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4-16-11

Old Town Civic Association  
P.O.Box 1213  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

April 16, 2011

Mayor William D. Euille  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Donley and Members of City Council:

Re: Draft Waterfront Small Area Plan

The draft Waterfront Plan has been the subject of numerous Old Town Civic Association meetings, surveys and workshops since the membership's adoption of a statement of "Waterfront Planning Principles" back in 2007. However, there is still significant frustration with a planning process that, although years in duration, has not adequately taken into account a number of concerns raised by the Old Town community.

At the March 12, 2011 City Council public hearing, I made this point and asked for more time to work with the City to resolve OTCA issues. The City Council challenged OTCA to come back with a list of specific modifications that we would like to see. These modifications are as follows:

1. **Slow down** – The waterfront plan is likely to undergo significant changes within the next month or two, specifically as a result of ongoing negotiations with the Old Dominion Boat Club and a more realistic assessment of the plan's revenues and costs. There needs to be continued public discussion of the waterfront plan; there will be substantial harm if further comment is foreclosed on a plan that is not yet complete. No Small Area Plan or Text Amendment should be adopted until and unless its fundamental elements are clear and precise and have been made available for public consideration and comment.
2. **Make a stronger commitment to historic/cultural amenities** – The celebration of Alexandria's history and public art should not be limited to a waterfront plan. These civic and cultural amenities should be a central element of any such plan, however—not relegated to mere appendices with no visible means of support.
3. **Set limits on the type of allowable commercial uses** in the waterfront area; unlimited, these uses, specifically restaurant uses, could cannibalize the business and parking supply of existing shops and restaurants in Old Town, especially along King Street, undermining what is presumably must be a principal economic objective of the plan.
4. **Include more open space** – Preservation of parks and open space for the benefit of the general public was a crucial objective of the 1981 and 1983 waterfront Settlement Agreements. Acquisition of additional open, public space on the waterfront should be accomplished to the optimum degree.
5. **Abandon the concept of a building in Waterfront Park** – Such a building is highly undesirable, either as a swap for the ODBC parking lot or as a stand-alone building, because it would take away public space at a critical crossroad location with King Street. No existing open space should be compromised or retroceded; once it's gone, it's gone forever.

6. **Scale back substantially the amount of restaurant space** – The most recent revenue forecast for the plan anticipates 84,140 square feet of new restaurant space, the equivalent of eleven new restaurants in the waterfront area each one the size of the new Virtue restaurant in the old Olsson’s Bookstore building. That amount of additional restaurant space will add greatly to street, sidewalk, and parking congestion in Old Town, especially along Union and King Streets.
7. **Scale back substantially the number of hotel rooms** – The proposed plan includes 625 hotel rooms on the premise that they will generate less traffic and higher tax revenues than currently permitted uses. Hotels, if allowed, should be limited to one “boutique” hotel of modest size which complements the architectural character of its existing neighborhood. Any new hotel should not be a larger, “full service” hotel with restaurants, coffee shops, banquet rooms and conference facilities which would generate heavy visitor and delivery traffic.
8. **Stay within the existing densities** – Densities should not be increased for any reason for the Robinson Terminal, Cummings, and Turner properties. Adding density to generate tax revenues to underwrite public improvements will add traffic and parking pressure to an already congested area of Old Town, overwhelm the historic character of its core area, and increase the value of waterfront property, making it more expensive to acquire land for open-space purposes.
9. **Demonstrate that the Plan is revenue neutral** – Cost and revenue estimates for each development increment must be balanced to avoid residential or specialty tax increases that directly impact Alexandria residents. It is essential that the waterfront plan include all projected capital, operating, and maintenance costs, including expanded sewer capacity; dredging at the proposed docks and piers; and maintenance and eventual rehabilitation and replacement of the proposed infrastructure.
10. **Guarantee the funding sources** - that allow all, or most, of the tax revenues generated by private-sector development in the waterfront area to flow into a fund designated for improvements along the waterfront and not into the City’s General Fund or spent on capital projects unrelated to the waterfront, such as new fire trucks, buses, or public buildings.

The City has asked for public comment, we see no compelling reason to hurry this process, and once again, request a delay in the plan adoption timetable to allow more time to work with the City to finish addressing our issues. There will be no substantive harm to the waterfront or to Alexandria if final Council action on the plan is postponed until a more concrete plan has been formulated and debated publicly.

Respectfully submitted



John Gosling, President, Old Town Civic Association.

Cc: The Planning Commission  
James K. Hartmann, City Manager  
Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

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I'm Linda Hafer, the Executive Director of The Art League, a 57-year-old nonprofit visual art organization headquartered in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, with two additional classroom annexes in Old Town. I wish, first of all, to **thank you for the support** afforded to The Art League by the City—both through the **rent support** for our space in the Torpedo Factory, and for the **resources provided through the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Cultural Affairs Office**—that make it possible for us to provide our programs. We appreciate that Alexandria has shown leadership in supporting the arts.

There are many reasons that a city supports the arts. At the most practical level, studies show that the arts have significant impact as an **economic driver**. Four decades of research tell us that they are critical to our **children's development, education, and success**. The enlightened recognize that art embodies qualities of creativity, innovation, problem solving, identity, communication, & expression—the **tools needed for 21st century success**.

As you consider the 2012 budget, you are tasked with the challenges of balancing limited financial resources with a variety of needs—all very compelling. I hope you will consider that a strong arts community can be a partner in addressing some of those needs.

As the Americans for the Arts' economic study revealed, arts activities generate a significant return on the money invested.

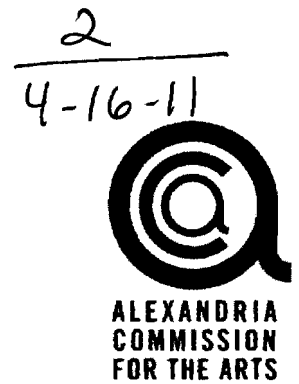
Since I'm speaking for The Art League, let me reference the **economic impact**, for example, of our annual Patrons' Show fundraiser. This event brought some 800 participants to Alexandria, for multiple visits, during a typically inactive January-February timeframe. Responses to a post-event survey indicated significant additional expenditures at restaurants, shops and parking facilities here.

On a year-round basis, more than 11,000 class registrants in The Art League School come to the area an average of 7 times each for classes—and a significant number of them also patronize local restaurants and shops when they are here.

In the area of **social services**, arts organizations provide resources that complement the city's programs. As an example, The Art League's award-winning SOHO (Space of Her Own) program was developed in concert with Alexandria's Court Service Unit to address identified needs of pre-teen girls at risk for court involvement. We provide instruction and venue for an excellent art education experience, and we obtain foundation funding to help support the program, allowing CSU to focus on the services at which they excel. It has been a very successful partnership!

A strong and stable arts community will ultimately enhance the city and share the burden of providing many benefits to its citizens. I hope you will recognize the value of maintaining funding for the Arts Commission and its grant programs, as well as ensuring adequate staffing in the Cultural Affairs office. I would encourage you also, looking forward, to consider a public art funding policy that will ensure appropriate funding into the future.

We are proud to be a partner with the City of Alexandria, and hope you will include substantial support for the arts in your budget. Thank you.



March 17, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille  
The Honorable Kerry J. Donley  
The Honorable Frank Fannon, IV  
The Honorable Alicia R. Hughes  
The Honorable Rob Krupicka  
The Honorable Redella S. Pepper  
The Honorable Paul C. Smedberg  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Funding for Arts Initiatives

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

As you consider the FY2012 City budget in this difficult funding climate, the members of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Public Art Committee respectfully request that you fund these important arts initiatives: Public Art Manager position and an increase in the granting program for area arts organizations. These additional requests represent an incremental investment for the future in our City's quality of life and economic growth.

Included in the City Manager's proposed FY2012 operating budget for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is a requested unfunded priority above the Manager's base budget for a Public Art Manager position. This position would implement the public art strategies called out in the City's Strategic Plan, Goal 7, Objective 2, Initiatives 1 & 2, which includes a Public Art Master Plan. At present, both staff and volunteers cannot meet the workload which have been mandated for public art programs in Alexandria. Currently, staff and approximately 60 volunteers are working on the Police Memorial, Charles Hamilton Houston Memorial, Freedmen's Cemetery, BRAC Public Art Project, and Ward Teitz' temporary art installation. The current Office of the Arts staffing must be expanded to meet these projects and importantly the role which has been outlined for the arts in the Alexandria Waterfront Public Art Proposal. We have a choice to move these projects and other projects forward or to cede our City's tradition in this area to other local jurisdictions.

Our growing national reputation as an arts destination is dependent on the health of our arts organizations which serve our citizens and the many visitors who plan their visits to Alexandria around the arts. Also, these same institutions help supplement the arts education of our school children at a time when the public schools deemphasize this form of learning. Every dollar the City invests in the arts through the Alexandria Commission for the Arts grants program returns \$26 in investment from individual, foundation and corporate support, ticket sales, and state and federal government funding. As you can see, the City's investment in the arts helps organizations leverage additional funding. Furthermore, the arts mean business in Alexandria. According to a 2005 Arts & Economic Prosperity Study by Americans for the Arts, the arts have an \$80 million dollar impact on the local economy.



We are appreciative that the proposed FY2012 budget does not include further reductions in funding for the grants program, as was the case in the FY10 budget. Our counterpart on the state level, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, is also fortunate to see steady funding for its proposed FY2012 budget. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the Alexandria Commission for the Arts reviewed the grant applications for FY2012. A total of 30 arts organizations requested \$264,654 in funds. With the current level of funding at \$179,937 (with the possibility of an additional \$5,000 in funds from a Virginia Commission for the Arts grant), we had to face very difficult decisions in making our funding recommendations. Three organizations will not receive any funding and even high-scoring organizations such as First Night, MetroStage, the Art League and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra will receive between 13% and 18% less than they had requested in their grant applications.

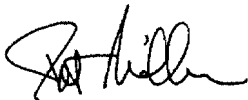
General market trends are showing a decline in giving to nonprofits among private funders and foundations, which look to public matching funds for evidence of support. These private sector partnerships are critical to ensuring the growth of our arts institutions. Many of our proposals seek to serve underserved populations of our community and reach out to populations who have historically not had full access to the arts. Our goal in the grants program is to assure that all our citizens have full access to arts programs.

As you know, the arts build communities. Arts and culture provide opportunities for civic engagement, define the identity of a community, provide opportunities for life-long learning, bring diverse groups together, offer meaningful artistic experiences for the artist and patron, as well as stimulate the economy. The business of the arts creates jobs, draws tourism dollars, attracts businesses, and generates tax revenue. And do not forget, the art we create today will serve as a legacy we pass on to succeeding generations in our community.

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts supports the recommendation for allocating additional funds to arts initiatives. This investment is critical to fulfilling our mission and ensuring that Alexandria will be recognized as a world-class arts location and destination.

On behalf of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Public Art Committee, we thank you for your time and for your careful consideration of the City's funding of the arts.

With our sincere gratitude,



Pat Miller  
Chair, Alexandria Commission for the Arts  
Co-Chair, Public Art Committee



Matthew Harwood  
Co-Chair, Public Art Committee

CC: Jim Hartmann, City Manager  
James Spengler, Director, RPCA  
Alisa Carrel, Deputy Director, RPCA/Office of the Arts  
Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Manager, RPCA/Office of the Arts  
Alexandria Commission for the Arts  
Public Art Committee

Good Morning. I'm Tom Berkey of the Alexandria Harmonizers. In the time I have, I would like to read a statement that describes a few of the many ways your financial support pays huge dividends in promoting the name of "Alexandria" locally, nationally, and globally. Our performances also bring visitors to the city who wouldn't otherwise come here.

The Alexandria Harmonizers are a chorus of 200 men who sing barbershop harmony and a capella music. We've been associated with the City of Alexandria since 1948.

At the local level, the Alexandria Harmonizers have annually presented spring, fall, and Christmas shows that are eagerly anticipated throughout the community. We provide free public concerts at Fort Ward Park, and Market Square year after year. We have an annual Christmas Carol Walk through downtown streets and restaurants much to the delight of surprised diners. We sing for patients at Alexandria Hospital and the residents at Goodwin House retirement community. For the past 4 years, we've sponsored a Youth Harmony festival for young men and women in grades 8-12 that, this year, has grown to 80 students from throughout the metro area. It was held last Saturday at Durant Center.

At the regional level, the Harmonizers have been invited to perform at the White House, Wolftrap, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Kennedy Center Honors. Last Saturday, we marched in the Cherry Blossom Parade, and were one of the few groups invited to perform in front of the ABC Channel 7 cameras and televised throughout the metro area. (see it on the Internet at Harmonizer's "Face Book" ([www.facebook.com/harmonizers](http://www.facebook.com/harmonizers) )

Nationally, The Harmonizers are recognized as one of the premier choruses in the Barbershop Harmony Society. Our name is legend among the 800 chapters in the US, Canada, Western Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. We've won 4 first place gold medals in International Competition. We're working on doing it again this year when we compete at Kansas City.

Globally, we carry the name of Alexandria to Japan as we perform this May 2011 at Carnegie Hall in New York as the featured chorus at the United States/Japan Chorus Festival. In 2012, we'll travel to China and perform at several venues in Beijing. During our caroling walk in the city this past December we were videotaped by a Russian TV crew, and that clip was telecast to 250 MILLION homes in Russia and the world. (see it on the Internet at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBm\\_erpm0yY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBm_erpm0yY) )

We could not do all of this without your continued generous financial support. Thank you. This concludes my prepared remarks.

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**“Don’t Rezone the Waterfront”**  
alternativealexandriawaterfrontplan.com

## Community Rally and News Conference

Saturday April 16  
10:00-11:00 a.m.

Foot of Oronoco Street at Founder Park  
Rain or shine!

Dear Neighbors:

No one disputes the fact that the Alexandria waterfront could be more accessible. But will high-density development improve the waterfront or diminish its value? We think the latter.

Do you want to see hotels and the equivalent of 12 more Chart House Restaurants on the waterfront? Or would you prefer more parkland and venues like a maritime museum that celebrates and interprets our seaport heritage? Do you want more affordable public access to the waterfront and river?

Two years of public meeting have produced ONE plan to develop the two biggest private properties on the waterfront owned by the Washington Post Co. and also the old warehouses along the Strand. The plan ignores the real potential public value of the waterfront and will create a generic waterfront that looks more like National Harbor than Alexandria.

***We believe there is an alternative vision for the waterfront. Here’s the basic framework:***

- A maritime museum with a pier for visiting ships at the Robinson Terminal Warehouse North, located at historic West’s Point, at the foot of Oronoco Street. We would reuse the building.

- A large new park at the site of the Robinson Terminal Warehouse South, located between Wolfe and Duke streets.
- A new Arts District along the Strand that preserves the most historic buildings.
- A new small boat recreation center along the waterfront east of the Strand where people can rent and store kayaks and canoes.

***We propose this alternative because we believe that any waterfront plan SHOULD:***

- PREVENT further pollution of the Potomac.
- INCREASE to the maximum extent possible affordable public access to the waterfront and shoreline.
- RECOGNIZE that the town's history and the Potomac River are what bring visitors and residents to Alexandria. The town's history should be the foundation for modest attempts to commercialize the waterfront.
- UNDERSTAND that a truly public waterfront is in the interest of ALL Alexandrians. The revenue to pay for such restoration should NOT be tied to specific development plans like hotels, which diminish the waterfront's value.
- SUPPORT the small, LOCAL businesses that make Old Town unique.
- BE cost effective. (Parks can flood naturally, hotels cannot)

City Council may approve the proposed plan on May 14. Time is short! We need everyone's help to prevent this beautiful public resource from being destroyed by shortsighted development. Come join us on Saturday, April 16 to show your support for our efforts and those of the Old Town Civic Association to promote an alternative waterfront plan.

Andrew Macdonald, Former Vice-Mayor  
andrewmacdonaldforalexandria.com  
603 512 9379

Boyd Walker, Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance  
703 732 7269



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REMARKS FROM DENISE FREELAND

Good morning. My name is Denise Freeland and I want to express collective gratitude from the Alexandria arts community gathered here this morning for your generous support of our activities, activities which are tremendously diverse, which increase the quality of life for Alexandrians, and which generate income to help fund some of the City's expenses.

I am wearing two hats this morning. First, I am the Founder and Artistic Director of The EcoVoce Ensemble whose performance specialty is music about nature and the earth. We are a trio of professional musicians – soprano, piano, and flute -- who are passionate about music and about raising environmental awareness through our music. Our commitment to this mission is reflected in our name – “Eco” comes from the word “ecology” and “Voce” is the Italian word for voice. We serve as a musical voice for ecology, giving voice to those that have no voice – birds, oceans, animals, trees. Your past support of EoVoce has enabled us to develop a partnership with parks, has allowed us to bring our innovative concert programs to the schools and after school programs, and helped us create meaningful collaborative concert programs with some of the finest arts organizations in our city.

I am also here this morning wearing the hat of Vice President for Advocacy for the Arts Forum of Alexandria. As you know, we are very fortunate to be living in a community where the performing arts and visual arts organizations and individuals are so rich and varied. The work we artistic people do in the community not only provides top quality entertainment for our citizens but has also resulted in Alexandria becoming a major arts destination. As you know, those who attend Alexandria arts and cultural events spend an average of \$39.65 per person. We artists have a positive economic impact on our community. Because our wonderful city benefits so greatly from the arts, I respectfully ask that funding for the Commission for the Arts be maintained at the 2010 levels at a minimum. Thank you for your time and consideration.

GEORGE CHADWICK, ALEXANDRIA PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION  
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I'd like to describe briefly two programs supported by the APAA. We feel that these programs are particularly beneficial to the general success of arts dissemination in Alexandria. They illustrate our ability to tailor our art to the needs of particular audiences.

First - the **National Symphony Orchestra Family Concerts**. Briefly, the NSO Education Programs Department, Kennedy Center makes available free tickets to special concerts designed to attract the young concert goer. An instrument petting zoo and music geared to kids is made available. Alexandria, although eligible to attend these events has not, until recently, availed itself of the opportunity.

The Alexandria Performing Arts Association has been instrumental in forming the necessary contacts to bring the program into being.

- We contacted the NSO Educational Programs Department and secured 200 tickets (face value \$3000) to the event. APAA also buys an additional 100 tickets
- We contacted Superintendent Sherman and secured school busses to take our kids to the Kennedy Center - APAA paying the overtime needed for the bus drivers.
- Finally, APAA volunteers man every bus, ensuring that the kids get where they are supposed to be in a timely fashion.

Cost to the City? Some time of school teachers and principals. Gas for the busses. Net result: 300 elementary school students enjoy a rare treat.

Second - **The APAA's ENCORE Program**. APAA several years ago received a bequest with an open ended target: Use the money to benefit the elderly in Northern Virginia. The ENCORE program, encore standing for "ENtertainment Carried Out to the Retired and Elderly" was born. Our regular musical/dance programs were not reaching the elderly. As a rule organizing a van load of seniors to come to an entertainment event was not happening. So we worked to take the entertainers to the retirement facilities. We undertake 10-12 events annually (big emphasis on Valentine's Day). Is it great art? Well no, often it's a singer with accompanist singing old favorites and encouraging a sing along. It is very very welcome.

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June Whelan, Vice President, Washington Balalaika Society

Alexandria City Council, April 16, 2011

Good Morning, I am June Whelan, Vice President and a musician in the Washington Balalaika Society orchestra. Our orchestra, with 55 musicians, is the largest Russian folk orchestra in the United States. We perform on traditional Russian folk instruments and in costume. While several in our orchestra have emigrated from Russia most of us are main-stream Americans who just love this music.

In addition to performing, our goal is to share and educate the public on the cultural richness of this music. We do this through several mediums – our orchestra will present its major spring concert, **“The Art of the Balalaika,”** at TC Williams High School on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Our several ensembles are engaged in active educational outreach programs. Last October when one of our ensembles played at the Durant Center.....more than 60 first and second-graders from the Jefferson Houston School joined us....in fact, one of the students was lucky enough to leave with a tambourine!

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, our **St. Petersburg Trio**, all orchestra musicians who studied at the prestigious Rimsky Korsakov Conservatory in St. Petersburg, Russia, entertained more than 100 people at the Lyceum. It was a fun evening as well as culturally diverse.

The orchestra works hard to preserve this music and two years ago formed a Children’s Music Academy which today includes about 20

students ages 5 – 14. Several of these students are about to graduate into the orchestra. They will perform at TC Williams on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

The funding the Washington Balalaika Society receives from the Alexandria Arts Commission enables us to present these programs in Alexandria. We appreciate your support and interest in what the arts community is doing in the city and we ask for your continued support.

Also, as a performing arts organization, we hope that in future planning, the Council will consider affordable performing arts venues.

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April 15, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille  
The Honorable Kerry J Donley  
The Honorable Frank Fannon, IV  
The Honorable Alicia R. Hughes  
The Honorable Rob Krupicka  
The Honorable Redella S. Pepper  
The Honorable Paul C. Smedberg  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Funding for Arts

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council,

Being that I make my living from my art, I am particularly appreciative of city support of the arts and know how vitally important funding for the arts is to any community.

I was honored to join the Commission in January and experienced the Alexandria Commission for the Arts grants program process for the first time. I was incredibly impressed by the versatility, diversity and sheer artistic talent of the groups requesting funding and it was heartbreaking at times to have to cut or in some cases eliminate some of these organizations from the funding list.

It is a proven fact that the City's investment in the arts helps these organizations successfully leverage additional corporate and private funding. It is also a proven fact in Alexandria that the arts are good for business, with a \$80 million dollar impact on the local economy.

The arts should not be considered as something "nice to have". They are vital to the growth and stability of every community. In essence we should not lose sight of the fact that art is viewed and heard and felt by people. Art is not just the fodder of a close-knit group of initiates. Art is the soul food of all people.

I have lived in Alexandria for one year but was drawn to this area not only through its reputation as a leading arts destination, but its reputation as a true community that nurtures and embraces the arts from its creative community projects, its corporate sponsorship as well as strong city support. I urge that this reputation and tradition be upheld and that funding for the arts in the City of Alexandria be ~~increased.~~ *maintained and increased.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Leisa Collins  
Commissioner, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding arts funding in the City of Alexandria. My name is Lisa Hawkins. I am the Founder and Executive Director of the Arts Center at Convergence on Quaker Lane. We are a creative community dedicated to serving the needs of local artists and arts organizations. Convergence's programming is concerned primarily with the physical, mental, emotional, creative and spiritual health of the artist— all of which are tied into being a healthy, whole, productive member of society.

One of the biggest stress factors artists face is the challenge to find affordable space in which to do their work. Performing artists especially find it difficult in our area. To meet this need, what was Fair-Park Baptist Church became Convergence and opened its doors to local artists. Currently all of the space in our two buildings are available, at very accessible cost to theater, dance, music, literary and visual artists. Some of the organizations hosted at Convergence are the 7 Sopranos, Port City Playhouse, Empowered Women International, The Lab All Ages – a unique open mic venue where young adults experiment artistically and gain confidence in a safe, supportive environment. We also have two exhibit spaces featuring shows designed to encourage discussion and exploration of diverse issues.

We believe in the power of the arts and the responsibility of artists not only to create enjoyable, meaningful work, but to serve as catalysts for community development. The economic value of a thriving arts community is even greater than the revenue it brings, the arts enhance the public welfare. In a report from Americans for the Arts it states that sustained, consistent access to high quality arts experiences (in particular) creates a community in which people are healthier mentally, have reduced anxiety, a higher sense of community identity, capacity for collective action and are more open to diversity.

Bringing as many people as possible into engagement with their culture through meaningful experiences of the arts leads not only to financial revenue for the city and attracting visitors, but to attracting a high-quality workforce and creating an involved, healthy, proactive community. We at Convergence are eager to continue doing our part and we urge you to continue your support of the vital role the arts play in Alexandria during the budget process. Thank you so much for this time to speak with you and thank you for your continued support of the arts in Alexandria.

Lisa Hawkins  
Convergence  
Apr. 16, 2011

MORNING

-Good Afternoon. My name is Ed Milner. I am currently employed as a Sergeant with the Alexandria police department and have been a city employee for over 22 years.

I am the current Vice President of the Alexandria Police Association and a current board member of the Police Union. I also serve as a member of the Police and Fire Pension board and serve on the newly formed AD HOC Retirement Advisory Group. Today, I am speaking on behalf of the Police Association and Police Union regarding the proposed increased pension costs to City employees.

In my 22 years with the city, I have heard numerous promises from past and present council members. I have seen very few promises kept, especially when it would benefit the City employees. In the past, employees have asked for financial compensation. The typical response from the City was that a study must be performed and the decision to give this compensation would be based on the outcome. When the studies favored the City employee, the City retracted its promise and never gave the duly owed compensation. The findings have always turned out in favor of the employee and the excuses are always the same. City council will do it in the future or there is no money to give because times are tough.

This time , you, the counsel, said we will form an AD HOC Retirement Advisory Group to see what the city should do about the increased costs relating to the employees pensions. But before this Advisory Group was even formed, the City Manger presented a proposed budget that increased the employees cost without ANY input from the now formed advisory committee.



I am asking you to consider treating the city's greatest assets, which are its employees, with the same careful thought and respect that you treat the property tax rates. Always, the budget is designed to protect property tax rates from an annual increase. It is about time you realize that the property tax rates are not what make this City an attractive place to live and visit. It is the City employees. It is the police department giving the city a 43 year low crime rate. It is the sanitation employees that keep the City streets spotless so tourists want to come and spend their money. It is the Fire and EMS units quick response that saves Alexandrian lives and protects property. It is the Parks and Recreation Department employees that keep our City Parks welcoming residents and tourists alike all year long. All of these accomplishments, mind you, have been made in spite of past budget and staffing cuts.

We expect the counsel to recognize its employees and protect the pension much like it protects its property tax rates. I respectfully request that you keep your promise. Afford the AD Hoc Advisory Board the opportunity to present its findings to you prior to any implementation of any proposed increase to the Pension. Strike the increase from the proposed budget and end this debate. Thank you.