

Docket Item # 10  
BAR CASE # 2007-0280

BAR Meeting  
January 16, 2008

**ISSUE:** Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria  
**LOCATION:** City Marina, 105 N. Union Street  
**ZONE:** WPR/Waterfront Park and Recreation

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval.

**BOARD ACTION, JANUARY 16, 2008:** Mr. Josephson, Mr. Blakely and Ms. Vosper gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the proposed improvements to the waterfront in conjunction with the National Harbor Initiative. On a motion by Mr. Neale, seconded by Mr. Spencer the Board approved the application with the following conditions:

1. The applicant is to return to the Board for approval of a coordinated color scheme for the waterfront improvements; and,
2. Cut sheets on the planters are to be provided to the Board.

The vote on the motion was 6-0.

**REASON:** The Board agreed with the staff analysis but believed that the various elements needed to be carefully considered and an coordinated color scheme presented.

**SPEAKERS:** Jan Gravel, Coordinator, National Harbor Collaborative, spoke in support  
Julie Crenshaw Van Fleet, Wolfe Street, spoke about concerns  
John Hynan, representing the Historic Alexandria Foundation, spoke regarding questions about various aspects

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval.



Update: Since the last public hearing on January 16, 2008, the applicant has provided additional information regarding the color palette for the interim waterfront improvements and for planters. The updated information includes existing conditions photographs, banner designs and wayfinding signs, planters and seawall railings. The banner design has been further refined in a warm brick tone reflective of the existing red brick buildings and in the predominant blue color that connects and relates to many of the existing and proposed improvements at the waterfront. The applicant has provided additional information regarding the beige/sandstone color planters that are proposed for the marina area. Further information and photographs have been provided to show where the existing 795 feet of white railing along the seawall. Photographic simulations have been provided to show the proposed railings in both white and black color, as suggested by the Board, in daylight, dusk and night conditions. In addition to the general memorandum in the packet explaining the color palette of improvements, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities has included a separate memorandum to explain more specifically why they recommend from a safety standpoint that the new (and existing) seawall railings be white in color, stating that these safety concerns are applicable to both pedestrians on land and boaters operating and approaching from the water. Included in the packet is a third memorandum from the City's Risk Manager emphasizing why he believes the railings need to be white for pedestrian and boater safety. Staff believes that the refinements since the last hearing have improved the proposal and recommends approval of the application as submitted.

#### **I. ISSUE:**

The City of Alexandria, serving as the applicant, is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a series of alterations to serve as interim waterfront improvements for the city marina area as part of the National Harbor Initiative. The proposed improvements meet City Council's goals for welcoming, orienting, and dispersing visitors to King Street, Old Town, and other areas of the City. In November of 2007, the proposed alterations were discussed with City Council who supported these interim measures.

The Proposed Improvements fall into three broad categories: lighting, directional orientation/wayfinding, and comfort/aesthetics. The applicant has provided location maps identifying the proposed changes as well as manufacturer specification sheets on the products proposed for use.

#### **Waterfront/Marina Lighting:**

In coordination with the design plan and recommended improvements, a lighting study was conducted to determine existing lighting levels and to suggest improvements in the marina area, from roughly the area immediately south of Founder's Park to the intersection of King and Union Streets. Specific existing ambient lighting levels for parks and outdoor meeting places were reviewed to ensure that national standards are achieved.

The study found areas of exceptional darkness and recommendations were made to increase lighting in those areas. In the arcade area of the Torpedo Factory, existing lighting levels were found to exceed minimum standards. Rather than reconfigure or reduce the existing lighting in

this area, the consultant recommended adding some additional lights outside the arcade area to adjust from the very bright light of the arcade area.

Given the increased foot traffic anticipated by the visitors from National Harbor and the recommended standards, the following areas have been designated to receive proposed new lighting:

- The existing steps located near the rear of the Chart House. A new freestanding light pole will be installed in this location. The proposed new light pole will be a 6590 Victorian Gaslight Series I.
- The pier end adjacent to the docking of the Cherry Blossom Ship. A new freestanding light pole will be installed in this location. The proposed new light pole will be a 6590 Victorian Gaslight Series I.
- The brick walkway along the outside Chart House seating area, and in front of the existing raised planter. Three new freestanding light poles will be installed in this location. The proposed new light poles will be 6590 Victorian Gaslight Series I.
- The gazebo area between the food court and the north end of the Torpedo Factory. Three new freestanding light poles will be installed in this location. The proposed new light poles will be 6590 Victorian Gaslight Series I.
- The walkway behind the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Four new building-mounted light fixtures are proposed to replacing the existing light fixtures. The proposed new fixtures will be manufactured by Candela CAND 51-CNS-M.
- The walkway between the Old Dominion Boat Club and the Torpedo Factory Office Building. Four new building-mounted light fixtures are proposed to replace the existing light fixtures on the wall of the Torpedo Factory Office Building. The proposed new fixtures will be manufactured by Candela CAND 51-CNS-M.
- The foot of King Street near the trolley stop. A new Gadsby light pole that matches the existing Gadsby poles located in the right-of-way on King Street is proposed to be installed.

The addition of several more marina style pole lights to match the existing style at the areas described above will be mounted on the marina deck surface. The replacement of all electrical conduit wiring and restoration of deck sidewalk surfaces are included.

Alterations to existing lighting and/or lamp poles includes the following items:

**Relamping:** This element includes the repair and restoration of existing globe fixtures/marina fixtures which are either not currently working or need to be replaced to increase light levels. This fixtures are DF Globe/Art Deco Series light fixtures.

**Torpedo Factory Art Center Façade Lighting:** This element involves the installation of exterior “wash” lights on the east façade of the Torpedo Factory building. Three new

roof-mounted lights are proposed to be installed. This proposed fixture will be FLO Intermediate Flood Light.

**Marina Blue Lights:** This element will replace the existing blue pile lights/electrical conduit and wiring as well as extend the lights to perimeter marina piles that are currently not lighted. It would provide additional blue lights to this existing decorative feature at the marina. This element is an Incandescent Vapolet.

**Lighting for Arcade Area:** This element includes the installation of new fixtures to replace the mercury vapor fixture within the Torpedo Factory Office building walkway to Union Street. The replacement of these existing lights would reduce glare within the arcade and safety issues associated with these fixtures.

**Emergency Lighting:** An element for emergency backup lights was added to install nine exterior wall-mounted battery lights along the marina waterfront. These would be used in the case of a major power failure in the marina area—101 Performance Sconce.

**Directional Orientation:**

Four freestanding directional or wayfinding signs, including one centrally located multisided kiosk near the existing gazebo, are proposed to be installed at the marina. Two additional directional signs are proposed to be installed: the first near the entrance to the arcade and mounted to the face of the existing column at the Torpedo Factory Office Building and the second V-shaped sign would be attached to the southern building wall, in the vicinity of the new trolley location. The signs will be designed, fabricated and installed at the marina to assist visitors to orient themselves, provide interactive information, and current event in the city. The design and placement of the signage is being closely coordinated with Sasaki and Associates, who will also be recommending the graphic design and placement of the vertical banners described below to be installed on the building wall of the Torpedo Factory Office Building.

**Historic Interpretive Signage:**

In the vicinity of the arcade under the Torpedo Factory Office Building, the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) is developing and will install a linear “Timeline of Alexandria History” interpretive panel that traces 13,000 years of City history, beginning with the “Clovis Point” recently discovered at the Freedmen’s Cemetery.

In addition, the Office of Historic Alexandria proposes to install a large freestanding photomural/panel to highlight the city’s cultural facilities, historic sites, and museums, as well as guidance on directions and transportation options to access these resources. This installation will be located at the rear of the Old Dominion Boat Club, in the immediate vicinity of the trolley stop. The panels are being designed by OHA in conjunction with the city’s wayfinding consultant, Sasaki and Associates.

**Comfort:**

Ten additional benches will be provided at various locations on the marina deck as well as on King Street. The benches in both locations will match the existing benches installed at the marina and on King Street respectively. Moveable seats and tables are proposed to be placed around the marina gazebo to provide a more flexible form of seating.

**Planters:**

Planters and seasonal plantings will be provided to help improve the appearance of the marina area. A total of 30 planters, new plantings in the existing planters at the Food Court and Chart House, and new landscape screening will be installed at rear of the Chart House to buffer the unsightly service area adjacent to Thompson's Alley.

**Bollards:**

Two existing pairs of unsightly bollards will be removed and replaced with new ornamental and removable bollards in the existing locations. One pair of three bollards is located in the Cameron Street alley. The other bollards are located at the bottom of the ramp behind the Old Dominion Boat Club. The bollards will inhibit regular vehicular traffic, with the exception of service and emergency vehicles, from traversing the marina and create a safe pedestrian-oriented environment for visitors and workers. The new bollards will match the existing bollards installed elsewhere along the waterfront.

**Proposed Improvements by Building:****Torpedo Factory Art Center Building:**

A series of improvements are proposed to better welcome visitors to the marina/river side of the Torpedo Art Center building. A total of four new awnings are proposed to be installed; two awnings will be installed on the eastern façade of the building above the existing doors and on each will be installed above the north- and south-facing doors of the building. The doors are proposed to be replaced with new doors that comply with current building code requirements for safe ingress and egress. To provide additional ambient lighting, four new light fixtures will be installed to replace the existing utilitarian fixtures that flank the doors on the eastern elevation of the building. Three new light fixtures will be installed at the roof-line and directed downward to provide additional building lighting. To provide lighting in the event of an emergency in which all power would be lost at the marina, a series of new emergency light fixtures is proposed. Three such fixtures are to be installed along the eastern elevation of the building.

**Torpedo Factory Office Building (located south of the Art Center building)**

In this location, four new light fixtures are proposed to replace the existing utilitarian wall-pack lights. A series of vertical banners are also proposed to be located in this area to attract the visitor and draw them down the ramp towards the new trolley stop at the intersection of King Street and Unions Streets. Two new directional signs are proposed to be installed on the east and south facades of the building wall. An interpretive sign panel that depicts the City's history will be installed at the base of the building near the entrance to the arcade. A freestanding interpretive

sign is also proposed to be installed in the vicinity of the rear building wall of the Old Dominion Boat Club.

**Chart House Restaurant:**

To provide shelter for water taxi passengers, a new waiting area with limited seating will be constructed underneath the Chart House. The existing solid wood doors will be replaced with new wood trim, glass panel doors of the same dimensions. Three new awnings are also proposed to be installed above the three doors that will provide access to the new waiting area. Three new emergency lights are proposed to be installed on the planter wall in front of the building; one additional emergency light will be installed on the planter wall in front of the Chart House. No rest rooms facilities will be provided in the new waiting area; the existing rest rooms in the Food Court will be renovated and be accessible to visitors. No other changes are proposed to the Chart House building.

**Food Court Building:**

Two new light fixtures are proposed to be installed to illuminate the existing identification sign. Globe lights are proposed to replace the existing fixtures. One emergency light is proposed to be installed on the building wall facing the marina deck.

**Installation of additional white safety railing at Marina:**

The City's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities is proposing to install additional safety railing, approximately 103' in length, along the north side of the City Marina. The safety railing will replace the existing 2x4's and rope that were installed after multiple pedestrians and pets fell into the Potomac River at this location. The railing will be custom made for the marina. The railing post and frame are to be 1 1/2" steel, primed and powder coated white to match existing railing. The posts are to be welded to 6" diameter steel plates and the plates are to be welded to the railing frame. Plates will then be bolted to existing deck or concrete walkway, matching the installation of the existing white railing. Bolt pattern on plates are designed to withstand 150 pounds of overturning force. Bolts are to be installed with nylon washers to prevent electrolytic corrosion. The railing frame infill will be 1/4" round steel rods set no more than 4" apart and welded to the frame on one end and a round center steel ring (similar to a marina life ring) on the opposite end. The infill rods differ from the existing marina railing design in that the existing design incorporates a 3/16" nylon rope infill with a center nylon rope knot. Currently, marina staff purchase and replace over 2,400' of nylon rope per year. The environmental conditions at the marina cause the rope to fray in less than one year after installation. In addition, marina staff have observed visiting children regularly standing on the rope causing the rope to snap. A Risk Manager has been consulted and recommended elimination of the existing rope design.

**II. HISTORY:**

Alexandria's location on the Potomac River has defined its history since its founding in 1749. This rich history as a port town has been discussed in books including A Seaport Saga: Portrait of Old Alexandria, Virginia by William Francis Smith and T. Michael Miller.

While certainly the City's waterfront area has changed and evolved over the centuries, especially as industrial uses along the river have moved and been replaced by residential developments, the City recognizes that the character and integrity of the waterfront and marina area should be protected. One of the most recognizable extant buildings along the waterfront in the marina area is the Torpedo Factory, constructed in 1919. The building was renovated in 1983 as the Torpedo Factory Art Center and has become a symbol of historic preservation and adaptive reuse in the City.

Throughout the decades, the Board has reviewed and approved alterations to the Torpedo Factory itself, including signage and lighting, as well as other changes to the waterfront—ticket booths, decking changes, and new construction. This application continues the Board's involvement for approvals through a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations in the Waterfront/Marina area.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

Proposed lighting, signage, and seating alterations comply with the Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The proposed items detailed in this report are the result of a collaborative effort, involving various City Departments, business owners, and the community, in order to improve the appearance of the City's Waterfront and Marina area, in anticipation of the opening of National Harbor in spring of 2008. Throughout the long process, BAR Staff from P & Z have been involved and consulted regarding the proposed alterations, to ensure compatibility and appropriateness in the City's Old and Historic Alexandria District.

At the December 19, 2007 Old and Historic BAR meeting, City Staff gave an informational presentation on the scope of the interim improvements to the waterfront/marina area, which mirror the items proposed in this application.

Staff supports these items, and views them as temporary and interim measures that have the potential to change during the more comprehensive long range Waterfront Study process. In Staff's opinion, none of the items result in the loss of historic fabric to the primary historic building, the Torpedo Factory, nor jeopardize the historic context of the City's Waterfront Area. Therefore, Staff supports the application and recommends approval.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the application.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-5 Projecting, hanging signs must comply with USBC [H103-H107, H112] for type of materials, maximum projection, vertical clearance below all parts of the sign, and additional loads.
- C-6 Wall letters / signs must comply with USBC [H103-H111] Please indicate the method to be used for anchoring the letters to the wall.
- C7 Canopies must comply with USBC 3202.3.1 for support and clearance from the sidewalk, and the applicable sections of USBC's Chapter 11. Structural designs of fabric covered canopies must comply with USBC 3105.3. The horizontal portions of the framework must not be less than 8 feet nor more than 12 feet above the sidewalk and the clearance between the covering or valance and the sidewalk must not be less than 7 feet.
- C-8 Awnings must comply with all applicable requirements of USBC 3105.3 and 3202.3.1 Retractable and fixed awnings must have a minimum 7 foot clearance form a sidewalk to the lowest part of the framework or any fixed portion of any retractable awning is required. Retractable awnings must be securely fastened to the building and can not extend closer than 24 inches in from the curb line (USBC 3202.3.1).
- C-9 Fixed awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand wind or other lateral loads and live loads required by the USBC. Structural members must be protected to prevent deterioration (USBC 3105.3).

C-10 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.

Historic Alexandria:  
R-Approve

Alexandria Archaeology:  
There is low potential for significant archaeological resources to be disturbed by this project. No archaeological action is required.