

City of Alexandria, Virginia

17
1-23-07

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 18, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ISSUE: Recommended Future City of Alexandria's Open Space Committee structure.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Establish a Council-appointed Open Space Advisory Committee with the composition outlined below;
- (2) Set this item for public hearing on Saturday, February 24; and
- (3) Following the public hearing, request the City Attorney to prepare the necessary ordinance to establish the committee. In the interim, the current committee would continue to serve until the new committee is appointed.

DISCUSSION: At the January 9, 2007, Council meeting Council deferred this item to allow for additional Council discussion on an alternative Open Space Committee structure and one in which members would be appointed by City Council. I am in full support of establishing a Council-appointed committee, and I offer the following items for your review on the composition of the future Open Space Advisory Committee.

Based on Council discussion, staff proposes a three-year time term for the Open Space Advisory Committee members and the following 12-member committee composition:

- One citizen member representing the Federation of Civic Associations;
- One citizen member representing Planning District 1;
- One citizen member representing Planning District 2;
- One citizen member representing Planning District 3;

- Two citizens who have shown a knowledge of and interest in open space and represent diverse geographic areas of the city;
- Four slots would be made available for one representative each from the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Environmental Policy Commission and historic preservation interests;
- Two additional slots would be made available for representatives from other commissions/boards with expressed interest in the preservation of open space in the City such as the Beautification Commission and the Waterfront Committee.

I recommend that this report be set for public hearing on February 24, 2007. Following the public hearing, and after determining the desired structure of the Open Space Advisory Committee, the City Attorney would draft the necessary ordinance for the establishment of this standing committee. I anticipate that the ordinance and Council approval process could be accomplished by March of 2007. I recommend that the existing Open Space Committee be asked to continue until such time as the new Open Space Advisory Committee can be formed.

As a point of reference, the Open Space Committee is currently comprised of eleven members that include:

- Three members from the Planning Commission;
- Two members from the Parks and Recreation Commission;
- Two members representing Historic Preservation;
- One member from the Environmental Policy Commission; and
- Three citizen representatives.

Staff representatives from RP&CA, T&ES, P&Z and Archaeology also attend all Open Space Committee meetings in an advisory capacity.

Attachment: Future Committee Structure docket dated January 9, 2007

cc: Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Kirk Kincannon, Director, RPCA


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

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~~1-9-07~~

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE

ISSUE: The future Open Space Steering Committee structure.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Schedule a public hearing on February 24, 2007, to consider approving a new structure for the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) and retitling it the Open Space Advisory Group; and
- (2) If Council agrees to change the future structure of the OSSC, acknowledge and commend the members of the current OSSC for their pioneering and productive work in protecting and expanding public open space in the City.

BACKGROUND: With approval of the Open Space Master Plan in 2003, an 11-member committee, devoted expressly to the preservation of open space, was appointed by the then City Manager. Since its inception in 2003, the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) has worked diligently with City staff to identify, analyze, review and rank potential open space sites throughout the City. The OSSC has also actively sought out opportunities for community outreach and education related to the City's Open Space programs and opportunities. The many successes achieved thus far related to preserving and protecting open space are a direct result of this committee's efforts.

The terms of their appointed service has come to a close, and in the September 20, 2005, Open Space Report and Recommendations, a future new structure of the OSSC was proposed. Since that 2005 report, and with review and approval from the existing OSSC, staff has taken into account additional feedback from OSSC members, staff and citizens, and has proposed revisions to the recommended structure. As much of the ground work for future open space protection has been established, the proposal is for a far smaller advisory group. The name of the group would also change to the Open Space Advisory Group. The recommended structure is outlined below.

We recommend the Committee be appointed as an *advisory group* to staff and the City Manager and include the following representatives: one person from each of the following commissions based on the nominations of these commissions.

- One member from the Planning Commission
- One member from the Park and Recreation Commission
- One member from the Environmental Policy Commission
- One member from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, and
- Two citizens who have shown a knowledge and keen interest in open space and represent diverse geographic areas of the City (to be appointed by the City Manager).

Staff would assist this six person advisory group, and work with the group primarily to implement education and outreach opportunities, and to review future potential open space pocket parks, and conservation easement sites.

The Advisory Group would:

- Meet up to four times a year, and/or additionally when necessary;
- Advise the staff open space team on open space issues and opportunities found during the outreach process;
- Work with staff to make initial contact with citizens concerning open space opportunities;
- Conduct and participate in open public forums to publicly review opportunities; and
- Review vacant and oversize lots for open space potential.

The Staff Open Space Team would:

- Confer with the advisory group on potential open space opportunities;
- Facilitate the meetings;
- Use long range development planning in securing open space on future development sites;
- Use the development process to secure open space on current development sites;
- Develop education and outreach strategies; and
- Report and make recommendations to City Manager and City Council as opportunities become available.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Kirk Kincannon, Director, RPCA

Aimee Vosper, Landscape Architect Supervisor, RPCA

Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA