

Kerry J. Donley
Mayor

William C. Cleveland
Vice Mayor

Members of Council
Claire M. Eberwein
William D. Euitte
Redella S. Pepper
David G. Speck
Joyce Woodson

March 13, 2002

Beverly I. Jett, CMC
City Clerk and
Clerk of Council
beverly.jett@ci.alexandria.va.us

(703) 838-4550
Fax: (703) 838-6433

The Honorable George F. Allen
United States Senate
708 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Allen:

At the Regular Meeting of City Council held on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, the Alexandria City Council adopted the enclosed resolution endorsing the continued operation of the Belle Haven Marina. The City Council requested that the City Clerk forward a copy of the resolution to you and the other members of the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation.

Sincerely,


Beverly I. Jett, CMC

City Clerk and Clerk of Council

Enclosure

cc: Members, Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation



City of Alexandria, Virginia
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Kerry J. Donley
Mayor

William C. Cleveland
Vice Mayor

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Beverly I. Jett, CMC
City Clerk and
Clerk of Council
beverly.jett@ci.alexandria.va.us

March 13, 2002

(703) 838-4550
Fax: (703) 838-6433

The Honorable James P. Moran
House of Representatives
2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Moran:

At the Regular Meeting of City Council held on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, the Alexandria City Council adopted the enclosed resolution endorsing the continued operation of the Belle Haven Marina. The City Council requested that the City Clerk forward a copy of the resolution to you and the other members of the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation.

Sincerely,

Beverly I. Jett, CMC
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

Enclosure

cc: Members, Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation



City of Alexandria, Virginia
301 King Street, Suite 2300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



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March 13, 2002

(703) 838-4550
Fax: (703) 838-6433

The Honorable John Warner
United States Senate
225 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

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Sincerely,

Beverly I. Jett, CMC
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

Enclosure

cc: Members, Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation

RESOLUTION NO. 2021

WHEREAS, since the mid-1940's, the Belle Haven Marina has functioned as a concession from the National Park Service and the George Washington Memorial Parkway; and

WHEREAS, over that period, the marina has provided a useful recreational service to thousands of Northern Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the marina provides not only boating slips for the owners of boats who patronize the services of the marina, but a sailing school for new sailors; and

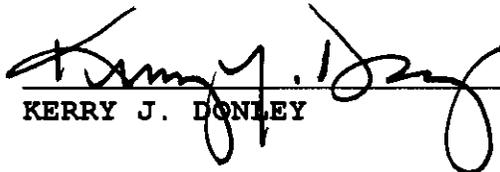
WHEREAS, the Belle Haven Marina offers an affordable rental service to daytime boaters who wish to sail or canoe on this beautiful stretch of the Potomac River; and

WHEREAS, supporters of the marina and the National Park Service have committed to protecting and preserving its adjacent neighbor, the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh; and

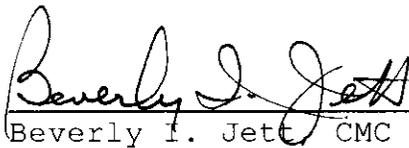
WHEREAS, the Belle Haven Marina is considered a significant resource for residents of Fairfax County and its neighbors in Alexandria;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alexandria City Council requests the support of the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation for the continued safe operation and eventual improvement of the Belle Haven Marina and its environs provided adequate safeguards exist to protect and preserve the environmentally sensitive Dyke Marsh.

Adopted: March 12, 2002


KERRY J. DONLEY MAYOR

ATTEST:


Beverly I. Jett CMC City Clerk