

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
with the
AD HOC FT. WARD PARK AND MUSEUM AREA STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP,
ALEXANDRIA ARCHAEOLOGY COMMISSION
and the
HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2011
5:30 P. M.
CITY COUNCIL WORKROOM

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Comments by the Mayor Mayor William D. Euille
- II. Presentation and Discussion of the Ft. Ward Park and
Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
- a. Report Recommendations Tom Fulton, Chair- Ad Hoc Ft. Ward Park
& Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group
- b. Comments from Chairs of Related Commissions Alexandria Park & Recreation Commission
Alexandria Archaeology Commission
Historic Alexandria Resources Commission
- c. Short Term Improvement Measures for the Park James Spengler, Director- RP&CA
- d. Archaeological and Historic Investigations Lance Mallamo, Director- OHA
- e. Storm Water Mitigation and Drainage Improvement Rich Baier, Director-T&ES
- f. Cost Impact of Recommendations James Spengler, Lance Mallamo, Rich Baier
- g. Discussion Mayor & City Council
- III. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the City Council Work Session may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 746-4500 (TTY/TDD 838-5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

WS
3-22-11

Jackie Henderson

From: Judy Noritake <jnoritake@nka-arch.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2011 11:46 AM
To: Jackie Henderson; Lora Love
Subject: Council Letter on Ft. Ward
Attachments: Ft. Ward SAG Report Letter.PDF

Jackie:

Can you please forward the attached letter on the Ft. Ward Park SAG Report to the Members of City Council prior to this evening's work session? The Park & Recreation Commission just met to formulate our comments on Thursday so the letter is arriving only now.

Many thanks.

Judy Noritake, Chair
Park & Recreation Commission

Judy Guse-Noritake, AIA, LEED AP
Principal

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James B. Spengler
Director

Park and Recreation Commission

March 21, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille
Vice Mayor Kerry J. Donley
Councilman K. Rob Krupicka
Councilman Frank H. Fannon, IV
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilwoman Alicia R. Hughes

Re: Fort Ward Stakeholders Advisory Group Report

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

At our February meeting the Park and Recreation Commission received the draft of the Ft. Ward Stakeholders Advisory Group (SAG) report and had a brief discussion with the group's Chairman, Tom Fulton. We followed up with a letter supporting the additional funding in the City's FY 2012 budget so that further archaeological work, particularly sub-surface work, could proceed sooner rather than later at Fort Ward Park. Until this investigation is completed, little else can proceed at the park.

At our March meeting the Commission further discussed the SAG report and its recommendations. While the park was established to primarily to preserve the historic Civil War aspects of the park, recently other very important cultural and historic resources have been explored and recognized as a further expansion of this park's unique and important history. While many of our parks have historic elements, it is very clear that Ft. Ward Park is one of the most special among these in our City. The Park and Recreation Commission supports the goals of the SAG report to honor and preserve these very special resources. However, there are two recommendations in the SAG report that the Park and Recreation Commission discussed at length and wishes to convey a different approach to the City Council.

The first is the SAG recommendation for a Council appointed Ft. Ward group which would meet in the future at frequent intervals and advise on matters related to Ft. Ward Park. The Park and Recreation Commission believes that the existing Council-appointed boards and commissions represented on the Stakeholders Advisory Group have adequate representation and operating charge from City Council to address issue that may arise in the future related to Ft. Ward Park. The roles of these existing commissions would not diminish if a new group was appointed and it would appear that a newly appointed group independent of the existing ones could possibly cause some confusion with overlapping roles and responsibilities. In our view the best course is to charge the existing boards and commissions to form a closer collaboration as required to address specific issues related to this park. In the end Ft. Ward, while focused mainly on historic and cultural resources, still is a park with many park management issues including a dog exercise area, picnic locations, the performance area, and the arboretum. Issues related to these more "recreational" functions will still remain within the purview of the Park and Recreation Commission and RPCA over time.

Never the less, our while our Commission is not in support of a separately appointed group to focus on Ft. Ward we believe that there is a critical role for the cultural and historic groups interested in and associated with the resources in Ft. Ward Park. The City should seek in as much as possible to encourage and strengthened these groups. At present there is a "Friends of Ft. Ward Park" aimed primarily at supporting the Civil War aspects of the park. We

would strongly encourage this Friends group to expand its reach and areas of interest to encompass other important aspects of this park. As an independent group they will have more ability to raise outside funds, to access grants and to lobby (if you will) City Council on various issues related to the park. Maintaining the existing commission/board structure and augmenting that with a vibrant "Friends" group at Ft. Ward seems like the best of both worlds.

Second, the SAG report calls for a "master plan" for Ft. Ward Park. We, too, believe that master planning should be undertaken for Ft. Ward, but not as a stand-alone plan. Rather we believe the best course of action, which the Commission advocated for even before SAG was formed, is a single master plan for the City's large parks. In such a comprehensive master plan Ft. Ward would comprise a chapter, with Chinquapin, Ben Brenman, Four Mile Run and perhaps Oronoco parks comprising other chapters. The master plan would detail and allocate the anticipated community uses across these parks, identifying where activities are best located. There is increasing need for space to accommodate active recreation, events and activities that are not appropriate for smaller passive parks. While the City has had more success recently in adding small neighborhood and pocket parks, adding to the stock of large parks that can accommodate more activity seems less likely. As a consequence the handful of larger parks in the City need to be able to accommodate more intense use in coming years as our population grows.

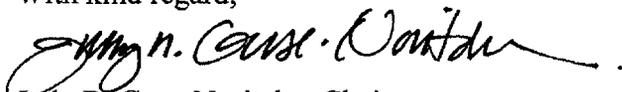
In 2001 the RPCA Department produced a Recreational Needs Assessment, a document that has proved critical in guiding recreational decisions and funding since that time. Now ten years later, as anticipated by the plan, the RPCA is undertaking an update of the Recreational Needs Assessment. The Department will have current and forward-looking recreational needs information available this year to feed into a Large Park Master Plan. We believe that identifying and allocating the projected uses that our larger parks must accommodate is a task that is best done by looking at this handful of parks together. A Large Park Master Plan would then address on-the-ground park changes that need to occur in each of the parks. It is hoped that by doing so we will be able to best accommodate the increasing demand for larger community and active uses, making more use of the bigger parcels we have.

Knowing what we know now about Ft. Ward, we believe no additional recreational or intensified community uses will be identified for Ft. Ward Park as a part of this broader plan; in fact quite the opposite is likely to occur. But if current uses are cut back at Ft. Ward they logically must be sent to one of our other large parks. In turn the communities surrounding those parks are likely to take exception to the intensified use – and in fact this is already occurring with larger picnics moving to Boothe Park. Ft. Ward, while focused appropriately on historic and cultural aspects, is still a part of Alexandria's wonderful park system. Changes to its use now and in the future will have effects in other parks. For this reason the Park and Recreation Commission believes that a plan for this park should be a part of a comprehensive master plan for our other large parks, and not stand alone.

The Commission would also note, however, that there are many actions outlined in the SAG report that can and should proceed ahead of having a master plan of any kind in place. There is broad agreement about the most immediately necessary actions and we encourage that the resources be found to undertake them as soon as possible.

In closing, the Park and Recreation Commission wishes to extend our thanks the SAG. The work that has gone into this report is a labor of love by many for this significant place, a remarkable part of Alexandria's history. As the report rightly points out there are wrongs that need to be righted, additional resources that need to be rediscovered and cultural aspects that need to be honored. There is much to be done and our Commission looks forward to a closer collaboration with our sister commissions, as well as the interested citizen groups, to make the changes and enhancements that are appropriate at this site.

With kind regard,



Judy R. Guse-Noritake, Chair
Park and Recreation Commission

Cc: Jim Hartmann, City Manager



Alexandria, Virginia

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission WS
3-22-11

*220 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2521
(703) 746-4554*



March 18, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille
Members of City Council
City Hall, 301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC), in its meeting of March 15, 2011, endorsed the report of January 11, 2011 of the Alexandria Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG).

While recognizing the legitimate and rightful needs of the citizens of Alexandria for appropriate recreational space and facilities, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission places on record its considered view that the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the historic resources of Fort Ward Park should be the primary consideration in the formulation of any plans for the future of the Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, as listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and that the protection and preservation of the historic character of Fort Ward and its ability to offer exhibits, education and interpretive programs, tours and other related activities not be compromised in any way.

In support of the SAG report, HARC would draw to your attention some of the factors contributing to the historic significance of Fort Ward:

- Fort Ward is the best preserved of the system of Union forts and batteries built to protect Washington, D.C. during the American Civil War.
- Native American presence is confirmed through archaeological evidence.
- African Americans supported the Union cause during the Civil War and subsequently settled the area, working in the community and living at Fort Ward.
- African American citizens were interred at Fort Ward in several family plots.
- Archaeological and cultural resources are abundant throughout the park as defined by the National Register of Historic Places.

HARC urges that the recommendations in the SAG report be the basis for improvements in Fort Ward Park, to be implemented as soon as is practicable.

Sincerely,

Nicole Devero McGrew, Secretary
Acting for HARC Chair John H. Sprinkle, Jr.

cc: James K. Hartmann, City Manager
J. Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria
Susan G. Cumbey, Director, Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site