



**COA Contact Us: Jones Point**

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05/27/2010 04:34 PM

**Please respond to Angela Keefe**



**Time: [Thu May 27, 2010 16:34:24] Message ID: [21927]**

**Issue Type:** Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members  
**First Name:** Angela  
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**Subject:** Jones Point  
June 1, 2010  
Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council,

We residents of  
Alexandria only recently learned that the National Park Service (NPS), as  
part of the final phase of  
Woodrow Wilson Bridge construction, intends to  
close Jones Point Park (JPP) for an estimated period of 18-24 months  
while the park is being renovated.  
From the beginning of the bridge  
construction process, one of the key goals was to ensure daily and  
continuous access to  
as much of JPP as possible during the construction  
process. Thanks to the efforts of many, including Alexandria City  
Council, access to JPP was consistently maintained via specially  
constructed pathways that both traversed and bordered  
the construction

area. To the best of our knowledge, there were no accidents on or around the construction site with regards to park users. Indeed, after some initial uneasiness, residents and bridge construction personnel co-existed in remarkable harmony.

City Council created the Woodrow Wilson Bridge

Task Force to monitor the construction of the bridge and its effects on the

citizens of Alexandria. It met regularly during the construction period,

and was an effective means of monitoring both the bridge construction as

a whole and the plans for JPP, which was a regular docket item for the Task

Force. Since the Task Force was disbanded approximately two years ago,

there has been no effective means for residents of Alexandria to express

their concerns or offer their input with regards to the planned

construction. The oversight, if any, is now in the hands of Alexandria's

City Park and Recreation Commission (CPRC).

On May 20, the NPS

addressed this issue before the CPRC, explaining that on June 8, NPS would

begin soliciting bids for the JPP renovation. The current plan is to

close JPP as early as October 2010. Some members of the CPRC expressed

concern over this plan and the CPRC did not take a vote or action to

approve the plan.

For many residents of Alexandria and the surrounding

neighborhood, JPP is a highly frequented open space used daily by

**Comments:**

hundreds of people. It is a highly valued area of respite from the busy streets of Alexandria and a place of great importance to pedestrians,

fishermen, dog owners, sports enthusiasts, and families. To arbitrarily

close the park for 1 ½ to 2 years for the convenience of a

yet-to-be-named contractor seems to be the height of bureaucratic disdain for the citizens of Alexandria.

Additionally, when an open space is closed to law-abiding citizens, who are eyes and ears for the community, it can create obvious issues of public safety. In particular, the

lighthouse is very vulnerable to fire and vandalism. During the time of the bridge construction, access for emergency vehicles to the lighthouse

area was constantly maintained, through the area of public pedestrian

access. Keeping the park open during the construction phase actually

assists in providing a greater measure of public safety. NPS personnel

stated that to keep the park open would cost \$1 to \$2 million dollars more,

and would extend the construction phase by an additional six to 10

months. This estimate was apparently provided by the Virginia Department

of Transportation (VDOT), which is managing the construction for NPS.

Unfortunately, the details of this estimate have not been provided to the

City, CPRC, or even (as we understand) to NPS. There must be more

accountability and transparency in this process.

We are greatly

encouraged that during the 5/25 Council meeting you asked the Director of

Parks and Recreation to work with NPS and VDOT to come up with a plan to

maintain public access to JPP and incorporate such a plan into the soon to

be issued bid request. Further, we would be pleased to work closely with

the NPS, VDOT, CPRC, and the City to do whatever needs to be done to

creatively plan and consider necessary measures, including those related to safety, and to create a

flexible plan and timetable that would support a  
reasonable degree of public access to the park during the construction

period.

Please continue to help communicate our concerns and to all  
the involved federal, state, and local agencies.


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 26, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THRU: ROSE WILLIAMS BOYD, <sup>RU</sup>DIRECTOR OF CITIZEN ASSISTANCE

FROM: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL  
ACTIVITIES 

SUBJECT: STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION FOR JONES POINT PARK AT THE  
WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE (COUNCIL REQUEST #10-13EH)

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City Council and the Office of Citizen Assistance have received several requests concerning the closure of Jones Point Park during construction. Additionally, citizen requests have asked for updated information on features to be developed within the park. This memorandum provides a summary update of activities at Jones Point Park.

Jones Point Park is approximately 65 acres in size. The property is and will remain owned, maintained, and operated by the National Park Service (NPS) as land of the U.S. Department of Interior.

The National Park Service managed and implemented the park design process for the Park. The process integrated significant public input and included an Environmental Assessment/National Environmental Protection Act process. In June 2005, the Alexandria City Council voted to support National Park Service proposed action Alternative 4A (see Attachment) and the National Park Service subsequently accepted that plan, which is now being implemented and will be constructed. The plan was codified with a formal Record of Decision and issued in accordance with federal law.

Alternative 4A includes significant constructed features including: historic interpretation of the finishing pier/craneway and shipway, renovation of the Jones Point Lighthouse, preservation and historic interpretation of the DC cornerstone, an historic site interpretive pedestrian/bike trails, multi-use fields, event lawn, playground and tot-lot, play courts, comfort station, 110 parking spaces, preservation of existing native species and wetlands and natural areas, removal of invasive plant species and replacement with native plant species. Construction documents and specifications for the plan as prepared by Potomac Crossing Consultants are now at 95-100% completion and will be advertised for construction bids/proposals in early June 2010.

The Jones Point Lighthouse will receive renovation work coincident with construction associated with Jones Point Park. The work will be dedicated to interior and exterior improvements. Interior improvements will restore the windows and doors-using any historic material that is inside and creating new ones to match; installation of wallboard, lighting, flooring, and a fire suppression system. Exterior improvements will focus on siding, roof and the light. The intent is to have part of the first floor available for special events but not be open on a regular basis. To provide accessibility for this limited use, a removable ramp will be used. Docking facilities at the lighthouse site were not a part of Alternative 4A. In addition, such facilities are not supported at this site due to shoreline conditions-including the DC Cornerstone, and lack of adequate depth in the Potomac River.

Construction of Jones Point Park is anticipated to commence in October 2010, and last for approximately 18-24 months (October 2012). During the time of construction, the Park will be closed to public access. This will ensure that the Park is reopened in the shortest possible time frame. VDOT is managing the bidding process and construction of the Park.

The Mount Vernon Trail will remain open, although it may be re-routed periodically-typically under the bridge to Royal Street, as it was during construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Some citizens have requested City Council involvement in a phased/partial incremental approach to construction. If undertaken, a 20-24 month delay in completion of the construction can be anticipated. This would effectively double the time until the Park is completed (from October 2012 to October 2014). The following can be anticipated if a phased/partial incremental approach is taken:

- a.) Delay in advertisement for construction bids/proposals by approximately 12 months due to required revisions to solicitation documents and inability to meet the VDOT/FHWA procurement cycles. This will result in delay in commencement of on-site construction. The site will remain in its existing fallow condition during the 12-month time frame. Cost to modify the construction documents and specifications is anticipated to be approximately \$100,000 and will be borne by the project.
- b.) 12 months of additional on-site construction time that would extend any associated impacts on the City as a whole. The additional time is due to necessary safety requirements, logistics and periodic opening/closing portions of the site associated with construction phasing.
- c.) An anticipated increase in construction costs of \$1-2 million that will be borne by the project, possibly resulting in modification to previously approved work.

At the May 20, Park and Recreation Commission meeting Superintendent of the George Washington Parkway Dottie Marshall gave a brief presentation on the Jones Point Park construction and timetable. The presentation was clear in the point that VDOT is the

construction manager for the park and controls the timetable. As a result of that meeting, the Park and Recreation Commission stated that it would not take any further action. The Commission and City does not now have a role in the construction process and that the process should proceed as currently intended.

The recommendation of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is for construction to proceed as presently planned. We think it is best for all Alexandria residents to have the entire park built and opened as quickly as possible. There are other City parks in the immediate area that local residents can use during the construction process.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 703.746.5502.

cc: James Hartmann, City Manager  
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager  
Debra Collins, Assistant City Manager

Attachment: Alternative 4A