

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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2-10-09**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE FY 2008 ANNUAL REPORT
FROM THE ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT COMMITTEE

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the FY 2008 Annual Report from the Alexandria Waterfront Committee (Attachment).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the Annual Report from the Alexandria Waterfront Committee and thank the Committee for its efforts on behalf of the City.

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Waterfront Committee is an advisory body to the City Council and to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. It was established by City Council on April 25, 1989, based on the recommendation of the Alexandria Waterfront Task Force, which was appointed by Council on June 29, 1988, to study commercial uses of the waterfront.

The Alexandria Waterfront Committee has prepared a report that highlights the principal activities of the Committee during FY 2008 (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008) and the Committee's planned future efforts.

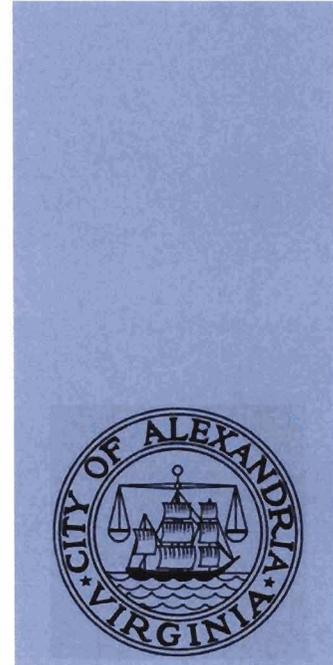
ATTACHMENT: FY 2008 Annual Report for the Alexandria Waterfront Committee.

STAFF:

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Roger Blakeley, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

The City of Alexandria
Waterfront Committee



July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008



Annual Report
FY 2008

INTRODUCTION

The Alexandria Waterfront Committee is an advisory body to the City Council and to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA). It was established by City Council on April 25, 1989, based on the recommendation of the Alexandria Waterfront Task Force, which was appointed by Council on June 29, 1988, to study commercial uses of the waterfront.

The function of the Committee is to study issues relating to the Alexandria Waterfront, and to make recommendations to City Council, the City Manager, and appropriate City departments. The Alexandria Waterfront Committee meets every month between September and June. The Chairperson may call special meetings. The Committee's meetings are public, and notification of meetings is circulated to newspapers by the City's Office of Citizen Assistance and posted on the City's website. Summary Minutes of its meetings, and briefings presented at those meetings, are posted to the RPCA page of the City's website.

MEMBERS SERVING IN FISCAL YEAR 2008

The Alexandria Waterfront Committee is composed of 15 members. Each member represents a particular neighborhood, community, or City committee.

Councilman Paul Smedberg
City Council Representative

Susan Pettey
Chair - Old Town Civic Association
Representative

Engin Artemel
Citizen, East of Washington St.
North of Pendelton St.

Jay Atkinson
Citizen, East of Washington St.
North of King St.

Henry Brooks
Parks and Recreation Commission
Representative

Mel Fortney
Citizen, East of Washington St.
South of King St.

Michael Geissenger
Chamber of Commerce
Representative



Doug Gosnell
Pleasure Boat Lease Holder
Representative

Charles Hamel
Founders Park Community Association
Representative

Nathan Macek
Citizen, West of Washington St.

Pete Peterson
Alexandria Archaeological Commission
Representative

Peter Pennington
Environmental Policy Commission
Representative

Willem Polak
Old Town Business Association
Representative

John Renner
Alexandria Convention and
Visitors' Association, Representative

Robert Taylor
Alexandria Seaport Foundation
Representative

CITY STAFF

Kirk Kincannon
Director - Recreation, Parks
and Cultural Activities

Roger Blakeley
Deputy Director - Recreation, Parks
and Cultural Activities

Laura Seidler
Recreation Supervisor
Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE WATERFRONT COMMITTEE

Alexandria Waterfront Committee members highlighted the following during FY 2008:

▫ **Waterfront Study - The Need To Move Ahead After Repeated Delays** - At the year's outset,

City staff predicted the study's start within six months. In response to reports of further delays, the Committee conveyed to City Council its frustration about repeated delays, noting that further delays would result in piecemeal development and significant negative impacts upon City residents and the tax base. The potential for Robinson Terminal development to move ahead in the absence of an updated Waterfront Plan was flagged. Committee Members worked with their respective organizations to convey concerns about the study delay's impact to City Council. By April, City Council had directed P&Z to make the study a top priority.

▫ **Facilitating Liaison Between The City And Public Stakeholders Affected By Waterfront-Related Activities** -The Chamber of Commerce and Old Town Civic Association briefed the Committee on their respective Waterfront visions. The preservation perspective on Waterfront Planning was also distributed to the Committee. The Committee discussed with staff issues raised by residents, businesses and other organizations such as the Alexandria Convention and Tourist Association and the Arts Commission. Public comments were received at each meeting.

▫ **Waterfront And Marina Security** - The Committee was regularly briefed by RPCA, General Services, National Park Service, Police, and others responsible for the security and safety of the Marina, waterfront, and nearby neighborhoods. The Committee was pleased by improvements such as RPCA's planned installation of Marina gates and their design. The Committee has continued to work with staff to direct attention to problems identified by residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

▫ **Waterfront Maintenance And Improvements**

The Committee discussed with staff planned and implemented improvements. Members proposed small Waterfront problems that RPCA could address prior to the Waterfront Study.

▫ **National Harbor-Related Actions** - The Committee monitored and made recommendations to the City's National Harbor Collaborative Working Group as it developed and implemented citywide improvements in preparation for National Harbor's spring 2008 opening. As a Collaborative member, Committee Chair Susan Pettey acted as liaison between the Committee and the Collaborative.

▫ **A Visitor-Friendly Waterfront** - The Committee worked with staff to ensure improved signage, information, lighting, public transpor-

tation to and from the waterfront, and water taxi schedules. These efforts facilitated National Harbor-related visitor and tourist traffic without creating burdens to residents.

▫ **Parking** - In light of the Waterfront Study's delayed start, Committee members urged the City to move ahead separately on a transportation and parking plan. P&Z briefed the Committee on its King Street parking study and options being developed.

▫ **Flood Mitigation** - The Committee was briefed by Environmental Services on its Land Flood Prediction Modeling Project.

▫ **Environmental Issues Needing Attention** The Committee submitted to the Environmental Policy Commission waterfront-related issues to



include in the City's Environmental Action Plan and informally urged staff to include environmental issues within the scope of the pending Waterfront Study.

▫ **Protecting Wildlife Habitat** - The Committee worked with staff to ensure that dredging and other actions protect and preserve wildlife habitat. The Committee recommended including actions to protect habitat in the City Environmental Action Plan.

▫ **Windmill Hill Park Redevelopment** - The Committee continued to monitor its redevelopment.

▫ **Proposed Hunting Towers/Terrace Development** - Committee monitored actions and

urged that public access to the waterfront be included in any development plan.

▫ **Potential Robinson Terminal North Redevelopment** - The Committee monitored actions associated with its redevelopment.

▫ **Waterfront Walk** - In June 2008, the Waterfront Committee held its annual waterfront walk, starting at Canal Center and ending at Windmill Hill Park. Members noted the many improvements implemented by the City over the past year, and raised several items for further attention.

▫ **Effective September 2008, Began Committee Communications With Members Via Mail.** To improve efficiency and reduce costs, e-communication will be used.



FUTURE EFFORTS

As part of its continued efforts to ensure that the City provides a safe, clean, and attractive environment for boaters, citizens, businesses and visitors to Alexandria's waterfront, the Committee will:

- (1) continue to advocate the prompt start-up of the Waterfront Study and support study efforts when they commence;
- (2) continue to work with staff to identify opportunities to enhance waterfront and Old Town livability and visitor-friendliness via parking and transportation planning, public art, public access to the Waterfront, maintenance of our Waterfront parks and marina, continued attention to safety and security, and other measures;
- (3) continue to monitor flood mitigation planning and actions;
- (4) continue to monitor National Harbor's impact on visitors, land and water traffic;
- (5) continue to monitor major projects adjacent to the waterfront, including Robinson Terminal and Hunting Towers/Hunting Terrace; and
- (6) continue to look for opportunities for the City to incorporate environmental and wildlife habitat planning into the Environmental Action Plan, Waterfront Study, and development.

GOALS for 2009

- Be actively involved in the City waterfront planning process, advising the City and commenting on proposed plans.
- Monitor and make recommendations to the City on issues related to the waterfront, including but not limited to maintenance, use, safety, improvements, historical and artistic interpretation, commerce, and development.
- Understand City budget proposals related to the waterfront; and advocate for adequate resources to maintain and improve the waterfront, marina, and related parks.
- Advocate for environmental quality in the Potomac River, along its shores, and in adjacent land in Alexandria.
- Support a vibrant waterfront that capitalizes on Alexandria's maritime heritage, that serves the needs of residents and visitors, and that includes mixed-use retail and residential development.

The Waterfront Committee welcomes citizens to its meetings, which are held at 7:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month September through May at the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St.